

# Kennebec County, Maine

## County Commissioner's Meeting

Minutes January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024



**Present:**

Patsy Crockett, Commissioner, Chair  
 George Jabar, Commissioner  
 Joe Pietroski, Commissioner  
 Chris Brawn, HR Director  
 Cindi Ferguson, Finance Director  
 Tom Doore, Treasurer  
 Lisa Bryant, Finance Manager

Ken Mason, Sheriff  
 Al Morin, Chief Deputy  
 Devon Parsons, IT Director  
 Abigail St. Valle, Register of Probate  
 Matthew Boucher, Register of Deeds  
 Corey Goodchild, Asst. Jail Administrator  
 Shay Freeman, DA Office Administrator

Sean Goodwin, Acting EMA Director  
 Kelly Staton, Victim Witness Advocate  
 Brian Sites, VOA Vice President of Business Development  
 Scott Ferguson, County Administrator  
 Stephanie Schredder, Executive Assistant

**Absent:** Meaghan Maloney, District Attorney, Bryan Slaney, Jail Administrator, Frank Griffen, Deputy District Attorney Esq, Gail Towns, Deputy Register of Deeds, Dr. Timothy Pieh, MD-3 Medical Director

	Discussion	Action
Call to order	11:59pm	
Minutes	<b>Joe Pietroski, Commissioner</b> , made a motion to approve the minutes of December 5th, 2023, seconded by <b>George Jabar, Commissioner</b> , the motion carries.	Approved 3-0
Human Resources	<p><b><u>Chris Brawn, Human Resources Director:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Human Resources has been meeting with the consultant on the employee handbook and administrative regulations rewrite. <b>Chris Brawn, Human Resources Director</b>, asked the commissioners for permission to eliminate the handbook and simply create a cover page to include with all personnel policies to give to new hires.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Patsy rocket, Commissioner Chair</b>, asked how the new hire paperwork had been handled in the past, and <b>Chris Brawn, Human Resources Director</b>, stated that the employee handbook was given to new hires, but none of the policies were shared.</li> <li>• The commissioners all agreed that giving policies with a cover page to employees would be preferred to a handbook that did not contain any policies.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Salary Study:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A non-union county salary study projection was produced for the commissioners to give an estimated number for this budget cycle, but updated numbers will be released later in January.</li> <li>• The commissioners decide to wait to talk about this until budget season.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	





