

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

August 9th, 2023, 10:00 am

MCCA Offices 4 Gabriel Drive, Augusta

1. Call to Order

MCCA President Richard Dutremble called the meeting to order at approximately 10:30 am.

DIRECTORS PRESENT:

Aroostook – Comm. Norman Fournier
Hancock – HR. Director Mary-Anne Saxl proxy for Comm. John Wombacher
Lincoln – Comm. William Blodgett
Oxford – Admin. Donald Durrah proxy for Comm. Steven Merrill
Penobscot – Comm. Andre Cushing proxy for Comm. Peter Baldacci
Piscataquis – Comm. Paul Davis
Sagadahoc – Admin. Amber Jones proxy for 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
Cumberland – Comm. Steve Gorden
Franklin – Comm. Bob Carlton
Hancock – Comm. John Wombacher
Kennebec – Comm. George Jabar
Knox – Comm. Sharyn Pohlman
Oxford – Comm. Steven Merrill
Sagadahoc – Comm. Carol Grose

OTHERS PRESENT:

Lincoln – Admin. Carrie Kipfer
MCCA Risk Pool - Manager Malcolm Ulmer
MCCA - Admin. Lauren Haven
Piscataquis – Manager Mike Williams
Somerset – Admin. Tim Curtis
Verrill Dana – Lobbyists Jim Cohen

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

Comm. Gardner moved to approve the consent agenda seconded by Comm. Blodgett, and the motion passed with no opposition.

3. Convention Planning Committee – Lauren Haven
 - 3.1. Convention Planning Update

Admin. Lauren Haven reported that Convention registration was open, and the lineup of educational sessions had been completed. She reminded them the convention dates were September 12th to the 14th. The Convention Planning Committee met on July 21st to continue ironing out the details of the event and the group was scheduled to meet twice in August. She said there were vendors and sponsors who had signed up and she expected a few more before the end of the month. Lauren asked that commissioners on the Board of Directors not only attend the convention, but also encourage fellow commissioners and county employees to participate. As this would be the first full conference since COVID, it would be important to support the convention to demonstrate that we believe the event is valuable to our association members.

4. Legislative Policy Committee – VP Norm Fournier
 - 4.1. Legislative Update - James Cohen, Verrill Dana
 - 4.2. Jail Funding
 - 4.3. Rural Patrol
 - 4.4. New Legislation
 - 4.5. Next Steps

Vice President Norm Fournier invited lobbyist Jim Cohen to update the group on legislative activities. Mr. Cohen stated that currently our number one priority was jail funding followed by rural patrol. These had been the main topics of the LPC meeting on July 17th that had been scheduled to work on our legislative strategy. The outcome of that discussion was that we would review the following points at the August board meeting:

- 1. Commitment to jail funding data collection, overseen by the county administrators. Scott Ferguson leading data collection.*

2. *Submit a bill calling for 20% state funding of jail operating costs. For September cloture. Need sponsor.*
3. *Work with jail standards council to secure additional funding through supplemental budget*
4. *Meet with Governor and Commissioner*
5. *Our Coalition – potential members. Need to determine.*
 - a. *MCCA*
 - b. *MACCAM*
 - c. *MMA*
 - d. *MSA*

Mr. Cohen listed the items and then opened the floor for discussion. The group talked about each item in depth. Some comments recorded for these topics were as follows:

The group talked about the County Corrections Professional Standards Council (CCPSC) of which Commissioner Steve Gorden is the Chair. The Council had representation from MCCA, MDOC, MMA, and MSA. The CCPSC had asked Scott Ferguson to survey all counties for their top three financial drivers for jail budgets. Scott responded that he had not heard from all the counties. Attendees at this meeting thought it was still the case. The requested budget numbers were due last Friday August 4th. The counties that failed to report their need for additional monies were in jeopardy of not receiving supplemental funding.

Several reasons were mentioned why not all the counties were responding in a timely fashion. Jim Cohen said they might be able to use historical jail budget data compared to actual spending to show the increase of expenses. If MCCA proposed an emergency supplemental jail funding bill, it would be important to emphasize the inflation drivers such as staffing costs, infrastructure, food, etc. We would also need a sponsor for the bill.

The discussion continued. Many attendees agreed it would be better to have a built in CPI rather than have to go back to try to get supplemental funding every year. There were issues with that method as well. The counties were all different and not all jails needed supplemental funding. There was not a, “one size fits all” solution to the issue. For now, we would need to come up with a short-term solution. Then we could work on a long-term solution over time.

Comm. Gardner **moved to adopt the legislative strategy as outlined including introducing an emergency bill. The motion was seconded by Comm. Dutremble, and the motion to was unanimously approved.**

The discussion moved on to Rural Patrol. Comm. Cushing reported on the status of

Penobscot and the need for rural patrol coverage. He passed out information with statistical data and talked about the challenges they were facing. Jim Cohen said one problem with getting funding for rural patrol is that it was a new responsibility for counties. There was no history of counties needing state support for this project. We would need to create a compelling argument and aim for an achievable outcome which would not be a light lift. No one would want to levy a new tax and it would be difficult to get a percentage of the existing taxes such as cannabis or alcohol taxes. It seemed likely that MMA would be on our side if we opposed raising property taxes.

Comm. Gardner suggested we work with Public Safety and propose we assist them with their mission. We could state the Maine State Police were failing to meet the requirements as outlined in the Statute. Either they needed to meet the requirement or outsource the work. That would put counties in the position to help rather than seem to be threatening or encroaching in any way. We could present a proposal that would show the cost savings as well as a solution to the problem. We could formalize a draft to give to MSA. We will have an opportunity to work on this topic during the Legislative Workshop at the convention.

5. Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,



MCCA Administrator, Lauren Haven

Attested:

MCCA Secretary-Treasurer, George Jabar