

Penobscot County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes January 28, 2020 2271
9:00 AM Commissioners Peter Baldacci, Andre Cushing & Laura Sanborn 30°

Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to approve modifying the agenda so that after public comment there can be a discussion on refugee resettlement. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Motion approved 3-0.

Approval of Minutes -

Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to approve January 14, 2020 Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

Public Comment –

Sarah Novak, resident of Hampden supports refugee resettlement. She believes we have a good county – we are a good State. She does not want to live in a state that see's people for who we are. No matter who we are, or what we are, we are all part of the melting pot. Anyone seeking help, as Mainers we should be helped.

Dennis Chinoy, resident of Bangor stated that he is involved with an organization that assists Bangor with a Salvadoran rural community of largely subsistence farmers. Dennis has personally gotten to know people and their stories of why and how they arrived. Their stories are painfully difficult to hear as to why they chose to flee their countries to seek refuge in the United States. Mr. Chinoy is requesting that you, our Commissioners, take this opportunity to make a proactive and positive statement to affirm that we are a county that welcomes the Stranger. It is an opportunity that would make us a better and stronger community.

Commissioner Baldacci stated "We as a County should be welcoming to refugees seeking resettlement. Catholic Charities initially informed us that there were no immediate plans for resettlement, but have since indicated that there would be great value in having our county send a positive message on this issue."

Julie Grab, a retired teacher who taught English as a second language in the Bangor School Department. She is a resident of Old Town. Julie saw during her tenure as an educator, the determination and work of these immigrants seeking the American dream speaks volumes of their work ethic. Leadership in our community means taking responsibility. She would like a strong statement supporting people that are here that have faced hopeless conditions. Julie spoke of previous students that she met up with later who have succeeded by becoming an engineer and a physician's assistant and have come back to Maine in order to give back.

Public Comment – Continued:

Donna Gilbert, a citizen of Winterport and was a Bangor employee for quite some time. She has met people that have come to our area and wants them in our community. Their values of family, faith, community and hard work is who they are. They are not here for a hand out. They are here to work and raise their families.

Pamela Proulx-Curry, a resident of Old Town and is on the Board of the Multi-Cultural Center. The Multi-Cultural Center was formed a couple years ago in response to what we saw a need for workers in the community. Pamela's request is for a public statement of support.

Marwa Hassanien, a resident of Bangor who spoke last week of her own family's story. Marwa would like to clarify that she is not a spokesperson of Catholic Charity Maine, but friends with the Director. Marwa read a letter from MMA Director Hannah DeAngelis. **(See attached)**

Angela Okafor – Bangor City Councilor wanted to expand on her statement of last week. She and her husband came to America on work visas. Her husband currently owns two pharmacies. They have three children. Councilor Okafor is a lawyer that is licensed in New York, but not yet in Maine. Angela is requesting that we vote now and not wait for an executive order to keep our community open.

Lucy Quimby, a resident of Bangor, Senator Geoff Gratwick's wife and a mother of an immigrant. She states that her daughter is from Taiwan and she saw some of the racism in the community. Lucy is requesting that we take this opportunity in our community to welcome all divisions of humanity.

Gerry Gross is a resident of Bangor and retired speech pathologist. Gerry wants to reiterate that newcomers to the County and State will make us stronger. She has gotten to know some of these people and they show through their actions their commitment to each other, their community and work very hard. Gerry has seen their contributions to the community and she, too, would like to see a public statement as a welcoming community and be supportive.

Larry Dansinger, citizen of Bangor states that his father was an immigrant who came here in 1921 when he was a teenager. Today marks the 75 anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and if the United States had been open during that time, he may still have living relatives. Larry is requesting a public statement in support as well.

A Maine Business Immigration Coalition information letter was received by the Commissioners from Beth Stickney.

Commissioners Discussion –

Commissioner Sanborn states that Penobscot County's overall experience with resettlement has been positive. Those who choose to resettle here have integrated into our communities as productive workers, business owners, educators and members of the medical fields. The reality is that we do not have people lining up to get into Penobscot County. Our Commission has a huge unorganized population who are in need of folks. Commissioner Sanborn would be in support of allowing resettlement of refugees into our beautiful County of Penobscot.

