

M.C.C.A.

Richard Dutremble, President
York County

Norm Fournier, Vice President
Aroostook County

George Jabar, Secretary-Treasurer
Kennebec County

Stephen Gorden, Past President
Cumberland County

William Blodgett, Emeritus
Lincoln County

Lauren Haven
Administrator



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MAINE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

March 8th, 2022, 10:00 am via Zoom

1. Call to Order

MCCA President Richard Dutremble called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00 am.

DIRECTORS PRESENT:

Androscoggin – Comm. Garrett Mason
Aroostook – Comm. Norman Fournier
Cumberland – Comm. Steve Gorden
Franklin – Comm. Bob Carlton
Hancock – Admin. Mike Crooker proxy for Comm. John Wombacher
Kennebec – Comm. George Jabar
Knox – Admin. Andy Hart proxy for Comm. Sharyn Pohlman
Lincoln – Admin. Carrie Kipfer proxy for Comm. William Blodgett
Penobscot – Comm. Peter Baldacci
Piscataquis – Manager Mike Williams proxy for Comm. Paul Davis
Sagadahoc – Comm. Carol Grose
Somerset – Comm. Robert Sezak
Waldo – Comm. Betty Johnson
York – Comm. Richard Dutremble

DIRECTORS ABSENT:

Hancock – Comm. John Wombacher
Knox – Comm. Sharyn Pohlman
Lincoln – Comm. William Blodgett
Oxford – Comm. Steven Merrill
Piscataquis – Comm. Paul Davis
Washington – Comm. Chris Gardner

OTHERS PRESENT:

Franklin – HR Director Tiffany Baker, Admin. Amy Bernard
Hancock – HR Director Mary-Anne Saxl
MCCA Risk Pool - Manager Malcolm Ulmer
MCCA - Admin. Lauren Haven
MMA - Rebecca Graham
MSA – Sheriff Troy Morton
Penobscot – Admin. Scott Adkins
Piscataquis – Manager Mike Williams
Sagadahoc – Admin. Amber Jones
Somerset – Admin. Dawn DiBlasi
Verrill Dana – Lobbyists Jim Cohen, and Brody Haverly-Johndro

2. Approval of the Agenda

Comm. Gorden **moved** to approve the agenda **seconded** by Comm. Fournier, and the motion **passed** with no opposition.

3. Consent Agenda:

3.1. Approval of the Minutes

3.2. Officer Reports:

3.2.1. Finance

3.2.1.1. Financial Report - Lauren Haven

3.2.1.2. Treasurer – George Jabar

Comm. Baldacci **moved** to approve the agenda **seconded** by Comm. Jabar, and the motion **passed** with no further comments.

4. Officer Reports:

4.1. Budget and Finance Committee - Norm Fournier, Chair - Consideration of the Convention

Comm. Norm Fournier presented the convention proposal submitted by the Samoset Resort. The last weekend in October was the only weekend available in the fall for that venue. Several comments were made that the prices in the proposal were too high. There would be added expenses as well for entertainment, activities, speakers, etc. Sheriff Morton said the MSA conference held at the Cross Center in Bangor was a great success. He thought MSA and MCCA might be able to collaborate in the future. MSA would not be able to plan a joint meeting for this fall, but MSA members would be likely to participate if MCCA moves forward with organizing an event this year. MSA members were thinking about having their next conference in Penobscot County again. As is the case for MCCA, the vendors pay for the conference, so their participation would be vital.

The group discussed other possible venues and meeting dates. Comm. Baldacci suggested that mid-week dates might be more affordable than weekends. It also might be easier for county employees to participate in the conference during the week. Lauren said she would inquire about mid-week options for the Samoset. She said a decision would need to be made by April to allow enough time to make all the arrangements.

4.2. NACo: Peter Baldacci & Sharyn Pohlman - Updates on Federal legislation, national programs, and resources

The NACo Legislative Conference was attended by both of Maine's NACo representatives, Comm. Baldacci and Comm. Pohlman. Maine was recognized as having 100% NACo membership.

Comm. Pohlman attended the Rural Action Caucus which is a key component of NACo's mission in supporting county officials in the pursuit of excellence in public service. County officials from areas across the country areas who participate in the caucus are dedicated to solving the unique issues impacting local communities and rural economic development.

Among the list of distinguished speakers at the conference Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen promoted the Biden administration's economic recovery efforts amid the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Yellen urged county officials to focus their ARPA funds particularly on workforce development and affordable housing. Top economic advisor to the President, Gene Sperling, was appointed to oversee the implementation of the American Rescue Plan and spoke to the group about his efforts. Mitch Landrieu, Senior Advisor to the President and Infrastructure Implementation Coordinator spoke as well as President Biden himself. President Biden

spoke of his roots as a County Commissioner in Delaware before he became a senator. He said he knew the importance of having funds sent directly to counties and not dispensed to the states to be filtered down.

Bills marked as a priority included the Farm Bill because the SNAP program (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) is at risk. As many as 50% of farmers lost money last year. Broadband projects are in progress to map the country to identify dead spots. This is the only way to improve the communication systems and be able to expand high speed internet to all areas. Amazon made a presentation about utilizing satellites instead of fiber in areas where running fiber is simply not feasible.

