

COMMISSIONERS MEETING

April 21, 2021

YORK,ss

At a regular meeting of the County Commissioners of the County of York, begun and holden at the York County Government Building in Alfred, within and for the County of York, being held on Wednesday, April 21, 2021 A. D. at 4:30 P. M.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Richard R. Dutremble
Richard Clark
Robert Andrews
Allen Sicard
Donna Ring

County Manager Gregory Zinser and Deputy County Manager Linda Corliss were present at the meeting.

YOU ARE INVITED TO RISE AND SALUTE THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 21, 2021 ITEM

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

Janet Drew of York (via ZOOM) asked if there would be electric vehicles for the county in the future? She added that she wanted to stress that the Federal Government is giving the counties, states and towns lots of money to do good things. A teacher took a correction officer's job for \$23,000 and Ms. Drew continued that she hoped he brings a teacher culture to the jail but that she doesn't really want us to be hiring those types of people for jails as she believes they should be at the schools. Ms. Drew stated that it was stated at a recent meeting in Penobscot County that 80% of students would benefit from mental health care. We need to look at organizations to do this, she stated. One other point Ms. Drew made was that Commissioner Liberty of the Maine Department of Corrections recently stated that (jail/corrections officer) positions were a solid job opportunity. Mrs. Drew Stated that she wants the "teacher jobs" to be there. People don't want those solid jobs, continued Janet Drew. They'd rather do something that is not demoralizing.

County Manager Zinser responded to Ms. Drew's comments. He stated that electric vehicles are not something the County has looked at or is

contemplating. Our vehicles are primarily first responder vehicles. He added that perhaps in future meetings we can address some of what you've said. Commissioner Clark clarified Ms. Drew's comment of a corrections officer job at a salary of \$23,000.00. He stated that our Correction Officers make at least \$36,000.00 annually. Janet Drew thanked him for that clarification.

2 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS:

- a. Regular meeting of April 7, 2021-Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

3 TO APPROVE TREASURER'S WARRANTS

- a. Warrants dated April 7, 2021 in the amount of \$562,142.83- Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the warrant. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.
- b. Warrants dated April 14, 2021 in the amount of \$413,524.25- Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the warrant. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

4 TO HEAR ANY REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

None

5 TO HEAR ANY REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY MANAGER

No formal reports.

6 NEW BUSINESS

- a. Commissioner review, discussion and possible approval of FOP contract from July 1, 2017-June 30, 2020-
County Manager Zinser explained to the Commissioners items that were agreed to in this contract such as defining the roles and responsibilities of Contract deputies and how internal investigations are to proceed. He added that the majority of the items were agreed upon during arbitration. County Manager Zinser stated that the Union members would each receive a \$4,500 signing bonus.
Commissioner Ring asked if the \$4,500 signing bonus was for all current employees who are in the FOP Union. The County Manager responded that it included all currently employed as of the date of signing of the contract. Commissioner Ring clarified that therefore any employees who have left recently wouldn't get it? The County Manager stated that they would not.
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the FOP Union contract from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2020 and authorize the County Manager to sign the document. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.
- b. Commissioner review, discussion and possible approval of FOP contract

from July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2022-

County Manager Zinser explained that this contract incorporates all of the changes contained in the previous contract as well as adding additional funds towards health insurance and both pay scales. There is a shift differential now for the Officer in Charge of an extra \$1.50 per hour. Also, it was agreed to a re-opener as it pertains to the OIC with the addition of the new rank of corporals.

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the FOP contract for the period of July 1, 2020 to June 20, 2022 and to authorize the County Manager to sign the contract. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

- c. H.R. Director, Linda Corliss to request hiring request for Diane St. Pierre in the position of Full-Time Deeds Clerk with an effective hiring date of May 3, 2021.-

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the hiring of Diane St. Pierre in the position of full-time deeds clerk with an effective hiring date of May 3, 2021. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0. Commissioner Ring asked what the starting rate of pay is. H.R. Director Corliss replied, \$15.00 per hour.

- d. American Rescue plan discussion- The County Manager reminded the Commissioners that a couple of meetings ago they had a brief conversation regarding the plan and that he had advised them at some time in the near future we would need to have some additional conversations. The County Manager added that he is still waiting for some guidance from the treasury so this conversation should be at the 30,000 ft. level. We still don't know what our allowable ways to spend this money is yet but that he did provide to the Commissioners a document containing a brief overview of allowable use of funds in regards to responding to the public health emergency from COVID or it's negative, economic impacts.

