

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



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Lauren Haven
Administrator

MAINE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

June 14th, 2023, 10:00 am via Zoom

1. Call to Order

MCCA President Richard Dutremble called the meeting to order at approximately 10:05 am.

DIRECTORS PRESENT:

Aroostook – Comm. Norman Fournier
Cumberland – Comm. Steve Gorden
Hancock – Admin. Mike Crooker proxy for Comm. John Wombacher
Knox – Comm. Sharyn Pohlman
Lincoln – Comm. William Blodgett
Oxford – Admin. Donald Durrah proxy for Comm. Steven Merrill
Penobscot – Comm. Peter Baldacci
Piscataquis – Manager Mike Williams proxy for Comm. Paul Davis
Somerset – Comm. Robert Sezak
Waldo – Comm. Betty Johnson
Washington – Comm. Chris Gardner
York – Comm. Richard Dutremble

DIRECTORS ABSENT:

Androscoggin – Comm. Garrett Mason
Franklin – Comm. Bob Carlton
Hancock – Comm. John Wombacher
Kennebec – Comm. George Jabar
Oxford – Comm. Steven Merrill
Sagadahoc – Comm. Carol Grose

OTHERS PRESENT:

Knox – Admin. Andy Hart
Lincoln – Admin. Carrie Kipfer
MCCA Risk Pool - Manager Malcolm Ulmer
MCCA - Admin. Lauren Haven
NACo – Employee Benefits Program Director Carlos Greene
Nationwide – Retirement Plan Acquisition Director Greg Watson
Penobscot – Admin. Scott Adkins
Verrill Dana – Jim Cohen, Brody Haverly-Johndro

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

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

3. Officer Reports:
 - 3.1. Secretary/Treasurer, George Jabar
 - 3.2. Vice President, Norm Fournier
 - 3.3. President Report, Richard Dutremble

President Dutremble reported on the status of jail funding and the importance of contacting legislators and committee members.

4. Standing Committee Reports:
 - 4.1. NACo Update: Peter Baldacci & Sharyn Pohlman

Comm. Baldacci announced the NACo Annual meeting would occur in Austin, Texas, which is Travis County, from July 21st to 24th. All NACo county members are eligible and encouraged to send members to attend. He also briefly touched on the meeting in May with NACo financial services in Portland, now called “Edge”, and the new AI Exploratory Committee which will assess the state of AI and how AI policies, practices and potential use relate to county governance.

- 4.2. Convention Planning Committee (CPC) – Lauren Haven
 - 4.2.1. Convention Planning Update
 - 4.2.2. Educational Session Topic Survey

Admin. Lauren Haven reported that the Convention Planning Committee met on Friday, June 2nd to plan the conference menu in preparation for the opening of vendor registration. Attendees also talked about the list of requested educational session topics and discussed conference pricing. She said that vendor registration was open and attendee registration would open in July after the convention schedule was determined.

Following that meeting, Comm. Gorden requested an Executive Committee meeting which occurred on June 5th. The group discussed convention related topics including the education sessions. It was decided that a survey would be taken of the educational

session topics so the Convention Planning Committee could narrow down the list by the amount of interest in each topic. The survey had been included in the agenda packet for the Board of Directors' meeting. Lauren asked that completed surveys be returned by June 29th so she could compile the results for discussion at the Committee's next meeting on Friday, June 30th.

4.3. Legislative Policy Committee – Steve Gorden, Chair

4.3.1. James Cohen, Verrill Dana

4.3.1.1. Legislative Update

4.3.1.2. Next Steps

Lobbyist James Cohen reported that the Legislative session was scheduled to adjourn the following Wednesday. However, he didn't think that would be possible due to the number of debates in progress. The calendar was full, and our focus needed to remain on jail funding. Legislators might be contemplating fitting Counties into the budget, and we would need to keep jail funding at the forefront. Again, the Governor does not want to raise taxes. Admin. Mike Williams said that it will raise property taxes if we can't get the money from the Legislature.

Comm. Chris Gardner stated that even though the rural patrol bill has been tabled, we could work with public safety to acquire the funding with the idea that we could repurpose it for rural patrol as it is a genuine safety concern. We would need support from a public safety group to help craft a solution for the legislature to stamp their approval. Comm. Gorden said the money is being used for required directives and there wouldn't be any left over. Comm. Gardner said we should go along to get along. This issue would not go away and we need to get the attention of the people who can allocate funds to bridge the gap being left by the Maine State Police. Penobscot will have a \$500,000 dollar impact. Mr. Cohen said it wasn't likely that money would come through for rural patrol this year, but we should keep fighting for the jail money and then work on getting funding next year with appropriate and necessary data.

Jim reported his team was still tracking many of bills we had been following. They would keep the commissioners apprised of any developments or outcomes. Comm. Fournier said the Governor signed the bill that will allow TIF (Tax Increment Financing) money to be used for capital expenditures. He asked Mr. Cohen to find out if this would include counties.

Admin. Carrie Kipfer reported that the 25 million dollars for the Blue Ribbon Commission which was reauthorized might be funded. Mr. Cohen pointed out that it was not funded in the budget so it will have to go to the appropriations table. He suspected there would be negotiations and changes. Comm. Gorden said we needed to be forward thinking and not sit back and then scramble to develop bills at the last minute. All agreed.

5. Association Reports - MACCAM, MARP, MRODA, MSA, others.
6. NACo/Nationwide Presentation of Programs

President Dutremble welcomed guests Carlos Greene from NACo and Greg Watson from Nationwide. Carlos Greene, who is the Program Director of Employee Benefits, explained that NACo partnered with Nationwide Retirement Solutions to help enhance the overall financial wellness and retirement security of our nation's county workers and their families. The relationship grew over forty years to provide the largest supplemental retirement plan in the US including three thousand counties and forty-one state associations. COVID was an obstacle in growing their membership in Maine. In the future, they would like to see Maine counties offer more Nationwide retirement programs.

Greg Watson, the Retirement Plan Acquisition Director, talked about the history of ICMA (Mission Squared) and the current trends that emerged post COVID. This turned out to be an ideal time for counties to reevaluate their offerings. He highlighted the benefits of their plans and said the goal was to achieve better participant experiences, administrative simplicity, and extraordinary service. Mr. Watson said he would like to have more conversations with Maine county representatives to determine if they would be a good fit. Admin. Lauren Haven said that NACo and Nationwide representatives would be at the convention in the fall and would be available to answer questions and provide more information then. She said she would also put program information on the MCCA website for reference.

Comm. Baldacci remarked that NACo/Nationwide was a tremendous partnership and asked if the Nationwide programs would replace the existing retirement offerings. Mr. Watson answered that they didn't necessarily need to replace the current plans. Instead, they could set up an a la carte method to give participants more options from which to choose. In this case, there would be no RFP process and the services could simply be added to the county's employee benefits to offer a variety of solutions. Comm. Baldacci commented that this would be a helpful selling point to attract potential employees to work for Maine counties. He explained that it has been increasingly difficult to recruit and hire. Any additional benefits they could offer could very well tip the scales in their favor. He thanked Carlos and Greg for their presentation and said he looked forward to seeing them in person in September.

7. Adjournment

President Dutremble invited a **motion** to adjourn at approximately 11:45 a.m. Comm. Steve Gorden made the **motion, seconded** by Comm. Bill Blodgett, and the motion to adjourn was **approved**.

Respectfully submitted,



MCCA Administrator, Lauren Haven

Attested:

MCCA Secretary-Treasurer, George Jabar