

Penobscot County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes March 31, 2020 2278
9:03 AM Commissioners Peter Baldacci and Laura Sanborn 40°
Commissioner Andre Cushing Arrived 9:48 a.m.

Roll call was taken at 9:03 am with Commissioners Baldacci and Sanborn present via team viewer.

Approval of Minutes –

Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to approve February 18, February 25 and March 17, 2020 meeting minutes. Commissioner Baldacci seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 2-0.

Sheriff's Update –

- Sheriff Morton stated that today's jail population is 178. There are 122 in-house, 56 boarded out to other county jails, no federal inmates, no county swaps and 93 inmates in Pre-Trial Services.
- Sheriff reported that he is continuing with the six-phase process for Law Enforcement, Corrections and Civil departments addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.
- We utilize best practices given by the DOC and CDC with daily conference calls.
- We continue to monitor the jails population with the use of the medical division, mental health counselors, DA's office and the Courts. Sheriff will be releasing those with serious medical concerns, without putting the public in danger.
- We promote working virtually, such as with the courts and meetings within the facility.
- Daily admissions are down to 5-6 a day with local law enforcement issuing more summons and bail at their own departments.
- Sheriff complimented his staff on how well they are adapting and responding to these safe health practices.
- The amended phone system is in place allowing for those detained to have additional time and free phone calls and video visitations.
- General calls for law enforcement service is down. We are still responding to serious calls.
- We are actively pursuing protective gowns and cleaners. We have applied through EMA and MSA to assist in locating those items. All set on the other supplies for now.

EMA Update –

- Administrator Collins provided the following update for Director Michelle LaBree for EMA:
- As of yesterday (March 30), new State guidance is for all PPE (personal protective equipment) requests go through the County EMA office. Previous guidance was to go direct to Maine CDC via District Liaison. All other requests still go through EMA.

EMA Update – Continued:

- EMA is fielding calls from local businesses, towns and first responders on PPE and general information. Various requests for alternate housing options for nursing or responders who may be exposed so they don't have to go their homes. Various hotels in the region have offered up rooms at a lower rate to the Departments/community.
- EMA is working on the storage capacity within Penobscot County for Funeral Homes and hospitals. There is a lot of discussion in Augusta on getting a refrigerated truck, however, we need to determine our need before we look at that further.
- There is an emergency declaration for this pandemic – towns have been notified and asked to submit requests for public assistance. FEMA Region 1 has staff in the State EOC helping with public assistance requests/questions.
- EMA is working with the State and area partners to include Good Shepard, Salvation Army, Maine Responds, etc. on Volunteer/Donations Management and Mass Feeding throughout our County. Concerns on identifying funding and inventory are key with bi-weekly conference calls.
- EMA is trying to provide current guidance on our website to agency partners. The system in place via CDC and MEMA has been a challenge. EMA is hopeful with the new guidance an MEMA/CDC going to a Unified Command System will make this more efficient moving forward.
- Administrator Collins reported that Deputy Brad Nuding has been working with Director Honey and has completed a draft of Continuity Government Plan for Penobscot County. We are working on final reviews.

Deeds Update –

Administrator Collins provided the following update for the Registry of Deeds from Register Susan Bulay:

- Deeds has gone to a split shift arrangement. Two staff working and two staff off, rotating daily; one team is never in direct contact with the other team. Each team cleans the office at the end of the day and then custodial comes in and cleans some more. Deeds has been accepting one/two documents a day from people who deliver to the front door, including transfer on death deeds, which must be recorded before the grantor passes. I think this arrangement is working well overall and working well for the public too.

Deeds Update – Continued:

- Work for the month of March is down about 20% as compared to last March, but the revenue is about the same. Overall, for the year, document numbers for this year are down only about 8% compared to last year but revenue is up about 15%. So, the year is looking good and I expect we will see a large volume of documents recorded from the towns once the pandemic is over.

Probate Update –

Administrator Collins provided the following update for the Probate Department from Register Renee Stupak:

- Court functions – Probate has a process in place to continue their most time sensitive, relevant cases. They are working with facility administrators, service providers and DHHS to provide as much consistency as possible. Trials that will require a significant amount of time, and in person testimony have been postponed. Those parties are encouraged to find an agreement, as well are unsure how long they will be delayed.
- Temporary amendments have been made at the State level, allowing alternative methods of service for minor and adult guardianships. This allows service to respondents to be done by mail, minimizing contact. As you already know hospitals, nursing homes, etc. do not allow any outside contact by attorneys or court appointed officers. This has been remedied with service by the facility administrator or an adult relative/friend/associate. They will then mail the service back to us. Due to most Court appointed officers not taking cases and staying home, they can now entirely complete case from home, via video and/or by phone. This has remedied the problem for now.
- Registrar Stupak is happy to say that we are still able to function with minimal delay and service to the public.

UT Update –

Administrator Collins provided the following update for the UT from Director Shaw Weeks:

- There was a letter forwarded on from EBI Consulting in regards to a project off RT 116 in Edinburg Road, Edinburg for a wireless tower. The Commissioners have until April 8th to submit any comments, pro or con, on this project.