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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A new assistant district attorney was sworn in today by the State of Maine Attorney General's office.</li> <li>➤ There are interviews scheduled for the legal secretary position.</li> <li>➤ There is jury selection this week.</li> <li>➤ There are scheduled trials this month.</li> <li>➤ <b>Joe Pietroski, Commissioner</b>, mentioned that he would like to talk to the departments about hiring challenges to help correct the issues.</li> <li>➤ <b>Joe Pietroski, Commissioner</b>, asked if <b>Frank Griffen, Deputy District Attorney</b>, and all other attorneys at the DA office were employees of the State of Maine and <b>Shay Freeman, District Attorney Administrator</b>, confirmed that they were.</li> </ul>	
Probate	<p><b>Probate:</b></p> <p><b>Abigail St. Valle, Probate Register:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A Deputy Register of Probate has been hired and will be starting next week.</li> <li>➤ Probate is at full staff.</li> <li>➤ The probate courtroom is looking forward to updates for the AV system.</li> <li>➤ <b>Abigail St. Valle, Probate Register</b>, will be teaching the deputy probate register in minor guardianships.</li> <li>➤ One staff member will be retiring this summer.</li> </ul>	
Information Technology	<p><b>Information Technology:</b></p> <p><b>Devon Parsons, IT Director:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Phone and Fax System:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgraded MTI system for key cards and the door lock retention system.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ The IT department is working with Siemens to upgrade the air handler system in the jail.</li> <li>➤ The phone and fax migration will start next Monday.</li> <li>➤ <b>Joe Pietroski, Commissioner</b>, asked about the progress on the AV system for the probate court, and <b>Devon Parsons, IT Director</b>, stated that the department is waiting to purchase the hardware needed for the update.</li> </ul>	
Registry of Deeds	<p><b>Register of Deeds:</b></p> <p><b>Matthew Boucher, Register of Deeds:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Revenues are down \$1,800 compared to last year.</li> <li>➤ <b>Patsy Crockett, Commissioner</b>, asked if anyone had been hired for the Deeds vacant position, and <b>Matt Boucher, Register of Deeds</b>, stated that he had not filled the position.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Special scheduling for breaks will be instated until the proper coverage can be maintained when there's a full staff.</li> <li>➤ The Kofile contract will be up soon and will be examined.</li> <li>➤ <b>Joe Pietroski, Commissioner</b>, asked if the office move was finished and <b>Matt Boucher, Register of Deeds</b>, stated that the move was done.</li> </ul>	
Emergency Management Agency	<p><b><u>Emergency Management Agency:</u></b>  <b>Sean Goodwin, Acting EMA Director:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Storm damage:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a lot of paperwork to be filled out for FEMA and MEMA regarding the recent storm damage.</li> <li>• <b>Jason Decker, EMA Deputy Director</b>, did a preliminary calculation for estimated cost of damages and came up with \$1.5 million worth of public damage so far.</li> <li>• Requests for funding can come in until the end of the month for individual and public damage reports from the storm.</li> <li>• There has also been lots of personal damage done.</li> <li>• The total damage is still being assessed.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Joe Pietroski, Commissioner</b>, inquired about the communications tower in Fayette and <b>Sean Goodwin, Acting EMA Director</b>, stated that EMA is very interested in utilizing the tower because of the recent loss of another communications tower.</li> <li>➤ <b>Joe Pietroski, Commissioner</b>, asked how the MD3 program was running, and <b>Sean Goodwin, Acting EMA Director</b>, stated that the program was receiving calls, and that <b>Timothy Pieh, MD3 Medical Director</b>, would be in to give an update at the next Commissioner meeting.</li> </ul>	
Facilities	<p><b><u>Facilities Maintenance:</u></b>  <b>Dan Brunelle, Facilities Director:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Thank you to <b>Joe Pietroski, Commissioner</b>, for the Kennebec County shirts and hats for the facilities team.</li> <li>➤ There were pictures given to the commissioners representing the storm damage to the Kennebec County buildings.</li> <li>➤ Facilities repaired the portico and pushed it back into place.</li> <li>➤ The slate roofs are the biggest concern. <b>Dan Brunelle, Facilities Director</b>, suggested composite slate to replace the shingles because it is safer.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Three whole roofs and high-quality windows are needed for Kennebec County buildings. Composite framed windows are suggested for replacements in Hill House, and there are 96 windows that need to be replaced.</li> <li>➤ The rooftop air conditioning units for 73 and 77 Winthrop Street will need to be replaced before next Summer. Each unit will cost approximately \$12,000.</li> <li>➤ The jail has a list of repairs needed after the storm damage.</li> <li>➤ Siemens will be bringing an electrician and a plumber to assess the cost to convert the courthouse heating system. They will provide a quote after assessment.</li> <li>➤ <b>Joe Pietroski, Commissioner</b>, asked about any updates on the piping and heating system repairs and replacements for Hill House and <b>Dan Brunelle, Facilities Director</b>, stated that it had not been fixed yet.</li> </ul>	
Administrator	<p><b>Scott Ferguson, County Administrator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The security contract for the courthouse is being reviewed by <b>Peter Marchesi, Kennebec County Legal Counsel</b>.</li> <li>➤ Storm damage assessment has been provided to the commissioners by <b>Sean Goodwin, Acting EMA Director</b>, and <b>Dan Brunelle, Facilities Director</b>.</li> <li>➤ A list of requested ARPA funded projects has been provided to the commissioners totaling \$1.9 million. <b>Scott Ferguson, County Administrator</b>, requested that the commissioners review the list and select the projects that they would like to fund.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>George Jabar, Commissioner</b>, asked that <b>Dan Brunelle, Facilities Director</b>, and <b>Scott Ferguson, County Administrator</b>, to point out the projects that should take priority, and <b>Scott Ferguson, County Administrator</b>, stated that fixing the three roofs of the Kennebec County Courthouse, Kennebec County Jail, and Hill House, take the biggest priority.</li> <li>• <b>Scott Ferguson, County Administrator</b>, said that he would number and prioritize projects for the commissioners. He also mentioned that the cost of county projects is greater than available funding.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Mileage reimbursement:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Joe Pietroski, Commissioner</b>, made a motion to approve the 2024 mileage reimbursement rate to be \$0.67 per mile and <b>George Jabar, Commissioner</b>, seconds the motion.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ <b>Joe Pietroski, Commissioner</b>, asked if there are any changes or additions to the budget calendar, and <b>Scott Ferguson, County Administrator</b>, stated that there aren't any changes that have been made.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Patsy Crockett, Commissioner Chair</b>, and <b>Joe Pietroski, Commissioner</b>, requested scheduling of departmental budgetary meetings on January 29<sup>th</sup> and <b>Scott Ferguson, County Administrator</b>, said</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	



