

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

December 13th, 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
Franklin – Deputy Admin. Tiffany Baker, proxy for Comm. Bob Carlton
Kennebec – Comm. George Jabar
Knox – Comm. Sharyn Pohlman
Lincoln – Admin. Carrie Kipfer proxy for Comm. William Blodgett
Oxford – Exec. Asst. Abby Shanor proxy for Comm. Steven Merrill
Penobscot – Comm. Peter Baldacci
Sagadahoc – Comm. Carol Grose
Somerset – Comm. Robert Sezak
Waldo – Comm. Betty Johnson
Washington – Comm. Chris Gardner
York – Comm. Richard Dutremble

DIRECTORS ABSENT:

Androscoggin – Comm. Garrett Mason
Hancock – Comm. John Wombacher
Lincoln - Comm. William Blodgett
Oxford – Comm. Steven Merrill
Piscataquis – Comm. Paul Davis

OTHERS PRESENT:

Knox – Admin. Andy Hart
MCCA Risk Pool - Manager Malcolm Ulmer
MCCA - Admin. Lauren Haven
MSA – Sheriff Ken Mason
Sagadahoc – Admin. Amber Jones
Verrill Dana – Lobbyist Jim Cohen

2. Consent Agenda:

- 2.1 Approval of the Agenda
- 2.2 Approval of the Minutes
- 2.3 Financial Reports - Lauren Haven

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

3. Officer Reports

3.1 Secretary/Treasurer George Jabar

Comm. Jabar indicated there was no report.

3.2 Vice President Norman Fournier

Comm. Fournier said he was saving his comments for the Budget and Finance section of the meeting.

3.3 President Richard Dutremble

- Officer Nominating Committee Appointments

President Dutremble talked with attendees about the officer positions and the availability of the current Executive Committee members. After some discussion, Comm. Dutremble recommended the Board of Directors propose the same slate of officers for 2024. This will be approved by a vote at the Annual General Membership meeting.

- Annual General Membership Meeting Venue

President Dutremble requested that the Board of Directors ratify the decision of the Executive Committee to hold the Annual General Membership meeting in January at the Senator Inn and Spa in Augusta. The **motion** was made by Comm. Jabar, **seconded** by Comm. Pohlman, and the motion **passed** with a unanimous vote.

The group discussed inviting Sheriff's to the annual meeting. Admin. Lauren Haven said she would include them in the distribution list to receive the meeting invitation.

4. Standing Committee Reports

4.1 Budget and Finance Committee - Norm Fournier, Chair

- Presentation of the 2024 Draft Budget
- Recommendation to Present the 2024 Draft Budget at the Annual Meeting

Budget and Finance Committee Chair, Comm. Norm Fournier, explained the highlights of the 2024 Budget draft with the MCCA dues formula as recommended by the Budget and Finance Committee which included Comm. George Jabar, Comm. Richard Dutremble Comm., Steve Gorden, Comm. Betty Johnson, Administrator Scott Adkins, and himself.

There were two major points of discussion about the proposed budget. The first point was regarding the Risk Pool Assessment which had been lowered in 2021 to \$24,063 and the amount had not been increased in the last three years. Comm. Baldacci asked why there was not a cost-of-living adjustment attached to the line item since the budget proposed an overall four percent increase. Comm. Gardner was opposed to the increase because he thought MCCA held little value to the Risk Pool. The group talked about points for and against an increase. After some discussion, Comm. Baldacci **moved** to increase the Risk Pool Assessment line item by four percent. The motion was **seconded** by Comm. Johnson, and the motion **passed**.

The second point was regarding the addition of \$5,000 for a public relations consultant. Comm. Gorden said he had brought this forth to the Committee. He said it would not pay for a public relations position, but we could start somewhere by setting a small amount aside for consideration. President Dutremble said York County has a full-time public relations position and it was worth it to them. Comm. Sezak said we might find someone to work on per diem since \$5,000 would likely not be enough for even a part time consultant. Comm. Gardner said the money would be better utilized elsewhere. Comm. Fournier said if they decided to use the funds, the request would be brought to the Board of Directors for approval and not be used for something else simply because the amount was put in the budget. He asked for a show of hands if anyone was opposed to leaving the placeholder in the budget. The majority of attendees were in favor. Therefore, the money was left in the budget proposal.

Comm. Baldacci **moved** to accept the 2024 draft and present the proposed budget to the Board of Directors at the General Membership meeting for final approval with the stipulation that the Risk Pool Assessment be increased by four percent and the difference decrease the amount utilized by the fund balance. It was **seconded** by Comm. Johnson, and the motion **passed**.

