

~Meeting Minutes~

August 2nd, 2023

Regular Meeting 5:15 p.m.

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER – by Chair Sally Christner at 5:15 P.M.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

Commissioners: Chair Sally Christner, Vice-Chair Terri Kelly, Brian Ames, Roland Poirier, Andrew Lewis, Edouard Plourde. Tardy: Garrett Mason.

Other: County Administrator Clarice Proctor, Sheriff Eric Samson, Jeff Chute, Lane Fieldman, Mike Perry, Hillary Nadeau, Martin Fournier, Sandy Berube, Sun Journal Steve Sherlock.

IV. MINUTES

A. Meeting Date: July 19, 2023

Motion: to approve with a waiver of the reading of the July 19, 2023 minutes as presented.

Plourde-Kelly 6-0

V. WARRANTS

Motion: to approve all warrants as presented: AP Warrants JV1241, JV1246, JV1247 & Payroll Warrants.

Kelly-Lewis 6-0

Commissioner Mason arrived.

VI. REPORTS

A. MCCA-The annual MCCA convention will take place September 12-14th at the Poland Springs Resort and registration is open.

B. Central/Western Maine Workforce Board-Commissioner Kelly stated that during their virtual meeting, new Executive Director Erin Benson introduced herself and shared her vision and future plans for the workforce board.

C. AVCOG Report-No report.

D. Treasurer's Report-Administrator Proctor noted that they are working on the audit and budgets.

E. Administrator's Report-Administrator Proctor gave an update on current activities.

VII. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Scott Berry, Auburn-Further emphasized and expanded upon the following viewpoint.

My vision for building a new state-of-the-art county municipal building, combined with re-purposing the current courthouse into a fine arts museum, is rooted in creating a lasting legacy that will transcend time and positively impact generations to come. This

transformative project goes beyond meeting immediate needs; it symbolizes our commitment to progress, culture, and community.

Constructing a new state-of-the-art county municipal building is an opportunity to build a foundation for the future. By leveraging cutting-edge design and technology, we can create a hub for governmental agencies that fosters collaboration, efficiency, and effective governance. This modern infrastructure will accommodate the diverse needs of our ever-evolving community, ensuring that essential public services are delivered seamlessly and with utmost convenience. I believe this building should serve as a symbol of unity, where all cities and towns in Androscoggin County come together to collectively shape a better future for everyone.

Equally important is the decision to re-purpose the historic courthouse into a fine arts museum. Preserving our cultural heritage and celebrating the arts is vital in nurturing the soul of our community. By breathing new life into this venerable structure, we pay homage to our past while embracing the future. This transformation will not only enrich our lives with art, history, and creativity but also become a major cultural attraction that draws visitors from near and far, boosting tourism and stimulating economic growth for the entire region.

The combination of a state-of-the-art municipal building and a fine arts museum embodies the essence of visionary leadership. It showcases our capacity to embrace innovation while cherishing our heritage. By investing in these enduring institutions, we demonstrate our commitment to sustainable development and the well-being of future generations. This project is more than just bricks and mortar; it is a testament to our collective spirit, our resilience, and our aspirations.

In conclusion, my views on building a new state-of-the-art county municipal building and re-purposing the current courthouse into a fine arts museum reflect a forward-thinking approach that values functionality, progress, and culture. This transformative endeavor will stand as a beacon of inspiration for generations to come, a legacy that reflects our dedication to building a vibrant, harmonious, and thriving community. Together, we have the power to shape our shared destiny and create a lasting impact that will be remembered and appreciated by our children, grandchildren, and countless future generations.

A State-Of-The-Art County Building

1. Modern Facilities and Infrastructure: A new state-of-the-art county building would provide modern facilities and infrastructure tailored to the specific needs of county governmental agencies. It would incorporate the latest technologies, energy-efficient systems, and improved accessibility, ensuring a safer and more efficient working environment for employees and visitors.