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	Discussion	Action
	that he would schedule the departments to meet with commissioners that day regarding their FY25 budgets.	Approved 3-0
<b>Old Business/ Follow Up Items</b>	<p><b><u>ARPA Update:</u></b>  <b>Zeb Letourneau, Manager Consultant:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To date, the County has received \$7,000,000 in external grant project expenditures. BerryDunn is processing one expenditure review for \$23,000.</li> <li>➤ Two expenditure requests for Greater Augusta Utility District and Maine General: Harm Reduction Program totaling \$258,000 are scheduled for approval in today's warrant.</li> <li>➤ VOA's Augusta Affordable Housing project is the only remaining external County ARPA project that does not have an executed grant agreement. BerryDunn received much of the documentation needed to finalize the grant agreement and legal documentation needed to initiate the project. VOA is in attendance at today's commissioners meeting to provide an update on the project.</li> <li>➤ The Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter and Services project's grant agreement was executed on December 7, 2023.</li> <li>➤ The County has \$1,680,000 left in ARPA reserves that have not been obligated.</li> <li>➤ As the year progresses, if there are projects that are not demonstrating progress towards milestones, goals, or objectives, there may be opportunities to reallocate those funds. BerryDunn is monitoring project progress and will keep the commissioners updated.</li> <li>➤ BerryDunn conducted project monitoring check-ins throughout December, and we are beginning to work on the quarterly treasury report that will be submitted by the January 31, 2024, deadline. We've noted project updates below:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BerryDunn met with the Town of Clinton on December 12 to discuss an expected cost overage for their water storage tank project. The work was originally estimated to cost \$500k. The Clinton Water District received an updated estimate of over \$1 million in total. Clinton Water District plans to obtain a loan to bridge the current finance gap and expects to increase consumer utility costs to pay for the loan. The project is still scheduled to start in Spring 2024. Currently, the project is still considered feasible, and the project schedule is on track.</li> <li>• BerryDunn communicated with the Town of Oakland regarding proposed changes to the project schedule and overall project feasibility. The Town had communicated a project change to delay project construction another year to 2025. The project was originally scheduled to begin in 2023 and received approval to delay construction until 2024. After further discussion with BerryDunn, the</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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	<p>Town of Clinton has decided to continue its previous plan to begin construction in 2024. Currently, the project is still considered feasible, and the project schedule is on track.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BerryDunn met with the Greater Augusta Utility District (GAUD) on December 13 to discuss the Kennebec River Crossing project. The project is currently on track and under budget. The final phase of the bridge crossing has been bid and was under the estimated budget by approximately \$500k. GAUD communicated that there are some expected overages to other components of the project, including the fiber network installation piece requested by <b>Ken Mason, Sheriff</b>, that GAUD plans to use the excess funds towards. BerryDunn communicated that any surplus funds must be returned to the county for its discretion to use. Future project overages or changes must be reviewed and approved by the county prior to their initiation and payment. GAUD requested that BerryDunn and the county hold off on re-obligating the current excess funds until the fiber network component is fully planned out in spring 2024, and agreed to submit a project scope change request if the fiber installation component is more than the original estimate of 100k. GAUD also agreed to inform the County of any project overages before work is initiated. BerryDunn recommends the County accept GAUD's request to hold off on re-obligating the current excess funds until Spring 2024 when the fiber network component is fully planned, and GAUD has verified any potential project overages. No vote is required for this action, BerryDunn will continue to monitor the project's progress.</li> </ul> <p>➤ <u>Discussion Items:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BerryDunn is working with the <b>Scott Ferguson, County Administrator</b>, to plan for changes to ongoing processes due to <b>Cindi Ferguson, Finance Director's</b> incoming departure. The finance director conducts an expenditure review and administrative reviews of the quarterly treasury reports submitted by the County, and the expenditure reviews submitted by subgrantees. BerryDunn will need to coordinate with a Kennebec County official to facilitate these reviews in the interim until the county hires and trains a new finance director.</li> </ul> <p><u>Voices of America ARPA Update:</u></p> <p><b>Brian Sites, VOA Vice President of Business Development, and implementation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The project was originally scheduled to produce 10 units and VOA has potentially found more funding with Maine State Housing Authority to build additional units on top of the original 10 that Kennebec County is funding.</li> <li>➤ A layout design of the project plan was given to the Commissioners.</li> </ul>	



