

1 **COMMISSIONERS MEETING**

2 **March 15, 2023**

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5 *YORK,ss*

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7 At a regular meeting of the County Commissioners of the County of York, begun and  
8 holden at the York County Government Building in Alfred, within and for the County of York,  
9 being held on Wednesday, March 15, 2023 A. D. at 5:00 P. M.

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12 **COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**

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- 14 Richard R. Dutremble
- 15 Richard Clark
- 16 Robert Andrews
- 17 Justin Chenette
- 18 Donna Ring
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21 County Manager Gregory Zinser and Deputy County Manager Linda Corliss were present at the  
22 meeting.

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

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26 **03-15-2023 ITEM**

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28 **1 PUBLIC COMMENT(S) ON ANY ITEM(S)**

29 None

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31 **2 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS:**

- 32 a. Commissioners’ regular meeting of March 1, 2023
- 33 Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Andrews
- 34 seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

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36 **3 TO APPROVE TREASURER’S WARRANTS**

- 37 a. Warrants to be approved on March 1, 2023 in the amount of \$1,149,596.69
- 38 Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the warrants. Commissioner
- 39 Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.
- 40 b. Warrants to be approved on February 22, 2023 in the amount of \$624,916.21
- 41 Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the warrants. Commissioner
- 42 Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

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44 **4 TO HEAR ANY REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY**  
45 **COMMISSIONERS**

46 Commissioner Chenette informed all that his next office hours will be on March  
47 28th at 6:30 p.m. via ZOOM.

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Commissioner Chenette asked County Manager Zinser how will we be promoting the new budget Commissioners' meeting date?

County Manager Zinser responded that we will be posting to social media and the newspaper.

Commissioner Chenette also spoke about Cumberland County's Annual Report that he recently looked at and commented that it was very nice. Is this something that we have ever explored doing at some point he asked? Commissioner Chenette added that it is a good way to educate people on what a great job our staff is doing and help to distribute the budget.

Commissioner Ring replied that the county used to have an annual report printed up that included a report from every department head with statistics.

## **5 TO HEAR A PROPERTY TAX DENIAL ABATEMENT APPEAL**

### **a. Usher v. Town of Buxton**

County Manager Zinser swore in Tony Buxton who spoke on behalf of Mrs. Usher. Commission Chairperson Dutremble informed all that this appeal will be treated as a de novo Hearing.

Tony Buxton addressed the Board and stated that he would like to clarify a couple of things. First, Mrs. Usher would like to thank Kathy Dumont for her assistance. Next, Mr. Buxton explained that although he is an attorney, he is here as that of a friend to Mrs. Usher and her late husband. Secondly, this is not an avoidance to paying taxes. We are asking you to look at the items submitted on a de novo basis and are requesting a reduction of the assessment rendered by the Town of Buxton of \$650,000 be reduced to \$500,000, stated Mr. Buxton.

Mr. Buxton summarized that there are three ways to assess property. One is the income basis that is used for commercial property, another is market value and then the cost or replacement basis. Mrs. Usher hired Appraiser, Heather Cote to conduct an appraisal of her property. Ms. Cote's appraisal was \$525,000 including the land. He added that the Town of Buxton's assessment was \$650,000. Mr. Buxton stated that the clear mistake is on the buildings. Heather Cote looked at comparable properties all that were valued under \$550,000.

Mr. Buxton explained that the second method used to evaluate this property was that \$275,000 was put into construction in 2019. Since then \$20,000 was spent to put a room downstairs while her husband was declining so their son came up from Florida to help her take care of her husband. We realized we needed to inflate the 2019 costs to find out what the replacement cost would be: It is 71% to get to the valuation of the buildings that the Town of Buxton got to. 36% is the construction analytics number.

Using this percentage, one comes very close to the \$525,000 that Heather Cote's opinion of value was.

Two of the methods came to these numbers. That gives you some assurance that that number is not out of whack, stated Mr. Buxton.

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Mr. Buxton explained that Mrs. Usher wants to be treated fairly.

There was discussion of whether the Usher property is a two-unit dwelling. Commissioner Clark asked if the building that we are looking at is a 2-unit building? Is there a separate dwelling unit to the left of the garage?

Mrs. Usher explained that it has a bathroom, a kitchen, bedroom and a small living room. She explained that when they built their home, she knew that she would need a place to live at some point and thought maybe her son could live on the other side at while allowing her to stay in her home. She added that downstairs is the only improvement that was made to the home since it was originally built and it is not used anymore.

Commissioner Ring asked if there was a bathroom downstairs. Mrs. Usher replied there was not.