Commissioner Cushing stated the he has weighed in on what he has heard over the last few days. Husson University and University of Maine, and the City of Bangor has a history of allowing people with diverse backgrounds and cultures into their Communities. Commissioner Cushing feels that each community must decide what they can absorb in supporting these people.

Commissioner Baldacci wanted to clarify that each Commissioner has their own district in which they are responsible. Each city, town and village is represented in Penobscot County. We don't have to limit the language to prevent other towns and cities to set up with this issue. The issue came to us by Representative Larry Lockman who was requesting Penobscot County to opt out. This information went out to the public and has since brought overwhelming support to dismiss Rep Lockman's request. Commissioner Baldacci feels that they have had enough information to make an educated decision on where Commissioners stand.

Treasurer John Hiatt read the following from President Ronald Reagan:

*"Through this Golden Door has come millions of men and women.
These families came here to work.
Others came to America and often harrowing conditions.
They didn't ask what this country could do for them but what they could do to make this refuge
the greatest home of freedom in history.
They brought with them courage and the values of family, work, and freedom.
Let us pledge to each other that we can make America great again."*

Commissioner Sanborn made a motion stating that Penobscot County is supportive to refugee resettlement in our County. This motion will not preempt any rights that may exist for cities and towns from making their own choice. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Motion approved 3 - 0.

Commissioners Discussion – Continued:

Administrator Bill Collins will prepare a resolution of our support of our efforts. A letter will be sent to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

Sheriff's Update –

- Chief Deputy William Birch stated that today's jail population is 177 (154 males, 23 females) with 46 boarded out to other county jails. There are no federal inmates, no county swaps and 99 inmates in Pre-Trial Services.
- Chief Birch reported that Sheriff participated in a conference call with other Sheriffs in supporting Penobscot County with extra inmate beds. Similar to our contract with Two Bridges, Sheriff's from Kennebec, Washington and Somerset Counties are working with us so that we can keep our bed count low. Currently this is an unconditional offer, so there is no acceptance as of yet.
- Chief Birch states that another round of interviews for Patrol will be held Friday for the two open positions in the Unorganized Territory.
- Last Thursday, the Court issued to us a temporary protection order. This order unbeknownst to us required us to serve and seize 217 firearms. The volume of firearms needing to be categorized, inventoried and boxed up caused our department a lot of additional man hours.
- Captain Richard Clukey had some positive news to report. The PREA Grant that was applied for last fall has been accepted. It is a two-year program of \$172K in which 50% of those monies are in-kind match for us. We will be working with stakeholders from the federal government that are experts in the field. Captain thanked Erika Honey and Judy Alexander for their hard work in putting this together. Captain thanked the Commissioners, Sheriff Morton, MEDPRO Associates, DA's Office, Administrator Bill Collins and the Rape Response Unit for their letters of support.

Vehicle Bid Approval Request –

- Lt. Keith Hotaling request seven (7) vehicles for normal bid; also Two (2) additional vehicles for the UT position and a replacement jail van. Our current van has over 250K miles on it; even though repairs have been made, it is old. Lt. Hotaling will be using the same specs as last year with exception of adding a remote less keyless entry. Lt. Hotaling was informed that if he got our bid in soon, last year's prices would be guaranteed.
- Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to approve nine (9) patrol vehicles and one (1) van to go out to bid. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Motion approved 3-0.

