

COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

August 5, 2026

The regular meeting of the York County Commissioners was held on Wednesday, August 5, 2026, at 4:30 PM at the York County Government Building in Alfred.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Richard R. Dutremble (arrived at 4:51pm)
Richard Clark
Robert Andrews
Justin Chenette
Donna Ring

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None.

County Manager Greg Zinser, Deputy County Manager/HR Director Linda Hutchins-Corliss, Facilities Director Rick deRochemont, EMA Director Art Cleaves, EMA Deputy Director Megan Arsenault, Sheriff William King, Finance Director Lori Lemieux, EMA Training and Response Coordinator Scott Gagne, Register of Deeds Nancy Hammond, Deputy Register of Deeds Wendy Caiazzo, Records Management Specialist Andrew O'Neill, HR Manager Christine Bean, RTC Director Rod Hooper (via Zoom), and EMA Emergency Management Coordinator Stephanie Collins (via Zoom) were present at the meeting.

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ITEM

1. PUBLIC COMMENT(S) ON ANY ITEM(S)

None.

2. MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

- a. Commissioners' meeting of July 1, 2026

MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the minutes of July 1, 2026, as amended.

Commissioner Chenette seconded the motion.

Motion carried 4-0

3. TO APPROVE TREASURER'S WARRANTS

- a. Warrants to be approved on July 1, 2026, in the amount of \$304,366.40

MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the warrant dated July 1, 2026, in the amount of \$304,366.40. Commissioner Chenette seconded the motion.

Motion carried 4-0

- b. Warrants to be approved on July 8, 2026, in the amount of \$683,560.58

MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the warrant dated July 8, 2026, in the amount of \$683,560.58. Commissioner Chenette seconded the motion.

Motion carried 4-0

c. Warrants to be approved on July 15, 2026, in the amount of \$2,331,584.49

MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the warrant dated July 15, 2026, in the amount of \$2,331,584.49. Commissioner Chenette seconded the motion.

Motion carried 4-0

d. Warrants to be approved on July 22, 2026, in the amount of \$831,695.16

MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the warrant dated July 22, 2026, in the amount of \$831,695.16. Commissioner Chenette seconded the motion.

Motion carried 4-0

e. Warrants to be approved on July 29, 2026, in the amount of \$610,836.51

MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the warrant dated July 29, 2026, in the amount of \$610,836.51. Commissioner Chenette seconded the motion.

Motion carried 4-0

4 POVERTY ABATEMENT

Heard in Executive Session pursuant to M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (F) - **WITHDRAWN**

5. TO HEAR ANY REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Chenette announced the York County Transportation and Mobility Forum on August 13 from 6:00-8:00pm in the EMA Room. The forum will bring together stakeholders and the public to discuss current transportation services, identify needs and opportunities, and explore ways to improve coordination and support for transportation initiatives throughout York County. He thanked York County Community Action for helping organize the event and invited all interested residents to attend.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Ron Smith, RHR Smith – Audit Review

Ron Smith, Managing Partner, RHR Smith & Company presented the County's FY2025 audit results and reported that York County received an unmodified opinion, the highest audit opinion available, indicating the financial statements were fairly presented and free of material misstatements. He noted that the firm completed the required financial statement, federal compliance, and state compliance audits.

Mr. Smith stated that the County remains in a strong financial position with a stable fund balance. He explained that year-end cash reserves were elevated due to funds designated for major capital projects, including the Recovery Center and Training Center, and are expected to decrease as those projects move forward. He also discussed the increasing size and complexity of county operations, including new medical services initiatives and upcoming state requirements for separate jail financial reporting.

Mr. Smith reported no significant audit findings, citing only routine administrative and reconciliation matters, and commended Finance Director Lori Lemieux and the Finance Department for their work. County Manager Zinser asked about future jail reporting requirements. Mr. Smith explained that the County will continue to receive a consolidated audit while also producing a separate financial report for jail operations to meet state requirements.

Commissioner Chenette asked how the audit results could be summarized as a letter grade for the public, and Mr. Smith stated that the County's audit would be equivalent to an "A" letter grade.

Commissioner Dutremble noted that growth and major capital projects naturally create new operational challenges. Mr. Smith agreed and stated that monitoring reconciliations and accounting support would be important as the organization continues to grow.

Commissioner Clark thanked Mr. Smith for the presentation, noted that the County appears to be in a strong financial position, and commended the Finance Department for its work.

b. Historical Indexing Contract

County Manager Zinser presented a proposed five-year contract with Just Appraised to digitize, preserve, index, and improve public access to historical County records. He explained that AI-assisted technology would be used to extract searchable information and generate document summaries, improving accessibility to older records.

The project would process approximately 45,000 documents annually over five years and would be funded through the Registry of Deeds preservation fund which has approximately \$1.2 million set aside for preservation, resulting in no tax impact. County Manager Zinser recommended annual payments tied to deliverables rather than prepaying multiple years and noted that the agreement had undergone extensive legal review.

