

MINUTES

AROOSTOOK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING – OCTOBER 18, 2023– 1:00 P.M. –SINCLAIR SENIOR CENTER – SINCLAIR

Present:

Paul J. Underwood, County Commissioner
Norman L. Fournier, County Commissioner
William T. Dobbins, County Commissioner
Ryan D. Pelletier, County Administrator
Paul Bernier, Community Services Director
Bryan Jandreau, Facilities and IT Director
Steve Pelletier, ARPA Program Administrator
Dana Gendreau, Finance Director
Darren Woods, EMA Director
Derrick Ouellette, Deputy Director EMA
Peter Johnson, County Sheriff
Erica Pelletier, Deputy
Jason Parent, ACAP Executive Director/CEO
Sherry Locke, ACAP Chief Administrative Officer
Various residents of Sinclair (see sign in sheet)

Before the meeting took place at 1:00 p.m. the Sinclair Sanitary District Trustees election was held. County Administrator Ryan Pelletier read the Warrant and entertained a motion to elect a moderator.

A motion was made by Marin Dionne to nominate Norman Fournier as Moderator. The motion was seconded by Raymond Thibodeau. There were no other nominations. Vote was unanimous. Mr. Pelletier administered the Moderator's Oath of Office to Mr. Fournier.

Moderator Fournier explained the rules and procedures for today's election. He explained, three (3) trustees were to be elected. Two for a three-year term and one for a one-year term and that the three (3) year terms would be elected first, then the one (1) year term. Commissioner Fournier opened the floor for nominations.

Raymond Thibodeau nominated Tina Pratico for the first three-year position. The motion was seconded by Martin Dionne. No other nominations were received. The vote was unanimous.

Mike Pratico nominated Diane Berube for the second three-year position. The motion was seconded by Alan Dearborn. No other nominations were received. The vote was unanimous.

Mike Pratico nominated Michael San Antonio for the one-year position. The motion was seconded by Martin Dionne. No other nominations were received. The vote was unanimous.

Having no other business, Moderator Fournier declared the election closed at 1:09 pm.

Commissioner Paul Underwood invited Jason Parent, ACAP, to provide a special presentation to Commissioner Norman Fournier. ACAP will be naming their new housing building after Commissioner Fournier in recognition of his long career with ACAP that began in the early 1970's. The building located at 1 Edgemont Drive, Presque Isle will be named Norman L. Fournier Place. It is going through renovations and a ceremony is expected to take place on February 29th, 2024 to formally open the housing complex. A rendering of the building with the proposed signage was displayed.

ART. 3. Darren Woods, EMA Director, advised all attendees that there were free bottles of hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes available to anyone who would like to take them. These were excess supplies.

ART. 4. Mr. Ryan Pelletier requested an addition to Article 15 to include A) To consider the hiring recommendation of Meaghan Flynn as Victim Witness Advocate in Caribou.

MOTION:

Motion by William Dobbins and seconded by Norman Fournier to approve the agenda as amended.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 5. Chair Paul Underwood entertained a motion for approval of the September 20, 2023 County Commissioners' meeting minutes.

MOTION:

Motion by William Dobbins and seconded by Norman Fournier to approve the minutes of the September 20, 2023 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.

ART. 7. Jason Parent, ACAP, presented an update on the success of last year and projects that are upcoming for the new year. Last year they saw great success with the warming center, ARPA grant projects for a new Navigator role to assist the community with resources to meet their needs, Power Match program to help prevent power disconnections, increasing access to child care with recent daycare closures, jail programs to help those re-entering the workforce, energy assistance is going back to pre-pandemic levels so there will be less funding available, using weatherization program to help 60 homes so far and installed heat pumps in 90 homes all to help with heating costs, school programs focusing on prevention of tobacco/substance use. In the upcoming year, there will be a Mobile Service Unit that will be able to reach additional community members to provide assistance, diaper grant will help with costs of diapers for families, and there will also be a Comprehensive Community Assessment done statewide in 2024 which will also include all of Maine's hospitals. Mr. Parent presented for consideration the nominees for the 2024 ACAP Board.

MOTION:

A motion was made by Norman Fournier and seconded by William Dobbins to accept the ACAP Board nominees as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 8. Mr. Ryan Pelletier presented for consideration the 2024 County Commissioner meeting schedule.

