

COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

September 16, 2026

The regular meeting of the York County Commissioners was held on Wednesday, September 16, 2026, at 4:30 PM at the York County Government Building in Alfred.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Richard R. Dutremble
Richard Clark
Robert Andrews

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Justin Chenette
Donna Ring

STAFF PRESENT:

County Manager Greg Zinser, Deputy County Manager/HR Director Linda Hutchins-Corliss, Facilities Director Rick deRochemont, EMA Director Art Cleaves, Register of Probate Carol Lovejoy, Major Craig Sanford, Finance Director Lori Lemieux, and RTC Director Rod Hooper.

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

ITEM

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

David Plavin, Vice President of Save Our Shores Saco, thanked the Commissioners and staff for approving additional Emergency Management staffing, noting its importance to coastal communities and countywide beach management planning efforts. He expressed support for the initiative and offered assistance from Save Our Shores. Mr. Plavin also endorsed Katie DeWater's appointment, stating she would be a valuable asset to the County.

2. MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

- a. Commissioners' meeting of September 2, 2026

Commissioner Clark had one edit; Line 77 change Trail Manager to Trial Manager.

MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the minutes of September 2, 2026, as amended. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

Motion carried 3-0

3. TO APPROVE TREASURER'S WARRANTS

- a. Warrants to be approved on September 2, 2026, in the amount of \$482,047.31

**MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the warrant dated September 2, 2026, in the amount of \$482,047.31. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.
Motion carried 3-0**

- b. Warrants to be approved on September 9, 2026, in the amount of \$395,177.01

**MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the warrant dated September 9, 2026, in the amount of \$395,177.01. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.
Motion carried 3-0**

4. TO HEAR ANY REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

None.

5. NEW BUSINESS

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

- i. To seek transfer approval of Scott Gagne from the position of Training and Response Coordinator to the position of Emergency Response Manager in the EMA Office with an effective date of September 21, 2026.

**MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the transfer of Scott Gagne from the position of Training and Response Coordinator to the position of Emergency Response Manager in the EMA Office with an effective date of September 21, 2026. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.
Motion carried 3-0**

- ii. To seek hiring approval of Katelyn DeWater in the position of Reserve Disaster Assistance Responder II in the EMA Office with an effective date of September 21, 2026.

**MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the hiring of Katelyn DeWater in the position of Reserve Disaster Assistance Responder II in the EMA Office with an effective date of September 21, 2026. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.
Motion carried 3-0**

- iii. To seek hiring approval of Richard Smith in the position of Reserve Public Safety Instructor III in the Regional Training Center with an effective date of September 21, 2026.

**MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the hiring of Richard Smith in the position of Reserve Public Safety Instructor III in the Regional Training Center with an effective date of September 21, 2026. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.
Motion carried 3-0**

- iv. To seek hiring approval of Diane Crowell in the position of Full time Registered Nurse in the Integrated Medical and Behavioral Health Division with an effective date of September 21, 2026.

MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the hiring of Diane Crowell in the position of Full time Registered Nurse in the Integrated Medical and Behavioral Health Division with an effective date of September 21, 2026. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.
Motion carried 3-0

- v. To seek hiring approval of Johnna Garneau in the position of Clerk III in the Sheriff's Office with an effective date of September 21, 2026.

MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the hiring of Johnna Garneau in the position of Clerk III in the Sheriff's Office with an effective date of September 21, 2026. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.
Motion carried 3-0

- b. Carol Lovejoy, Register of Probate, to give update on Probate operations

Carol Lovejoy provided an update on Probate Office initiatives, including developing a partnership with Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine (AFFM) to better assist families seeking emergency guardianships, recruiting additional court visitors, and managing statewide access credentials for confidential adult guardianship and conservatorship records. She reported continued success as a U.S. passport acceptance facility and outlined staff development and process-improvement goals for the coming year.

