

Approval of Minutes-

- Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to approve the February 28th minutes. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 2-0. Commissioner Baldacci abstained from voting since he was absent for this meeting.

Unorganized Territory Update-

- Barbara Veilleux reported that a Mattawamkeag ambulance went off the road on a call to Carnation Ct. in Prentiss Twp. this past week. A towing service unsuccessfully attempted to free the ambulance which then lead to the Springfield & Lee Fire Departments responding. The Lee Fire Department was able to free the vehicle and has presented a \$173 bill to the county for reimbursement. The Commissioners asked Barbara to thank Lee for their efforts. Commissioner Sanborn motioned to approve payment to Lee upon receipt of the bill. Commissioner Davis seconded. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- Barbara informed the Commissioners that she will be attending training on a new fire reporting software (MEFIRS) this coming week. Barbara currently enters all of the fire department reports for Kingman into the current state software that is being updated.
- All UT roads have been posted for heavy loads.
- Bill noted that county attorney Ed Bearor will be mailing out an amended agreement between the Municipal Review Committee and Penobscot Energy Recovery Company this week. Ed is comfortable that previous concerns noted have been addressed. He does still want the Commissioners to include the addendum agreement to be signed.

Probate Office Update-

- Registrar Renee Stupak notified the Commissioners that she will be testifying in front of the senate judicial committee in regards to bill LD 365. LD 365 is a bill that focuses on eliminating any language that reads "biological parent" to "parent" in regards to criminal background checks requirements in the adoptive process. Renee stated she was in favor of the bill and was hopeful that it would pass. The Commissioners support Renee's position on this bill.

PRCC Update-

Administrator Bill Collins spoke on behalf of department head Chad LaBree who was unable to attend the meeting. Chad has spoken to Maintenance Supervisor Cap Ayer and Terry Sullivan and they agree that the PRC is need of a new sink for sanitary and custodial purposes. They will get some cost estimates and get back to Chad.

PRCC Update Continued-

- Chad has contacted a few consultants in regards to doing the second phase of our radio upgrade as requested by the Commissioners. He hopes to have estimates by early next week.

Administrative Update –

- Bill Collins informed the Commissioners that the City of Bangor and Brewer held a joint meeting for local legislatures to attend. The purpose of the meeting was to express both cities concern over the reduction of municipal funding from the state and the increased tax burden that has been placed onto both cities. Bill stated he and Sheriff Troy Morton were invited to speak. Bill reiterated the county's desperate need of supplemental jail funding. Bill was concerned that attendees did not understand that if the county doesn't receive additional jail funding from the state, we will have no other option but to pass that increased tax burden onto local tax payer.
- Bill noted the State denied the county its supplemental jail funding request which in turn leaves the jail operating at loss for the current fiscal year of July 2016 – June 2017. Bill has spoken to Finance Director Judy Alexander for ways the county can help pay for the jail's budget shortfall. Bill noted he knows of other Maine counties that have transferred County funds to their respective jails but he is unsure of the legality of the transfer process. Commissioner Davis expressed his concern of wanting to be legal in the ways the county manages its jail funding crisis. He would like to invite the budget committee to come together to further brainstorm the issue. In light of the high number of recent board fees to other jails, Bill communicated that the initial supplemental budget request of \$470,000 could now be a conservative estimate for the jail's budget deficit. He feels that with the continued increase in our jail population it results in boarding additional inmates out to other jails. Commissioner Davis would like to see all of Penobscot county's municipalities informed of the dire financial situation that we are facing.

Sheriff's Department Update-

- Sheriff Troy Morton reported that there are 47 pre-trial and 16 probation inmates currently being housed in the jail. He noted out of the 16 probation violations, 10 were technical violations. Of the 47 pre-trial inmates, 23 are technical charges and 22 of the technical charged inmates have no option for bail. The Sheriff is very frustrated that these low risk - low level crimes and technical offenses are tying up such a large number of the jail population.

