

Approval of Minutes-

- Commissioner Davis made a motion to approve the March 14th minutes. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

Unorganized Territory Update-

- Department head Barbara Veilleux presented the county's animal shelter contract renewal with Bangor Humane Society. Barbara noted there was a two percent increase in this year's contract which amounted to roughly sixteen dollars. Commissioner Davis motioned to approve signing the new agreement. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0. Commissioners signed. Barbara added that we have agreements with two shelters in the county, Bangor Humane Society and Penobscot Valley Humane Society in Lincoln.
- Commissioner Davis motioned to approve a renewal of an ATV use permit for Rocky Mountain ATV club in Greenfield. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0. Barbara explained that she renews the permit annually unless there are problems brought to her attention.
- Barbara and George Buswell have continued to update the 911 addresses for all of Unorganized Territories in the county. Mattamiscontis Township is completed and they spent yesterday in Kingman compiling addresses to re-enter into the state system. Barbara noted there were some addresses they will have to retrieve when the roads are more accessible in the spring.
- George commented that the roads in the northern portion of the county are in worse condition than in past years. He added that they have repaired the worst areas.

Sheriff's Department Update-

- Sheriff Troy Morton provided the current population of the jail: 200 total, 164 males, 36 females, 1 from the U.S. Marshalls, and 54 out on pre-trial services. Troy estimated there were around 40 inmates being boarded out to other counties, 20 of which at Cumberland.
- Sheriff stated the Aroostook County Commissioners were very appreciative of the transport van that our county donated to them.
- Sheriff Morton has requested that the department promote three part time correction officers to full time. He noted this will alleviate most of the scheduling holes and overtime burdens the jail has been facing. Approved.
- Former Skowhegan Chief of Police and Millinocket Don Bolduc has been hired by our department to fill the deputy patrol position in the northern zone of the county. The

Sheriff's Department Update Continued-

Sheriff has received many compliments on hiring Bolduc and looks forward to him starting this week for the county.

- Troy reminded the Commissioners that he and MSA officially opposed LD 516 presented by Cumberland County. The bill would require local municipalities to pay a surcharge of \$50, and then \$27/day to house offenders at the county jails. While he understands Cumberland's reasons, he feels that since towns already pay a county tax there shouldn't be an additional financial burden placed on local communities. Troy complemented local law enforcement for mostly summoning low risk – low violent offenses instead of making arrests. He feels the heart of the problem is when the court systems place warrants out for low risk – low violence crimes which then force officers to make arrests. His hope is to have more conversations with the courts to help address these concerns.

Administrative Update-

- Administrator Bill Collins informed the Commissioners he will be meeting this morning with Governor LePage to discuss the need for supplemental funding for Maine County Jails. Due to time constraints he will present his administrative updates at a later time.

Executive Session- Commissioner Davis made a request to go into Executive Session to discuss a legal matter at 9:15 am under 1 MRSA §405 (6) (E). Commissioner Sanborn seconded the request. Vote to approve passed 3-0. The Commissioners, Administrator Bill Collins, Treasurer Dan Tremble and attorney Erik Stumpfel attended. Executive Session ended at 9:35 with no votes taken.

Public Hearing – On the County to acquire Real Estate, Land & Buildings at 127 Hammond Street by Eminent Domain. Property Identified as Map 41 Lot 20 City of Bangor-

- Commissioner Baldacci opened the public hearing on the County acquiring the 127 Hammond St. property by Eminent Domain. Commissioner Baldacci introduced Sheriff Troy Morton to begin the hearing and provide background information on the property.
- **Sheriff Morton-** Sheriff Morton began by describing the current population crisis that our county jail is facing. Due to a growing number of inmates the county was forced to renovate the current jail in 1987-88. Our jail is currently rated to house 157 inmates, but consistently houses 200. The overabundance of inmates has naturally caused major safety issues and exorbitant costs as a result.