4.2 NACo Update - Peter Baldacci and Sharyn Pohlman

Comm. Baldacci reported that he and Comm. Pohlman were scheduled to attend the NACo Legislative Conference in February. They will have an opportunity to talk with various legislators, NACo staff, and congressional members. He requested that commissioners let them know what their top issues were. There will be a session on opioid money and a presentation on the guidelines planned for the first day of the conference. Comm. Pohlman said she attended a Zoom meeting a few weeks ago presenting an overview of the Treasury's Final Rule. There's an executive summary which includes ten highlights with changes that have been made. Comm. Gorden mentioned that after 2024, no one could fund positions using ARPA money.

Comm. Gardner asked where we are on inmate healthcare. Comm. Baldacci said that California was able to obtain a waiver for Medicare and that we should look into that for Maine. It was a very positive step in the right direction for all of us.

4.3 Convention Planning Committee – Admin. Lauren Haven

Admin Lauren Haven reported that the Committee was scheduled to meet on Friday, December 15th to kick off the planning for the 2024 convention. Since no county had offered to host, the Committee would be looking at getting estimates from potential venues and then they would make a recommendation to the Board of Directors. Several attendees thought Poland Spring Resort would be a suitable choice if other venues turned out to be too expensive.

4.4 Legislative Policy Committee – Steve Gorden, Chair

- Legislative Updates
- Next Steps

Comm. Gorden asked Lobbyist James Cohen to update the Board on Legislative activities.

Mr. Cohen talked about the two top priorities, Rural Patrol and Jail Funding. The rural patrol bill put in by MCCA, LD 630, "*An Act to Ensure Rural Law Enforcement Services in Maine*" sponsored by Representative Anne Graham had been carried over. The strategy was to keep the control with the Maine State Police (MSP) and have them hire county deputies to perform the duties if they couldn't provide the services themselves. The group talked about traction for this LD. Comm. Mike Sauschuck was not in favor of the bill. MSP positions were unfilled as was the case in all law enforcement agencies. Comm. Gorden said the job is done better by the Sheriff's because they're in the communities and develop relationships and trust with the residents. Sheriff Mason stated that the Maine Sheriff's Association (MSA) has ongoing discussions on how they can provide coverage. They have the necessary tools to perform the job, but everything costs money. He agreed that county sheriff's offices could do a better job with rural patrol. Comm. Gardner said he met with Col. Sauschuck and he expected push back, yet this seemed to be the best approach in that we were not asking for funding. Mr. Cohen said it's to our advantage to keep the responsibility with MSP. There will be a public hearing which will be our best opportunity to line up county representatives and have each one speak on behalf of the bill. Mr. Cohen said the public hearing would occur in approximately one month. We should concentrate on, "What's the message" and, "Who's the messenger", etc.

The group moved on to Jail Funding. Mr. Cohen said the vehicle to get additional funding was supposed to be through recommendations made by the County Corrections Professional Standards Council (CCPSC). Methods to get the message to legislators might be a Criminal Justice Committee workshop with handouts showing the costs that counties don't have control over. We could use those handouts to get in front of the Appropriations Committee as well. Sheriff Mason said MAT (medically assisted treatment) was imposed on county facilities. This cost wipes out whatever money we were able to obtain previously for additional jail funding. Comm. Gorden said

that at their last meeting, Council members did ask Comm. Liberty to submit the supplemental request. Admin. Scott Ferguson had put a document together for that purpose. The original request was five million and the amount had been increased to \$7.8 million because the last biennial budget had been flat funded. Comm. Fournier said there was another Council meeting the following day. They would get an update on the package Scott Ferguson assembled that had been sent to the office of finance. Jim Cohen said we should get the council to send the packet to criminal justice as well.

Comm. Fournier reported that the second quarter payments were being distributed. Aroostook had received their payment that day. He reminded attendees that CRAS (Corrections Reporting of Actuals System) needed to be updated to be eligible to receive the payment.

5. Affiliate Organizations Reports - MSA, MARP, MACCAM, others.

MSA – Sheriff Ken Mason said that Sheriff Scott Nichols of Franklin County was slated to be the new association president for 2024. The Sheriff said MSA members appreciated MCCA’s efforts to keep MSA informed of their activities and encouraged the group to continue working to combine efforts to achieve common goals.

6. Other Business

No other business was brought before the Board.

7. Adjournment

President Dutremble invited a **motion** to adjourn at approximately 12:10 p.m. Comm. Gorden made the **motion, seconded** by Comm. Pohlman, and the motion to adjourn was **approved**.

Respectfully submitted,



MCCA Administrator, Lauren Haven

Attested:

MCCA Secretary-Treasurer, George Jabar