

COMMISSIONERS MEETING

January 17, 2024

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, January 17, 2024, A. D. at 4:30 P. M.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Richard R. Dutremble
Richard Clark
Robert Andrews
Justin Chenette
Donna Ring

County Manager Greg 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

01-17-2024

ITEM

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

Susan Wiswell questioned why the treasurer's warrant was so high? County Manager Zinser explained the various expenses.

Sheriff King gave a "shout out" to York County's EMA stating that they took a leading role during the recent storms. He added that Deputy EMA Director Megan Arsenault did an exceptional job.

2 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS:

- a. Commissioners' meeting of January 3, 2024
Commissioner Clark made two corrections to the minutes and motioned to approve them as amended. Commissioner Andrews second the motion. Vote 5-0.

3 TO APPROVE TREASURER'S WARRANTS

- a. Warrants to be approved on January 3, 2024 in the amount of \$1,166,456.47
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the warrant. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.
- b. Warrants to be approved on January 10, 2024 in the amount of \$739,241.02
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the warrants. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

4 TO HEAR ANY REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Clark informed all that he recently attended the annual Maine County Commissioners Association meeting. He informed all that Commissioner Dutremble was re-elected as President of MCCA for 2024.

Commissioner Chenette echoed Sheriff King's sentiments and also thanked our local representatives. He added that he had received positive feedback from his towns on how well York County EMA did. Commissioner Chenette asked for an update and the county's role in the repair.

Commissioner Dutremble reminded the Board that we all agree to disagree on certain issues but we should also serve with honor and respect to each other.

5 NEW BUSINESS

a. Introduce Deputy Manager/H.R. Director Corliss to seek approval for the hiring/transfer of the following individuals:

i. Ryleigh Dwyer in the full-time position of Legal Secretary in the District Attorney's Office with a date of hire of January 22, 2024

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the hiring of Ryleigh Dwyer in the full-time position of Legal Secretary in the District Attorney's Office with a date of hire of January 22, 2024. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

***** This item moved to the end of the meeting after Public Comment*****

b. To seek Commissioner approval for the termination of Donald Desjardins with an effective date of January 17, 2024. (Executive session may be necessary pursuant to 1M.R.S.A. §405 (6)(A) personnel issues.) Commissioner Clark motioned to enter into executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405 (6)(A) personnel issues.) Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

Commissioner Clark motioned to come out of executive session.

Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

Deputy County Manager/H.R. Director Corliss addressed the Board to seek approval for the termination of Donald Desjardins effective January 17, 2024. Commissioner Chenette motioned to approve the termination of Donald Desjardins effective January 17, 2024. Commissioner Ring seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

c. To set date to hear tax abatement denial appeal from the town of Arundel (recommend meeting date of February 21, 2024)

Commissioner Clark motioned to schedule the tax abatement for the February 21, 2024 Commissioners' meeting. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

d. Discussion of FY'25 budget

County Manager Zinser explained that this is an opportunity for the Board to give him some input on what they are hoping to accomplish, etc. He continued that the budget will be given to them in the last week of March for review in April. During the meetings held the 1st and 2nd weeks of the month we will

begin review. He reminded the Commissioners that wages and benefits are driven by the Union contracts. The NCEU contract expires 12-31-2024 so that will impact half of the FY'25 budget.

County Manager Zinser gave some highlights and stated that he is somewhat concerned over multiple lines across the budgets. For example, office supplies have gone up, software and overtime wages. County Manager Zinser explained that the District Attorney was down a couple of positions (legal secretaries) so that contributed to overtime but now all are hired. Other lines seeing increases, continued County Manager Zinser include meals and lodging, training and development and travel. There are various hardware lines that are being over expensed. Therefore, he advised the Commissioners to anticipate that there will be some increases in those lines. He continued that they have just started figuring out wages and he is estimating that he will be adding in the equivalent of 1.5 full time employees as some are obligations from (hires) last year. We are hopeful to get Department Leaders their first draft during the first or second week of February.

County Manager Zinser informed the Commissioners that our revenue is ok but that our Deeds recording fees are 13% to 14% off target (\$200,000 or \$300,000). We are hoping for a bit of a rebound in the Spring he stated. We are at 51% or 52% for transfer tax so we are pretty much on target there.

Commissioner Dutremble asked the County Manager what would happen if the State takes over the transfer tax? County Manager Zinser explained that this was delayed a couple of years ago by the State. Maine Revenue was going to their online portal system but it was delayed last year but it is still being talked about. The law says we get 10% of the tax. If the portal is utilized, they will collect all the revenue and we will be waiting for our payments. It should be more as we are the ones answering the questions and doing the accounting. This amounts to about \$1 million a year for us.

Commissioner Clark asked where are we on the audit? The County Manager replied that he had e-mailed the auditors today. They are swamped and will be in touch with us.

Commissioner Chenette asked, assuming we don't get any additional Federal or State support, how will we make up the shortage for our ARPA projects? County Manager Zinser explained that we will leverage the opioid funding and borrow from ourselves and pay ourselves back. Currently, our deficit is about \$5.5 million. County Manager Zinser continued that the construction drawing phase will help us refine (the deficit) more. He added that he is hopeful that we can draw that down even more. County Manager Zinser continued that he is having a conversation now with another county to see if they could partake in this also and another private company as well.