Sheriff's Department Update Continued-

He added he is also unsatisfied with the amount of time it takes for probation hearings to be scheduled, which in turn keeps inmates in jail longer.

- Sheriff then discussed that Androscoggin County has recently presented a bill that requires the state to reimburse county jails, and/or transfer an inmate to the state prison, any probation violator who has not been processed in the time frame allotted by law. The Sheriff is in support of the bill's intent but is concerned it is not worded properly. He would love to see the District Attorney's office find a way to expedite the court hearing process for probation and pre-trial violators. Sheriff explained our county's policy is that probation violators must be addressed within 45 days, but a simple court hearing satisfies this condition. On average it can take months for our county to fully process a probation violator.
- The Sheriff received an email from a state legislator from this area who asked if the Sheriff would be interested in coming down to meet with the senate president of appropriations. The purpose of the meeting would be to discuss our jail's situation in greater detail. The Sheriff would also like to communicate with our local legislators to focus on our county's predicament and not generalize our problems with other counties. The Sheriff feels that our current problem is unique. He added that our county has been diligent in cost cutting and brainstorming other revenue streams over the last few years. Commissioner Davis added that our county should keep doing what we've been doing but to put pressure on the state to see the position they have placed us in. Commissioner Sanborn commented that she is disappointed with the apparent lack of communication from legislators in Augusta.
- The Commissioners expressed their disappointment with State legislators refusing to even hear a supplemental budget request. Especially since it was not built into the Governors existing budget. Commissioner Baldacci explained that the mission now is to legislate all the supplemental budget requests into the next biennial state budget.
- Bill added that the MCCA voted against the proposed bill that would require all Maine jails to charge \$90/day per inmate for a boarding rate. The Sheriff noted that Somerset County jail recently reached out to him to renegotiate their boarding rate. They proposed a \$70/day per inmate charge versus the current rate of \$90/day. Sheriff noted that we pay Cumberland County Jail \$70/day an inmate. Also Cumberland is not nearly as strict with who they house in comparison to Somerset. Troy did add that Sheriff Lancaster of Somerset noted that his jail would no longer be as strict in accepting Penobscot inmates if we decided to board them there. Troy told Sheriff Lancaster that we would match the same terms as far medication cost that we currently have in place with Cumberland if we decide to accept Somerset's new offer.

Sheriff's Department Update Continued-

- The Sheriff asked if Judy and the Commissioners would consider offering a lump sum distribution to Somerset to see if we could contract a number of inmates at a fixed lump-sum cost. Our county attempted this contract with Cumberland in the past but they denied the offer. The Sheriff will review the new terms and offer with Somerset and report back to the Commissioners. He noted this opportunity with Somerset has possibly created a viable avenue to help lessen the jail population.
- Commissioner Baldacci asked if Sheriff Morton had contacted Susan Young of the Bangor Daily News in regards to the status of the jail's supplemental budget request. Troy responded that he will get in touch with her this week.

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program (LEAD) Presentation-

- Gretchen Ziemer, the criminal justice coordinator for Health Equity Alliance, presented to the commissioners a pilot drug rehabilitation program being set up in Bangor called LEAD. The program began in Seattle in 2011 and offers care to individuals struggling with opioid use and engaged in low-level, non-violent offenses. Gretchen explained that the LEAD program will offer 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. The program arose in the wake of the vast amounts of individuals in jail with opioid addictions and the fact that many of them become repeat offenders for the same or similar drug charges.
- Program participants will not be exempt from being arrested or receiving citations. However LEAD attempts to work extensively with law enforcement so that officers can discretionarily direct individuals to the recovery program instead of traditionally processing them through the current judicial and recovery systems.
- Gretchen noted the program has partnered with the Bangor Police Department in hopes to provide services to more than sixty people in the surrounding Bangor area this year. She explained that LEAD also plans on working hand and hand with The BARN, Higher Ground Services, Wellspring, and Narcotics Anonymous (to name a few). If successful, LEAD's goal is to then move into other Maine municipalities.
- Sheriff Morton added that both he and Gretchen attended an opioid convention yesterday in Augusta. In the wake of the present drug epidemic in our area, Sheriff praised an organization like LEAD that provides an officer with an opportunity to lead a flagged individual to a recovery program at any point of the day or night. Now officers can direct an individual to a treatment center rather than chancing a crisis from happening at a later point, or exclusively send the individual to jail where genuine recovery rarely occurs. The Commissioners and Sheriff are supportive of this program.

