

Kennebec County Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 25, 2026
4PM to 5:58PM in Augusta at Hill House 125 State Street

Members present: Eric Austin, Ray Bates, Charlie Hippler, Lloyd Irland, Kathryn Mills Woodsum.
Members absent: Jon Beekman, Shawn Dixon, Michael Perkins.

Commissioners Present: Patsy Crockett, Joseph Pietroski.

1. Meeting was called to order by Lloyd Irland at 4PM.
2. Presentation of the DA department budget. District Attorney Maeghan Maloney (in office since 2013) presented a department overview and briefly discussed the budget.
 - a. The DA and other attorneys are paid by the State through their funds and are not included in the County budget. The office is for Somerset and Kennebec counties (since 1973). There are 10 attorneys for Kennebec, 5 for Somerset, and 1 Juvenile attorney serving both counties. Everyone works very well together to keep both counties safe places to live and work. Felonies are on the rise seeing a 97% increase since 2019. The case management software that was funded last year has been fully implemented and is working well including the body cameras for the Deputies, providing much better access to information as well as allowing for smooth interaction between the DA's office and the Sheriff's Office and various defense attorneys. The new State mandated judiciary E-File system for logging cases into the court system is much more cumbersome to use and takes two to three times longer to use than the manual system. The department is working through how best to handle this workload increase.
 - b. The budget has a 7.3% increase. This is primarily for salary and benefit increases held close to inflation rates, and for shifts in cost centers for utilities from Administration to Departments.
3. Remote access to Budget Committee Meetings: The OWL was set up and ready to use for our meeting. Thank you to the Commissioners for approving using this technology. The meetings will be recorded and posted the following day on the County website.
4. Meetings: To accommodate allowing all committee members to attend we revised our meeting time to be 5PM to 7PM.
5. Membership: The Budget Committee does not have 9 members. District 3 is missing 1 member.
6. Work of the Budget Committee since last Spring:
 - a. Jail Staffing: Lloyd, Eric and Kathryn met with Jail Administration to discuss staffing needs, planning and resources needed. A large amount of detailed information was

the end of the first year. Whenever the new hire is not working that shift is covered with OT.

5. Other OT factors: Per week: 7 shifts for hospital visits, 7 shifts for employee vacation; 6 shifts for callouts. These are primarily covered with overtime.
 - ii. Inmates: Currently 9 are for murder charges; these folks can be housed for up to 2 years pending trials. The average stay for any inmate is 35 days. Inmates can stay in the County Jail for up to 9 months after conviction before being transferred. The inmate average count is 154, with 5 intakes and 5 processing out daily.
 - iii. Union negotiations are underway for Corrections Officers currently. Anticipating a 3% increase to wages. The last 3-year contract had increases of 3% 1st year, 14% 2nd year and 7% 3rd year.
 - iv. Non-union staff wages are determined with the Commissioners.
 - v. The budget increase this year is approximately \$400,000, down from \$1.5 million last year.
- b. Sheriff's Office: Chief Chris Read presented the budget for the department along with explanations of why certain expenses exist and examples of situations that impact costs that are difficult to predict. The budget overall is an increase of 21.8%.
 - i. Wages: A new contract was negotiated for this year, FY26, with substantial wage increases. The increases are 4% 1st year, \$3 to \$5 per hour 2nd year, 4.8% 3rd year. This has helped to bring the wages near to the middle for the same positions in other Maine counties.
 - ii. Overtime:
 1. Similar to the Jail in past years, and as noted above in the discussion in item 6b, the department is filling 2 fulltime Deputy Patrol shifts with mandatory overtime. 17 positions are needed to cover all the shifts, only 15 are approved and funded. The 2 positions are included in the proposed budget which will cost less and boost morale. There is additional cost of a fully outfitted patrol vehicle for each position. Total cost is \$190,000 for the 1st year (\$64,000 is for the vehicle.) A new hire attends the Academy for 18 weeks and their shift is covered with OT; other training and FTO is also required.
 2. Other OT factors: Any Officer-involved-shooting requires mandatory 4 weeks off; vacation, callouts, National Guard duty, etc. all leave shifts to cover with OT.
 3. Budget: \$300,000 was budgeted for the current year, and with 5 months remaining \$317,000 has already been spent. Request is for \$525,000 for FY27. If there is an overage the funds remain in the Sheriff's Office in a designated fund.
8. Facilities: Dan Brunelle presented the budget for the department with a lot of anecdotal information concerning needs. He referenced the tour given to the Budget Committee as noted above in 6c. There are a few immediate needs, elevator replacement and HVAC units