

COMMISSIONERS MEETING

April 10, 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, April 10, 2024, A. D. at 4:30 P. M.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

Deputy Manager Linda Corliss was present at the meeting.

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

04-10-2024

ITEM

- 1 PUBLIC COMMENT(S) ON ANY ITEM(S)**
None
- 2 TO APPROVE TREASURER'S WARRANTS**
 - a. Warrants to be approved on April 3, 2024 in the amount of \$653,052.09
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the warrant. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.
- 3 TO HEAR ANY REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**
None
- 4 NEW BUSINESS**
 - a. Introduce Deputy Manager/H.R. Director to approve hirings/transfers of:
 - i. Lukoki Ntaku in the position of full-time corrections officer in the Sheriff's Office with a date of hire of April 15, 2024
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the hiring of Lukoki Ntaku in the position of full-time corrections officer in the Sheriff's Office with a date of hire of April 15, 2024. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Ring informed all that several constituents asked has this individual entered the US legally? Deputy County Manager/H.R. Director Corliss replied yes, and that she has all the paperwork and he has a social security card and a work permit.

Commissioner Ring asked if this individual speaks and understands English? Deputy County Manager/H.R. Director Corliss replied, yes.

Commissioner Ring asked since we are hiring him in April, when is the next academy? Jail Administrator Major Thayer replied, in July. He explained that they job shadow and work Monday – Friday from 8:00 to 4:00.

Commissioner Ring commented that hiring people months in advance of an academy and an increase in the budget this year, she asks if this is a valid expenditure? Jail Administrator Thayer replied that the job shadowing results in a lot less washout experiencing the jail.

Commissioner Ring replied that is extensive job shadowing and asked how much can we afford?

Vote 4-1 with Commissioner Ring opposed.

- ii. Luke O'Brien in the position of full-time maintenance technician I with a date of hire of April 22, 2024

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the hiring of Luke O'Brien in the position of full-time maintenance technician I with a date of hire of April 22, 2024. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Ring asked Deputy Manager/H.R. Director Corliss what the starting hourly wage would be. She replied, \$20.32 and that it was a Grade 5 (MSEA) position.

Vote 5-0.

- b. Megan Gean-Gendron to review Layman Way operations-

Ms. Gean-Gendron approached the Board. She informed all that in 2023, 21 clients from the York County Jail entered the program and 18 from the community resulting in 12 graduates. She added that some remained in the program for 2024 and have not graduated yet.

Ms. Gean-Gendron continued that a medical assisted after-care programming treatment program is run at Layman Way as well. She informed all that thirty former LWRC clients take advantage of that program. There are weekly outpatient meetings for substance abuse with 15-20 clients on a regular basis enrolled. Former LWRC graduates are enrolled in that program.

York County Community College offers continuing education classes on-site. Career navigation from Adult Ed. is also offered as well as AA and NA and Alanon on Sundays.

Ms. Gean-Gendron continued that they provide various housing centers services for sober living. Nason Healthcare is used for medical needs. She added that they employ four graduates of the program at LWRC with one recently promoted to a management position.

Commissioner Ring commented that she has been contacted by a few of your past residents and they have spoken highly of your program and thank you for what you have done.

Commissioner Dutremble commented that York County is the only county

providing this service and he is often told by a lot of colleagues that they wish they had done the same thing. Our statistics are better than the Federal statistics, stated Commissioner Dutremble.

Commissioner Andrews commented that he was excited to hear of LWRC employing some of the graduates.

c. Register of Probate Carol Lovejoy to present budget (HEARD AFTER SHERIFF'S BUDGET PRESENTATION)

Register of Probate Lovejoy addressed the Board and stated that they had hired and trained another paralegal and passport employee. She added that they have had one employee out for over a year. Register Lovejoy informed all that they had moved their offices downstairs. They have had a 46% increase in filings since 2019. In 2023, they processed 447 passport applications, a 71% increase from the previous year resulting in an additional \$15,000 in funds to the office.

Register of Probate Lovejoy continued that they serviced 1371 people in person this year. She stated that they added \$100,000 to their revenue lines last year and are on target to reach our goal.

High density storage for our files is in our budget in the amount of \$62,000. She explained that this is not a critical cost and that they would be willing to ask for half of the money now and half next year.