Ms. Lovejoy highlighted ongoing efforts to preserve and improve access to historic probate records dating back to 1687, including relocating records from multiple courthouse storage locations and continuing the digitization and uploading of archived documents. County Manager Zinser discussed exploring opportunities to coordinate with existing records digitization projects to streamline the process.

Commissioner Dutremble asked whether the former law library could be used to store Probate records. County Manager Zinser explained that the County has been exploring several options to relocate the records from the courthouse basement, including the law library. He noted that previous plans to install high-density storage were limited by structural and floor load concerns identified through engineering reviews. The County is evaluating the law library and other courthouse spaces, including portions of the Superior Court courtroom, to determine suitable storage solutions that will better preserve and improve access to historic Probate records.

- c. Review and possible award of Vehicle Bid for the Sheriff's Office

County Manager Zinser presented the annual cruiser purchase request for six vehicles from Arundel Ford at a total cost of \$273,654, noting the purchase is within budget and that only one bid was received.

Commissioner Clark asked whether municipal police departments could participate in a joint vehicle purchase to increase buying power and encourage additional bids. Major Sanford explained that joint purchasing has been explored in the past but is difficult due to differing replacement schedules and purchasing needs among agencies. County Manager Zinser agreed that cooperative purchasing is a good concept but noted previous efforts among municipalities have been challenging to implement.

Commissioner Clark encouraged continuing discussions with municipal departments about potential future joint purchases to seek cost savings and greater competition among vendors. He thanked Major Sanford for the information.

MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to award the Sheriff's Office vehicle bid to Arundel Ford for the purchase of six vehicles at \$45,609.00 per vehicle, for a total cost of \$273,654.00.

Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

Motion carried 3-0

- d. Set date and time for the Spirit of America Award Ceremony (recommended: November 18, 2026, at 3pm, prior to the Commissioners' meeting).

MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to set the date and time of the Spirit of America Award Ceremony for November 18, 2026, at 3pm. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

Motion carried 3-0

ASIDE: County Manager Zinser suggested the Board discuss expanding the Spirit of America award nomination process at a future meeting. Commissioners could consider either submitting nominations individually by district or continuing with nominations as a Board. County Manager Zinser noted there is nothing preventing either approach and recommended placing the matter on a future agenda for discussion. The Board expressed support for moving the conversation forward.

- e. Community Development Block Grant – York County Entitlement Status

County Manager Zinser reported that York County has exceeded the population threshold to qualify as a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement county, making it eligible to apply directly to HUD for an estimated \$1.8 million annually rather than through the State of Maine.

He explained that becoming an entitlement county would require significant planning and cooperation agreements with all York County municipalities, except Biddeford, which already has entitlement status. Because participation from every municipality is required, the effort cannot proceed if any municipality declines.

To allow time for evaluation and municipal outreach, County Manager Zinser secured a one-year deferral from HUD. While implementation would involve substantial administrative effort and costs, he noted the program could provide additional funding for infrastructure, affordable housing, and other projects benefiting low- and moderate-income residents. He recommended continuing to pursue the opportunity and requested the Board's support.

Commissioner Clark supported exploring entitlement status and asked how municipal funding requests would be evaluated. County Manager Zinser said participating municipalities would establish a governing or advisory council to review, score, and rank projects before forwarding recommendations to the Board of Commissioners for final approval.

Commissioner Clark also asked whether future growth in Sanford could allow it to become its own entitlement community and potentially affect York County's eligibility. County Manager Zinser said this is possible and would depend on whether Sanford chose to pursue its own allocation or remain in the county program. He noted that the long-term impact is uncertain.

MOTION: Commissioner Clark moved to authorize the County Manager to move forward with the necessary work to obtain Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement status for the upcoming fiscal year . Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

Motion carried 3-0

f. November 3, 2026, General Election – Treasurer’s position

County Manager Zinser reminded the Board that it had previously voted to place a ballot question before voters seeking the elimination of the elected County Treasurer position. He emphasized the need for public outreach and education before the election, including through newspaper articles, social media, and the County website, to explain the Board’s rationale and encourage voter support for the measure.