Commissioner Clark asked if that meets the Buxton code as a dwelling unit?

Buxton tax assessor, Bob Gingras was sworn in by County Manager Zinser. He stated that the town has reviewed the comparable properties but found them not to be comparable as none had an accessory building in it.

Commissioner Ring stated that the (property) taxes took a huge jump from 2022 to 2023. When were the Ushers assessed the additional \$90,000?

Mr. Gingras explained it has always been. He added that everything was being valued and everything is being assessed the same.

Mr. Gingras stated that the apartment has been rented for \$2,800.00. It is a rentable apartment.

Commissioner Dutremble commented that the appraiser allowed \$16,000 for the apartment.

Mr. Gingras stated that the difference is that \$96,000.00.

Commissioner Chenette commented that he is struggling with an appraiser that has 17 years of experience coming up with such a differential (\$100,000) and wouldn't she come to a similar conclusion? How do I know what is accurate, he asked?

Commissioner Dutremble explained that the town has a standard in which they treat each individual property the same.

Mr. Gingras added that we value properties that are similar, and it is up to the individual tax payer to prove they have been treated differently.

Commissioner Ring asked Mr. Gingras if he could explain why from 2022 to 2023 this property had a \$4,000 increase in their taxes when another piece of property had a \$3,000 increase and one (property) had a decrease. This one has the largest increase.

Mr. Gingras commented that 50% of town's taxes went up \$1100.

Commissioner Ring replied shouldn't the percentage of increase all be the same?

Mr. Gingras responded not if a house hasn't been maintained well. Taxes and value have nothing to do with each other.

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Commissioner Chenette wondered if the statement that the accessory dwelling unit was rented out was factually accurate or not? Commissioner Clark asked if this is a rentable unit?

Mr. Gingras explained that this fact would have no value difference as to how we would value that property. The cost to replace is still \$96,000.00.

Commissioner Clark commented that we have talked about a lot of construction costs and replacement costs. Aren't we supposed to talk about market value? Assessor Gingras explained that they are all the same. Land (value) is separate from the buildings. There is a building value and a land value.

Commissioner Chenette stated that the market rate that you have here is what it could be sold for. The replacement cost is figured minus the age of the property plus the land value equals the market value.

County Manager Zinser asked what year the revaluation in the Town of Buxton was done. Mr. Gingras replied, 2022.

The revaluation is what made property taxes jump, explained the County Manager.

Commissioner Ring replied, but other properties haven't jumped.

Mr. Gingras stated that the issue before this Board is the value of the property in comparison to similar type properties in Buxton. If you feel they are over valued then you can make that decision. He continued that there is a range as property ages aren't the same.

Mr. Buxton addressed all and stated that this had been an education for some of us. Valuation is proper when it varies \$100,000 is an extraordinary statement, said Mr. Buxton.

Mr. Buxton stated that the comparables used by the assessor were accurate. Heather Cote's comparables are a map all near to each other and all in Buxton. One of the comparables provided by the assessor is a house in Scarborough.

Commissioner Chenette stated that he was very much struggling with the outside appraisal and the information provided by the Town. He added that he is not saying one is more correct than the other. Commissioner Chenette stated that he thinks we have to look towards those that have that experience. He continued that appraising is about a range, but this is a sizable range. \$100,000 just seems like too much of a discrepancy for it to be accurate. Discrediting one is not the way to go about this. Commissioner Chenette continued that he is open for somewhat of an interpretation but that he looks to some other data point to try to determine what is the fair value of this property.

Commissioner Dutremble commented that they (Usher) are looking for a determination based on what their assessor (Heather Cote) said.

Commissioner Clark stated that we talked about a lot of things that have very little to do what is in front of us. This is a 2-unit building with a potential for rental income no matter what side you own. None of the comparables have that situation. He continued that while he understands why the unit is built, in terms

201 of the value of the building, there is a potential income stream of \$18,000 to  
202 \$24,000 a year that has to be figured into the value of the house. I don't see that  
203 being done. Commissioner Clark stated that he is at a loss at this point. Nothing  
204 submitted has been helpful.

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206 County Manager Zinser suggested perhaps asking the town to share with them  
207 other multi-unit homes that have an accessory dwelling. Mr. Gingrass stated  
208 that they would charge all accessory dwellings \$96,000.  
209 Commissioner Chairperson Dutremble stated that it appears a lot of the  
210 Commissioners don't have the information they need to make a decision  
211 tonight.

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213 Commissioner Chenette added that he wants verification on whether or not this  
214 is deemed a multi- family property. And, he wants to know if this is being  
215 rented out.

