

# MCCA

Andre Cushing, President  
Penobscot County

Robert Sezak, Vice President  
Somerset County

Sawin Millett, Secretary-Treasurer  
Oxford County

Richard Dutremble, Past President  
York County



Lauren Haven  
Administrator

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## MAINE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION

### Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

June 11th, 2025 at 10:00 am via Zoom

#### 1. Call to Order

President Andre Cushing called the meeting to order at approximately 10:00 am with the following directors and other participants in attendance:

#### DIRECTORS PRESENT:

Androscoggin – Comm. Jane Pentheny  
Aroostook – Comm. William Dobbins  
Cumberland – Comm. Steve Gorden  
Franklin – Comm. Bob Carlton  
Hancock – Comm. Samuel DiBella  
Kennebec – Comm. George Jabar  
Lincoln – Comm. David Levesque  
Oxford – Comm. Sawin Millett  
Penobscot – Comm. Andre Cushing  
Piscataquis – Admin. Mike Williams proxy for Comm. Paul Davis  
Sagadahoc – Comm. Todd McPhee  
Somerset – Comm. Robert Sezak  
Waldo – Comm. Betty Johnson  
Washington – Manage Renee Gray proxy for Comm. David Burns  
York – Comm. Richard Dutremble

#### DIRECTORS ABSENT:

Knox – Comm. Ed Glaser  
Piscataquis – Comm. Paul Davis

#### OTHERS PRESENT:

Androscoggin – Admin. Jeff Chute  
Franklin – Manager Amy Bernard  
Lincoln – Admin. Carrie Kipfer  
MCCA Risk Pool - Manager Malcolm Ulmer  
MCCA - Admin. Lauren Haven  
MRODA – Registrar, Cheri Crockett  
MSA – Sheriffs Ken Mason  
Oxford – Admin. Zane Loper  
Penobscot – Comm. David Marshall, Admin. Scott Adkins  
Sagadahoc – Admin. Amber Jones  
Somerset – Admin. Tim Curtis  
State of Maine – Harold Chip Jones  
Verrill Dana – Lobbyists Jim Cohen and Sam Hamilton

2. Consent Agenda:
  - 2.1. Approval of the Agenda
  - 2.2. Approval of the Minutes
  - 2.3. Financial Reports: Lauren Haven

Comm. Cushing requested a motion to move the consent agenda. *Comm. Penthey made the motion which was seconded by Comm. Sezak and the motion to approve the consent agenda passed.*

3. Committee Reports:
  - 3.1. NACo Update: George Jabar and Robert Sezak

The group discussed the upcoming annual NACo conference which was scheduled for July 11<sup>th</sup> to July 14<sup>th</sup> in Philadelphia. Several people will be participating to represent Maine county government. There was mention of planning a dinner for people attending from Maine.

- 3.2. Events Committee - Lauren Haven

Administrator Lauren Haven reported that the Events Committee traveled to the venue, Sebasco Harbor Resort, on June 6<sup>th</sup> to meet with the event coordinator and take a tour of the property. Registration for the Convention of Maine Counties had opened and attendees were starting to register for the event and book hotel rooms. The schedule was still being developed, one of the activities would be a Golf Tournament on Wednesday September 17<sup>th</sup>, the day prior to the event. A barbeque lunch was planned as well as a reception following the tournament. Awards and prizes were expected to be presented. Also in the works was a congressional breakfast, "Coffee with Congress", on Saturday, September 20<sup>th</sup>. She said the full details would be shared as they were finalized.

President Cushing said that the objective for this year's convention was to get us back to pre-COVID attendance numbers. He said he hoped to not only have our elected officials attend but to offer sessions that would benefit employees in different departments. He explained the schedule and the speakers who had confirmed availability. Andre said MCCA was inviting partners from MMA, MSA and some of the legislative leadership committee chairs and presiding officers to the golf tournament. He said that the golf tournament would provide a fun revenue-building activity which would be a great kick off the convention.

4. Legislative Policy Committee: Steve Gorden and Jean-Marie Caterina, Co-Chairs
  - 4.1. James Cohen, Verrill Dana
    - 4.1.1. Legislative Update
    - 4.1.2. Next Steps

Lobbyist Jim Cohen reported that our highest priority, county jail funding, continues to be the primary issue that we're focused on in the waning days of the session. Speaker Fecteau had started yesterday's session by saying that his goal was to wrap things up by the end of Wednesday the following week. Mr. Cohen said there was a chance that the legislature could meet on Saturday or Sunday or possibly both days due to the hundreds of divided reports that remain the legislature. He mentioned our focus on the initiative for the \$4 million line item to be allocated to medication assisted treatment (MAT) programs in jails. LD 852, "An Act to Reduce the Property Tax Burden by Adequately Funding County Jail Operations" sponsored by Representative John Ducharme involves another \$4 million for each year of the biennium for county jails. However, there was no way to know if there would be money to fund it or if it would be a priority.

