

**State of Maine
Androscoggin County**

**Minutes of Budget Committee
Meeting of
September 30, 2015**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Norman Beuparlant, Steve Bolduc, Shane Bouchard, Emily Darby, Guy Desjardins, Belinda Gerry, Joseph Grube, Michael Lachance, Michael Marcotte, Anthony Reny, Andrew Titus.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ralph Caldwell, Mark Lunt, Jeffrey Wakeman.

OTHERS PRESENT: County Commissioner/Chair Beth Bell, Commissioner Sally Christner, Commissioner Ronald Chicoine, Commissioner Alfreda Fournier, Commissioner Randall Greenwood, Commissioner Elaine Makas, Commissioner Matthew Roy, Treasurer Robert Poulin, County Clerk Patricia Fournier, Sheriff Eric Samson, Chief William Gagne, Captain Jeffrey Chute, Register of Deeds Tina Chouinard, EMA Director Joanne Potvin, Steve Sherlock-Sun Journal, Administrative Assistant Sandra Berube, Larry Post future County Administrator beginning October 19th, Michael Stephanak WGLT, Sally Hebert WGLT.

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by County Commissioner, Chair Beth Bell.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE

Norman (Norm) Beuparlant – Represents District 6 (Poland, Mechanic Falls, and part of Auburn).

Steve Bolduc – Resident and Councilor of Mechanic Falls. After his appointment to the Budget Committee, he will Represent District 6 (Poland, Mechanic Falls, and part of Auburn).

Emily Darby – Resident of Minot. Represents District 7 (Leeds, Livermore, Livermore Falls, Minot, Turner).

Guy Desjardins – Resident of Sabattus. After his appointment to the Budget Committee, he will Represent District 4 (Lisbon, Sabattus, Wales).

Belinda Gerry – Resident of Auburn, Auburn City Council, Represents District 5 (Part of Auburn).

Joseph (Joe) Grube – Resident of Lewiston. Represents District 2 (Part of Lewiston).

Michael Marcotte – Resident of Lewiston. Represents District 1 (Part of Lewiston).

Andrew (Andy) Titus – Resident of Auburn. Represents District 5 (Part of Auburn).

Anthony (Tony) Reny – Resident of Greene. Represents District 3 (Durham, Greene, Part of Lewiston).

Michael Lachance – Resident of Lewiston. Lewiston City Council Ward 7. Represents District 1 (Part of Lewiston).

Shane Bouchard - Resident of Lewiston. Lewiston City Council Ward 4. After his appointment to the Budget Committee, he will Represent District 2 (Part of Lewiston).

Chair Beth Bell read the overview regarding processes and achievements for the varied departments that make up the Androscoggin County Budget.

On motion of Emily Darby, seconded by Michael Lachance, it was

VOTED:

(001-2015) To confirm appointment of Guy Desjardins of Sabattus to replace Don Fournier for District 4.

VOTE: 8-0

On motion of Norman Beauparlant, seconded by Emily Darby, it was

VOTED:

(002-2015) To confirm appointment of Steve Bolduc of Mechanic Falls to replace Nancy Richard for District 6.

VOTE: 9-0

On motion of Joe Grube, seconded by Tony Reny, it was

VOTED:

(003-2015) To confirm appointment of Shane Bouchard of Lewiston to replace Donald D'Auteuil for District 2.

VOTE: 10-0

On motion of Michael Marcotte, seconded by Anthony Reny, it was

VOTED:

(004-2015) To nominate Emily Darby as Budget Committee Chairperson.

VOTE: 10-1
Abstained Darby

***Motion** of Norman Beauparlant, seconded by Andrew Titus:

To nominate Michael Marcotte as Budget Committee Vice-chairperson.

NO VOTE

Marcotte – declined acceptance
Motion Withdrawn - Beauparlant

***Motion** of Michael Marcotte, seconded by Anthony Reny:

To nominate Shane Bouchard as Budget Committee Vice-chairperson.

