

MINUTES

**AROOSTOOK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING – WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2017 –
1:00 P.M. – SHERIFF'S OFFICE BUILDING – CONFERENCE ROOM (SECOND FLOOR)**

PRESENT

Paul J. Adams, Chair, County Commissioners
Norman L. Fournier, County Commissioner
Paul J. Underwood, County Commissioner
Douglas F. Beaulieu, County Administrator
Darren Woods, EMA Director
Jesse Belanger, EMA Deputy Director
Darrell Crandall, Sheriff
Shawn Gillen, Chief Deputy
Craig Clossey, Jail Administrator
Christina Theriault, Human Resources Manager
Sherrill Campbell, Administrative Assistant
Jason Parent, ACAP Executive Director

ART. 1. Chair Paul J. Adams called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

ART. 2. Public Comment Period.

None.

ART. 3. Approval of Agenda.

Paul J. Adams entertained a motion to approve the agenda. One (1) item was added to Art. 14, Other Business, EMA Vehicle Bid.

MOTION:

Motion by Paul J. Underwood and seconded by Norman L. Fournier to approve the agenda as amended.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 4. Minutes.

Chair Paul J. Adams entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the April 5, 2017 Special County Commissioners' Meeting.

MOTION:

Motion by Paul J. Underwood and seconded by Norman L. Fournier to approve the minutes of the April 5, 2017 Special County Commissioners' Meeting.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 5. The County Commissioners approved and signed the following:

- A) Attendance Record.
- B) Bills and Warrants.
- C) State of Maine V. Akahenten Ferguson Criminal Forfeiture.

MOTION:

Motion by Norman L. Fournier and seconded by Paul J. Underwood to accept a total of \$578.00 in Criminal Forfeiture funds, with one half deposited against the Jail Fund Balance and one half deposited in the Sheriff's Equipment Fund.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

- D) MDOT Overlimit Permit.

MOTION:

Motion by Paul J. Underwood and seconded by Norman L. Fournier to authorize a Maine Department of Transportation Overlimit Permit for project #STP-2205-(800) in the towns of New Sweden, Stockholm and Madawaska Lake Township.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 6. Update on Aroostook County Action Program Programs and Priorities for 2017. (Jason Parent, ACAP Executive Director)

Commissioner Paul J. Adams introduced Jason Parent, ACAP Executive Director.

Mr. Parent provided an informational packet to each of the Commissioners. Mr. Parent proceeded to discuss the 2016 ACAP Community Assessment purpose and background, the approach and methods of assessment, and key data findings. He also presented the strategic priorities of the organization and provided an Executive Summary, which is appended to the minutes (Attachment 1).

The County Commissioners thanked Jason Parent for an informative presentation.

ART. 7. Approval of paid volunteer firefighters for North Lakes Fire and Rescue.

Chief Darren Woods presented ten (10) applicants for the position of paid-call volunteer firefighters.

MOTION:

Motion by Norman L. Fournier and seconded by Paul J. Underwood to approve all ten (10)

applicants as recommended by Chief Darren Woods.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 8. Sheriff's Appointments.

A) Approval of part-time dispatcher.

Sheriff Darrell Crandall recommended the approval of Cheyenne McNally of Monticello for the position of part-time dispatcher.

MOTION:

Motion by Paul J. Underwood and seconded by Norman L. Fournier to approve Cheyenne McNally of Monticello for the position of part-time dispatcher as recommended by Sheriff Crandall.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

B) Approval of part-time corrections officers.

Sheriff Darrell Crandall recommended the approval of Carey Suttter of Linneus, Kevin Harris of Houlton, and Randy Foster of Houlton as part-time corrections officers.

MOTION:

Motion by Paul J. Underwood and seconded by Norman L. Fournier to approve the hiring of Carey Suttter of Linneus, Kevin Harris of Houlton, and Randy Foster of Houlton as part-time corrections officers as recommended by Sheriff Crandall.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

Art. 9. Bids:

A) Connor Recreation Facility Maintenance (2017 - 2019).

Bids were received from the following contractors:

Precision Lawn	\$7,200.00
Pelletier Property Service	\$10,590.00
RM Lawncare	\$6,289.00

MOTION:

Motion by Paul J. Underwood and seconded by Norman L. Fournier to table the Connor Recreation Facility Maintenance bids pending review of the County Administrator and to authorize the County Administrator to award the bid to the lowest bidder provided the bid specifications are met.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

- Art. 10. Authorization to execute a contract with Securus Technologies for jail inmate telephone and records management systems.