Another bill that we focused on for jail funding was LD 1775, "An Act to Authorize the Issuance of a Revenue Bond to Upgrade County Jails to Meet the Corrections Needs of Maine's Counties", again sponsored by Representative Ducharme. Mr. Cohen thought this revenue bond would likely not be funded this session but might be carried over.

MCCA's bill LD 719, "An Act to Amend the Share of State Funding for the County Jail Operations Fund" would have called for an annual appropriation of 35% of county jail costs. That bill has morphed into a resolve which directs the County Corrections Professional Standards Council to answer several questions that have been posed and report back next year. Then the Criminal Justice Committee would have authority to "report out" legislation based on the report from the County Corrections Standards Council. That will take some work and some effort. Some work has already been done, and some of it may be able to be passed off to the Department of Corrections. Those recommendations could include that there should be more funding for the council or that audit requirements should be modified. There are any number of directions that the report could go in, but it provides a formal vehicle for counties to introduce information and to make recommendations to the legislature.

Lobbyist Sam Hamilton reported on the status of the priority legislation that's been acted on. MCCA submitted testimony for LD 870, "*An Act Regarding the Membership of the Maine Land Use Planning Commission*" sponsored by Representative William Bridgeo. He said the bill was on the appropriations table for a small amount but if it gets funded on the appropriations table it has been amended to address issues we raised in our testimony. It will be adding two new members to the Commission, one member will be a federally recognized tribal representative, and one will be appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House. They will appoint an at large member who has scientific or technical background in forestry land use planning conservation wildlife river recreation. Some other bills Mr. Hamilton reviewed were LD 1416, LD 1347, LD 647 and LD 286. The outcomes of these bills can be found in the Legislative Tracker on the MCCA website.

Cherri Crockett from the Registers of Deeds Association reported on bills the group was actively following. Ms. Crockett submitted a report on this topic which is attached to these minutes.

Sheriff Mason was asked to submit a similar end-of-session report on behalf of MSA on the status of the bills their association had been working on. Sheriff Mason said he would find out if such a report was being developed.

The group talked about a bill that was carried over that would restrict commercial enterprises from abusing the freedom of access laws. Another bill was discussed that would have addressed fees that could be charged for fulfilling FOA requests.

Andre mentioned that there would be an LPC discussion at the July 9<sup>th</sup> MCCA meeting in Farmington. He said there would also be subcommittee meetings and partner association meetings taking place that day. Bob Carlton in Franklin County offered to host the event in celebration of their incredible new county building for emergency operations. Bob said they had arranged for a really nice lunch and a reception to follow the meetings. Andre said Lauren would be putting out an RSVP to get a head count so that they can be prepared for that number at lunch.

Meeting guest Harold Chip Jones, Fiscal Administrator of the Unorganized Territory (UT) at the State of Maine asked to speak about a couple of bills that were going to affect counties. LD 22, "*An Act to Update the Laws Governing Education in the Unorganized Territory*" sponsored by Senator Joseph Rafferty helped in transportation of UT students. The state statutes specified that parents could not be paid to transport their own child to and from school. Some of these students are traveling over two hours one way to get to school and have grandparents or contractors transport them. Mr. Jones said the passing of this bill will be a cost savings measure so that parents are being paid mileage.

Mr. Jones reported that LD 1302, "*An Act Regarding the Number of Voters of a Municipality Required to Petition for Consideration of Deorganization of That Municipality*" sponsored by Senator Joseph Baldacci was more of a housekeeping bill. The bill modifies the provision of law governing voter petition for the deorganization of a municipality. Current law requires a written petition of a number of voters equal to at least 50% of the number of votes cast in the municipality at the last gubernatorial election, but not fewer than 10 voters, to request a municipal meeting to discuss and determine whether the municipality should deorganize. The bill removes the limitation that the petition must be signed by at least 10 voters. The bill passed.

LD 1584, An Act to Establish Municipal Cost Components for Unorganized Territory Services to Be Rendered in Fiscal Year 2025-26 was passed as an emergency bill so that it will go into effect quickly. Mr. Jones said that one aspect of this involved UT students as they do not receive any general purpose aid for their tuition to go to school. Right now in Maine general purpose aid is 55% state educated funding collective over the state. They may be looking at paying in the same range as the public commitment which is approximately \$3,000-\$4,000 and the state would pick up the rest. The 55% mark for the UT students would be about \$8 million in savings to the UT that they no longer have to fund.