Public Hearing Continued -

- Sheriff Morton explained in early 2016 he presented the Commissioners with four possible resolutions to address housing and cost concerns. First would be to build a new jail facility which would cost the county's tax payers \$50-60 million. Second, renovate any current county owned property to enable additional housing. Third, purchase nearby properties that can be used as an extension of our current jail. Last, board out as many inmates as we can to other county jails to the state rated capacity of 157. Troy stated it would cost the county roughly \$1.4 million in fees to board that many inmates over the course of a year.

The Sheriff then listed the challenges and causes of the jail over-crowdedness. He noted seventy percent of our inmates are pre-trial. He would love to see the courts expedite the hearing and sentencings. Increased numbers of mental health and substance abuse inmates, failure to fund from the state, serious crimes, an aging facility, the growing female inmate population, and the increase of crime create challenges for our jail.

Sheriff Morton then stated the many ways the county has looked to find solutions to this overcrowding. We identify low risk – no risk pre-trial inmates and move into pre-trial programs. The jail utilizes inmate work programs to reduce the lengths of their sentences. The Sheriff has been diligent working with the District Attorney's Office and other state facilities to communicate the amount of time pre-trial inmates are forced to spend in our jail. The Sheriff's Department formed a Jail Diversion Coalition which partners with local organizations. The Coalition is aimed at providing services to house inmates safely in rehab and safety programs versus being detained in jail.

The Sherriff explained that the department and county has been diligent in seeking out help form local and state legislators. The goal is to create policy and legislative change which would then lessen some of the facility's burdens. The Sheriff and Commissioners have also thoroughly explored the cost of building and expanding the jail's campus.

The Sheriff concluded that our jail is the only facility in the state that offers the Vivitrol Substance Abuse Program. He added that our county jail is the only one in the state that takes part in the Stepping Up initiative. The initiative helps deflect inmates with mental illnesses from incarceration and places them in a treatment program that can better address their needs. The Sheriff finished with noting that despite all of these efforts today's jail count is 200, with 40 boarded out at other counties at our expense, and 56 more in pre-trial services. There are near 300 inmates the Sheriff is responsible for while operating a facility rated at 157. The Sheriff asked the Commissioners to

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consider purchasing property in the nearby area to address our inmate housing needs.

Commissioner Baldacci then opened up the floor for anyone wishing to speak in favor of the county obtaining the 127 Hammond Street property.

- **Pat Kimball – Hermon Maine, Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor-**

Ms. Kimball began by praising how far the county jail has come with its treatment of inmates with mental health and substance abuse problems. She believes the biggest hindrance of treatment services is that our current jail is running out of room with no current options to expand. She feels that location and the ability to share staff and building resources is a fundamental part of an effective treatment service. She noted that while the building's current tenant City Reach Church is a wonderful program, from a fiscal, administrative, and inmate service viewpoint this building would be best suited as an expanded campus for the county's jail.

- **Jenna Mehnert – Executive Director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness**

Ms. Mehnert stated she began working with this county jail in 2013. Former County Sheriff Glenn Ross asked her to look at NAMI providing services for our mentally ill inmates. The mission of NAMI is to ensure that mentally ill inmates who shouldn't be incarcerated are not, and those who should be incarcerated receive proper treatment. Jenna explained she has been working with our jail in carrying out the Stepping Up initiative. Stepping Up is an initiative brought forth from the National Council and State Governments, The American Psychiatric Association Foundation, and other national partners that looks at diverting low risk - no risk mentally ill inmates from serving time in jails where they are unable to receive the best treatments. She noted that Penobscot County Jail is the only jail in the state to sign the initiative's pledge. She stated that while Sheriff Morton has made a serious commitment to the program, it is very difficult for the treatment to be successful in an over-crowded atmosphere.

- **Wally Fraser – Hampden Maine, Licensed Professional Counselor-**

Mr. Fraser began by stating he works in many facets with the jail through NAMI, the Stepping Up Initiative, the Jail Diversion Coalition, and works with the community on ways to help the jail's population crisis. One of his biggest concerns is the substantial financial burden on the county's taxpayers from meeting staffing needs and paying to

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board out such a large number of overflow inmates. Thus because of 127 Hammond Street's close by proximity and ease of flow of staff and inmates, he is in full support of this acquisition.