Commissioner Chenette replied that he doesn't want to be in a situation where one tax year we have to put a burden on taxpayers. Commissioner Chenette continued that as a follow up, could we as part of the budget process, get an update on our development initiatives. Knowing the game plan and publicly talking about it would be helpful.

Commissioner Chenette also reminded County Manager Zinser that perhaps the Annual report could be produced as part of the budget process. He stated that he would like a much more comprehensive product to distribute publicly like Cumberland County does and they do it as part of the budget process.

County Manager Zinser responded that perhaps next year we could do it with the FY 26 budget.

Commissioner Ring added that the annual report is helpful to all elected officials and department heads. It allows them to take pride in what they've done in their departments.

Commissioner Ring also asked that in preparation for the budget, she would like the Department heads to give us their year-end estimated expenditures. County Manager Zinser replied that the issue is that it is difficult to see on spreadsheet when it's printed.

Commissioner Andrews asked about the increase of \$100,000 put into last year's budget by the Budget Committee to address homelessness. What happened?

County Manager Zinser replied that he has had discussions with town officials broad and wide. He added that he has had a meeting with the Shelter as well and a community action program. EMA Director Art Cleaves took part in one meeting from the sheltering aspect, informed the County Manager. He advised that the Commissioners keep the money in the budget. County Manager Zinser stated that there is only one shelter in the county. They have about 30 beds and they have some septic issues. Maybe this might be a better location to put the money into or assist with outfitting warming centers, recommended the County. He added that he is not seeing a good, clean path forward.

Commissioner Chenette replied that if we're not able to identify a path on our own, does it make sense to form a community stakeholder conversation in the county? It might open up what is our blueprint. These conversations have to happen at a local level as well. We seem to be good conduits. He added that he understands it will be a lot of work.

County Manager Zinser replied that we could, but they already exist.

Commissioner Chenette asked which one for the county? The County Manager explained there isn't a specific one but the regional homeless council takes a countywide approach. There is another one out of community action program and funding is provided by Federal funds.

County Manager Zinser added that the budget committee was clear that this money was for homelessness. He continued to state that we do take part in those meetings. That's where we are getting this information that there isn't a cohesive answer.

Commissioner Chenette replied that he does like the idea of a warming center. County Manager Zinser commented that some of the police chiefs in the meeting last week thought that it might be a localized approach.

Commissioner Clark asked the County Manager other than 1.5 new employees, do you expect to do any other hiring this year?

County Manager Zinser responded there is a half-time position vacant due to a retirement in H.R. and he is talking with the Sheriff about taking money (from his budget) to make it a full-time position as recruiting is huge. I.T. probably will be beefing up some resources there and maybe another Facilities position. "I haven't had any conversations from anyone else," stated the County Manager. Deeds won't be looking for a new position but perhaps converting a position from deeds into an archivist. He added that he has not talked to department heads yet.

Deputy County Manager Corliss stated that she has not had a general conversation with the District Attorney.
Commissioner Ring commented that IT has done a good job trying to stay ahead of problems. Two people for this organization is not a lot.
She added that maintenance is in the same boat. We have added lots of space.

6 OLD BUSINESS

- a. Recap of Planning Board Meeting with Town of Alfred
County Manager Zinser informed all that the Planning Board did approve 58 beds and moved our projects on. The Planning Board agreed that their third party reviewer will work with our engineers so when it goes back to the Planning Board it will be keyed up for approval.

Commissioner Clark stated that he attended this meeting. He restated what the County Manager said. Attorney Gene Libby did an excellent job presenting our position on the number of beds. He deserves a lot of credit for the work he did. He was very impressive, commented Commissioner Clark.

County Manager Zinser stated that one of the sticking points for the town is water. We did agree at the meeting to contribute \$150,000 to the water main project out here. This seemed to help the situation. The tension in the room went down. Our position is that it has nothing to do with water levels and fire protection. It is a goodwill gesture on our part. We will have to find some money in the budget. As a reminder, the County Manager told all that interest monies are accruing from our ARPA funds close to \$400,000 to \$450,000 in interest earnings.

County Manager Zinser also stated that in regard to the funding deficit, we have money for the buildings but we are short on money for the contingencies. He also told all that we offered land to the water district to dig a test well as they spoke about finding a new water source.

- 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)

Deputy EMA Director Megan Arsenaault informed all that EMA activated for the Wednesday and Saturday storms. Nine coastal towns were affected. We assisted with public messaging as some towns needed assistance with RAVE alerts. We are now working on damage assessments with the towns. We will be doing initial damage assessment survey process to get a rough estimate for FEMA. Currently, they are two separate disasters, but we are hoping to combine them to make it more efficient and cost effective. Next week we will be working with MEMA along the coast and with FEMA so we can get a declaration.

Commissioner Chenette asked if we have a list of towns that are participating in our RAVE program so people aware of whether or not their town is on it. Deputy EMA Director Arsenault explained that they can do it two ways as we have worked with our new hires to make templates for the towns. Even if a town is not enrolled, we can still send out a RAVE request to them.

9 ADJOURN

Commissioner Clark motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

Vote 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 5:42 p.m.