LEAD Presentation continued-

- Morton and the Commissioners thanked Gretchen that the program decided on Bangor for a pilot location. They all felt there is a vast need for effective drug rehabilitation programs in the area and look forward to seeing how the recovery center develops over time.

Sheriff's Department Update Continued-

- Sheriff Morton explained that he would be meeting with the Region 5 Chiefs of Police this week in regards to a potential legislative bill LD516. The bill would grant jails the opportunity to charge local municipalities fifty dollars or more for the booking of a non-violent Class D or E crime offender. The bill would hopefully encourage local law enforcement agencies to just summons low-risk / no-risk violators instead of housing them in already full jails. The Sheriff would like to meet with our local Chiefs to try and garner support from local towns for supplemental funding since the county is providing a regional booking center.
- As previously mentioned, Sheriff Morton spoke at a drug convention in Augusta yesterday. He spoke on the prevalence of drug smuggling that is attempted in our jail.
- Don Bolduc, the candidate for the open patrol position, has agreed to accept the position at the step 4 pay-scale level. Sheriff Morton asked if he could proceed with the offer. Commissioner Baldacci noted as long as the offer was consistent with the current contract that the Commissioners were ok with it. It is.
- Bill asked Troy to determine the current financial status of the jail. Once Bill receives that information he will draft an Impact Statement to present to the Criminal Justice Committee.
- The Commissioners and Sheriff had received a request from AmeriCorps to allow their recovery case workers to have access to treat prisoners in our jail. Since AmeriCorps is volunteer driven, Troy does not feel comfortable granting a significant number of people who have not been properly vetted, regular access inside the jail. He would like to see how the LEAD program progresses and reexamine AmeriCorps at a later date.
- Troy asked if the Commissioners would allow the Sheriff's Department to adopt the Maine Chiefs of Police policy on marijuana use for law enforcement officers. The policy mirrors federal law and does not allow law enforcement and corrections officers, or any employee associated with the Sheriff's department to possess marijuana. Commissioner Baldacci noted that the Commissioners would like to read over the policy before a final decision is made.
- Sheriff stated that Aroostook County Sheriff's Department has recently totaled their transport van. Our county is in possession of an older van with high mileage that was

Sheriff's Department Update Continued-

Going to go out to bid. Sheriff thought it would be a good gesture to just give the van to Aroostook County. Commissioner Davis made a motion to give the county's old van to Aroostook County for free. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

- Troy asked if the Commissioners could discuss at a later date how the county's and Sheriff's IT departments could relook at their respective asset allocations for next year's budget. Troy complemented how well the IT/Sheriff's departments worked together in resolving a recent network breach. He added it would be beneficial for both departments to sit down and discuss how to share resources more effectively going forward.

Executive Session- Commissioner Davis made a request to go into Executive Session to discuss a legal matter at 10:20 am under 1 MRSA §405 (6) (E). Commissioner Sanborn seconded the request. The Commissioners, Administrator Bill Collins, Treasurer Dan Tremble, Finance Director Judy Alexander and Sheriff Troy Morton were in attendance. Executive Session ended at 11:11 am with no votes taken.