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217 Commissioner Chenette motioned to table this item until the next meeting.  
218 Commissioner Ring seconded the motion. Vote 4-1 with Commissioner Clark  
219 opposed.  
220 County Manager Zinser stated that this matter will be put back on the agenda for  
221 the April 5<sup>th</sup> Commissioners meeting and he will contact Mr. Gingrass to obtain  
222 further information as requested by the Commissioners.  
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225 **6 NEW BUSINESS**

- 226 a. H.R. Director Linda Corliss to seek approval of the following new  
227 hires/transfers:  
228 H.R. Director Corliss informed all that with the hiring approval of Kara Jones there  
229 will be 39 full-time corrections officers (line officers).  
230 County Manager Zinser explained that the target number is to have 55 line staff  
231 corrections officers.  
232 H.R. Director Corliss added that we have approximately 32 reserve officers with 6  
233 to 8 who pick up hours regularly.
- 234 i. Kara Jones in the position of full-time Corrections Officer in the  
235 Sheriff's Office with a date of hire of March 27, 2023  
236 Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the hiring of Kara Jones in the  
237 position of full-time Corrections Officer with a date of hire if March 27,  
238 2023. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.
  - 239 ii. Addiana Morrison in the position of reserve Public Safety Instructor II in  
240 EMA/Fire with a date of hire of March 20, 2023  
241 Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the hiring of Addiana  
242 Morrison in the position of reserve Public Safety Instructor II with a date  
243 of hire of March 20, 2023. Commissioner Andrews seconded the  
244 motion.  
245 Vote 5-0.
  - 246 iii. Jason Legere in the position of reserve DAR 111 in EMA with a date of  
247 hire of March 20, 2023  
248 Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the hiring of Jason Legere in  
249 the position of reserve DAR 111 with a date of hire of March 20, 2023.  
250 Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.  
251 Vote 5-0.

252 iv. Bryan Courtois in the position of reserve DAR111 in EMA with a date of  
253 hire of March 20, 2023  
254 Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the hiring of Bryan Courtois in  
255 the position of reserve DAR 111 with a date of hire of March 20, 2023.  
256 Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.  
257 Vote 5-0.

258 v. David Eggleston in the position of reserve DAR 111 in EMA with a date  
259 of hire of March 20, 2023  
260 Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the hiring of David Eggleston  
261 in the position of reserve DAR 111 with a hire date of March 20, 2023.  
262 Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

263 vi. Christopher Hayden in the position of reserve DAR 111 with a date of  
264 hire of March 20, 2023  
265 Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the hiring of Christopher  
266 Hayden in the position of reserve DAR 111 with a hire date of March 20,  
267 2023. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

268 vii. Aaron Shuffleburg in the position of reserve DAR 111 with a hire date of  
269 March 20, 2023  
270 Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the hiring of Aaron  
271 Shuffleburg in the position of reserve DAR 111 with a hire date of  
272 March 20, 2023. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.  
273 Vote 5-0.

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275 b. Discussion and action on creation of Development Director position  
276 County Manager Zinser reminded all that a discussion took place  
277 at the last meeting regarding this position and the general concurrence of  
278 the Board was to have a conversation and pursue the concept. We have  
279 met with three development directors and one was a national corporation.  
280 County Manager Zinser instructed all not to confuse this position with a  
281 fund raiser as these are two distinct processes.

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283 Deputy County Manager Corliss added that she also reached out to some  
284 non-profit organizations that we work with in behavioral health programs  
285 who have worked with Directors of Development. We also asked them  
286 to be on the interview panel, she explained as we need someone who is  
287 experienced and someone who is ready to go.

288

289 Commissioner Ring asked if the salary placed on this position was the  
290 standard salary for the area?

291 Deputy County Manager/H.R. Director Corliss replied that they did and  
292 all three (director of development) said we will get someone but if we go  
293 higher, we'll get someone fully trained. She added that she believes for  
294 southern Maine, we will find someone in this range.

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296 Commissioner Ring commented that we have been offering some decent  
297 salaries for these positions and a good package. Will this position be  
298 given 41 days off?

