

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

4 Gabriel Drive, Suite 2
Augusta, ME 04330
207-623-4697
www.mainecounties.org

MAINE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes October 8th, 2025 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
Knox – Comm. Ed Glaser
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
Waldo – Comm. Betty Johnson
York – Comm. Richard Dutremble

DIRECTORS ABSENT:

Piscataquis – Comm. Paul Davis
Somerset – Comm. Robert Sezak
Washington – Comm. David Burns

OTHERS PRESENT:

Androscoggin – Admin. Jeff Chute
Cumberland – Comm. Jean-Marie Caterina
Franklin – Manager Amy Bernard
Lincoln – EMAD – Emily Huber
MCCA Risk Pool - Manager Malcolm Ulmer
MCCA - Admin. Lauren Haven
MRODA – Registrar, Tanya Belanger
Penobscot – Comm. David Marshall
Verrill Dana – Lobbyists Jim Cohen and Sam Hamilton
Maine State Board of Property Tax Review - Phil St. Onge
Maine Office of Tax Policy - Connor Feeny

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. Dutremble made the motion which was **seconded** by Comm. Levesque and the motion to approve the consent agenda passed.

President Cushing welcomed attendees. He mentioned the MCCA newsletter that had recently been distributed and the convention financials that were being tallied. He said he had met with Treasurer Millett and Administrator Ryan Pelletier to discuss the 2026 budget. Due to fundraising efforts for the convention, the bank account had enough funds available to justify investing in another CD. The group discussed the opportunity. Comm. Penthany made a **motion** to authorize moving up to \$45,000 into a CD. which was **seconded** by Comm. Millett. Comm. Gorden requested a friendly amendment to adhere to MCCA's policies. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion **passed** unanimously.

Comm. Gorden mentioned the resignation of Aroostook County Admin. Ryan Pelletier and said he was moving to a municipal government position. The conversation transitioned to the financial difficulties counties were facing and then jail funding.

3. Committee Reports:

- 3.1. NACo Update: George Jabar and Robert Sezak
- 3.2. Events Committee - Lauren Haven

4. Legislative Policy Committee: Jean-Marie Caterina and Kevin Kelley, Co-Chairs

- 4.1. James Cohen, Verrill Dana
 - 4.1.1. Legislative Update
 - 4.1.2. Next Steps

Lobbyist Jim Cohen reported that the cloture deadline for the second regular session was on the 24th of September and there were approximately 250 bill requests submitted. A handful of those bills did relate to counties. He turned the conversation over to colleague Sam Hamilton.

Mr. Hamilton reported that new legislation was being introduced, likely due to the financial difficulties in Washington County. One is LR 2731 which was submitted by Senator Moore out of Washington County. It's an act to allow a political subdivision to enter into federal bankruptcy proceedings. The next one was LR 2821 which requires that county budgets be approved by the voters of each county. This was put in by Representative Woodson of Waterboro. There was a similar bill submitted by Representative Toole of East Machias titled, "An Act to Require County Budgets to be Approved by a Countywide Referendum."

There was also legislation proposed in the energy realm. This was an act to authorize municipalities and counties to form community choice aggregation programs to produce electricity submitted by Representative Runte of York County.

Regarding jails, LR 2823 is, *“An Act to Provide Local control over jail capacity decisions.”* This was submitted by former Speaker of the House and now Senator Rachel Talbot Ross of Portland.

LR 2649 is an act regarding Department of Corrections payment for health care services. This was submitted by Representative Ducharme of Madison. There was another that bans the use of drones over county jails and correctional facilities proposed by the Department of Corrections.

Mr. Hamilton mentioned there were a few requests pertaining to property tax and fiscal items with potential county impacts. LR2704 was an act to increase the homestead property tax exemption submitted by representative Rudnicki and LR2740 an act to re-establish property tax levy limits for large Maine towns submitted by representative Bishop. And finally, LR 2697 was looking to triple the homestead exemption property taxes.

That's a carryover bill. That's a long bill. I would add that Senator Talbot Ross's bill, to the extent it relates to whether or not a county jail needs to accept certain inmates, I'm assuming that that relates to ICE detainees. That's my assumption as well on that one, just based off the sponsor title.

A Legislative Policy Committee meeting was considered. However, no date was set.

Comm. Cushing mentioned hosting a legislative breakfast and reinstating county day at the state house as some ways to engage with legislative members to educate them on county roles and issues. The group talked about trying to work more closely with Maine Municipal Association.

Comm. Cushing referred to two legislative items from the newsletter: L.D. 1770 *“Resolve, to Establish the Real Estate Property Tax Relief Task Force Resolve, to Establish the Real Estate Property Tax Relief Task Force”*. This task force will review the impact on property taxes over the next two years and report back to the Legislature with an interim report due in January 2026. MACCAM President Tim Curtis has been invited to present to the task force. Amanda Campbell, representing Maine Municipal, has also been invited to present. The second was LD 719, *“Resolve, to Direct the County Corrections Professional Standards Council to Examine Funding of and Compliance by County and Regional Jails”*. The County Corrections Professional Standards Council will review aspects of county jail operations and funding. They are charged with reporting back during the second session and are authorized to propose legislation. Tim Curtis and Commissioner Steve Gorden serve on this council and have been working with sheriffs, administrators, and commissioners to compile key data for presentation.

5. Officer Reports

5.1. President Report, Andre Cushing

President Cushing proposed holding a holiday reception December in Lincoln County. Comm. Levesque respectfully declined the request to have Lincoln County host the meeting due to the timing of the event. Comm. Cushing said that Sheriff Brackett had arranged for the group to tour the

Two Bridges Regional Jail and asked if Comm. Levesque would mind if MCCA members took advantage of this. Comm. Levesque encouraged attendees to take the tour and talk to the Jail Administrator. Comm. Cushing said the reception might take place in Edgecomb at The Sheepscot Harbor Village Resort in Lincoln County on Tuesday night, December 9th, followed by dinner. The reception would be open to all county employees who want to participate. He said that MCCA would hold their monthly board meetings the next day.

President Cushing also mentioned the plan was to delay the January board of directors meeting until the January 21st so that counties would have their January meeting prior to ours and be ready to vote in MCCA officers and board members.

5.2. Vice President, Robert Sezak

5.3. Secretary/Treasurer, Sawin Millett

6. Consideration of the Development of a Report Explaining the Role of County Government

7. Maine Revenue Services: Improving the Tax Appeals Process and Property Tax Review

Comm. Cushing introduced guest speaker, Phil St. Onge, Executive Director of the State Board of Property Tax Review and Connor Feeney from the Maine Office of Tax Policy.

Mr. St. Onge said they were working on changes to make things more efficient and better for the taxpayers, the towns, the counties, the assessors, all the people that are involved in the process. The idea was to simplify and modernize the process to make things work even more smoothly. He said they would be interested in hearing feedback from your MCCA members about proposed changes. The group talked about it and decided to conduct a survey. Lauren said she would get the questions from Mr. Feeney.

8. Association Reports - MACCAM, MARP, MRODA, MSA, others

9. Adjournment

President Cushing asked if there were any other comments for the good of the association. President Andre Cushing invited a **motion** to adjourn at approximately 11:05 a.m. Comm. Dutremble made the **motion, seconded** by Comm. Gorden, and the motion to adjourn was **passed**.

Respectfully submitted,



MCCA Administrator, Lauren Haven