Motion:

A motion was made by William Dobbins and seconded by Norman Fournier to approve the 2024 meeting schedule.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 9 Mr. Ryan Pelletier presented an update on the Jail Commission. The process is taking more time than initially expected. The next step includes a series of Zoom meetings with the representatives from Practical Solutions for them to work on a complete Jail and Justice System Assessment. The first meeting will take place this year, a second meeting will take place in early 2024. The representatives expect to be on site in Spring 2024. They will do a complete assessment of the entire system to include judges, district attorneys, police, etc. to determine where the bottlenecks are and what is causing the overcrowded system. After this, the next step would be hiring a consultant.

No motion necessary.

ART. 10. Mr. Bryan Jandreau presented for consideration a request for contingency funds (\$16,679.73) to help pay for the failing condensate tank at the Caribou Courthouse.

MOTION:

A motion was made by Norman Fournier and seconded by William Dobbins to approve the requested Contingency funds in the amount of \$16,679.73.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

ART. 11. Mrs. Dana Gendreau presented for consideration a request to increase the aggregate credit limit to \$125,000.

MOTION:

A motion was made by Commissioner Norman Fournier to allow the County of Aroostook to establish a corporate credit card from Katahdin Trust Company in the master limit amount of \$125,000 to be used for working capital. Also, this motion gives County Administrator, Ryan Pelletier, permission to sign any required documents on behalf of the county. Commissioner William Dobbins, seconded the motion.

VOTE:

So voted. All in favor.

ART. 12. Mr. Paul Bernier presented for consideration the solid waste contract for Benedicta and Silver Ridge with the town of Sherman for FY 24 (7/1/2023-6/30/2024).

MOTION:

A motion was made by William Dobbins and seconded by Norman Fournier to approve the contract.

VOTE:

Motion voted and passed.

ART. 13. Sheriff Peter Johnson presented for consideration the hiring recommendation of Erica Pelletier as Patrol Commander.

MOTION:

A motion was made by Norman Fournier and seconded by William Dobbins to approve the hiring recommendation of Erica Pelletier as Patrol Commander.

VOTE:

Motions voted on and passed.

ART. 14. Sheriff Peter Johnson presented for consideration the recommissions of Aaron Neureuther, Michael Gahagan, and Jesse Belanger.

MOTION:

A motion was made by William Dobbins and seconded by Norman Fournier to approve the recommissions.

VOTE:

Motions voted on and passed.

ART. 15. Mr. Ryan Pelletier presented on behalf of Todd Collins, District Attorney, the hiring recommendation of John Verno as Office Support Supervisor in Caribou.

MOTION:

A motion was made by William Dobbins and seconded Norman Fournier to approve the hiring recommendation.

VOTE:

Motions voted on and passed.

A) Mr. Ryan Pelletier presented on behalf of Todd Collins, District Attorney, the hiring recommendation of Meaghan Flynn as Victim Witness Advocate in Caribou.

MOTION:

A motion was made by William Dobbins and Norman Fournier to approve the hiring recommendation.

VOTE:

Motions voted on and passed

ART. 16. County Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Fournier provided an update on the MCCA Risk Pool with 16 new open cases last month and 10 closed. \$144,000 has been set aside for the claims for defense, settlements, etc. The MCCA Convention was held at Poland Springs with 125 attendees. Great feedback on the educational sessions that were provided.

Met with Governor's office 2 weeks ago in efforts to secure additional funding for county jails. Providing the office with as much detail and back up information as possible to support the funding requests. Jail funding was flat funded last year while costs only increased for running jails, including pay rates, medical costs, food costs, etc. We are hoping for additional funding to be included in the special session.

Rural patrol is another area that is being worked on as there are 58 open State Police positions which reduces their ability to patrol rural communities. Local Police stations are also disbanding in some areas which puts the burden of coverage directly to the counties. State Police gets funding for rural patrol and if they are not able to due to staffing then the counties takes on the duty, and the funds should be allocated to the counties.

No motion necessary.


ART. 17. No other business.


ART. 18. Adjournment.

A motion was made by William Dobbins and seconded by Norman Fournier to adjourn the meeting at 2:03 p.m. Motion voted and passed.

ATTEST: A True Copy
of Commissioners' Meeting

Ryan D. Pelletier
County Administrator



Norman Fournier


AROOSTOOK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DATE: November 15, 2023