299 Deputy County Manager/H.R. Director Corliss replied, yes.

300 Commissioner Ring replied that we hire for 10 months. Right away they  
301 have two months off.

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303 H.R. Director Corliss replied that if we find the right person, they won't  
304 take the time off right away.  
305 Commissioner Ring responded that if they don't use it, they get paid for  
306 it. She continued that the inequity really upsets her when she sees these  
307 salaries and benefits given. Front line people have to work their way up  
308 to this, stated Commissioner Ring.  
309 Commissioner Ring asked who is the P.R. department?  
310 H.R. Director Corliss responded that it could be the County Manager or  
311 me. We have a contracted social media person. We contract out when  
312 we have something that needs it, explained H.R. Director Corliss.  
313 Commissioner Dutremble asked how long will this position be?  
314 H.R. Director Corliss explained that this is a permanent position.  
315 Commissioner Clark asked if this position will be included in the June  
316 budget?  
317 County Manager Zinser explained that right now we have a set of funds  
318 available as we can use the opioid funds and they are ongoing. We also  
319 have LATCF funds that you appropriated back in January.  
320 The County Manager stated that it is up to the Board but the goal would  
321 be to bring this person on sooner than later.  
322 Commissioner Chenette commented that this (Director of Development  
323 job description) looks great. The salary is comparable to this market  
324 place. He continued that he is bringing up for conversation that he feels  
325 there should be some elements of marketing in this (job). Having spent  
326 some time in communications in the non-profit area, explained  
327 Commissioner Chenette, often marketing and development are  
328 combined. I personally would love us to explore more of the marketing  
329 aspect so this person could handle more marketing to include clients,  
330 strategic partnerships, training programs, for example and also to amp up  
331 our communications, stated Commissioner Chenette. He added that it is  
332 standard practice to think about the inclusion of marketing. They should  
333 know how to create a poster and a graphic, video, and have other skill  
334 sets.  
335 County Manager Zinser replied that we can modify the job description.  
336 H.R. Director Corliss responded that we tried to make this as round as  
337 possible as we were told this.  
338 Commissioner Chenette added that the title does matter.  
339 Commissioner Ring asked where would be put this in the budget?  
340 County Manager Zinser replied that we would be using special revenues  
341 that we have.  
342 Commissioner Ring responded that she wants it in the budget as it is a  
343 full-time employee so she would like to see it in the operating budget.  
344 The County Manager responded that he would prefer a motion or  
345 guidance.  
346 Commissioner Ring stated that it can be in the operating budget and we  
347 can apply some of the opioid money to it. I want this to be transparent,  
348 stated Commissioner Ring. She added that any employee that we have  
349 should be in our operating budget.  
350 Commissioner Chenette asked if he understands correctly that this  
351 position can be listed in the operational budget and you are still able to  
352 stipulate to tap special revenues to fund it?

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County Manager Zinser replied, yes.

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the Director of Development job description and have the County Manager put it in the budget for next fiscal year. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

DICUSSION: Commissioner Chenette asked does this motion include making the title adjustment?

Commissioner Clark modified his motion to change the title of the position to Development and Marketing Director.

Vote 5-0.

**7 OLD BUSINESS**

None

**\*\*\*HEARD AFTER PUBLIC COMMENT\*\*\***

**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. To conduct an executive session pursuant to 1M.R.S.A. §405 (6) (A), personal issues

Commissioner Ring motioned to enter into executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405 (6) (A). Commissioner Chenette seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

Commissioner Clark motioned to come out of executive session.

Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Clark informed all that they had conducted the County Manager’s annual performance review and that no other action was taken.

**\*\*\*HEARD PRIOR TO ITEM #8\*\*\***

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

Janet Drew addressed the Board via ZOOM and stated that the drone program sounds very interesting and must be a new program as she hasn’t heard a word about it and asked what is funding it? She commented further that it sounds like we are relying on a lot of fund raising to have these new programs.

County Manager Zinser replied that we have had the drone program through our EMA department for many years.

Deputy EMA Director Megan Arsenault approached and gave a brief overview of the drone program stating that it has been in existence since 2015. York County EMA is the first in the State to get its license through the FAA. All of our pilots are fully licensed with the team chief being a licensed commercial pilot, she explained.



402 Deputy EMA Director Arsenault continued that the program has 20 to 30  
403 volunteers up until this point and we have decided they should be compensated a  
404 bit. The drone is deployed for hot spots after fires, search and rescue, law  
405 enforcement activities such as searching for folks.  
406 The drone equipment is purchased through a Homeland Security Program,  
407 explained Deputy Director Arsenault.  
408 Janet Drew replied that her concern is more and more surveillance. County  
409 Manager Zinser explained that we don't track people down other than in warrant  
410 situations. The drone is used more for search and rescue.  
411 Deputy EMA Director Arsenault explained that we follow regulations from the  
412 FAA that include specific heights and distances from properties and windows for  
413 privacy.  
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415 **10 ADJOURN**

416 Commissioner Clark motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Andrews  
417 seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.  
418 Meeting adjourned.