

COMMISSIONERS MEETING

August 17, 2022

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, August 17, 2022 A. D. at 4:30 P. M.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Richard Clark
Richard Dutremble
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

08-17-22 ITEM

- 1 **PUBLIC COMMENT(S) ON ANY ITEM(S)**
None

- 2 **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS:**
 - a. Commissioners meeting of August 3, 2022
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the minutes with one correction.
Commissioner Ring seconded the minutes.
Vote 5-0.

- 3 **TO APPROVE TREASURER'S WARRANTS**
 - a. Warrants to be approved on August 3, 2022 in the amount of \$936,605.68
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the warrant in the amount of \$936,605.68. Commissioner Dutremble seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

 - b. Warrants to be approved on August 10, 2022 in the amount of \$577,313.13
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the warrant in the amount of \$577,313.13. Commissioner Dutremble seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

- 4 **TO HEAR ANY REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Clark asked if the Maine County Commissioners' meeting was still scheduled for September 14th in Augusta. Commissioner Dutremble replied that it was. County Manager Zinser added that he will confirm the location.

5 NEW BUSINESS

a. H.R. Director Linda Corliss to request approval for the following new hires/transfers:

i. Transfer of Matt Jones from temporary Jail Investigator to reserve Patrol Deputy in the Sheriff's Office with a transfer date of August 22, 2022

County Manager Zinser reminded the Commissioners that a year ago they approved the creation of a temporary position for a Jail Investigator. H.R. Director Corliss asked that this employee, Matt Jones, now be moved to a reserve patrol deputy so that he can still be involved in the ongoing investigations. He did resign, she explained, but, in his position, he can still be involved.

Commissioner Ring asked what his rate of pay would be. H.R. Director Corliss replied that it would be as a starting reserve rate of pay.

Commissioner Clark asked does this temporary position now go away? H.R. Director Corliss explained that yes it does. She added that they tried to negotiate with the Teamsters to keep the position but that they were not successful.

County Manager Zinser added that this position is in the budget. H.R. Director Corliss stated that the Captains are not willing to extend the temporary position at this time.

Commissioner Sicard asked what happens with new investigations? County Manager Zinser replied that this position is needed and that they are still trying to work with the Teamsters. The current captains do not have the necessary qualifications to move the investigations.

Commissioner Sicard asked what is the rationale the Union is using to block the extension? County Manager Zinser replied that none was given.

Commissioner Ring motioned to approve the transfer of Matt Jones into the position of reserve deputy with the reserve deputy starting rate of pay.

Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Clark stated that he will vote for this transfer but that there needs to be a discussion perhaps in executive session as this position needs to be filled.

Vote 5-0.

b. To review, discuss and seek Commissioners' approval of the engineering and architectural contracts for the Regional Training and Recovery Facilities
County Manager Zinser explained that there is a 31-page addendum necessary for ARPA regulations along with the contracts for mechanical and civil engineering. He explained that the housing contract is \$440,000, the Oakpoint contract is \$477,000, the training center contract is \$1,050,000 and the Recovery Center is \$1,050,000 for a total cost of \$3,017,000.

These are standard contracts and have been reviewed by our legal counsel, explained County Manager Zinser. These contracts will move the process forward.

Commissioner Dutremble questioned the rate of pay of \$70.00 an hour for typists. County Manager Zinser responded that they are probably transcriptionists.

Commissioner Ring asked why we are paying for the housing project if Sanford Housing Authority is doing it? County Manager Zinser explained that we said we would pay for the engineering portion of the project.

Commissioner Sicard asked about the sewer for the projects.

County Manager Zinser explained for public sewer the cost to hook right into the buildings through Sanford Sewer would be around \$4.5 million. It will be more economical to get our own private sewer, he stated.

Commissioner Ring asked if the housing would be apartments. County Manager Zinser replied that they would be 40 single occupancy apartments.

Commissioner Dutremble asked what the estimated rate of flow had been figured to be. County Manager Zinser responded that he would forward that information to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Sicard suggested having further discussions with Sanford Sewer District asking for reduced rates for us if we pay to have the public sewer run as several others could tie into it.

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the Oakpoint contract for civil engineering work utilizing ARPA funds in the amount of \$477,000. Commissioner Dutremble seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the Sanford Housing contract to Lassel Architects utilizing ARPA funding in the amount of \$440,000. Commissioner Dutremble seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

Commissioner Clark motioned to award the recovery center contract for engineering to Lassel Architects utilizing ARPA funding in the amount of \$1,125,000. Commissioner Dutremble seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the engineering contract for the Training Center in the amount of \$1,050,000 utilizing ARPA funds to Lassel Architects. Vote 5-0.

County Manager Zinser reminded the Commissioners that there is also already \$1 million set aside for these projects as there will be other fees such as geotechnical and traffic engineering.

Commissioner Ring asked if the Town of Alfred was on board with these projects. County Manager Zinser replied that they will go to the Town once costs are firm. He added that he had a recent meeting with Gordon Smith from the Governor's office regarding gap funding and operational expenses for these facilities. He will be having an onsite meeting with Mr. Smith and others in a couple of weeks.

As far as other ARPA projects, the County Manager continued, the HVAC study is completed. As a reminder, this study was approved by the Board a while ago. They will now consolidate it down to lay man's terms. This building is good. The courthouse could use some ionization strips to charge the air. The jail needs the roof top units replaced. Also, we would like to redo the medical wing to add negative pressure in the entire wing. New boilers need to be installed from an efficiency perspective.