- **Angel Shaw – Employee of Rape Response Services-**

Ms. Shaw works with our county jail's inmates in providing educational support groups and an individual contact on the matter of sexual assault. As of December 31st, 2016 over 300 females had attended the service's groups. The goal is not only to provide service for inmates but to help prevent them from returning to jail. The biggest current restraint is the lack of space for programs or to be able to even have private one to one conversations with individuals. She feels if the county can expand its jail's campus, it would create an opportunity to provide more services and more private sessions to help treat and prevent inmates from returning to jail.

- **Andrew Davis – Case Manager at the Penobscot County Jail-**

Mr. Davis' job is to work with prisoners on a one to one basis and help them plan for their respective jail release dates. He partners with many substance abuse and faith based programs to help ensure that inmates won't return to jail after they are released. Andrew is in favor of the property acquisition due that he is often forced to have private conversations in the middle of jail hallways because of space restraints. He noted there are so many organization vying to help treat inmates that it makes it difficult to even schedule a room to hold a meeting session.

- **Don Lynch – Bangor Maine – Assistant Director of Families and Children Together, and works with Penquis Regional Linking Project-**

Mr. Lynch explained he has worked with the jail via the Penquis Regional Linking Project to provide support for inmates dealing with substance abuse. Don's goal was to set up large parenting classes at the jail, however due to space and logistics restraints the classes never materialized. Don would love to see the jail expand to be able to hold larger gatherings for treatment organizations.

Public Hearing Continued –

- **Gretchen Ziemer – Charleston Maine, Criminal Justice Coordinator for Health Equity Alliance-**

Ms. Ziemer spoke to the Commissioners in a recent meeting about a program she is beginning in the Bangor area named LEAD. LEAD offers trauma-informed case management and attempts to provide individuals to achieve behavioral change, access support services, have access to safe housing, and/or receive drug treatment. While this program aims at treating inmates outside of jail, Gretchen explained she has a lot of experience working inside of our county's facility. She feels the jail is very overcrowded and provides little to no space to speak with people privately. A campus expansion would provide many organizations opportunities to provide and expand their services.

- **Holly Billings – Clinical Social Worker for Acadia Hospital at Penobscot County Jail-**

Ms. Billings shares many of the same sentiments of confidentiality and space restraints that have been echoed previously in the meeting. In addition she is very concerned for the safety of inmates and staff due to the crowding situation. She described that where the county has been boarding out a large number inmates, many of them have their treatments discontinued due to the move. She hopes that the jail will expand and house those boards on campus creating the opportunity to consistently treat and carry out programs until completion.

Comments in Opposition of the County Obtaining the 127 Hammond Street Property-

Commissioner Baldacci then opened up the floor for anyone wishing to speak in opposition of the county obtaining the 127 Hammond Street property.

- **Reverend Bobby Bledsoe – Pastor/CEO of City Reach Church and Recovery Programs-**

Pastor Bledsoe began by complimenting the Sheriff and the services the jail has been providing for inmates. He explained he had a background with substance abuse but through faith and church was delivered from those addictions. In wanting to change other people's lives, his family decided to start a City Reach Church in the city of Bangor. Their goal is to serve, love, and minister to people who are dealing with life's problems. Many of the people treated by the church are now tax paying citizens with jobs. He added that all of the church's outreach and treatment programs are member funded and the church uses no tax payer dollars. Bledsoe wanted to be clear that the church

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vehemently opposes the county taking the building by eminent domain. The Reverend noted that the church had placed bids and wasn't done bidding for the property when the county began expressing interest in obtaining the property through eminent domain. He expressed it now feels as if the county is using eminent domain to ensure they get what they want by unfair means. He concluded that the church wishes to respectfully oppose the acquisition, and worries that if the county acquires the property it will tarnish the Commissioners' standing.