UT Update –

- Director Shaw Weeks presented for signature the Census 2020 Initial Boundary Validation Program with no legal boundary changes. Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to execute with no boundary change. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Motion approved 3-0. Signed.
- Deputy George Buswell reported that there still has not been a legislative meeting to approve vehicles for Patrol in the UT. George reports it probably won't be until the end of February, beginning of March that the budgets will be approved. New UT Fiscal Administrator Shayne White will come up to go over our budget.
- Shaw and George met with the Mattawamkeag – Springfield and former Kingman Fire Department members last week. There was a strong turnout. A number of issues such as turn out gear for four former Kingman firefighters, now in the Mattawamkeag department; and approval to have Reliance Equipment from Vassalboro to come and access the Kingman fire engine for a repair quote were discussed.
- Shaw is going to look further into transfer of vehicles titles, insurance, and registrations. They are currently inspected through the spring.
- Commissioner Sanborn stated she has received emails on the following: concern on the UT Mining proposal to rezone Pickett Mountain and Howland EMS possibly requesting additional funding.

PRCC Update –

- Director Chris Lavoie reported that the RFP for the Radio System has been advertised and Monday we will have the pre-conference. Chris has sent the RFP to several vendors in Maine as well as some parent companies in other states.
- Chris started writing the RFP for the Project Manager. Drafts have been sent to Bill Collins and the Radio Committee for their feedback.
- Chris discussed the Guardian Tracking Software. Chris and Josh have visited Sanford RCC and others that use this program. Chris feels it will suit us well for tracking employee performance in training. The cost is \$2,271.50. We don't have anything like this currently. Erika mentioned it may be beneficial to have a demo as to where we could employ this system in other departments. Commissioner Sanborn thought it would be beneficial to work with Lt. Hotaling and Erika to see a demo and how it would benefit the County.

IT Computer Purchase Request –

- Director Cliff Warren reported that our county computers are either coming out of warranty or have already come off. The Sheriff's Department needs to be CEGIS compliant and will need new computers. There is currently \$29,696.17 in the capital reserve account, \$32,670.40 to be requested to be carried forward from 2019 in capital reserve and \$72,370 budgeted for 2020.
- Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to approve leasing from Dell Financial for new computers and equipment. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Motion approved 3-0.

Finance Update –

- Commissioner Sanborn moved to accept the engagement letter with Chester Kearney for the 2019 year end county audit. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Motion approved 3-0. Signed.
- Finance Director Judy Alexander asked Chester Kearney what our GASB liability would be for 2019. After some discussion regarding GASB 68, Judy will get further clarification on how it might affect our undesignated fund balance, if at all.
- Judy reported that the W2's have gone out and the 1099's have been distributed. Judy is working on the 1095C's currently.
- Judy provided a preliminary year to date expenditures and revenues spreadsheets through December 31, 2019. On the expenditure side:
 - It shows \$1.2M of unexpended funds
 - Two departments were over-expended
 - Program donations were down a little
 - Soil Conservation had a big increase due to health insurance addition
- On the Revenue side:
 - Judy is now booking the monies on an accrual basis vs actual
 - The only Town that has not paid their taxes to date is Webster. Judy has spoken to them
- Judy is hopeful that within the next two weeks she will be able to get the 2020 tax commitments out.
- The balance of the capital reserve accounts as of December 31, 2019 totals \$1,873,596.54
- Administrator Bill Collins and Director Chris Lavoie reported that the vehicles that were damaged last week were employees of PRCC. Chris is requesting that some monies are expended from the Safety Committee in order for them to purchase better surveillance cameras. Chris states that the estimated car damage is approximately \$4800.