(This article and article 11 were combined for decision making purposes.)

MOTION:

Motion made by Paul J. Underwood and seconded by Norman L. Fournier to issue an RFP for both Art. 10 and Art. 11 and to follow our bid process for these services.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

- Art. 11. Consideration of Proposal from Keefe Commissary Network for Jail Commissary and inmate account services.

(See above.)

- Art. 12. County Commissioners' Report:

A) MCCA/Risk Pool.

Risk Pool Meeting. Commissioner Norman L. Fournier stated reports were made on various claims; 17 claims were active and 2 were re-opened; the reserves were increased by \$385,000.00; and, some counties are no longer accepting cash in the DA Restitution Fund. Commissioner Fournier commended the Sheriff's Office staff for their excellent attendance rate at the Risk Management presentations. He stated that participation in training seminars may be taken into consideration when formulating rates in the future.

MCCA. Commissioner Norman L. Fournier stated a discussion was held regarding the Executive Director position. There were 17 applications. A decision will be made after the full board completes interviews.

B) Legislative Update.

Commissioner Norman L. Fournier reported that County Day at the Maine Legislature on April 3rd was well attended by the counties but there were not many Legislators in attendance as they were not in session; discussion was held on funding jails; the Diamond bill does not seem to have much support; and, the Criminal Justice Sub-committee will meet on the Jail Cap Bill sponsored by Rep. Roland D. Martin and will report back to the full Committee at a later date. Commissioner Fournier also reported that the Governor

will not support more money for the jails. He stated that the Governor did propose to give a percentage from sales tax for jail funding. This is unlikely to receive support from Legislators. Approximately 3 million dollars is needed to supplement jail funding. There is no support to remove the jail cap. Commissioner Norman L. Fournier stated that he feels the best bet is to receive supplemental funding from the Appropriations Committee.

County Administrator Douglas F. Beaulieu reported that the Municipal Cost Component Bill had a public hearing on Tuesday, April 25th. There were no opponents to the bill. The hearing took sixteen (16) minutes.

Art. 13. County Administrator's Report.

A) Safety Scholarship Training Grant Application.

County Administrator Douglas F. Beaulieu reported that the Maine Municipal Association did not award the Safety Scholarship Grant to North Lakes Fire and Rescue despite a creative application from Jesse Belanger. Chief Darren Woods stated that, despite not receiving the grant money, Mr. Belanger was able to complete the training.

B) Private and Special Law 2017, Chapter 2.

County Administrator Douglas F. Beaulieu stated that LD 24, "An Act To Change the Name of Township 17, Range 4, WELS, in the Unorganized Territory to Sinclair" has passed. The County Commissioners now have up to six (6) months after the adjournment of the 128th Legislature to submit the question for referendum.

C) Other Items of Interest.

County Administrator Douglas F. Beaulieu congratulated EMA Director Darren Woods for being named Northeast Emergency Management Director of the Year 2017. Mr. Woods and his staff are exceptionally good at what they do. We are proud of the department.

Art. 14. Other Business.

A) EMA Vehicle Bid.

The following bid was received for a 2017 F-250 Series 4x4 Crew Cab Vehicle for the EMA with a trade-in consideration.

York's of Houlton	\$17,683.00 (trade included)
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MOTION:

Motion by Norman L. Fournier and seconded by Paul J. Underwood to table the bid pending review of the County Administrator with authorization to award the bid provided all bid specifications are met.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

B) June Meeting Date Change.

It was agreed by the Commissioners to change the June County Commissioners' Meeting from June 21, 2017 to June 20, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. in the Administrative Hearing Room at the Caribou Courthouse.

Art. 15. Executive Session.

MOTION:

The following motion was made by Paul J. Underwood and seconded by Norman L. Fournier:

"I move we go into executive session pursuant to Title 1, M.R.S., §405, paragraph 6 (A) to discuss a personnel issue concerning the Office of County Commissioners."

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

Upon returning to open session the following motion was made by Norman L. Fournier and seconded by Paul J. Underwood:

MOTION:

"I move that the County of Aroostook adopt the full portability of Douglas F. Beaulieu's years of service with the State of Maine from December 30, 1981 through September 5, 1995 to the PLD Consolidated Plan with Aroostook County to be used as though it was rendered with Aroostook County. This motion is contingent on said Beaulieu waiving his rights under Section 6 of an employment contract dated September 13, 2016".