Commissioner Clark asked whether the affected departments supported the proposal and Register of Deeds Nancy Hammond confirmed they did.

Commissioner Chenette asked how the annual processing target was determined. County Manager Zinser and Records Management Specialist Andrew O'Neill explained that the target was reduced from 60,000 to 45,000 documents per year to reflect staffing capacity and the time required to prepare and scan historical records.

MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to approve a five-year contract with Just Appraised in the amount of \$453,740 and to authorize the County Manager to execute the agreement. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

Motion carried 5-0

c. Promotion of Gisette Miles to Corrections Corporal

County Manager Zinser introduced the Sheriff's recommendation to promote Gisette Miles to the position of Corrections Corporal. Sheriff King stated that Gisette Miles has served with the department for approximately ten years, ranked first in the promotional process, and has been an outstanding employee. He expressed strong support for her promotion.

MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the promotion of Gissette Miles to the position of Corrections Corporal with an effective date of July 19, 2026. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.
Motion carried 5-0

d. EMA proposed reorganization plan and staffing recommendations

County Manager Zinser introduced the proposed Emergency Management Agency (EMA) reorganization plan and staffing recommendations. He noted that commissioners received organizational charts outlining the phased reorganization, along with current and proposed job descriptions.

County Manager Zinser explained that discussions regarding EMA's future have been underway for more than a year and intensified following recent staff departures. The proposal is intended to align staffing with the agency's current responsibilities, increasing workload, and future needs while providing a framework for hiring, succession planning, and leadership transitions. He noted that EMA's responsibilities have expanded considerably, particularly in coastal resilience efforts and regional emergency management initiatives.

The proposed long-term organizational structure would increase staffing from seven to twelve positions over several years. County Manager Zinser stated that the initial financial impact would be minimal, with several positions supported through federal and state grants and other available funding sources. While future county funding may eventually be required, he emphasized that no layoffs or terminations are proposed and that implementation would occur over time. He requested approval of the reorganization strategy and invited EMA representatives to provide additional information.

Deputy Director Megan Arsenault provided background on the agency's growth over the past eleven years, noting that EMA has evolved from a three-person department focused on core emergency management functions into a regional resource supporting municipalities, first responders, training efforts, disaster recovery, public outreach, COVID-19 response, drone operations, and coastal resilience initiatives.

Deputy Director Arsenault stated that requests for assistance, volunteer participation, and training activities have increased significantly while staffing has not kept pace. She noted that volunteer participation has grown from approximately 50 to more than 160 individuals and annual training exercises have increased from approximately 10 to 41 per year. She said that staff and volunteers have absorbed growing responsibilities but continued understaffing presents operational challenges and risks associated with employee burnout and future emergency response capacity.

Commissioner Ring expressed concern regarding the proposed addition of five positions, questioning whether increases in population, emergency incidents, or workload justify the expansion. While praising EMA staff and acknowledging their effectiveness, she stated that she would like to see additional data supporting the request. Commissioner Ring also expressed concern about the long-term financial impact on taxpayers, particularly if grant funding decreases in the future, and questioned whether the proposal reflected new responsibilities rather than increased demand for existing services.

Deputy Director Arsenault responded that EMA has operated lean for many years, with staff routinely performing the work of multiple positions. She stated that increasing responsibilities, including the Coastal Resilience Program, volunteer management, preparedness initiatives, and emergency response activities, have significantly increased workload. She noted that the growing Community Emergency

Response Team (CERT) program, which now exceeds 160 volunteers, requires extensive recruiting, training, credentialing, and coordination efforts that have become a substantial operational responsibility.

Commissioner Chenette spoke in support of the proposal, citing EMA's strong reputation throughout the county and state, the importance of coastal resilience efforts, and the increasing impacts of severe storms and coastal erosion. He described the reorganization as strategic, forward-looking, and necessary to ensure the department can meet future challenges.

Commissioner Clark also supported the proposal, citing increasing emergency management demands, including severe weather events, flooding, wildfire risks, and extreme heat. He emphasized that much of EMA's work occurs before emergencies through planning, mitigation, and preparedness efforts and stated that strengthening the department would help ensure continued readiness.

Director Cleaves responded to Commissioner Ring's request for additional data by noting the extensive hours worked by EMA staff, significant overtime demands, and the agency's growing workload. He emphasized that emergency management involves planning and preparedness activities that are not always reflected in disaster statistics and stated that municipalities rely heavily on EMA support and services.

Commissioner Andrews expressed confidence in the expertise and judgment of Director Cleaves and Deputy Director Arsenault. While acknowledging the proposal's timing following the budget process, he said succession planning and the agency's long-term future made the reorganization necessary.