- **Alfred Defao – a Director for City Reach Church Bangor-**

Mr. Defao explained that less than two years ago he nearly overdosed on heroin. He then completed City Reach's drug program and has recovered from opiate addiction. He feels traditional medication that is given in jails do not address the 'life problems' that lead to substance abuse. Programs like City Reach aim to directly minister to people's problems, which in turn help curb their substance addiction. Alfred expressed the church's desire to remain in the city and in their current building. The fear is this property acquisition will force them to move somewhere in Bangor's outskirts.

- **Jermel McWhorter – Associate Pastor of City Reach Bangor-**

Pastor McWhorter explained nearly a year ago he was homeless in Bangor and struggling with poor decisions. He found the City Reach Church, attended their program, and it changed his life. The program has helped him and many other people uphold their sobriety.

- **Kevin McGuire – Bangor Maine, Public Relations City Reach Bangor-**

Mr. McGuire noted he used to be a prisoner in the county's jail. He explained that upon release society told him he was mentally ill and that he should go on social security and medication for the rest of his life. Pastor Bledsoe directed him to City Reach's treatment program. Now after completing the program, he is free from his mental illnesses and has become a taxpaying, working citizen. He adds there are over sixty lost and needy people that attend weekly meetings. He feels it would be foolish for the county to take City Reach out of their current building.

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- **Kelsey Young – Bangor Maine, City Reach Church Member-**

Ms. Young states that she suffers from mental illness and just recently finished City Reach's nine month treatment program. Kelsey described that she has spent time in mental hospitals throughout the State but it was at City Reach where she first felt like she was loved. She feels City Reach's building is a beacon of light for the city's citizens struggling with mental illness or addictions. Kelsey noted that people are familiar with the building and hopes the location won't be forced to move.

- **Ali McLaughlin – Bangor Maine, Home Director of City Reach Church-**

Ms. McLaughlin described how she had been in an abusive relationship, was addicted to drugs, and often considered suicide. She eventually reached out to City Reach Church and lived in the women's home at the church. City Reach was a building of hope that helped change her life. She does not want see City Reach move. This would disrupt the service and familiarity of location of the many citizens that utilize its' services. Ali hopes the county would consider choosing another building in the city to expand its' campus.

- **Robin McLaughlin – Medway Maine-**

Ms. McLaughlin began by asking the Commissions why they have chosen this building and why now. She inquired why the Commissioners did not reach out and purchase the building when it was vacant many years ago. She is disappointed that the county has chosen to pursue the building when it is currently serving as a positive services for our community. She felt the church was moving in a direction to eventually purchase the building from Dr. Buxton (the deceased owner of the building, whose estate is in charge of the property now). She echoed that the county could purchase many other buildings in the city to fulfill the same purpose thus it is sad they would take over an established service.

Commissioner Baldacci responded that this hearing was held to gather information from the public, and not meant for the Commissioners to voice their opinions.

- **Josh Allen – City Reach Church Member-**

Mr. Allen stated he been in prison for ten years of his life, two of which at Penobscot County Jail. He just has finished his first month in the City Reach Church's treatment

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program. Josh explained that he had previously received counseling, attended rehab, and had been prescribed medication for his problems. However, after attending City Reach's program he is the happiest he's ever been. He feels that his life is changed, and he will never spend time in jail again.

• **Rick McLaughlin – Penobscot County Citizen, City Reach Church Member-**

Mr. McLaughlin stated his strong belief in this program and has witnessed the great success of people freeing themselves from addictions and mental issues. Where the building use to serve as a YMCA for years, he feels it would be best served as a home to City Reach Church and its' treatment services. He complemented the church for being self-sustaining and using no state funding. While he agrees that the county needs to expand, moving the church would cause a significant negative effect on the city's community.