Andre announced that Comm. Kevin Kelly from Waldo County had indicated he would be receptive to helping chair the LPC Committee as Comm. Steve Gorden was hoping to step down from that and the Jail Standards Council.

## 5. Officer Reports

### 5.1. President Report, Andre Cushing

#### 5.1.1. Consideration of an Education Subcommittee

President Cushing announced that he was going to establish an Education Committee. MCCA bylaws permit the president to do so. The purpose of this committee would be to feature topics of interest in trainings, either organized after board meetings or at other designated times as standalone web presentations and discussions. These topics would be chosen based upon the responses from the survey that Lauren designed for the convention. He said that Chip Jones might be asked to conduct a training if he was willing. Andre said he would be in touch with commissioners, administrators, sheriffs, and county partner organizations that might be interested in sharing important information.

### 5.1.2. Proposal to Adopt an Awards Program

President Cushing referred to the awards program proposal included in the agenda packet. The purpose would be to expand the scope of the award recognitions. He said that he had attended the New England Emergency Communications Convention and thought they did a tremendous job recognizing some of their dispatchers and others team members. He said he realized we have an opportunity at our convention to recognize people who work within county government who do a great job. Clearly counties cannot compete salary-wise with the private sector, so recognition is a key component for professional development, retention and recruitment of good people to work in our county government. Comm. Cushing said he had listed a few of the areas he wanted the board to consider and I wanted the board's approval to move forward with the additional awards that would presented at the convention. Strategically, if the awards dinner is scheduled for Friday night, there may be some additional people who would come in and register for the event to come to the dinner and recognize their colleagues. He entertained a motion to accept the proposal. Comm. Dutremble made the motion which was **seconded** by Comm. Sezak and the motion to approve the awards program **passed**. Comm. Cushing said he hoped each county would embrace this idea and recommend employees for the awards so everyone could recognize the winners at the awards dinner.

### 5.1.3. County Incentive Scholarship Program

President Cushing said his objective was to generate revenue that would allow MCCA through the budget process to subsidize the cost associated with an Executive Director and enhance the association revenues. To do that, he said he had come up with a fairly robust series of sponsorships with different levels and opportunities that members of county government would take to some of the local vendors that dealt with through individual counties and operations either through jails or through county services or they could simply be good community members that would sponsor recognition at the golf tournament. The idea was that if a sponsor was referred by a county, then the county would receive a percentage of the sponsorship which would go into a scholarship fund that could be applied towards sending employees to the convention or other MCCA events. He said he would leave it to the Board's consideration as to what percentage it would be. There would be a variety of opportunities available for these sponsorships including activities like candle pin bowling, food and entertainment. Historically we've had two gift baskets donated by every county which are raffled off at lunch and dinner each day of the convention. It's fun and attendees seem to really enjoy being able to win something. We've also done passport cards where exhibitors are listed on the card and people go around each exhibit booth and have it signed by the vendors. The completed cards go into a drawing for another prize. This is a conversation starter for the exhibitors. We want to make sure that we're giving value to those people who are willing to invest in being a sponsor and exhibitor at our event.

The group discussed the percentage amount for the scholarship. Andre emphasized that these funds would not impact the county budgets. The monies would be additional funds that would be used for county members to participate in MCCA events. The remaining portion not allocated to the scholarship fund would be used to raise funds for MCCA expenses, one of which could be paying for the salary and benefits of an executive director if the board is interested in doing that.

Comm. Sezak made the **motion** for 25% of the sponsored amount to go into a scholarship fund for county members to participate in MCCA events. The motion was **seconded** by Comm. McPhee. A roll call vote was taken and the motion to approve the scholarship fund **passed**.

## 5.2. Vice President, Robert Sezak

Comm. Sezak said there was nothing to report other than to note that the Bylaws Committee planned to meet in Farmington on July 9<sup>th</sup>.

## 5.3. Secretary/Treasurer, Sawin Millett

### 5.3.1. Consideration of Office Supplies Reimbursement for the President

Comm. Millett reminded the group that during the last meeting the Board authorized a travel allowance for the president capped at \$3,000 for the year. Recently, President Cushing also submitted a couple of small bills, one for name tags and one for business cards. Comm. Millett said the reason the topic was introduced for discussion and approval was because the president has not incurred such expenses in past years. Therefore, although there is no issue with the amount of these expenses, we need to be clear that in approving them we will be setting a precedent for the future and would need to decide how we deal with these issues going forward. Admin. Lauren Haven said it was her recommendation that MCCA draft and adopt a policy which would formalize guidelines and procedures for such purchases. She said that if someone made a motion to approve the reimbursement of the expenses, she would ask that it include not only the approval but also that the Budget and Finance Committee would be authorized to draft a policy for consideration of adoption by the Board. Comm. Gorden **moved** to approve the expenses and charge the Budget and Finance Committee to draft appropriate

language for a policy to be reviewed by the Board. Additionally, he stipulated that the total amount of such expenses would be capped at \$3,000 for the year. This motion was **seconded** by Comm. McPhee and the motion **passed** with a simple majority vote.

