

**~Meeting Minutes~**  
**Androscoggin County Commissioners**  
January 17, 2024  
Regular Meeting 5:15 p.m.

**I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER - Chair Sally Christner at 5:15 P.M.**

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. ROLL CALL**

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

Other: Interim County Administrator/Sheriff Eric Samson, Finance Director Clarice Proctor, Register of Deeds Tina Chouinard, Register of Probate Thomas Reynolds, DA Office Manager Mike Perry, Facilities Director Dave Cote, Sandy Berube, Steve Sherlock, Hillary Nadeau, citizens.

**IV. ELECT CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

Commissioner Mason nominated Sally Christner as chair and Commissioner Poirier seconded. Commissioner Mason moved to cease nominations and Commissioner Kelly seconded.

Motion: to elect Sally Christner as Chair.

Mason, Poirier 6-0-1

Abstained: Christner

Commissioner Ames nominated Terry Kelly as Vice-Chair and Commissioner Mason seconded.

Commissioner Poirier moved to cease nominations and Commissioner Mason seconded.

Motion: to elect Terri Kelly as Vice-Chair.

Ames-Mason 6-0-1

Abstained: Kelly

**V. MINUTES**

**A. Meeting Dates:** December 20, 2023 regular meeting minutes.

Motion: to approve with a waiver of the reading of the December 20, 2023 regular meeting minutes as amended.

Kelly-Ames 7-0

**VI. WARRANTS**

Motion: to approve all warrants as presented: AP Warrants (JV1349-01/03/24), JV1354, JV1357 & Payroll Warrants.

Kelly-Lewis 7-0

**VII. REPORTS**

**A. MCCA-**No report.

**B. Central/Western Maine Workforce Board**-Commissioner Kelly attended the year end meeting on December 28<sup>th</sup>. Topics included potential ideas to increase effectiveness, approval of new board members and approval of new schedules.

**C. AVCOG Report**-No report.

**D. Treasurer's Report**-Treasurer Proctor asked whether Commissioners had any questions regarding November's report. Hearing none, she noted that November carries over into December and then presented the latest financial information. She stated that there is still a lot of work to be done because it is year-end. There are still bills coming in and reconciliations to be done, but an updated report would be provided in the future.

Motion: to table the Treasurer's report (to wait for updates).

Poirier-Kelly 2-5

Opposed: Lewis, Ames, Christner, Kelly, Mason

Motion fails.

Motion: to accept the Treasurer's report.

Ames-Mason 5-2

Opposed: Poirier, Plourde

**E. Administrator's Report**-Interim County Administrator/Sheriff Eric Samson updated Commissioners on ongoing events.

## **VIII. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC – None.**

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. ARPA Update**-Treasurer Proctor presented ARPA financial information (in spreadsheet format) to Commissioners.

\*Commissioner Mason said that he always has trouble reading the (ARPA) sheet and requested ARPA information in a readable format.

\*Chair Christner suggested they set a goal at the next meeting to make some movements, either take items off the ARPA list or move forward with on the list at the February 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.

\*Treasurer Proctor offered to have Zeb Letourneau from BerryDunn attend the next meeting and Commissioners agreed.

**B. Opioid Settlement**-Treasurer Proctor noted that they had received \$162,197 and pointed out that there are specific things they can do with it. She recommended, due to the requirements that the DOC had placed on the money regarding medically assisted treatment and due to two sections in the agreement that specifically say, "incarcerated peoples," that they set aside the money. She continued to say, "they already have about \$40,000 that 'fits in here' that we can take out of the jail budget and put in here that qualifies, and I expect more."

Motion: to approve for the Treasurer to use the funds from the opioid settlement to offset jail expenses.

Lewis-Ames 6-0-1

Abstain: Poirier

**B. Revisit-Hire Administrator**

Motion: for HR to post the Administrator role tomorrow, five days internally, and 30 days until the 21<sup>st</sup>.

Ames-Kelly 7-0

\*Hold executive session on February 21<sup>st</sup>.

**X. DISCUSSION ITEMS - (DA's Office building)**

Commissioner Mason said, "I think that it is absolutely absurd that we continue to pay rent on that building. It is not habitable; it is ridiculous to try to get someone to handle these issues. We still do not have an elevator...The roof collapsed, and we had a leaking roof that did not get repaired. It is not a habitable building, and I don't know why we continue to pay rent. My suggestion would be that we stop paying rent...We are seeing and an increasing rent scale for the next two years at least... If this were a residential tenancy the landlords would be dragged into court immediately, just because this is a commercial lease, I don't think it should be any different, I know it is different but it shouldn't be because we have a District Attorney's Office who cannot conduct normal and regular business...Not to mention a District Attorney's Office who is dealing with very sensitive matters-that we have to meet disabled people in the vestibule to talk about case matters, this is ridiculous. I would suggest that we stop paying rent."

DA Office Manager Mike Perry discussed issues with a power failure causing it to be cold and dark in the building.

Commissioners questioned eviction, code enforcement, and why the owners of the building were not maintaining the building.

Commissioner Mason stated, "This is a huge barrier to access to justice in this county and to others-I would image, and I think that we are at the point where the people that are victims and have cases pending in front of the court are not able to be properly serviced because of this issue."

Motion: to stop payment on the lease until these issues are addressed.

Mason-Ames (no vote)

DA Office Manager Mike Perry requested a recess.

After the recess, DA Office Manager asked Commissioners to consult with their attorney to figure out the consequences of not paying rent. (i.e.: Does that mean we won't get our area plowed anymore? Will we be able to operate?)

Commissioner Mason explained that he hears what he is saying, but noted that the elevator hasn't been fixed for a year.

Facilities Director David Cote mentioned that the insurance company also has a list of defaults that they want resolved as well. He offered to give Mike Perry the list, as it had previously been given to the landlord to no avail.

Motion: to call the question.  
Ames-Mason 7-0

(Original) Motion: to cease payment on the lease (at 55 Lisbon St. Lewiston) until the issues identified by the District Attorney's office are resolved and to bring this issue up at subsequent meetings to decide if those issues are resolved and (if resolved), we will then again pay the lease.

Mason-Ames 5-2

Opposed: Plourde, Poirier

## **XI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

\* ~~February 7, 2024~~ - Strategic Planning Workshop - Commissioner Plourde will investigate this and present his findings at the February 7<sup>th</sup> workshop. (Workshop not scheduled for February 7<sup>th</sup>.)

\* 774 Center Steet (updates when available)

\* Building Committee (updates when available)

## **XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

### **A. Executive Session Pursuant to Title 1 MRSA Section 405 (6) Subsection (C)**

#### **Discussion or consideration of acquisition of real or personal property.**

Motion: to enter into Executive Session Pursuant to Title 1 MRSA Section 405 (6) Subsection (C) Discussion or consideration of acquisition of real or personal property.

Plourde-Lewis 7-0

Motion: to enter into public session (7:50 p.m.)

Mason-Lewis 7-0

## **XIII. ADJOURN**

Commissioners adjourned.

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Interim County Administrator/Sheriff Eric Samson