The County Manager reminded all that the Jail budget for next year will be quite a bit lower as it was established using today's numbers (money received) resulting in a small formula allocation from the State of Maine this year. Water, sewer or broadband infrastructure are some of the allowable uses, stated the County Manager. This document does state that we are unable to transfer money to cities and towns.

The County Manager told the Commissioners that it would help him to know where the Board might be going with ideas on how they'd like to spend the funds.

Commissioner Ring asked if other county facilities (jail) are seeing a decrease in their population numbers? County Manager Zinser replied, most likely, yes but a lot of other counties have overtaken us in population numbers. Sheriff King informed all that the population today is 126. The County Manager added that for the large majority of the year we have been hovering in the 80's.

Commissioner Dutremble asked if the 126 included include our inmates

housed at the Cumberland County jail. Sheriff King replied that it did not.

Commissioner Dutremble asked about extending the public sewer system to the jail? County Manager Zinser replied that they have talked about this with the Sanford Sewer District and it won't be feasible. There is a whole litany of things that would have to happen. Commissioner Dutremble asked if we can build our own treatment plant?

County Manager Zinser replied, yes.

The County Manager stated broadband is another use but that the State is also going to be getting \$100 million for that project.

Commissioner Ring asked about a mental health facility/recovery center.

County Manager Zinser stated that there have been initial, random conversations that have occurred. He added that there is a bubble in the court system that is going to pop and there will be services that clientele are going to be needing. The County Manager informed all that he, the Sheriff and D.A. have been looking at the CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out on the Streets) program out of Oregon. It is a different way to police response and brings on clinical level social workers to assist with actual treatment of substance abuse and mental health. We are seeing a rise in overdose deaths and severe lack of treatment, commented the County Manager. Right now, Layman Way is really the only show in town. Their numbers are down because the court hearings are down.

County Manager Zinser continued that the only detox center in Portland is shut down right now. "Building a big, new building on the jail land is something to look at but, stated County Manager Zinser, I don't know at the end of the day if the guidance will say we can do so." He asked the Commissioners, "what are the avenues that you want me to pursue. I can do a little bit of research and report back to you."

Commissioner Sicard asked what the parameters around how long we have to spend the \$40 million? County Manager Zinser responded that we have until 12-31-2024 to spend the money. He added that it will be in two deposits, with the first being in the amount of \$20 million. He cautioned the Board it estimates right now until it hits our bank account and no changes are made in Washington.

Commissioner Sicard stated that the county has the opportunity to go big with some kind of project and infrastructure and change. A lot of counties are going with Broadband, continued Commissioner Sicard. He continued that he thinks we have the opportunity with 75 acres to do something more. Maybe a mini pumping station and additional beds as well as halfway houses to get people out to the workforce. The County would have two years to build it out and it would serve the whole county. The County Manager clarified that it does state in the document that anybody receiving these funds can transfer it to a private, non-profit. He added that there have been some conversations regarding whether or not we can partner with a town to work with water, broadband, etc. This would make for a cumbersome project, stated County Manager

Zinser as how would we choose one town over the other.

Commissioner Ring stated that one of her concerns with “let’s go big as this is one time fund and we start building buildings is that we need to remember we will have to have all these towns help us pay for operating these facilities. It will be a huge cost down the road once we complete the buildings. Tax payers of this county will have to pick up this bill.

Commissioner Dutremble responded that Layman Way has proven that every one person it helps, it helps ten people down the road. In the long run, it saves money. Commissioner Ring replied that she does believe that but we have to make sure the towns are on board.

Commissioner Sicard suggested maybe partnering with non-profits already in business would be wise. County Manager Zinser agreed that if we were to go down that road (detox center), we will have operational costs and would have to work with organizations. There has to be partnerships. He added that we looked at running a detox center a few years ago it was \$1.5 million.

The County Manager mentioned that another item where assistance is needed is transportation. He suggested looking into taking some funds to create some type of transportation system. The County Manager stated that he recently met with people from Layman Way and Sanford Housing Authority who told him transportation in general is a large need in the County. The County could partner with some non-profit to create this, stated County Manager Zinser.

Commissioner Ring asked the County Manager if he meets regularly with the rural towns? The County Manager replied that there is no more 12 town group. Commissioner Ring suggested that the County Manager maybe find out with rural towns what town managers are looking at. The County Manager replied that only 14 of the 19 towns have managers.

Commissioner Sicard commented that transit is big in this bill. We could bring Biddeford-Saco in instead of buying vans. The County Manager asked if the Commissioners had any other objectives? He added that he will e-mail the guidance right out to them as soon as he receives it.