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

MOTION:

The following motion was made by Paul J. Underwood and seconded by Norman L. Fournier:

"I move we go into executive session pursuant to Title 1, M.R.S., §405, paragraph 6 (A) to discuss a personnel issue concerning the Office of County Commissioners."

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

Upon returning to open session no action was taken.

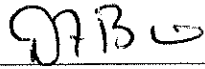
Art. 16. Adjournment.

MOTION:


Motion by Norman L. Fournier and seconded by Paul J. Underwood to adjourn the meeting.

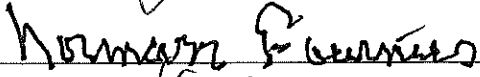
Meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

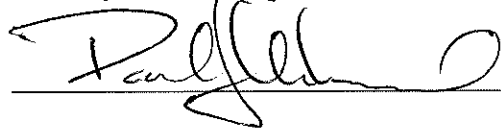
ATTEST: A True Copy
of Commissioners' Meeting



Douglas F. Beaulieu
County Administrator







AROOSTOOK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DATE: April 26, 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose and Background

Community Action Agencies are non-profit private and public organizations that were established under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 to fight America's War on Poverty. Their purpose is to carry out the Community Action Program (CAP), with the goal of working to eliminate the causes and conditions of poverty. Today, there are over 1,100 Community Action Agencies operating throughout the United States.

Since it was established in 1972, Aroostook County Action Program, Inc. (ACAP) has provided the people of Aroostook County with services and resources to help achieve greater economic independence. ACAP serves approximately 14,000 clients per year and responds to human needs in four major program areas: early care and education, community health, energy and housing, and workforce development.

This assessment is a robust, comprehensive, and objective analysis of community needs and assets, conducted collaboratively with key stakeholders and the community-at-large. This assessment will allow ACAP and its partners, as well as the full breadth of other public and private stakeholders, including the community at-large to explore ways to more effectively leverage its activities and resources, and is a process that promotes community partnerships and collaboration, fosters broad community engagement, and encourages the development of a targeted, integrated, and sustainable strategic plan.

Approach and Methods

The assessment was conducted in three phases. Phase I involved a comprehensive review of existing quantitative data along with a review of domain-specific reports and strategic plans. Phase II involved a series of qualitative interviews and forums with key stakeholders, service providers, and community members to characterize community need. During this phase, JSI also reviewed the results of a needs survey, administered by ACAP, to better understand the key characteristics and needs of community residents. Finally, Phase III involved strategic planning and reporting activities. This approach and process provided ample opportunity to vet the quantitative and qualitative data compiled during the assessment. While ACAP already has a robust set of programs and initiatives that address many of the issues identified through the data, this assessment provides new guidance and insight on quantitative trends and community perceptions that can be used to inform and refine ACAP's efforts and activities moving forward.

- **Phase 1:** Data sources included a broad array of publicly available secondary data that allowed JSI to gain an understanding of the demographic, socio-economic, geographic, health status, and access characteristics (See Appendix A: Quantitative Data Findings). JSI characterized status and need at the county level. Tests of significance were

performed when possible, and statistically significant differences between county and state or national values are noted when applicable. Confidence intervals measure the probability that a population parameter will fall between two set values; throughout our assessment, statistical significance is defined as two values with non-overlapping confidence intervals. Assessment activities nearly always face data limitations with respect to quantitative data collection. With respect to the quantitative data compiled for this project, the most significant limitation was the availability of timely data. While the available public data was valuable and allowed JSI to identify characteristics and needs relative to Aroostook County and the state of Maine, it should be acknowledged that some data sets were older and may not reflect the most recent trends.

To obtain targeted, direct quantitative data from residents of Aroostook County, JSI reviewed the results of an ACAP-administered survey that allowed community members to share information and opinions around a number of topics, including education, employment, housing, financial stability, and health (See Appendix B: 2016 ACAP Community Assessment Survey). Participants also had the opportunity to provide input on strengths and challenges in their communities.

The survey was developed by ACAP staff members and was modeled after surveys conducted by other Agencies in and outside of Maine. The template was reviewed by Aroostook Policy Advisory Council (APAC), who provided valuable input on question revisions and overall approach. ACAP also relied on the expertise of its community assessment consultant, JSI, for feedback and recommendations.