NO VOTE

Bouchard – declined acceptance

On motion of Norman Beauparlant, seconded by Andrew Titus, it was

VOTED:

(005-2015) To nominate Michael Lachance as Budget Committee Vice-chairperson.

VOTE: 10-1
Abstained Lachance

Discussion regarding Budget Committee meeting schedule.

Larry Post, (Will be County Administrator on October 19th, 2015) – Has managed three municipalities and was a member of the Budget Committee in each of those municipalities, was also County Administrator in Somerset County. Post stated that he is aware that there have been some issues and he is looking forward to resolving those issues.

Discussion regarding the new format of the budget reports.

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Norman Beauparlant – As a long-term member of the Poland Budget Committee and having participated in a lot of other activities within his community, Norm views being a member of the Androscoggin Budget Committee as an opportunity to represent a segment of the population in need of greater representation.

Steve Bolduc – As a member of the Mechanic Falls Town Council, Steve decided to join the Budget Committee as a way of keeping his town informed regarding budget issues.

Guy Desjardins – Retired as Sheriff in December after working in the Androscoggin County Building for 18 years. Guy has been a member on the Sabattus Budget Committee for eight years now, and a member on the Sabattus Board of Selectmen for 9 years. He enjoys working for the County and is looking forward to working with the Budget Committee.

Belinda Gerry – Wants to represent Auburn regarding keeping taxes low.

Joseph Grube – Retired assessor after working for the city of Lewiston for 35 years. Joseph is looking forward to a final product that is fiscally responsible to the County and fair to the taxpayers of Lewiston.

Michael Marcotte – Has been on the Budget Committee for 9 years and has also been on the Lewiston Finance Committee. Michael is concerned with the rising costs of taxes creating a financial burden on the citizens. His goal is to come as close to a 1.8% increase as possible.

Andrew Titus – Would also like to be efficient and keep the budget as low as possible. Andrew believes in transparency in government and wants everything out in the open, on public record, and easily accessible to the public.

Anthony Reny – Selectman from Greene who wants to represent the taxpayers in his district. Anthony enjoys serving his constituents in the Town of Green.

Michael Lachance – Served as a Councilor for two years and has participated in two challenging city budget processes. Michael looks forward to working together to get the budget where it needs to be.

Shane Bouchard – As a Lewiston City Councilor, Shane enjoyed working on the Lewiston budget last year and is happy to participate in the budget process.

Chair Emily Darby – Has been involved in municipal budgets, and believes that it's not all about the bottom line but about participation as citizens who believe they have a say. She stated that the Budget Committee consists of representatives from 14 diverse municipalities who send the budget committee members to speak for them; it's really all about taxation with representation.

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE CHARTER

Norman Beauparlant – Explained that although litigation is occurring, we have a Charter opportunity, with full membership of 14 to change a line item with a vote of 11 in order for it to be formally received by the Commissioners.

Chair Emily Darby – Stated that “the Charter that was approved by the voters had two clauses in it in particular. One was 11 votes to make a change in the budget...The other was the Commissioners salaries and benefits... Those two parts are in question legally right now. That legal question does not include us. The Budget Committee is not part of that legal action. That legal action is being put forth by the municipalities. Therefore, we continue to operate as we have. Norm is correct with the 11 votes necessary if we want to make a change, the simple majority does not make that change. One of the things I'd like to say is - whatever is going on outside of our meeting, is outside of our meeting, and we continue to operate and act responsibly to all of the things we just said we would do.”

Guy Desjardins – Asked if the “super majority” is 11 votes.

Norman Beuparlant – Responded affirmatively and discussed Budget Committee attendance last year in which votes occurred such as 9 to 2, effecting no change.

Michael Marcotte – Noted that the terminology was majority plus 1 which was determined to be 9 (not 8). Marcotte explained that it is difficult to get to 11 when there are absences and encouraged regular attendance.