• **Elaine Pelletier – City Reach Church Member-**

Ms. Pelletier communicated that City Reach has helped over six hundred people in their programs. Elaine explained that the Church serves as housing and a preventative service to keep many of the city's local citizens from being sentenced or re-sentenced to jail. Thus by displacing the Church, the county would be directly worsening their current jail crisis. She hopes that the Commissioners would keep in mind the costs associated with holding more treatment centers in the proposed expanded jail. She added that the Commissioners should weigh those cost with moving an established service that is already helping prevent citizens from serving jail time.

• **Jennifer DeGross – Bangor Maine-**

Ms. DeGross stated she would like to see the Commissioners continue to press the courts and DA offices on expediting pre-trial cases and other means to lessen the jail population. Her hope is that if the Commissioners still feel the jail needs expansion, they would choose an already vacated building as to not disrupt a positively impacting community organization.

• **Travis Klein – City Reach Church Program Member-**

Mr. Klein explained he has been in and out of jails since he was sixteen years old. In his experience there are no medications or drugs that can change a person the way City

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Reach Church has changed his life. He hopes the Commissioners mindfully consider the impact that the building has on the community before they make a decision.

- **Michael Vermette –City Reach Church Member-**

Mr. Vermette explained that he has been around drugs all of his life. He has never seen a church that goes out and rehabilitates the needy like City Church does. Michael has witnessed many individuals turn their lives around and become responsible citizens under the Church's care. He hopes the Commissioners can maintain the partnership of the Church and Jail working side by side to help curb the problems of individuals in our community.

- **Daniel DeGross – Twin City Baptist Church Member-**

Mr. DeGross began by stating that it is a social issue that our society fosters and accepts individuals having substance addictions. He feels the county should provide more services to focus on reaching kids before they turn to drugs or become prisoners. He feels expanding within the current city limits is a bad idea and that the County should lobby the current court system to keep less violent inmates out of jail.

Comments from those that have a Neutral Position of the County Obtaining the 127 Hammond Street Property-

Commissioner Baldacci then opened up the floor for anyone wishing to speak that has a neutral position of the county obtaining the 127 Hammond Street property.

- **No Comments**

Commissioner Davis motioned to close the public hearing. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to close the hearing passed 3-0.

Commissioner Baldacci then thanked everyone who spoke on the topic. He informed the crowd that the Commissioners will now thoughtfully consider all points presented and hope to make decision in the public's best interest in the near future.

Administrative Update Continued-

- Payroll Warrant to be approved for \$ 210,996.52
- Accounts Payable Warrant to be approved for \$ 236,727.76
- Unorganized Territory Warrant to be approved for: 64,294.25
- Payroll change notice signed for: Holly Eastman, Laura Craig, and Ann Dunkerley – Hired Full Time.
Shelley Carver, Heather Crouse, Jody Currier-Smith, Jessica Guy, Sheila Leavitt, Jeanne Orcutt, Janey Ross, Craig Johnston, Patricia Tracy, Daniel Valcourt, Scott Worster, Dianne Caine, Lise Hamel, Deborah Knapp, Melissa Boyle, Michael Osterby, Deborah Shott, Amy Polyot, Stephen Boyd, James Ellis, Dianne Estey, Ray Goodspeed, William Haefele, Cody Haverly-Johndro, Mary Anne Hesseltine, Kari Kurth, Mark Lloyd, Stephen Marko, Jason Matheson, Patricia McLaughlin, Claudia Ricker, Steven Saucier, Peter Stone, Edward Toulouse, Christopher Watson, Donna Fish, Brian Kinley, Jessica Marsh, Kenneth Spaulding, John Mayhew, John Fiske, Michael Kennedy.
- Compensation notice signed for: None

Additional Public Comment-- None.

Meeting Adjourned- The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 am with no further business on the agenda.

Certified By:

/s/
Peter K. Baldacci, Chairman

/s/
Laura J. Sanborn, Commissioner

/s/
Thomas J. Davis, Jr., Commissioner

/s/
Penobscot County Administrator
William Collins