County Manager Zinser stated that the ARPA list will need to be realigned in the next couple of months. He continued that for the next meeting we will have more of an ARPA update to review funding.

He added that he is working with Chief Rod Hooper to establish an operating budget for the Training Center and with Jen Ouellette to establish an operating budget for the Recovery Center. We will be able to receive Maine Care reimbursements.

Commissioner Dutremble asked if there has been any funding from the Federal Government. County Manager Zinser replied we have initial approval of \$1.9 million in CDS funding for simulators. This still needs to go through the steps, but everyone seems to be on board.

c. Discussion of County hiring practices

County Manager Zinser explained to the Board that one of the road blocks that we go through is the speed at which we can hire.

H.R. Director Corliss addressed the Board and stated that the hiring environment has changed. We have been trying to hire legal secretaries and before we can hire them as we have to wait for a Commissioners' meeting to seek approval, they have taken another position with another company.

The hiring of corrections officers is a long, tedious process.

County Manager Zinser explained that once someone is interviewed and we then contact them to tell them they have the job we have to tell them they cannot start until we get Commissioner approval which can be two to three more weeks. By then, they have taken another job.

H.R. Director Corliss stated that they have lost two legal secretary applicants in the last two weeks.

County Manager Zinser stated that we currently have four corrections officers in the hiring process. If we cannot move the process along, they will most likely find another job.

H.R. Director Corliss added that they are looking at other hold ups as well and speeding up the review of applications and interviewing time frames.

Commissioner Clark stated that the Commission can solve one small piece. In the past six years of him serving on the Board, he stated that he does not recall having said no to hiring of anyone brought forth. We can delegate the hiring to Linda and Greg and then ratify their decision at the next meeting.

Commissioner Dutremble stated that it is in the County's bylaws that the Commissioners have to approve all hirings.

Commissioner Ring stated that she is not comfortable giving up that authority. We meet twice a month and always make ourselves available if needed for hiring approval. She questioned why MSEA only received a 3% raise and not 7% like all others.

County Manager Zinser stated because they rejected that offer and asked for more.

Commissioner Ring asked so then everything just stopped? (no more communication)

County Manager Zinser replied, yes, because we are going to be filing a Prohibitive Practice Complaint.

Commissioner Ring asked couldn't another member of the union step in? We have a Deputy Manager and they (the Union) have a Vice-President.

County Manager Zinser responded, no.

Commissioner Ring replied, so all MSEA members have to suffer?

County Manager Zinser responded that the offer was rejected.

Commissioner Ring stated that we are sitting here talking about not being able to hire. Why didn't they get 7% like everyone else?

County Manager Zinser stated again that it was offered and they rejected it.

Commissioner Ring replied so there have been no further conversations?

County Manager Zinser replied, no.

Commissioner Ring stated that we gave it to everyone else. Some non-union employees got a 28% increase to their salaries. We couldn't make it equal?

County Manager Zinser replied that it was rejected.

Commissioner Chairperson Sicard interjected and stated that we are trying to resolve hiring practices now. Could we temporarily change our bylaws?

Commissioner Ring commented that we have incentives to aid in hiring corrections officers. Could we look at this for others?

H.R. Director Corliss replied that we are looking at this.
Commissioner Clark asked that H.R. Director Corliss and Attorney O'Brien work on a written policy for this (temporary change to hiring procedures) within the statutory bounds and bring it back to us.
H.R. Director Corliss replied that she will have this document for the next meeting.
County Manager Zinser stated that they will also incorporate the changes in hiring standards with the Corrections Officers, also to have them in line with the Maine Department of Corrections.
Commissioner Sicard suggested perhaps also include sign on bonuses for administrative positions, also.
H.R. Director Corliss informed all that they are looking for a professional recruiter for corrections perhaps on a temporary basis.

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)

None

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

Janet Drew commented via ZOOM that all the ARPA money is being spent on brick and mortar. There are people already doing this work, she stated. She asked, what happens if people fail? She added that the county is spending like there doesn't have to be a community bond.

She asked who the housing will be for. Ms. Drew went on to state that there are 191 residents in jail awaiting trial. 75 of those are on the MAT program. She continued that it was just on the news that someone waiting three years to go to trial. Ms. Drew stated, *You are going in the wrong direction to get only 40 beds. I'm mad.*"

County Manager Zinser informed Ms. Drew that the housing is a place where those who leave the treatment center but are still undergoing outpatient treatment can temporarily live. He added that they all agree there is a huge population of our jail awaiting trial but that is the judicial system and State laws. That is why we are looking to do these other programs. This is why we have pre-trial program contracts that currently are keeping 131 people out of jail. Twenty people are in the Layman Way Recovery Center and 75 in the MAT program at the jail. County Manager Zinser continued that we will increase this by using brick and mortar as you need places to put people in. He added that until laws change, we are doing what the laws tell us to do and we share your frustrations.

Marian Anderson commented via ZOOM and stated that she was an abolitionist. She asked if this treatment was forced and what the process is to determine (who

enters treatment). Ms. Anderson continued that lack of staffing is not unique to York County. Police Officers are leaving their field. Criminalizing those with drug disorders isn't working, stated Ms. Anderson. You should be investing in organizations who are already doing this work. Forcing doesn't work. Commissioner Sicard replied that the Layman Way program works as a diversionary program. It is a voluntary program in conjunction with the Sheriff and District Attorney. The MAT program at the jail is also voluntary. Commissioner Sicard added that York County is the biggest provider of recovery services in the State of Maine.

9 ADJOURN

Commissioner Clark motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Dutremble seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.