Register of Probate Lovejoy explained to the Board that she has added additional monies in her salary line for herself and her Deputy Register as she feels her deputy is underpaid.

Probate Judge Houde addressed the Board as he was also seeking an increase in his salary above what the County Manager had put into the draft budget. He explained that he has to interpret a lot of complex laws making his job challenging, while also rewarding. He explained that the pay issue has been on his mind for a number of years. Probate Judge Houde continued that he realizes that he is asking for a significant increase but explained that as an example, on Sunday he wrote five Orders. He had court on Tuesday but put in 3-4 hours of uncompensated time already this week and explained that this occurs more and more. He stated that he is in court 10 days a month, but he has to do the work required other times. Judge Houde added that there are seven full time employees generating work for a single Probate Judge. He continued that he does not have a law clerk that assists him so therefore, he is doing all the pre-trial Orders himself. He explained further that there are a lot of emergency Hearings. Judge Houde stated that he is working an extra 4-5 days a month. He stated that he is not on par with District Court Judges. Commissioner Ring asked Judge Houde if he was behind with his cases. Judge Houde replied that he is more caught up than he has been but that it is difficult when he has to file a Hearing. He continued that the Decisions that he has to write are complex and thoughtful.

Commissioner Ring asked Probate Judge Houde if he has a law practice also? Judge Houde replied that he does not and is only doing Probate as it is too difficult to try and have a practice, also.

Commissioner Chenette asked what does the percentage increase in the past look like?

Register of Probate Lovejoy explained when Judge Houde started in 2019 he

was at \$45,000 and he had six floating days and in 2022 we added \$10,000. Judge Houde has received COLA also like everyone else.

Commissioner Chenette asked what does the Cumberland County Probate Judge make?

Neither Judge Houde or Register of Probate Lovejoy had that information.

Commissioner Chenette asked what does the Cumberland County Probate register make?

Register Lovejoy replied that she is part-time.

Commissioner Chenette asked can the Judge be full-time?

Neither Judge Houde or Register of Probate Lovejoy knew the answer.

Commissioner Chenette asked what happened that you had to come here to ask for a raise. Did you bring your request to the Manager and have a conversation, Commissioner Chenette asked.

Probate Register Lovejoy explained that for the FY'24 budget, she told County Manager Zinser that she would ask for an increase and he advised her that it wouldn't be supported by him.

Commissioner Chenette asked Register Lovejoy if she received COLA?

She replied, yes.

Deputy Manager/H.R. Director Corliss added that all non-union received a 7% COLA last year.

Commissioner Ring asked if it is correct that you (Register Lovejoy) are asking for \$110,000?

Deputy Manager/H.R. Director Corliss clarified that she is seeking \$125,000.

Commissioner Ring commented and you are saying that your Deputy has supervisory responsibilities and others are making more in your department who aren't in supervisory roles. She added that it looks like they reduced the salary for the clerk.

Probate Register Lovejoy explained that a few years ago we had asked for two positions to be reclassified to a grade 6 and this year that was taken out.

Deputy Manager/H.R. Director Corliss added that they (administration) have a request right now to move those positions from a grade 5 to a grade 7.

Deputy Manager/H.R. Director Corliss reminded the Commissioners that an equity evaluation was done back in 2020 that resulted in pay increases for the deputy of probate and deeds as well as the office manager in the Sheriff's Office. This was an increase in July 2020 in addition to COLA.

Deputy Manager Corliss added that there is a concern that if you give one person an increase, all will want an increase.

Commissioner Chenette commented so 7% COLA to 1% or am I missing a COLA?

Finance Director Lori Lemieux explained that for the total for fiscal year, the first 6 months does have a 4% COLA increase and in January (remaining 6 months), Register Lovejoy receives a 2% longevity increase.

Commissioner Chenette asked how does that stack up with other non-union increases, is this according to policy?

Deputy County Manager/H.R. Director Corliss responded, yes, it is according to policy and eight employees were given equity pay raises to put them in line in 2020.

Commissioner Chenette asked if this was beyond COLA increases?

Deputy Manager/H.R. Director Corliss explained that by policy (those on pay

scale A) nonunion employees receive 2% every year hired and then pay scale B applies to those non-union employees hired after 2014 and they receive 3% after their first year and then 2% at year 8 plus COLA yearly.

Commissioner Chenette asked Register Lovejoy if she is saying that with COLA and the statutory increase that she is not sufficient.