The survey included 57 questions. For ease of measurement, many questions were multiple choice and provided opportunities for those who wished to share additional information. As with any measurement tool, there were challenges, particularly around recruitment. Although efforts were made to recruit a representative sample of respondents, 40% of respondents were between the ages of 41 and 59, 44% of respondents had a 4 year college degree or more, most were middle-income, and most were home-owners. Hard copies of the survey were distributed amongst ACAP's low-income clients, but it was difficult to collect completed surveys.

In total, 932 community members responded to the survey, either electronically or in hard-copy, and results were entered into Survey Monkey and analyzed by ACAP and JSI. Overall, 587 participants responded through a web-link distributed via email by ACAP and other social service organizations, 189 participants responded through a link on social media, and 156 participants completed a hard copy of the survey distributed to customers participating in Early Head Start, Head Start, WIC, LIHEAP, and other programs.

- **Phase II:** JSI conducted five one-on-one interviews with external stakeholders representing schools, law enforcement, workforce and economic development, community organizations, and community health centers. Interviews were conducted using a standard interview guide and information was gathered related to major household, economic, and health needs. Interviewees were also asked about community strengths and assets, with the goal of understanding how conditions were perceived by community leaders. In addition to stakeholder interviews, JSI also conducted community and provider forums in three regions of Aroostook County: northern Aroostook, known as St. John Valley (Fort Kent), central Aroostook (Presque Isle), and southern Aroostook (Houlton). JSI posted a range of questions to solicit input on community characteristics, perceptions, and attitudes on whether quantitative data reflected actual conditions. While forum participants acknowledged regional differences, responses to the series of questions posted during the forums were very similar. It is important to note that given the relatively small sample size and the casual nature of questioning, results may not be generalizable to the larger population. Efforts were made to speak to a broadly representative group of stakeholders and residents, but the selection process was not random. Though community forums were held in three different towns, feedback from each meeting does not solely reflect the needs or interests of the area in which the meeting was held.
- **Phase III:** JSI met with senior leadership at ACAP to assess the results of the assessment, to identify priorities, and to determine a range of feasible strategies that ACAP may prioritize to meet specific needs of their target population. Strategies were drawn from data analyses, interview findings, and input from the community.

Key Data Findings

Following is a summary of key findings drawn from the assessment's interviews and community forums, as well as a review of the existing quantitative data. A detailed discussion of assessment results is contained in the body of this report.

Population Characteristics

- Aroostook's population has been in decline since the 1960s, and decreased 4.5% between 2010 and 2015.¹
- Community members identified out-migration as a concern. Common reasons for leaving Aroostook County include a desire to seek jobs and gain higher wages, causing a strain on the local workforce and economy.
- A common theme throughout stakeholder interviews and community/provider forums was that older adults (65+) represent a vulnerable population in the County.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau Annual Estimates of Resident Population, April 2010 to July 2015

Economics

- A greater percentage of all residents, individuals under 18, and individuals over the age of 65 in Aroostook County live in poverty or are low-income compared to the rest of the state.²
- Based on discussions with residents, one of the greatest concerns in the County is generational poverty — when a family has lived in poverty for at least two generations.
- The median household income, family income, and per capita income for Aroostook County were all significantly lower than for Maine overall.³ Out of 858 respondents to ACAP’s Community Survey, 24% reported that they regularly borrow money or use credit cards to meet basic needs, such as rent or food.

Education and Workforce

- Residents of Aroostook County had lower educational attainment compared to Maine overall.⁴ Although Aroostook County sends more high school graduates to college compared to Maine overall, college persistence (the percent of students returning after freshman year) is lower, though not significantly.⁵
- Aroostook’s unemployment rate mirrors that of the state (7.4%), though consensus among stakeholders and forum participants is that this statistic disregards the seasonal nature of many of Aroostook’s industries. The labor force participation rate, or the proportion of people 16 years or older who are employed, unemployed, or actively seeking employment, is lower than Maine overall and has continued to decline over time.⁶
- Forum participants and stakeholders identified several barriers to finding and maintaining employment: finding affordable childcare, criminal records, and lack of knowledge around employment preparedness (creating resumes, preparing for job interviews, understanding the soft and hard skills necessary for work.)