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ This project will have ongoing service funding to give case management services.</li> <li>➤ Maine State Housing Authority will be releasing funds for the additional 10 units this Spring.</li> <li>➤ This project also has HUD (Housing and Urban Development) funding which has a separate set of requirements to meet, specifically for environmental standards.</li> <li>➤ <b>Joe Pietroski, Commissioner</b>, asked if all of the funding needs to be allocated in 2024 or if some of it can be allocated in 2025, and <b>Zeb Letourneau, Manager Consultant</b>, stated that the funding is required by treasury guidelines to be allocated by the end of 2024, and spent by 2026, and the construction for the VOA project will be done by 2025, so it is well within those constraints.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Joe Pietroski, Commissioner</b>, asked if an account would need to be established for the project funds and <b>Zeb Letourneau, Manager Consultant</b>, explained that Kennebec County would hold the money until it was drawn down by VOA, and it would be drawn down through an expenditure reimbursement request, so they would ask for reimbursement. This allows the county to earn interest off the funds while they are in savings.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
New Business	<p><b>Stone Garden Grant:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Under review by <b>Peter Marchesi, Kennebec County Legal Council</b>.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Joe Pietroski, Commissioner</b>, mentioned that there is a section in the grant documents that show “yes” and “no” were both checked off and asked that the paperwork be reviewed.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Selection of 2024 Commissioner Chair:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>George Jabar, Commissioner</b>, made a motion to select <b>Patsy Crockett, Commissioner Chair</b>, for an additional year term of service as Kennebec County Commissioner Chair for 2024, and <b>Joe Pietroski, Commissioner</b>, seconded the motion.</li> </ul> <p><b>Paying for senior care:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ This organization would like Kennebec County to put a link on the website to their organization, and <b>Scott Ferguson, County Administrator</b>, suggested that a link on the website might be problematic and that the management of that sort of link for a government agency would be too great. The commissioners agree that a link should not be added to the website.</li> </ul>	Approved 2 Abstain 1
Public Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Sean Goodwin, Acting EMA Director</b>, made a request that the ARPA funding that was originally allocated to the cancelled paramedic training program be reallocated to several projects, including:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) A generator for the warming center in Waterville (\$50,000).</li> <li>2) A communications tower in Fayette, Baldwin Hill (\$21,000)</li> <li>3) An air compressor for the town of China. (\$40,000)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	

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	<p>4) A generator for the town of Gardiner. (no amount provided).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>George Jabar, Commissioner</b>, stated that the commissioners would review and consider these projects.</li> <li>➤ <b>Joe Pietroski, Commissioner</b>, stated that he had received an ARPA funding request from Mount Vernon, Vienna, Readfield, and Fayette, for a recreation field and gave an overview of the project.</li> <li>• <b>Scott Ferguson, County Administrator</b>, stated that there isn't enough funding to enact all projects currently requesting ARPA funding.</li> <li>➤ <b>Patsy Crockett, Commissioner Chair</b>, mentioned that she would like to keep taxes down for citizens by doing projects for the county using ARPA funding, but all projects requesting funding are important.</li> <li>➤ <b>Joe Pietroski, Commissioner</b>, asked if the \$1 million in interest accrued is included in the \$1.6 million in leftover ARPA funding, and <b>Scott Ferguson, County Administrator</b>, stated that it is not.</li> </ul>	
<b>Adjournment</b>	<p>There was a motion by <b>George Jabar, Commissioner</b>, to move to Executive Session at to discuss personnel issues pursuant to 1MRSA § 405-6-E. <b>Joe Pietroski, Commissioner</b>, seconds the motion.</p> <p>Declaration to end Executive Session at 2:19pm</p> <p>Motion by <b>Patsy Crockett, Commissioner Chair</b> to adjourn regular session at 2:30pm, and <b>George Jabar, Commissioner</b>, seconded the motion.</p>	<p>Approved 3-0</p> <p>Approved 3-0</p>

Respectfully Submitted: **Stephanie Schredder, Executive Assistant**