Register Lovejoy replied that when she figured, it was different. The real inequity for her, she explained, is her deputy. Based on the authority she has as she could fill in for me if needed long term. I feel she needs more, stated Register Lovejoy.

Register Lovejoy added that there is inequity everywhere in this budget.

Commissioner Chenette asked did the deputy receive an increase for equity? Deputy Manager/H.R. Director Corliss replied, she did. She was hired in November of 2018, she received \$2,000 to her base wage in 2020 resulting in a 25.91% increase for her from 2018 to 2023.

Commissioner Chenette asked Register Lovejoy that is it accurate that your role in Cumberland County is part time? He added that he is trying to reconcile those two positions. How are they able to do that part time in Cumberland?

Register Lovejoy explained that the Deputy oversees the office. She added that she is away from her desk on court dates. Casey (deputy) does everything needed in the office.

Commissioner Chenette stated that it would be helpful to have the Judges' salary from other counties as anytime we ask for salary adjustment, he would want to look at the market data, explained Commissioner Chenette.

Commissioner Ring stated that in regard to the elected full-time officials, this has always been something that has bothered her. They do not accrue any pto. and other benefits. Elected officials are only budgeted at 52 weeks, she stated. She added that she thinks all elected officials should get another two weeks' pay added to their salary. Commissioner Dutremble replied that would be a policy discussion.

Commissioner Dutremble said to Probate Register Lovejoy that she stated in 'FY 24 she increased the revenue \$100,000 to hope they could get more monies.

Probate Register Lovejoy replied that they were at \$375,000.

Commissioner Ring asked so you didn't get your raise as there was no money left in the budget? You talked about a raise in 'FY24 so you asked for it in 'FY 25. What reason do they have other than there isn't enough money?

Commissioner Dutremble replied that the cities and towns will pay more for their taxes if you give them this raise.

d. Sheriff William King to present Sheriff's Office budget- **(HEARD BEFORE PROBATE)**

Sheriff King addressed the Board and stated that the Police Services budget is relatively the same.

Commissioner Ring asked the Sherriff how many vehicles are you buying this year?

Chief Deputy Forbes replied, seven this year. Sheriff King explained that they have a rotation.

Chief Deputy Forbes informed all that they are having a tough time getting their vehicles.

Commissioner Ring stated to the Sheriff that most of his supplies line are way over budget. She continued that the Sheriff's budget is over budget on uniforms, meals and lodging, etc. and you haven't asked for any increases so how are you planning on covering these overages, asked Commissioner Ring. Sheriff King replied that he can get answers for these overages.

Commissioner Ring responded that it concerns her. She added that the Sheriff is overspending several of the supply accounts and he hasn't asked for any increases so where will we end up?

Commissioner Ring stated that the estimated expenditures for this year needs to be put in the budget.

Commissioner Ring stated that she would like to see all positions in the budget (contract deputies and MDEA).

Commissioner Chenette asked if there were any grants that could be obtained to purchase the body cameras.

Sheriff King stated that they have looked at grants but there were no grants available.

Commissioner Ring asked if the body cameras are replacing the ones in the vehicles?

Chief Deputy Forbes replied, no but they work with the current ones.

Commissioner Dutremble asked the Sheriff if his bottom line in last year's budget was going to come out even. Sheriff King replied that the County Manager says it will.

Commissioner Dutremble stated that in the legislative committee he serves on, it was mentioned that the State Police hoped to hire 32 more employees and they cut it down to 16. Will that affect York County?

Sheriff King responded, no, but we are always cognizant of this.

Commissioner Dutremble added that the pay rate for the State Police is increasing. One county already lost a deputy to go there. He asked Sheriff King if this will affect us?

Sheriff King replied yes, we are not getting as many applicants as we have been. Biddeford has a better contract than we do. He continued that we have had many discussions with the Manager. The County is still in a contract with the FOP and not willing to open it back up.

Commissioner Dutremble asked if there is anything else that you want in your budget?

Sheriff King replied that the body cameras will help and he knows at this time we cannot hire more officers but next year I would like to hire more officers, the Sheriff stated.

e. Sheriff William King to present jail budget

Major Thayer and Sheriff King presented this budget. Sheriff King explained that the jail budget did go up. The increase has been due to contractual increases. We have a new medical contractor. Inmate prescriptions have gone up. We are doing well with recruiting and retention. Water usage fees have gone up, explained the Sheriff.