Administrative Update Continued-

- Bill said he has been notified that the county's patrol line unit has voted to accept their labor contract. We are still waiting for Union Representative Jack Parlon to okay language changes that were modified as part of the revisions. Bill hopes this can be done at the next Commissioners' meeting.
- Stephanie Fecteau, a representative for Maine PERS, will also need the Commissioners to vote and approve the retirement plan change for the patrol contracts. The revised contract changes the retirement plan for Maine PERS patrol members from the AC to the 2 C plan. Bill explained that if approved, the plan change will take place July 1st of this year. The county's contribution rate would increase from 9.6% of employee wages to 10.1%.
- The general unit, consisting of janitors and clerical members have also reached a verbal agreement on their new contract. Bill has forwarded their revised contract to Union Rep. Sylvia Hebert, for her to review. He hopes to have that contract for the Commissioners to sign at the next meeting as well.
- Sheriff Morton asked Bill and the Commissioners if he could verify for Bangor Daily News Editor Susan Young that the estimated jail budget deficit is still at \$470,000. Bill and the Commissioners confirmed this amount.

Administrative Update Continued-

- Commissioner Baldacci asked if any of the county departments would be interested in promoting our County on Maine County Day. Bill noted that the Sheriff Office and PRCC have done this in the past. Sheriff Morton said he had already planned on doing something for the Maine Sheriffs' Association and he will commit to doing something for Penobscot County as well.
- Bill reminded the Commissioners that Rosemary Kulow, Executive Director for the MCCA, is retiring her position on March 17th. Commissioner Baldacci noted the Commissioners appreciated her service.
- County attorney Ed Bearor notified Bill that his firm will soon be sending a correspondence to the state asking them to release the proceeds from the Unorganized Territory TIF Fund.
- Bill added he would like discuss with the Commissioners at a later date forming a committee for the handling of TIF funds. Bill mentioned the Commissioners have different ideas on who should be on the committee. Hence they should give it some thought so they can discuss the matter with Barbara Veilleux at a later meeting.
- Bill presented that the Commissioners received praise from Brewer councilman Gerry Goss for their support of local recovery center BARN. BARN is holding a special luncheon this Friday and would love the Commissioners to attend.
- Bill informed that there is a new Maine Municipal Workmen's Compensation representative for our county Jennifer Gomez. Bill and Sheriff's Department Executive Vanessa Holmes met with Jennifer to go over all of the counties open worker's comp cases. Jennifer praised the county for providing as many light duty working opportunities for comp employees. She also noted that for the size of the county's workforce, the number of employees on workers comp is low compared to other counties. Treasurer Dan Tremble asked if we had two separate pay rates for light versus regular duty hours worked. Bill answered there was just one pay rate for each departments' respective positions regardless of the duties performed. Commissioner Baldacci suggested that all counties should examine the details of switching to a risk pool type coverage. He noted that several counties not only use a risk pool for liability coverage but for workers' comp as well.
- Bill notified the Commissioners that Judy has been working on the county's TAN bond. He and Judy have also been discussing shifting the Jail's fiscal year to a calendar year to coincide with the county's year end. Commissioner Baldacci would like to know what effects that would have on the jail or county's budget if we decided shift to a traditional year-end. Treasurer Dan Tremble and Judy will report back to the Commissioners at a later date.

Administrative Update Continued-

- Commissioner Davis stated that members of the MCCA would like Commissioner Baldacci to meet with Governor LePage to present the financial crisis that many of the county jails are experiencing. Commissioner Baldacci noted he would, but is still waiting for Governor LePage to get back to on a possible meeting date/time.
- Payroll Warrant to be approved for \$ 226,256.08
- Accounts Payable Warrant to be approved for \$ 108,150.82
- Unorganized Territory Warrant to be approved for: 116,933.21
- Payroll change notice signed for: Thurlow Harper – Temporary Assignment Ended, Rocco Santa Fe.
- Compensation notice signed for: Tyler Thompson - 1.125 Hours

Public Comment-- None.

Meeting Adjourned- The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 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