

# 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 Sept 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at Sebasco Harbor Resort

### 1. Call to Order

President Andre Cushing called the board meeting to order at approximately 2:30 pm with the following directors and other participants in attendance in person and on Zoom:

#### DIRECTORS PRESENT:

Androscoggin – Comm. Jane Pentheny  
Aroostook – Comm. William Dobbins  
Cumberland – Comm. Tom Tyler proxy for Comm. Steve Gorden  
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  
Somerset – Comm. Robert Sezak  
Waldo – Comm. Betty Johnson  
Washington – Comm. David Burns  
York – Comm. Richard Dutremble

#### DIRECTORS ABSENT:

Cumberland – Comm. Steve Gorden  
Franklin – Comm. Bob Carlton  
Piscataquis – Comm. Paul Davis

#### OTHERS PRESENT:

Androscoggin – Admin. Jeff Chute  
Aroostook – Admin. Ryan Pelletier  
Cumberland – County Manager Jim Gailey  
Hancock – Admin. Mike Crooker  
Kennebec – Admin. Scott Ferguson  
Lincoln – Admin. Carrie Kipfer  
MCCA Risk Pool - Manager Malcolm Ulmer  
MCCA - Admin. Lauren Haven  
MSA – Sheriff Ken Mason  
NACo – Matt Chase  
Oxford – Comm. Lisa Keim  
Penobscot – Comm. Dan Tremble and Comm. David Marshall  
Somerset – Admin. Tim Curtis  
Spirit of America – Bruce Flaherty  
Verrill Dana – Lobbyists Jim Cohen

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

## 3. Committee Reports:

### 3.1. NACo Update: George Jabar and Robert Sezak

Guest Matt Chase, CEO and Executive Director of NACo spoke about the organization's 2025 initiatives which focus on advocating for strong local-federal partnerships, ensuring fair and flexible tax policies, increasing funding for infrastructure and public lands programs like PILT, promoting innovative solutions in areas like technology and public health, and fostering county-driven initiatives that drive local economies and improve essential services. Key priorities include modernizing technology, enhancing health and human services, and developing strategies for workforce retention and community resilience. Matt also explained his personal attachment to Maine and thanked the group for the invitation to participate in the convention. MCCA representatives George Jabar and Robert Sezak talked to the group about their experiences with NACo and thanked Matt for attending.

### 3.2. Events Committee - Lauren Haven

Administrator Lauren Haven provided a report on preliminary conference statistics, including participant, sponsor, and exhibitor numbers. She noted that additional sponsorships allowed for expanded budget allowances, such as increased signage and complimentary meals. While these line items exceeded projected amounts, sponsorship income more than offset the additional expenses. More financial details will be available at the next meeting, with payments and receipts expected to be reflected in November. Lauren also shared that an online evaluation form will be distributed to attendees, and feedback will be reviewed by the Events Committee during an October debrief. She further asked members to discuss with their county commissioners the possibility of hosting the 2026 convention.

## 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

Among other topics, the group discussed the Maine Tree Growth Tax Law as it recently saw updates to its annual valuation rates, which are used to assess property tax for enrolled forest parcels, and several legislative changes that took effect or were enacted in 2025. These changes

include the repeal and replacement of Rule 202 with updated valuation rates by the Maine Revenue Services, and legislation that raised the minimum parcel size from 10 to 25 acres for new enrollments as of April 1, 2017, and created a mechanism for the Bureau of Forestry to audit parcels for compliance. The increases in Maine's Tree Growth Tax Law valuations have led to higher property taxes in unorganized territories, causing concern among some residents. Some properties have seen their valuations double or triple, with tax bills rising by 60% or more.

Comm. Lisa Keim brought up a bill suggestion to address FOA requests by commercial entities. These requests were being used to gather marketing data and do not fit the original intent of FOA. She asked if counties would estimate the cost in time and money spent to fulfil these types of requests to provide proof of the issue to legislators.

The group talked about LD 719 which is a 2025 resolve that directs the County Corrections Professional Standards Council to study and report on the funding and compliance of county and regional jails, with the goal of improving financial transparency and operational efficiency. The council must submit its findings and any proposed legislative changes to the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety by January 15, 2026. This would be a good opportunity to educate legislators about the need for stronger financial support by the state as there were millions in funding shortfalls for the county jail system in fiscal years 2026 and 2027.

Admin. Tim Curtis talked about exploring alternative Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) methods for county jails to be used in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies. This was one of the directives being categorized as an "unfunded mandate" that might be used as an example in a future bill being developed to challenge such laws that forced counties to provide certain programs and services without adequate funding. Partial funding was being allocated by the state for this purpose, but the amount awarded did not come close to covering the actual expenses incurred.

It was noted that the Legislative Policy Committee would be meeting the following afternoon.

## **5. Officer Reports**

### **5.1. President Report, Andre Cushing**

President Cushing reported on the golf tournament from the prior day, the conference schedule including speakers who would be presenting and the entertainment and activities for the event. Additionally, Comm. Cushing spoke about the new awards that would be announced at the Friday evening dinner.

### **5.2. Vice President, Robert Sezak**

Vice President Sezak reported that the Bylaws Review Committee was scheduled to meet at the convention that afternoon. He said the group had written a draft document containing revisions primarily updating the language. Operational changes proposed included additional Executive Committee members to draw from a larger pool of county representatives and increasing the number of votes per county.

### 5.3. Secretary/Treasurer, Sawin Millett

Secretary/Treasurer Millett echoed the comments made by President Cushing and Admin. Lauren Haven regarding the finances of the convention. He was pleasantly surprised by the extensive number of sponsors Andre was able to effectively solicit. His efforts would positively impact the overall revenue generated by the association which would in turn allow for new projects or expansion goals to be met. Comm. Millett reported that the Budget and Finance Committee would be meeting in the fall to prepare the 2026 budget that would be presented to the board in December and finalized at the General Membership Meeting in January.

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

No other reports were given at this time.

### 7. Adjournment

President Cushing asked if there were any other comments for the good of the association. Comm. Cushing invited a **motion** to adjourn at approximately 3:30 p.m. Comm. Robert Sezak made the **motion** to adjourn, **seconded** by Comm. Todd McPhee, and the motion to adjourn was **passed**. Attendees returned to other scheduled convention activities.

Respectfully submitted,



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MCCA Administrator, Lauren Haven