Commissioner Dutremble also supported the proposal, noting that emergency management responsibilities have evolved significantly over the years. Based on his experience in public works, he stated that EMA has consistently assisted municipalities during major emergencies and should be strengthened to meet future challenges.

Commissioner Clark asked whether the Board was being asked to approve the phased implementation plan or the overall strategy. County Manager Zinser clarified that the request was for approval of the overall organizational strategy and the final organizational structure outlined in Phase 7. He stated that implementation details may change over time, that no employees would lose their jobs, and that the timing of future staffing additions would depend on operational needs and available funding.

Deputy Director Arsenault added that the proposal represents a long-term staffing strategy and is not intended to immediately fill all twelve positions. She stated that implementation would occur gradually, using available funding sources and normal hiring processes in coordination with Human Resources and county administration. County Manager Zinser added that the phased approach was designed to allow responsible growth while minimizing budget impacts.

Commissioner Ring confirmed that the proposed job descriptions were part of the EMA Staffing Strategy and noted that she had concerns about adding the positions included in the plan.

MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the plan that was submitted and identified as the EMA Staffing Strategy in its entirety. Commissioner Chenette seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-1, with Commissioner Ring opposing

- e. Deputy County Manager/H.R. Director Linda Hutchins-Corliss to present New Hires/Transfers:

- i. To seek hiring approval of Heather Knight in the position of Per Diem Licensed Practical Nurse in the Integrated Medical and Behavioral Health Division with an effective date of August 3, 2026.

Deputy County Manager/HR Director Hutchins-Corliss noted a change to Ms. Knight's employment. She will be full time rather than Per Diem Tier 1.

MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the hiring of Heather Knight in the position of full time Licensed Practical Nurse in the Integrated Medical and Behavioral Health Division with an effective date of August 3, 2026. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

Motion carried 5-0

- ii. To seek hiring approval of Heather Fraser in the position of Registered Nurse Per Diem Tier 1 in the Integrated Medical and Behavioral Health Division with an effective date of August 10, 2026.

MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the hiring of Heather Fraser in the position of Registered Nurse Per Diem Tier 1 in the Integrated Medical and Behavioral Health Division with an effective date of August 10, 2026. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

Motion carried 5-0

- iii. To seek transfer approval of Melanie Molnar in the position of Per Diem Tier I to Full Time Registered Nurse in the Integrated Medical and Behavioral Health Division with an effective date of July 27, 2026.

MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the transfer of Melanie Molnar to the position of full time Registered Nurse from Per Diem Tier 1 in the Integrated Medical and Behavioral Health Division with an effective date of July 27, 2026. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

Motion carried 5-0

- iv. To seek transfer approval of Adam Granatowski from full time Patrol Deputy to full time Corrections Officer with an effective date of August 3, 2026. - **REMOVED**

Deputy County Manager/HR Director Hutchins-Corliss provided a staffing update for County medical and behavioral health services. She reported that recent hiring efforts for full-time positions should bring the medical division to full staffing, barring any unexpected departures. She noted that the county will continue recruiting per diem employees to strengthen its backup staffing pool. Deputy County Manager/HR Director Hutchins-Corliss also advised that several clinical positions within the behavioral health division remain vacant, and recruitment efforts are ongoing to fill those roles.

Commissioner Ring asked for an update on overall jail staffing levels, specifically the number of corrections officers currently employed.

Deputy County Manager/HR Director Hutchins-Corliss reported that the jail currently has 35 full-time corrections officers, along with approximately 10 leadership positions, including corporals, sergeants, and lieutenants. She noted that the facility also utilizes reserve personnel and estimated there are approximately 12 to 15 reserve corporals. She added that several employees are currently attending the corrections academy, with another academy scheduled to begin in November. Deputy County

Manager/HR Director Hutchins-Corliss stated that recruitment efforts are ongoing, with several applicants currently being processed for future hiring opportunities.

7. OLD BUSINESS

None.

8. TO CONDUCT AN EXECUTIVE SESSION ON PERSONNEL ISSUES PURSUANT TO 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (A), ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY OR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PURSUANT TO 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (C), LABOR NEGOTIATIONS PURSUANT TO 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (D) AND CONSULTATION WITH LEGAL COUNSEL PURSUANT TO 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (E), REVIEW OF CONFIDENTIAL RECORDS PURSUANT TO 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (F)

a. Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405 (6) (A) Personnel matters

**Motion: Commissioner Clark moved to enter executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (A) to consider personnel matters. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.
Motion carried 5-0.**

**Motion: Commissioner Clark moved to come out of executive session. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.
Motion carried 5-0**

Commissioner Clark stated no actions were taken.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT(S) ON ANY ITEM(S)

Heard before Item 7, Executive Session.

None.

10. ADJOURN

**Motion: Commissioner Clark moved to adjourn. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.
Motion carried 5-0
Meeting adjourned at 6:26pm.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Murray, Executive Assistant to the County Manager