### 5.3.2. Certificate of Deposit Reinvestment

Comm. Millet provided an update regarding the CD investment. The Board of Directors authorized the Executive Committee to approve a new funding location for the CD of \$50,000. Northeast Bank offered the best rate at 4.25% for six months. Members of the Executive Committee approved moving forward with Northeast and Lauren was completing the process to establish the CD. Sawin thanked Lauren for her help. He said that he was responsible as the Secretary/Treasurer and the Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee to maintain a full and accurate account of the income and disbursement and a record of our proceedings. He said he does none of that, Lauren does it all, and he said he had reviewed her detailed financial reports and recognized this task was well beyond his capacity. He said that he thought MCCA was on track with the budget and that he really appreciated the work that Lauren does on our behalf. President Cushing thanked Sawin for noting that and asked that Lauren present a mid-year report for the July meeting.

### 6. Association Reports - MACCAM, MARP, MRODA, MSA, others.

MACCAM: Admin Tim Curtis reported that the association planned to have an in-person meeting on July 9<sup>th</sup> in Farmington. One of the items on the agenda would be the status of county audits. He said that due to a lack of auditing services and staff turnover, a third of the counties in Maine are at least two years behind in their audits. Therefore, he said we need to have a conversation about this and brainstorm ideas to move things forward.

MCCA Risk Pool: President Cushing thanked Malcolm Ulmer again for his presentation in May on the history and role of MCCA Self-Funded Risk Pool.

### 7. Adjournment followed by Maine Paid Family and Medical Leave Options Presentation: Admin. Tim Curtis.

President Andre Cushing invited a **motion** to adjourn at approximately 11:45 a.m. Comm. Sezak made the **motion, seconded** by Comm. Millett, and the motion to adjourn was **passed**.

Respectfully submitted,



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MCCA Administrator, Lauren Haven

## **MAINE REGISTERS OF DEEDS ASSOCIATION**

Cherri L. Crockett, Oxford County, MRODA President

Jessica Spaulding, Cumberland County, MRODA Vice President

**APRIL 14, 2025**

### **BRIEFING TO: MAINE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' ASSOCIATION**

The Maine Registers of Deeds Association held their monthly meeting on Friday, April 11, 2025 at the Waterville Police Station. 'Thank You' treats were provided to the Communications Department for their efforts to welcome us.

\*Minutes for this meeting will be available for viewing pending approval on May 9, 2025.

#### Topics of Discussion

- Report from Secretary (March Minutes Approved)
- Report from Treasurer (March Treasurer's Detail Approved)
- Registry Procedure Binder; Resource for each Registry Created by Membership to Empower Consistency and Continuity of Registry Practice
- Website Updates; MRODA President and Secretary Communicate Monthly with Lauren Haven (webmaster) to Ensure Meeting Minutes and other Updates are made to [www.maineregistryofdeeds.com](http://www.maineregistryofdeeds.com)
- Tax Portal Updates/Issues; The October 2024 GO LIVE Date was Problematic and Issues Continue to Arise. Cherri is in regular contact with Lisa Gatcombe (site manager) to keep informed of Updates/Reported Issues/Estimated Time of Correction
- Legislative Updates; LD 68, LD 353, LD 358, LD 915, LD 1082
- Monthly Focus Presentation; Recap of PRIA (Property Records Industry Association) Convention. Thank you to Cumberland, York and Oxford County for Representing Maine.
- Report from Events Coordinator; Annual Greenville Team Builder & Partner Panel
- Education/Team Building Committee Report; Greenville Team Builder, Newsletter, MCCA and MMA Convention Education Planning
- Registry Tours; Annual Rotating Tour of Three Registries with the objective of gaining insight to Best Practice, Consistency, Preservation Goals, etc.
- Register Rounds; Provides each Register the opportunity to ask county-specific questions and/or make announcements.

For further information, the MRODA encourages you to make contact with your County Register of Deeds.

Respectfully Submitted by Cherri L. Crockett, Oxford County/MRODA Liaison to MCCA