2. Enhanced Efficiency and Collaboration: By consolidating all county governmental agencies in one central location, a new building would promote greater efficiency and collaboration among different departments. Streamlined processes, shared resources, and improved communication would enhance the delivery of services to the public, leading to improved governance and responsiveness.

3. Upgraded Judicial System: The inclusion of a new courthouse within the state-of-the-art county building would address the critical need for an upgraded judicial system. An

aging building may lack the necessary courtroom facilities, security features, and technological advancements required to support a modern justice system. A new courthouse would provide a dignified and secure environment for legal proceedings, ensuring the fair and efficient administration of justice.

4. Enhanced Law Enforcement Capabilities: With a dedicated space for the sheriff department and a county jail, a state-of-the-art building would enable law enforcement agencies to function at their best. Upgraded facilities would offer improved safety measures, advanced surveillance systems, and increased capacity to handle inmates securely. This would ensure better law enforcement outcomes, enhanced public safety, and improved conditions for inmates.

5. Long-term Cost Savings: While renovating the existing 165-year-old building might seem like a cost-effective solution in the short term, it could potentially incur significant ongoing maintenance and repair expenses. These costs, coupled with potential disruptions during renovation, could outweigh the benefits. In contrast, a new building would be designed to minimize long-term maintenance costs and provide a sustainable solution that meets the county's needs for decades to come.

In closing, I urge the Commissioners to embrace boldness, courage, and dynamism in their decision-making process. This is an opportunity to leave a lasting legacy that will benefit all citizens in the county for generations to come. I implore you not to settle for the ordinary or the mundane; instead, strive to be visionary leaders who are willing to take calculated risks and make transformative decisions.

History remembers those who dare to challenge the status quo, who have the courage to pursue ambitious projects, and who show unwavering dedication to the betterment of their community. As County Commissioners, you have the power to shape the future of Androscoggin County and leave a profound impact on the lives of its residents.

By investing in a new state-of-the-art county municipal building and re-purposing the current courthouse into a fine arts museum, you can demonstrate your commitment to progress, culture, and inclusivity. This legendary move will be a testament to your visionary leadership and your deep understanding of the needs and aspirations of the people you serve.

I encourage you to be bold in your decision-making, to embrace innovation, and to prioritize the long-term interests of the county over short-term considerations. Remember that your actions today will be recorded in history, and the legacy you leave will shape the future narrative of Androscoggin County.

Let us not settle for mediocrity or obscured leadership. Instead, let us rise to the occasion and become the Commissioners who fearlessly lead Androscoggin County into a brighter, more promising future. Together, we can create a community that thrives, where progress and culture intertwine, and where all citizens can proudly call this place their home.

I have faith in your ability to make the right choice, to be remembered as Commissioners who took a stand and made a positive difference. Be legendary in your pursuit of a better future for Androscoggin County. The citizens are counting on your courage, your vision, and your determination to build a legacy that will endure the test of time.

After Mr. Berry's comments, Chair Christner shared a letter from Phillip Roux which

encouraged the move to a new location, followed by another from Chris Ramirez who suggested a possible new location for the DA's office.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Union Contract (AFSCME)

Motion: to sign the contract as presented (and send it back to the union for signatures).

Ames-Kelly 7-0

B. 2024 COLA Approval

Motion: to approve the 2024 COLA approval at 2.3%.

Mason-Kelly

Roll call vote:

Lewis-No

Ames-Yes

Christner-Yes

Kelly-Yes

Plourde-No

Poirier-Yes

Mason-Yes

IX. DISCUSSION ITEMS – N/A

X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

*Opioid settlement

*Strategic Planning Workshop (Plourde)

*774 Center Steet (ongoing)

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Executive Session-Pursuant to Title 1 MRSA Sec 405(6) Subsection (D) Labor Contracts.

Motion: to enter into Executive Session pursuant to Title 1 MRSA Sec 405(6) Subsection (D) Labor Contracts.

Kelly-Mason 7-0

Motion: to enter into public session.

Lewis-Mason 7-0

XII. ADJOURN

Motion: to adjourn.

Lewis-Kelly 7-0

Clarice Proctor, County Administrator