County Manager Zinser noted that common questions from the public include the need for a "second set of eyes" on financial matters and how the Treasurer's duties would be handled if the elected position were eliminated. He explained that the Board of Commissioners would appoint an individual to serve as Treasurer, consistent with practices used by most municipalities, where the position is often assigned to a chief administrative officer or finance official. He added that the appointment would be made by Board vote and invited Commissioners to share additional points they believe should be communicated to the public.

Commissioner Clark stated his support for eliminating the elected County Treasurer position, noting that the office requires only basic eligibility qualifications and does not require financial management, accounting, budgeting, or related professional expertise. He expressed concern that an individual without the necessary skills could be elected to oversee matters involving a county budget exceeding \$25 million. Commissioner Clark also observed that during his tenure as both a Budget Committee member and County Commissioner, he has had limited interaction with county treasurers and believes the position currently provides little practical value to county operations.

Additionally, he noted that maintaining the elected position may expose the County to certain employment-related liabilities. For these reasons, he supports replacing the elected office with an appointed individual who has appropriate training and experience in accounting and budget management.

Commissioner Andrews stated that York County has outgrown the need for an elected County Treasurer position. He noted that the role has become largely administrative, consisting primarily of signing checks, and no longer provides sufficient value to justify maintaining the office. Commissioner Andrews described the position as unnecessary and expressed support for eliminating it as a way to streamline county operations and improve efficiency.

Commissioner Dutremble, drawing on his background in finance and experience establishing financial management structures, stated that York County created a Finance Director position to assume the responsibilities traditionally associated with the Treasurer's office. He commented that the Treasurer position has become obsolete, noting that the County's financial operations are professionally managed and subject to regular audits. As a result, he expressed support for eliminating the elected Treasurer position.

County Manager Zinser addressed the common argument that the elected Treasurer provides an additional layer of financial oversight, questioning whether that is truly the case given that the position requires no specific qualifications or financial expertise. He noted that the County has long operated under a professional financial management structure, including a Finance Director position established when the County faced significant financial challenges.

County Manager Zinser stated that the Treasurer position has become antiquated and obsolete in light of the complexities of modern financial management, including accounting, grant administration, and the

management of federal and state funds. He added that many counties are moving toward professional finance leadership models and remarked that York County is already ahead of that trend.

Commissioner Dutremble noted that governmental accounting standards have changed significantly over the past two decades, making it essential for those overseeing county finances to have current financial knowledge and expertise.

County Manager Zinser agreed, adding that accountability is strengthened through the County's professional Finance Director structure because the position is directly employed and overseen by the County. In contrast, an elected Treasurer may or may not possess relevant experience or qualifications, and the County has no control over who is elected to the position. County Manager Zinser reiterated the Board's support for eliminating the elected Treasurer position and stated that staff would begin sharing information with the public explaining the rationale behind the proposed change before the November 3, 2026, election.

g. Zoom setting update

County Manager Zinser reported that, following issues experienced during the previous Zoom meeting, staff made minor security changes to the County's Zoom settings. Screen sharing has been disabled unless specifically authorized by the meeting host, and users of the shared Zoom account will be reminded not to alter those settings.

County Manager Zinser noted that while participants can still activate their cameras after being admitted from the waiting room, disabling screen sharing allows staff to remove disruptive participants more quickly and limit exposure to inappropriate content. He added that some of Zoom's recommended safeguards, such as restricting access, requiring registration, or limiting distribution of meeting links, are not practical for a public body that must provide open public access. The County will continue monitoring the settings and adjusting as needed.

6. OLD BUSINESS

None.

7. 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 3-0.

Motion: Commissioner Clark moved to come out of executive session. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

Motion carried 3-0

**Motion: Commissioner Clark moved to approve the request for a Leave of Absence for the period of October 6, 2026, through January 6, 2027. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.
Motion carried 3-0**

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

None.

9. ADJOURN

Motion: Commissioner Clark moved to adjourn. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

Motion carried 5-0

Meeting adjourned at 5:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Murray, Executive Assistant to the County Manager