

Penobscot County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes June 11, 2019

2242

9:00 AM Commissioners Peter Baldacci and Laura Sanborn

64°

Commissioner Andre Cushing (Late – Arrived 9:10)

Approval of Minutes -

Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to approve May 28 and June 4, 2019 meeting minutes. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 2-0.

PRCC Update/Radio Infrastructure Discussion –

- PRCC Director Chris Lavoie reported on last weeks Board of Directors meeting. Our radio consultant was present and discussed the needed upgrades. We need to push for a County system wide approach including communities that have their own stand-alone equipment, more specifically the City of Old Town and Towns of Orono, Holden, Eddington and Hampden. Their systems are aging and rapidly failing too. If this is going to be funded by tax dollars then this is a good time to approach this as a county-wide system.
- We need to hire a consultant to research the equipment to upgrade and map sites (coverage maps and equipment study). This is \$1,200. To study State Towers too and coverage maps it would cost an additional \$1,800.
- We won't know if the State will allow us to use their towers until the RFP is completed. We need to build the system on paper, then meet with the Radio Governance Board and see if they will allow to use their towers. The State will also receive an intermodal study and find out how much weight we would be placing on their towers. Chris believes the State will consider our request as we have a good working relationship.
- Chief Leonard, Town Manager – Fire & Police Chief from the Town of Veazie, stated he is been on the board for about 20 years and sits on the radio sub-committee. He apologized for where we are now. He acknowledged that this has been an issue for years and we've cobbled the system together. Now it is mission critical for all agencies. It has really come to light over the last few weeks as a couple towers have gone down. We do not see it getting better. We need to go forward to replace the radio infrastructure.
Chief Leonard stated that when the former director the RFQ was not complete. We have a mission critical problem in front of us. We are doing ourselves a disservice if we don't look at the entire system.
- Commissioner Baldacci requested clarification on "system wide approach". Chief stated that the towns have the opportunity to turn their equipment over to the county. If not, then they will need to enter into an MOU in which their equipment will need to reach a minimum standard. They will be responsible for the maintenance.

PRCC Update/Radio Infrastructure Discussion – Continued:

- Les Brown, Fire Chief of East Millinocket reported that they have severe issues with the towers. He stated they are constantly flipping between four towers just to find service. On occasion we find ourselves using our personal cell phones as a method of communication because the service is so terrible. There are some areas with absolutely no contact and with this community seeing more drug overdoses, car and moose accidents this issue must be addressed.
- Chris provided a rough estimate on the cost of the tower upgrades at \$ 40 K per tower for six towers if we keep the equipment where it is as it stands right now. The only way to find out if we can save money is to do a coverage study and build a system for the future.
- Commissioner Cushing made a motion to approve \$1,200 for a study as a system wide approach and \$1,800 for a line of site and coverage maps for the State towers. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0.

HR Update –

- HR Director, Erika Honey requested approval to hire Mahkayla Mailman for the second clerical specialist position in Probate. This will bring the Probate Office to full staff. If you approve she will start Monday, June 17. Approved. Payroll slip signed.

Administration Update –

- Commissioner Sanborn moved to have Judy Alexander replace Bill Collins on the Penquis Steering Committee. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Motion Passed 3-0.
- Bill presented communication from Eaton and Peabody a dismissal from the Town of Plymouth for Tax Abatement Claims for years 2016, 2017 and 2018.
- Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve a draft letter to the Town of Orono denying waiving interest for a later payment of taxes. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0.
- Payroll Change Notices signed for: Mahkayla Mailman – Hired; Seth Rolfe – Resignation; Blake Miller and George Buswell – Comp time.
- Payroll Warrant to be approved for: \$ 242,935.26
- Accounts Payable Warrant to be approved for: \$ 158,669.43
- UT A/P Warrant to be approved for: \$49,699.63
- UT TIF Warrant to be approved for: -NONE-

Sheriff's Update –

- Sheriff reported that today's jail population is 162 (122 males, 40 females) with 48 boarded out to other county jails. There is one county swap, no federal marshals and 75 in Maine Pre-Trial Services. Maine Pre-Trial has a temporary person in place and hopefully will have a permanent person in place shortly. Sheriff states that over the last 72 hours we had 51 inmates brought in to the jail and 43 of those bailed out. Sheriff believes the bail reform has had a tremendous impact over the last couple years.
- Sheriff noted we are down eight full time correction officers.
- Sheriff states that two inmates were sent to the hospital with one escaping. When something like this happens we lose resources because multiple agencies get involved, not only the impact it has on EMMC.
- Sheriff reported that the jail had a very significant hole placed in an interior wall. There was no chance of anyone escaping, but there is potential danger.
- There were several suicides this week. Sheriff discussed an incident of a deputy trying to arrest someone that had been bailed out four different times with serious crimes. This deputy was trying to apprehend him and he took off dragging along our deputy by a car.
- Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve the Town of Greenbush supplemental Law contract as presented. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Motion passed. 3-0. Signed.
- Sheriff will be meeting with Orrington officials on June 24th to discuss their contract and budget. The head selectmen has confirmed that it is the Town's intent to contract with the Sheriff's Department.
- Maine Pre-trial will host the fall program at Camp Roosevelt, but discontinue working the 1st and 2nd offender programs. Bill Collins has contacted the City code enforcement to see if we can use the old Y Building for the 1st and 2nd offender programs.
- Sheriff was informed by Sgt. Goodspeed we received 16 applications for the new patrol position. Interviews will begin shortly.
- Sheriff reported that Intensive Case Management (ICM) meetings will be taking place. Andy Davis is the currently assigned to the jail. ICM is trying to assign another person too. This person would work directly with the court to deal with the mental health issues and divert from the jail.
- The video arraignment meeting is coming up next week. Our list shows more cons to change from what we are doing.