COMMENT FROM CHAIR BETH BELL

“Dear Members of the Budget Committee:

The Board of Commissioners is pleased to present its proposed budget to the budget committee for fiscal year 2016 in accordance with Section 5.5.1 of the County Charter.

The proposed budget is the product of many hours of review, study and deliberation by both the Board of Commissioners and County department heads and employees and represents our considered judgment of what is necessary to insure the proper funding of all operations of County government for the fiscal year.

The Board of Commissioners will provide the budget committee, in accordance with Section 5.5.1 of the Charter, with necessary clerical assistance, office expenses and meeting space, as well as access to county files and information needed to carry out its functions. Request for additional assistance or information should be channeled, in writing, through the County Clerk.”

Discussion regarding the Commissioners request for the Budget Committee members to inquire for additional assistance in writing. Also discussed was the Budget Committee’s desire for the Administrator and/or Department Heads to attend the Budget meetings.

Andrew Titus – Asked if the Department Heads would be presenting their budgets at each meeting.

Chair Beth Bell – Responded that it was up to the Department Heads whether they would be attending the meetings.

Michael Lachance – Asked, “If this board requests information or Department Heads for any kind of briefing, am I correct to read that that would have to be provided at this boards request?”

Chair Emily Darby – Stated that she believes that there is language in the Charter regarding that and that she would do homework on that topic.

More discussion regarding information forms.

Chair Emily Darby – Noted that the Budget Committee, as a collective body, would make information requests as one entity.

More discussion regarding the Budget Committee's desire to have Department Heads, Commissioners, the Administrator, or other representative to attend the meetings and answer the Budget Committee's questions regarding the budget.

Michael Lachance – Stated that he has no problem with the information request form. However, he believes that it is imperative for Department Heads, on any particular agenda item, are present at the Budget meetings to provide information that may be requested by the board. He also noted that the Commissioners presence at last year's budget meetings was extremely valuable and it added to the efficiency of the meetings. If the Board has a question that is of an administrative nature and there is no one here to answer that, that does not add to the efficiency of the meeting and it does delay, and move down something that may otherwise have been taken care of that evening. He would entertain having at least one Commissioner present at each meeting to represent the Commissioners.

More discussion.

Michael Lachance – Stated that if there is a discrepancy between the Department Proposed and the Commissioners Proposed, that this Committee does benefit, as does all the counties represented, from having one or more Commissioners or a representative present to answer questions. If the Commissioners are proposing line items, this board needs answers. If the Commissioners are not present to provide answers, that does a great disservice to this whole process and to the representatives of the municipalities who are serving on this board.

Chair Emily Darby – Asked the Commissioners to discuss why they are choosing not to attend the meetings.

Chair Beth Bell – Replied that they had no further discussion at this time.

Chair Emily Darby – Asked the Commissioners, “So you don't want to say why you won't attend?”

Chair Beth Bell – Replied again, “We have no further discussion at this time.”

The Budget Committee made the following requests throughout the meeting:

1. Up-to-date budget expenditure amounts at each meeting.
2. Details regarding budget line amounts.
3. Conversational topics placed in the minutes when specifically requested.
4. Placing the Budget Committee schedule and Agendas on the Androscoggin County Website and in the newspaper with the notice that all meetings are open to the public.
5. Providing request forms at each meeting and also in word document form.
6. Having the presence of one or more Commissioners, Administrator, Treasurer, Department Heads (with their respective budgets), or other knowledgeable representatives at the budget meetings available to answer budget questions.
7. To change the format of each departments summary expenditure forms by adding the “2016 Department Request” and the “2016 Proposed by Commissioners” columns.

8. Tax Levy with amounts by municipality as soon as the State of Maine supplies the information.

On motion of Anthony Reny seconded by Andrew Titus, it was

VOTED:
(006-2015) To adjourn at 10:15 p.m.

VOTE: 11-0

Patricia Fournier, County Clerk