Unfortunately, the language regarding inmate health benefits through Medicaid/Medicare had to be taken out of the infrastructure bill. However, juveniles can get benefits set up before they leave the facility. Mental health tools were recognized as challenging issues.

Comm. Baldacci announced Matt Chase and his Executive Board were planning to meet in Portland. On Capitol Hill Day he and Comm. Pohlman were able to meet with Representative Chellie Pingree. They had also hoped to meet with other members of the Maine delegation, however due to scheduling issues, it was not possible. Comm. Baldacci encouraged all Maine counties to send commissioners to NACo conferences, especially the legislative conference.

4.3. President Report – May Board of Directors’ Meeting

After a brief discussion about meeting venue options, Comm. Fournier moved to hold the May Board of Directors’ meeting at the MCCA offices in Augusta. The motion was seconded by Comm. Gorden, and the motion passed. The next in person meeting would be in September.

5. Committee Reports:

5.1. Standing Committees:

5.1.1. Legislative Policy Committee: Comm. Steve Gorden Chair, Comm. Norm Fournier Vice Chair

5.1.1.1. James Cohen, Verrill Dana

- Legislative Update
- Jail Funding Legislation
- Rural Patrol Legislation

Mr. Cohen reported that the number of printed bills was continuing to grow. Some bills that were talked about were as follows:

LD 422 "An Act to Eliminate the Requirement That Municipalities Provide Public Notice in Newspapers" would allow local governments to use the internet to post notice. This would include counties. At the recent public hearing, there was a long presentation by the newspapers arguing that counties and municipalities couldn't be trusted to comply.

Mr. Cohen reviewed the bills that were being tracked and explained positions taken during the Legislative Policy Committee meetings.

LD 543, "An Act to Reimburse Counties for Judicial Costs" which would allow counties to charge rent for superior court, will be heard today. Also, LD 748 the qualified immunity bill was scheduled to be heard that day.

In conversations with Policy Assistant Patrick Rankin, there was a discussion about legislation that was going to expire related to TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families). He wanted to see what projects the county ARPA funds had been allocated to and determine if counties had any money left to dedicate to this project. It would be an opportunity for counties to point out what great things have been accomplished with their funds. We might want to gather a short synopsis of projects for each county.

Comm. Gorden reported that the jail funding figures were still not complete, but we were given additional time to supply them. We are asking for an inflationary increase of 7.1%, a reasonable percentage derived from a number of factors. Jim said Comm. Liberty was helping to get the numbers into a presentation for the Governor. Administrator

Andy Hart said the numbers are not a true reflection; they are down because of staffing problems. All jails are struggling.

Comm. Gorden said there were two more bills addressing the issue of rural patrol in addition to our bill. We have powerful sponsors which will help our bill to move forward if we can prove the need. He recommended working on definitions. What exactly is rural patrol and how did we get into this position. We should stress the fact that this is a cost to counties that didn't exist before. It did make sense for counties to answer rural calls. The residents know the sheriff's and staff. They might be more at ease than they would be with a trooper they don't know.

Mr. Cohen said there was a leadership meeting scheduled for next week which would include representatives from MCCA, MMA, MSA, and Public Safety. There would be resistance if we attempted to obtain funding with a percentage of any existing taxes. Instead, we should focus on why the funding is needed and point out that counties share responsibility with the state.

Sheriff Troy Morton said rural patrol was a huge issue throughout State and the problem has been developing over the past few years. There was a vast difference between counties and what is needed for each of them. In the 1990's, Penobscot was thought of as the model for call sharing and sharing resources. Accident reconstruction, response, drone teams, negotiations are all tasks that will continue to be needed and the volume of calls will continue to increase. We must work towards partnerships to financially support the performance of these duties. The Maine State Police (MSP) are struggling to fill positions and evolved to make the job more attractive by promising a better life to their troopers. They offered more time off and began to restrict their travel to less rural areas. Sheriff Morton said he had met with Col. Cote and the conversation was adversarial. Since that meeting Col. Cote had not been responsive. Rebecca Graham could be the key to finding funding solutions. Some towns are investing in their own communities by hiring law enforcement personnel on their own. Using county resources would save them money. Regardless, MSA does not want the funds to come with oversight from the state which overcomplicates the process, adds more work and slows the receipt of the money. Comm. Baldacci said it was not the intention of Penobscot Commissioners to go off on its own. They want to work with MCCA, MSA, MMA to find the best solution. Sheriff Morton agreed; MSA wants to be in partnership with MCCA.

5.2. Affiliate Organization Committee Reports - recognize those in attendance or submitted Information:
MACCAM - MSA, Others

No other reports were given.

6. Adjournment

Comm. Richard Dutremble asked if there were other comments. Hearing none, *President Dutremble invited a **motion to adjourn at approximately 12:17 p.m. Comm. Baldacci made the motion, seconded by Comm. Gorden, and the motion to adjourn was approved.***

Respectfully submitted,



MCCA Administrator, Lauren Haven

Attested:

MCCA Secretary-Treasurer, George Jabar