Housing

- Though there were more HUD-Assisted units per 100,000 population in Aroostook compared to Maine overall, a number of community forum participants discussed the need for safer and more affordable housing options. Individuals noted the long wait times for subsidized housing.⁷

² U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010-2014

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Mitchell Institute, “Maine High School Graduates: Trends in College-Going, Persistence, and Completion,” August 2015, <https://mitchellinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/MaineCollegeGoing2015.pdf>

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1990, 2000, 2009-2013

⁷ US Department of Housing and Urban Development. 2015

- Participants emphasized that many homes in the County, especially those owned by older adults, are in disrepair and in need of weatherization, safety upgrades, and basic upkeep.
- The numbers of individuals who are turned away due to the lack of an Emergency Shelter suggest that vulnerable and high-risk individuals are unable to access social services that are desperately needed.

Transportation

- Lack of a reliable public transportation system was a major area of concern, and residents reported that the current system was inefficient and underutilized.
- Out of 827 respondents to ACAP's Community Survey, 10% reported that they did not own a reliable vehicle. When asked specifically about transportation challenges, 17% of 797 respondents said that they faced challenges with respect to auto repairs; 11% reported that they faced challenges related to the cost of fuel and gasoline, and 9% reported challenges with purchasing a reliable vehicle.

Health

- Substance abuse and mental health were overwhelmingly named as the most critical issues for residents of Aroostook County. Community forum participants and interviewees cited substantial gaps in behavioral health services and family/child support services, particularly for low-income individuals and families with multi-generational substance use.
- After substance abuse and mental health, survey participants identified issues around obesity and access to healthy, nutritious foods as critical priorities.
- Residents of Aroostook County tended to have more chronic disease-related health issues compared to individuals in Maine. Adults in Aroostook were more likely to rate their health as "fair to poor," were more likely to have three or more chronic conditions, and were more likely to report that they were in poor physical health for more than 14 of the past 30 days compared to Maine residents overall.⁸
- Many forum participants identified residents' inability to access and/or afford healthy foods as a major issue for segments of the population in this region. Specifically, low-income individuals and families and isolated older adults were identified as at-risk with respect to food access.

⁸ Maine BRFSS 2011-2013

Strategic Priorities

The following assessment provides context for the current conditions within Aroostook County, and will hopefully be used to guide transformative interventions. Assessment results illustrate that Aroostook County is not the same place as it was 10 years ago; the population is shrinking and aging, the political context has shifted, and workforce and business environments have changed. Such changes demand a paradigm shift of the social service system and require bold action to tackle leading issues. JSI's approach to the assessment provided ample opportunity to vet quantitative and qualitative data compiled during the assessment; from this process, four strategic priority areas emerged. A more robust discussion of priorities can be found on Page 29.

Strategic Priority 1: Strengthen Partnerships and Foster Cross-Sector Collaboration

With increasing demands and shrinking budgets, County service providers must work to identify systemic changes that can be made within the infrastructure of the County's social service system. ACAP and partners must explore potential for collaboration, consolidation, and shared services agreements for administrative functions, or take other proactive measures that will allow organizations to retain individuality and strengths, but create opportunities for more efficient delivery of services.

Strategic Priority 2: Create Opportunities for Productive Dialogue on the Causes and Impacts of Poverty

Community forum participants noted that misinformation, misconceptions, and a general lack of understanding around the causes and impacts of poverty are barriers to community cohesion. A community-wide understanding of the systemic causes of poverty and options for responding to these challenges is essential for change to occur. ACAP and other community organizations must create platforms that allow residents and stakeholders to come together to work through poverty's complex dynamics. Fostering productive and mutually beneficial relationships between low-income residents, key stakeholders, and service providers will be a critical first step in ensuring that community-level interventions are met with a broad range of support.

Strategic Priority 3: Continue to Address Social Determinants and Barriers That Have Impact on Health and Well-Being

A dominant theme from the assessment's quantitative and qualitative data collection was the continued impact that the underlying social determinants of health and wellness have on Aroostook County's population, specifically those that are low-income. More specifically, determinants such as poverty, limited transportation, and poor housing and nutrition limit people's

ability to live productive and fulfilling lives. The service system must continue to provide comprehensive services that work towards improvement in these areas.

Strategic Priority 4: Reduce the Burden of Behavioral Health on the Population and Service System

Mental health and substance abuse were identified as the leading health issues of concern amongst community residents; furthermore, rates of chronic disease were significantly higher amongst County residents compared to the state overall. Despite increased community awareness and sensitivity around mental illness and addiction, there is still a great deal of stigma related to these conditions and a general lack of appreciation for the fact that these issues are often rooted in genetics and physiology similar to other chronic diseases. Addressing these issues and supporting community residents to develop healthier habits in these areas should be addressed collaboratively on a County-wide level.