Public Comment –

Melissa Burkey, presented a recent article from NACo News. This article showed where St. Louis County was able to reduce their jail population by 24.4% in four years. They received assistance from the McArthur Foundation to implement strategies to safely reduce jail population.

A detailed analysis showed that the pretrial population as a major driver. The data looked at the ability to post bail and who returned to jail due to probation violations. Some strategies used were a pretrial release program and they assembled a Jail Population Review Team. This team met weekly. It included community members, judges, prosecutors, and public defenders. During these meetings recommendations were made and forwarded to prosecutors, public defenders and judges that were handling these cases. This team also worked with drug court.

Four years ago, the proposed outcome was a modest 15-19% reduction in the jail population. However, the population has been reduced 24.4% for average length in stay and for probation violations a decrease of 99 days to 10-15 days. The jail population that is incarcerated due to technical probation violation reduced 29% to 13%. Saving tax payers money while placing inmates back with their family and work. Melissa is asking the Commissioners to consider proposing a Jail Population Review Team for Penobscot. Commissioner Baldacci stated that will be considered.

Larry Dansinger, commented that the county budget was not found online.

Larry is requesting that the Commissioners look at a cost effected strategy when looking at the proposals being presented by the design firms today. This presents an opportunity to build/create a new jail facility much better than what we have now. This would eventually save the tax payers and provide better safety and security to the public. Everybody in the county wants safety and security, but also want people in jail that come out not go back. The design firms know there is discussion/debate about the size of the new jail with hopes the population will be going down in the future.

Doug Dunbar, states the trend nationwide is not to build jails that are twice the size of those that already exists, but to reduce the number of inmates. Doug reports that 75-80% are pretrial, so there is a lot of work to be done. There are grants available from the DOJ as well as monies being offered by foundations.

Doug requested information regarding the Board of Visitors for the jail and is awaiting word on what is being done for mental health for inmates.

Executive Session---Commissioner Cushing made a motion to go into Executive Session at 10:00 a.m., under 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (D) Contract Matter. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve 3-0. Present were: Bill Collins, Judy Alexander, John Hiatt, Sheriff Morton, Chief Birch, Captain Clukey, Lt. Hotaling, Rob Frank and Matt Ward – WBRC, David Ziskind and Darko Hreljanovic - STV Session ended at 11:00 a.m. NO votes taken.

Executive Session---Commissioner Cushing made a motion to go into Executive Session at 11:01 a.m., under 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (D) Contract Matter. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve 3-0. Present were: Bill Collins, Judy Alexander, John Hiatt, Sheriff Morton, Chief Birch, Captain Clukey, Lt. Hotaling, Mark Kukuvka, David Weller and Bill Harke – LaBella Associates, Mike Cunningham – Lincoln/Haney Engineers, Jim Seymour – Sebago Technics and Alan Richardson – Justice Planners. Session ended at 12:02 p.m. NO votes taken.

Executive Session---Commissioner Cushing made a motion to go into Executive Session at 12:04 p.m., under 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (D) Contract Matter. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve 3-0. Present were: Bill Collins, Judy Alexander, John Hiatt, Sheriff Morton, Chief Birch, Captain Clukey, Lt. Hotaling, Graham Vickers, Dennis Morin & Arthur Thompson – SMRT, George Campbell – Sewall Company and Cheryl Gallant, PBA Session ended at 1:05 p.m. NO votes taken.

Executive Session---Commissioner Cushing made a motion to go into Executive Session at 12:04 p.m., under 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (D) Contract Matter. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve 3-0. Present in addition to the Commissioners were: Bill Collins, Judy Alexander, John Hiatt, Lt. Hotaling. Commissioner Cushing left at 1:38 p.m. Session ended at 1:50 p.m. NO votes taken.

Meeting Adjourned-

Commissioner Sanborn moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:51 p.m. with no further business on the agenda. Commissioner Baldacci seconded the motion. Moved to approve passed 2-0

Certified By:

Administrator, Bill Collins

Peter K. Baldacci, Chairman

Laura J. Sanborn, Commissioner

Andre E. Cushing, III, Commissioner