Administration Update –

- Bill Collins stated that the meeting with the City of Bangor for last night was canceled. We will be on the agenda for their next workshop in February.
- The Patrol SUV was totaled by the appraiser at (\$33,656.80)
- Rep Lockman has reached out to Bill regarding the refugee resettlement. He is requesting copies of what is being presented.
- Erika and Bill met with Sylvia Hebert regarding the General Unit Contract Unit.
- Dick Hansen has confirmed Mr. Dudley would like to come before you to report on the work progress of the Matagamon Dam Project.
- Erika and Bill met last week with Susan Caston of Workers Comp to learn more about how they our mod rate and what we can do going forward to close claims.
- Shaw Weeks is scheduled for the Marijuana Workshop with MMA next Tuesday.
- James Gallant will purchase the old SUV for the Bid Price quoted.
- Congratulations to our treasurer, John Hiatt. He has recently become engaged.
- Judy Alexander has received copies of State valuations which show an increase of approximately \$500 M.
- Thank you goes to Erika Honey for her hard work in getting the clerical position out of the Corrections Line and into FOP. This has been approved by all union representatives.
- MCCAM and MSA will be meeting on Friday with Charlie Pray with the key part of discussion being in regards to a one-time adjustment on the jail cap. This is being opposed by MMA.
- Commissioner Cushing was requesting to attend the NACo Annual Conference in late February/early March and would like the Commissioners to pay for the \$515 fee. Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve fees paid for the registration fee for the legislative session and annual conference in July. Commissioner Baldacci seconded the motion. Motion approved 3-0.
- Payroll Change Notices signed for: Francis Surdick and Matthew Bragdon – Hired Full-time; Cory Hamilton – Resignation; Taylor Keeran – Interdepartmental transfer; Duncan Kane, Tyler Cochran and David Quinn – Payroll Change.
- Payroll Warrant to be approved for: \$229,671.39
- Accounts Payable to be approved for: \$127,217.44
- Unorganized Territory Warrant to be approved for: \$282.22
- Unorganized Territory TIF Warrant to be approved for: NONE

Executive Session---Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 11:00 a.m., under 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (A) Personnel Matter. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Motion approved 3-0. Present were: Commissioners, Bill Collins, Erika Honey, Sheriff Troy Morton and Attorney Ed Bearor. Session ended at 11:38 a.m. No votes taken.

Executive Session---Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 11:39 a.m., under 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (D) Contract Matter. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Motion approved 3-0. Present were: Commissioners, Bill Collins, District Attorney Executive Secretary Kristine Higgins and Finance Judy Alexander. Session ended at 11:42 a.m. No votes taken.

Executive Session---Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 11:43 a.m., under 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (D) Contract Matter. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Motion approved 3-0. Present were: Commissioners, Bill Collins, Treasurer John Hiatt and HR Director Erika Honey. Session ended at 11:55 a.m. No votes taken.

Meeting Adjourned-

Commissioner Cushing moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:56 a.m. with no further business on the agenda. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Moved to approve passed 3-0.

Certified By:

Administrator, William Collins

Peter K. Baldacci, Chairman

Laura J. Sanborn, Commissioner

Andre E. Cushing, III, Commissioner



Most Rev. Robert P.
Deeley, J.C.D.
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January 27th, 2020

Dear Penobscot County Commissioners,

Catholic Charities Maine is Maine's only refugee resettlement agency. We believe that individuals fleeing violence and persecution have the right to safety, security, and welcome in their new communities. It is our role to support folks in their resettlement and integration in Maine.

In late September, Executive Order 1388 was issued asking refugee resettlement agencies to gain state and county level consent for refugee resettlement. Since that time, CCM has been meeting with officials across the state educating officials about the resettlement program and asking for consent for resettlement. We obtained consent from the State of Maine, Cumberland County, and the City of Portland by the end of December 2019. On January 15th, an injunction was put on EO 13888 that halted the implementation of the order.

Refugees resettled through our agency have been processed through the State Department and the UNHCR overseas and come to Maine because of family or community ties. In the last 5 years, we have resettled refugees in Cumberland, Kennebec and Androscoggin counties. **Currently CCM RIS has no plans to resettle refugees in Penobscot County.**

We do however, hear from many community members in Penobscot County about why it could make a great home for refugees in the future, and encourage the commission to consider a proactive statement of support for refugee resettlement.

CCM supports the refugee resettlement program in Maine and advocates for refugees to be welcomed into communities where they can reunify with family, have access to language and education resources, afford housing, and seek meaningful work opportunities.

Any county that would like to submit a letter stating their support for Maine's refugees would be welcomed and applauded by our agency and community.



Sincerely,

Hannah DeAngelis
Director
Refugee and Immigration Services
Catholic Charities Maine