DA's Update –

Administrator Collins provided the following update for the DA's Office from District Attorney, Marianne Lynch:

- DA Lynch reports that she is proud of the response of her support staff, Victim Witness Advocates and Detective in light of the unprecedented circumstances we are in. Deputy Devon Demarco, Office Manager Kristine Higgins in partnership with HR Director Honey were able to transition our office operations to work from home solutions. I appreciated the willingness of Kristine Higgins to begin working on planning for this eventuality earlier in February. Kristine amassed office and personal cleaning supplies, retrofitted several laptop computers and began to develop plans that not only protected our staff, but allowed for a continuation of to the residents of Penobscot County.

In these uncharted waters we were so very fortunate to have the guidance and advice of Erika Honey who helped us work through several issues related to human resources. It was a comfort to know we had someone to turn to for questions.

- Currently, we are working with a skeleton staff at the office. A support person and 2-3 attorneys are in every day. Others are completing their work remotely and our Detective has been a key person in helping to keep the work flow moving. Our advocates are completely working from home and none are coming into the office. DA Lynch is pleased to report work is getting done, staff are coordinating activities and are working as a team to make sure things are not falling through the cracks.
- This work at home strategy has given me some peace of mind knowing it helps protect the health and safety of my staff family and their loved ones.

PRCC Update –

Administrator Collins provided the following update for the PRCC from Director Chris Lavoie:

- Director Lavoie reports that starting today (March 31) three of our "non-essential" employees will be tasked to work from home. I use the term "non-essential" loosely since, without them, there would be huge gaps in our system. Director Lavoie feels that they can do their daily duties from home and lessen their exposure to COVID-19. We will hold a conference meeting every Monday while they are working remotely to ensure that tasks are being completed.

PRCC Update – Continued:

- Hank Futtner from Motorola Solutions and Mark Davis from Dirigo Wireless will be on site today to start diagnosing the issues that we have had with the radio consoles. You will be kept updated with information as it becomes available.
- Paul Miragliuolo from Central Security has ordered the equipment to upgrade the lock software, intercom unit and the camera to go by the “Hammond Street Entrance”. I have reached out to him for follow-up.
- The call volume has sort of dropped off with everything going on, but the Dispatchers and Call-Takers remain busier than ever. Daily we are receiving new information and trying to adapt to the changes that we need to. This week, there is potential for them to release a new protocol to help us handle the COVID-19 related calls. There will be more information on this by Wednesday. The staff has done an incredible job at remaining open to the daily changes. They have a very difficult job right now, but they are doing great work!

HR Update –

Director Honey discussed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act) which becomes effective April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

There are two components to this law: The Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act and Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act. The Act provides that covered employers must provide to all employees:

- Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of **paid sick-time** at two-thirds of employee’s regular rate of pay because the employee is unable to work because of bona fide need to care for an individual subject to quarantine (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or advice of a health care provider), or care for a child (under 18 years of age) whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19, Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretaries of the Treasury and Labor.

Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to approve Penobscot County paying 100% on the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act and not exclude Corrections, Patrol or PRCC employees. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0

Administration Update –

- Administrator Collins noted that our building (97 Hammond Street) is closed to the public until end of business on March 31st. He is requesting that we continue to keep this building closed until May 1st. Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to keep 97 Hammond Street closed to the public until May 1st, 2020. Commissioner Baldacci seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 2-0.
- Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve Departments to continue working remotely until May 1st. Commissioner Baldacci seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 2-0.
- Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to approve the payroll and accounts payable warrants as presented. Commissioner Baldacci seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 2-0
- Finance Director, Judy Alexander reminded the Commissioners that we will open the TAN Bids next week.
- Payroll Change Notices signed for: Constantine Orfan – Hired part-time; Jason Raymond – Promoted; Gary Albert- Resignation; Jennifer Jalbert and Gerald Carstensen – Payroll Change Notices.
- Payroll Warrant to be approved for paydate 3/20/20: \$ 235,464.10
- Payroll Warrant to be approved for paydate 3/27/20: \$ 224,757.02
- Accounts Payable to be approved for paydate 3/24/20: \$ 116,382.11
- Accounts Payable to be approved for paydate 3/31/20: \$ 197,496.13
- Accounts Payable to be approved for paydate 4/1/20: \$ 332,996.53
- Unorganized Territory Warrant to be approved for paydate 3/31/20: \$ 52,306.79
- Unorganized Territory TIF Warrant to be approved for: NONE

Meeting Adjourned--Commissioner Cushing made a motion to close the public session of this meeting. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion at 10:02 a.m. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

Executive Session--- an Executive Session was scheduled to follow the Public Meeting but did not take place due to Technical Difficulties.

Certified By:

Administrator, William Collins

Peter K. Baldacci, Chairman

Laura J. Sanborn, Commissioner

Andre E. Cushing, III, Commissioner