Commissioner Ring asked what the daily average population is right now.

Sheriff King replied that it is actually more than Cumberland- 230 to 240.

Commissioner Ring asked about pre-trial.

Jail Administrator Major Thayer replied between 92 and 94%. We still are

experiencing the effects from Covid but the courts are catching up. People are being summonsed for minor crimes. For more serious crimes they are in the jail or their time served or they are going to prison.

Sheriff King stated that once someone is incarcerated it takes the State a long time for trials.

He added that the Maine County Commissioners Association is concerned about this and they wanted to submit legislation about this.

Commissioner Chenette asked about the travel budget line and asked if there is travel occurring for inmate transfer?

Sheriff King replied this reflects costs for employees going to training.

Major Thayer explained that fourteen corrections officers had to travel everyday to Windham so we need to reimburse for gas and tolls.

Commissioner Chenette asked about the recruiting budget line of \$30,000.

Deputy Manager/H.R. Director Corliss replied that a new hire gets \$750 after FTO and \$750 after one year.

Commissioner Chenette asked do we think that is a good number?

Sheriff King replied that he thinks it is and doesn't see a reason yet to increase this.

Deputy Manager/H.R. Director Corliss stated that we monitor it to see if other counties offer more.

Commissioner Chenette asked are we making progress with reducing that number?

Sheriff King replied, yes but the wages will be more in line to what they should be.

Commissioner Ring with the new courthouse opened are we transporting?

Sheriff King replied that they are doing video as well as transport. The initial arraignment is via video but the Courts have told us they will want more people in person. We are working on an MOU to having a transport unit.

Commissioner Dutremble asked about filling gas tanks in Biddeford as was previously done.

Sheriff King responded that he is going to re-contact with them we start transports to Biddeford.

Commissioner Ring asked about civil process and court security in the Sheriff's budget. She asked what happens to the surplus in civil process at the end of the year.

Commissioner Ring asked the Sheriff if he would be paying back the deficit (in the civil process budget) from a couple of years ago? This board does not want to have a civil department. There should be some type of budget that goes along with this. They have equipment and weapons, stated Commissioner Ring.

5 OLD BUSINESS

- a. To approve Memorandum of Agreement for Dredge with the City of Saco
EMA Director Cleaves explained that Saco Public Works will be taking the dredge to the Portland Yacht Club and it will be painted. Michaels Dredge will then put it in the water after and then it will be towed down to Wells. Director Cleaves added that there are verbal MOU's with all 7 towns.

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the MOA with Saco and authorized County Manager Zinser to sign the Agreement. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Andrews. Vote 5-0.

Commissioner Chenette commented that seven towns is great. Do we think we can get the dredge utilized in all seven towns this fall, he asked?

EMA Director Cleaves answered that they do not know the order of operation. He explained that it will take a long time. He added that there is potential of FMA reimbursement.

Commissioner Chenette stated that the Commissioners should meet next Wednesday as Commissioner Ring can be here next Wednesday.

Commissioner Chenette added that the Commissioners will be able to vote (on the budget) next Wednesday as they have some outstanding items. There are data points that we are missing so we need them before we vote, he explained. He asked if there were any outstanding questions beyond that.

Commissioner Dutremble stated that he is comfortable with the budget and that any questions he had can be answered.

Commissioner Ring stated that they need another budget meeting. The public needs to know when we are going to finalize the budget. It should be an agenda item.

Deputy County Manager Corliss stated that the County Manager is clear as to what his budget is.

Commissioner Chenette stated that he would like to know if York County Probate Judge's salaries are comparable with Cumberland County or other similar county governments' Probate Judge salaries. If I don't have comparable stats in front of me, it's difficult to come to a decision. This one department has a big consternation, commented Commissioner Chenette. He added that it is irrelevant whether or not we agree with the County Manager's portion of the budget.

Commissioner Clark added that we should obtain salaries and statistics for several counties similar to our own.

Commissioner Chenette motioned to set a special meeting for April 17, 2024. Commissioner Ring seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

6 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 enter into executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (A), personnel matters

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

Commissioner Clark motioned to come out of executive session. Commissioner Andrews seconded. Vote 5-0.
No action was taken.

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

None

8 ADJOURN

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:11 p.m.