

MINUTES

AROOSTOOK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING – WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2024, 1:00 PM  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS – FIRST FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM – FORT KENT

**Present:**

Paul J. Underwood, Chair, County Commissioner via Zoom  
Norman L. Fournier, County Commissioner  
William T. Dobbins, County Commissioner  
Ryan D. Pelletier, County Administrator  
Tammy Pelletier, Operations Assistant  
Dana Gendreau, Finance Director  
Leigh Smith, Treasurer  
Steve Pelletier, ARPA Program Administrator  
Peter Johnson, Sheriff  
Paul Bernier, Community Services Director  
Bryan Jandreau, Facilities & IT Director  
Melissa Richardson, Registrar of Deeds-Zoom  
Michael Carpenter, Judge of Probate  
Jason Parent, CEO, ACAP  
Pat Good, ACAP - Zoom  
Galan Williamson, Executive Director, NWDB-Zoom  
Kathy Williams, Job Counselor, ACAP-Zoom  
Nelson Jandreau, Finance Committee Member  
Myles Ouellette, Maine Recovery Council  
Mary Coyne, Recovery Council Coordinator, State of Maine-Zoom  
Mike Lavertu, Valley Racing Team  
Mary Dahlgren, Governmental Audit Manager, RH Smith-Zoom  
Ron Smith, Managing Partner, RH Smith-Zoom  
Christopher Bouchard, Bangor Daily News

-Prior to the start of the regular meeting, the Commissioners toured the Fort Kent Registry of Deeds-

- ART. 1. Commissioner Norman Fournier called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.
- ART. 2. Pledge of allegiance.
- ART. 3. No public comment.
- ART. 4. Mr. Ryan Pelletier requested the following changes to the agenda: 1) move Article 22 to Article 6 (D); and 2) add under Other Business - To Consider the 2024 Subsidy requests from the Town of Ashland for ambulance services for Oxbow North and other townships, and library services for Oxbow North.

**MOTION:**

Motion by Paul Underwood, seconded by William Dobbins to approve the agenda as amended.

**VOTE:**

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 5. Commissioner Fournier entertained a motion for approval of the January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024 minutes.

**MOTION:**

Motion by William Dobbins, seconded by Paul Underwood to approve the minutes of the January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024 County Commissioners' meeting.

**VOTE:**

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 6. The County Commissioners approved and signed the following:

- A) Attendance record.
- B) Bills and warrants.
- C) Liquor License Renewal – Long Lake Sporting Club – Sinclair

**MOTION:**

Motion by Paul Underwood, seconded by William Dobbins to approve the liquor license renewal for Long Lake Sporting Club – Sinclair.

**VOTE:**

Motion voted on and passed.

D) Article 22: To consider the donation of a 2008 Ford Econoline van to the Valley Racing Team.

**MOTION:**

Motion by William Dobbins, seconded by Paul Underwood to approve donating the 2008 Ford Econoline van to the Valley Racing Team.

**VOTE:**

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 7. Mr. Galan Williamson, Executive Director of NWDB and Kathy Williams, Job Counselor, ACAP, presented an update on programs to improve and engage the workforce. Programs where youth can gain work experience, and exposure to the various fields of work have been successful and are expanding to provide more opportunities.

No motion necessary.

ART. 8. Mr. Jason Parent, CEO of ACAP, presented for consideration a Proclamation for Pat Good Day on March 17<sup>th</sup>.

**MOTION:**

Motion by William Dobbins, seconded by Paul Underwood to approve the Proclamation for Pat Good Day on March 17<sup>th</sup>.

**VOTE:**

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 9. Mr. Ron Smith, managing partner, RH Smith provided an update on the financial audits. Completed audits show no red flags or malfeasance and they continue to make headway on prior year audits to get us current.

No motion necessary.

ART. 10. Mr. Ryan Pelletier introduced the new Aroostook County Probate Judge, Michael Carpenter to the Commissioners.

No motion necessary.

ART. 11. Mr. Ryan Pelletier presented for consideration an update on the Opioid Settlement funds and plans for disbursing those funds. Myles Ouellette, Maine Recovery Council and Mary Coyne, Recovery Council Coordinator for the State of Maine provided information on the opioid epidemic, areas of focus, and what services we need the most in our rural area. Jason Parent, CEO of ACAP also offered their assistance as we move forward with implementing plans for use of the settlement funds. ACAP has programs in place for drug free communities that could be a valuable resource. An Opioid Task Force was proposed to include 9 members appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, 3 members will include the County Administrator, County Sheriff, and County Finance Director. The other 6 will be public members.

**MOTION:**

Motion by William Dobbins, seconded by Paul Underwood to approve the creation of an Opioid Task Force with the requirement that the 6 public members must be comprised of 2 members from each Commissioner's district and that to the extent possible, members appointed shall not be potential opioid fund applicants.

**VOTE:**

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 12. Mr. Ryan Pelletier presented for consideration a date for the Tax Abatement hearing in the matter of Cassidy Holdings, LLC vs. the City of Caribou. The Commissioners agreed on April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at the Caribou Courthouse at 10:00 am.

No motion necessary.

ART. 13. Ms. Tammy Pelletier presented for consideration a date for the 2023 Spirit of America Foundation awards. Nineteen (19) recipients were chosen by their communities to be recognized for their outstanding contributions. The Commissioners agreed that the event will take place at the Northeastland Hotel as a luncheon award ceremony to be held on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024 from 11am-1pm.

No motion necessary.

ART. 14. Mr. Steve Pelletier presented an update on the letter of intents that have been received for ARPA grant funding. The deadline for completed applications will be April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

No motion necessary.

ART. 15. Mr. Bryan Jandreau presented for consideration a request to reallocate ARPA funds previously approved for the HVAC project to be used for the replacement of the top roof at Houlton Superior Court.