Commissioner Andrews suggested perhaps looking into uber-type of transportation. He stated that he can see that transportation is a very reasonable and appropriate use of the funds. People in the rural areas in York County need to be able to get to jobs. He added that maybe we put together a system and think outside the box of how it can be done.

Commissioner Dutremble recommended looking further into the feasibility of doing a treatment plant. Commissioner Sicard recommended that the County Manager reach out to transit operators. Commissioner Andrews suggested the County Manager look at places in other parts of the country as to what they do for transportation in rural counties.

County Manager Zinser informed the Commissioners that he has reached out to Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission about broadband. There needs to be a study first for a needs- assessment in the

county. Commissioner Andrews added that mental health is a really big direction as far as detox or halfway house situations.

Commissioner Clark stated that he wants to see more guidance and that until then he doesn't find this (conversation) particularly useful so far. He added that he feels the County should be looking at energy efficiency projects. Some money could be used with opioid issues if we can fill the beds, commented Commissioner Clark. Right now, the beds aren't full. Before we build another dozen beds, we need to make sure we have people that want them, stated Commissioner Clark. He added that Maine has a high population of elderly people and some people shouldn't be driving at a certain age. He suggested the County Manager talk to York County Agency on Aging.

County Manager Zinser stated that this gives him some things between now and when the guidance comes out. We will need more input at some point with non-profits and citizens, said the County Manager.

- e. Sheriff's Office Update (executive session may be necessary- Title 1, Section 402, Subsection 3, paragraph Q. Q. (REALLOCATED FROM T. 1, §402, sub-§3, ¶P) Security plans, staffing plans, security procedures, architectural drawings or risk assessments prepared for emergency events that are prepared for or by or kept in the custody of the Department of Corrections or a county jail if there is a reasonable possibility that public release or inspection of the records would endanger the life or physical safety of any individual or disclose security plans and procedures not generally known by the general public. Information contained in records covered by this paragraph may be disclosed to state and county officials if necessary to carry out the duties of the officials or the Department of Corrections under conditions that protect the information from further disclosure; [2015, c. 335, §1 (AMD).])

Commissioner Clark motioned to enter into executive session pursuant to Title 1, Section 402, Subsection 3, paragraph Q.

Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

Commissioner Clark motioned to come out of executive session.

Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

No action taken.

****ITEMS 7 AND 9 HEARD PRIOR TO EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEM 6e.****

7 OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Ring asked the County Manager if it would be possible to purchase tablets for the Commissioners to have their meeting packets and emails contained on.

Commissioner Sicard motioned to approve the purchase of five (5) tablets – one for each Commissioner. Commissioner Ring seconded the motion. Vote 4-1 (Commissioner Clark opposed).

Commissioner Sicard stated that he has heard that vaccination booster shots will now perhaps be necessary in 6 months. Our Lease runs out on

December 21, 2021. Will we keep the Center open or are we waiting to hear from the Maine CDC for guidance? County Manager Zinser responded that he doesn't have an answer but that the hope was to shut it down and the booster would be given by one's primary care physician.

County Manager Zinser informed all that he visited the Center today and gave kudos to EMA and Maine Health Care. Lots of the vaccinators were local firefighters and EMTs.

Commissioner Ring asked the County Manager about which contracts we are entering into negotiations with. County Manager Zinser replied that the FOP contract is good for 18 months and we have just started conversations with MSEA. Their contract runs out on 6-30-21. The NCEU contract expires on 12, 31,2021. We are having conversations about the next contract, stated the County Manager.

Commissioner Ring commented that she would love us to have contracts done prior to the budget with a 3- year contract for every one of them.

County Manager Zinser responded that the bigger issue is where the unions are. Sometimes it works and sometimes it does not (to get a three year contract.)

- 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)**

None

- 9 PUBLIC COMMENT(S) ON ANY ITEM(S)**

Janet Drew commented (via ZOOM) that everyone wants Broadband but that there are different ways its delivered including 5G mini microwave transmission. If we could get successful intervention in school areas she believes that to be more important to include mental health services. There is the issue of the crisis of poverty, low wages and the stress it puts on families as well as housing issues. Maybe getting some services in their own communities after de-tox, would be important. Climate and people, stated Ms. Drew, are what the County should look at. Sometimes we don't need another building. We need to think about using the building we already have and put the money into public services, concluded Janet Drew.

- 10 ADJOURN**

Commissioner Clark motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.