**MOTION:**

Motion by William Dobbins, seconded by Paul Underwood to approve the reallocation of ARPA funds to the replacement of the top roof at Houlton Superior Court.

**VOTE:**

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 16. Ms. Dana Gendreau presented for consideration the 2024 tax commitment, due date, and interest rate for the 2024 6-month County taxes.

**MOTION:**

Motion by William Dobbins, seconded by Paul Underwood to approve the 2024 tax commitment, due date, and interest rate for the 2024 6-month County taxes.

**VOTE:**

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 17. Mr. Paul Bernier presented for consideration the 2024 Fire Protection agreement for Cary Township with the Town of Houlton.

**MOTION:**

Motion by William Dobbins, seconded by Paul Underwood to approve the 2024 Fire Protection agreement for Cary Township with the Town of Houlton.

**VOTE:**

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 18. Mr. Paul Bernier presented for ratification the Proposed FY 24-25 UT budget for the State Fiscal Administrator.

**MOTION:**

Motion by William Dobbins, seconded by Paul Underwood to ratify the Proposed FY 24-25 UT budget.

**VOTE:**

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 19. Mr. Paul Bernier presented for consideration a request from Friends of Cross Lake for the County to be the applicant and administrator for a new Maine DEP 319 grant for the Cross Lake boat landing.

**MOTION:**

Motion by William Dobbins, seconded by Paul Underwood to allow Ryan Pelletier, County Administrator and Dana Gendreau, Finance Director, to review the application, and make a determination as to whether the County can effectively meet the requirements of being the DEP 319 grant applicant and administrator for the Cross Lake boat landing project.

**VOTE:**

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 20. Ms. Melissa Richardson presented for consideration a letter of support seeking information and guidance on the new tax portal for the Registry of Deeds. The portal is being implemented in October 2024 and there has been little, to no communication on how this change will be implemented and no training has been provided to the Registry staff.

**MOTION:**

Motion by Paul Underwood, seconded by William Dobbins to approve a letter of support to Maine Revenue Services regarding the need for communication and training surrounding the implementation of the new tax portal in October 2024.

**VOTE:**

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 21. Sheriff Peter Johnson presented an update on the Stranton Foundation Grant. A new K-9 has been received and has been assigned to Deputy Adam Bouchard.

No motion necessary.

ART. 22. See Article 6 (D).

ART. 23. Sheriff Peter Johnson presented for consideration the hiring of Devin Orr as full-time Corrections Officer.

**MOTION:**

Motion by William Dobbins, seconded by Paul Underwood to approve the hiring of Devin Orr as full-time Corrections Officer.

**VOTE:**

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 24. Sheriff Peter Johnson presented for consideration the following Dispatch contracts:

- A) Bridgewater
- B) Central Aroostook Ambulance Service
- C) Frenchville
- D) Grand Isle
- E) Limestone
- F) Mars Hill
- G) Southern Aroostook EMS
- H) Sinclair/Cross Lake
- I) Van Buren

**MOTION:**

Motion by William Dobbins, seconded by Paul Underwood to approve the Dispatch contracts as noted.

**VOTE:**

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 25. County Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Fournier provided an update on MCCA/Risk Pool. Insurance renewal was higher than expected with increases of 11-20% across the Counties. Increases were mostly due to the increase in property values as many counties used ARPA funding to improve their infrastructure. The nature of claims has varied and claims were up last month. \$147,000 has been set aside for claims.

Legislatively, the Governor has proposed \$4 million funding for County jails. Most of the funds are earmarked for MAT (Medicated Assisted Treatment) and it is one time funding. The goal is to get the state to fund 20% of County jail operations. Changes in

Rural patrol have also being proposed to ensure that there are Troopers that can respond to rural areas in a timely manner and coverage is available.

ART. 26. Other Business

Mr. Paul Bernier presented for consideration the subsidy request from the Town of Ashland for library services for Oxbow North and ambulance services for Oxbow North, Scopan and various other townships.

**MOTION:**

Motion by Paul Underwood, seconded by William Dobbins to approve the subsidy request from the Town of Ashland for library services for Oxbow North and ambulance services for Oxbow North, Scopan and various other townships.

**VOTE:**

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 27. At 3:13 pm, the following motion was made by Paul Underwood and seconded by William Dobbins:

"I move that we enter Executive Session, pursuant to Title 1 MRSA 405(6)(A) to 1) begin review and discussion of the County Administrator's employment agreement; and 2) to consider the Elected Officials salary structure options for Probate Judge salary.

Upon return from Executive Session at 3:44 pm, the follow motion was made:

**MOTION:**

Motion by William Dobbins, seconded by Paul Underwood to establish and adopt Option 1 for the Judge of Probate salary scale, and to have the new Judge of Probate begin at Step 7 on the new scale.

**VOTE:**

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 28 Adjournment

**MOTION:**

A motion was made by William Dobbins, seconded by Paul Underwood to adjourn the meeting at 3:46 pm.

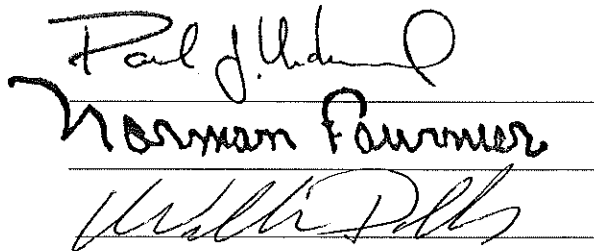
**VOTE:**

Motion voted on and passed.

ATTEST: A True Copy  
of Commissioners' Meeting



Ryan D. Pelletier  
County Administrator



AROOSTOOK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
DATE: March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024