

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 November 12th, 2025 10:00 am via Zoom

1. Call to Order

President Andre Cushing called the meeting to order at approximately 10:20 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
Kennebec – Comm. George Jabar
Knox – Comm. Ed Glaser
Lincoln – Comm. David Levesque
Oxford – Comm. Sawin Millett
Penobscot – Comm. Andre Cushing
Piscataquis – Comm. Paul Davis
Sagadahoc – Comm. Todd McPhee
Somerset – Comm. Robert Sezak
Waldo – Comm. Betty Johnson
Washington – Manage Renee Gray proxy for Comm. David Burns
York – Comm. Richard Dutremble

DIRECTORS ABSENT:

Hancock – Comm. Samuel DiBella
Washington – Comm. David Burns

OTHERS PRESENT:

Androscoggin – Admin. Jeff Chute
Kennebec – Admin. Scott Ferguson
Lincoln – Admin. Carrie Kipfer
MCCA Risk Pool - Manager Malcolm Ulmer
MCCA - Admin. Lauren Haven
MSA – Sheriff Ken Mason
Penobscot – Comm. David Marshall
Piscataquis – Admin. Mike Williams
Sagadahoc – Admin. Amber Jones
Somerset – Admin. Tim Curtis
Verrill Dana – Lobbyists Jim Cohen and Sam Hamilton

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. Sezak and the motion to approve the consent agenda passed.*

3. Committee Reports:

3.1. NACo Update: George Jabar and Robert Sezak

Comm. Sezak reported that both of MCCA's NACo representatives planned to attend the Legislative Conference in Washington DC. Scheduled for February 21-24th. He said he was looking forward to networking with commissioners in other areas of the country as well as meeting with attendees from Maine and taking advantage of the information sessions NACo was making available. Comm. Jabar also encouraged fellow commissioners and county administrators to participate in the conference. He mentioned some of the topics and pointed folks to the NACo website to look at the full agenda for the event.

3.2. Events Committee - Lauren Haven

Admin Lauren Haven reported that the Events Committee met on October 24th in person in Augusta and on Zoom. She said they discussed the last convention regarding what went well and what might be improved upon in future events.

In terms of financial outcomes, with some minor adjustments expected, Lauren reported that the total income from the convention was \$103,553. The budgeted revenue for 2025 was \$45,350 which 128% more than anticipated. On the expenditure side, the actual number was \$52,190. The budgeted line item for expenses was \$40,350 which is 29% over our planned budget. This was justified by the additional revenue from sponsorships. With the approximate net revenue at \$51,363, the next consideration was whether or not to plug these numbers into the 2026 budget. She said that would be something for the Budget and Finance Committee to discuss.

Lauren said that looking forward, the Committee was interested in securing hosts for the 2026 and 2027 conventions. Prior to COVID this was the norm. The next host was lined up a year ahead for planning purposes. In fact, she said invitation cards were distributed at the convention to vendors with the dates for the next year. The committee was hoping to reestablish this practice. She requested attendees to talk to their board of commissioners about hosting and let her know if there was interest. She said the next Event Committee meeting has been scheduled for November 21st.

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 a Legislative Policy Committee (LPC) planning call had been scheduled for Monday with the MCCA president, the Co-chairs of the LPC, Sam Hamilton and himself to talk through how the session is likely to go. He said the second regular session was short but there were plenty of bills coming forward that would need to be addressed. He said he had been trying to work with Maine Municipal Association (MMA) to get a meeting on the books among all the various groups that work with local government. No date had been set.

Lobbyist Sam Hamilton covered some pre-session activities shifting from the campaigns to the upcoming legislative session. He said the Judiciary Committee was meeting to discuss a number of carryover issues and hear interim reports. The committee was being closely monitored. Additionally, the Legislative Council had already screened the new bill requests for the second session with only a small number of them making it through the cut. He then walked the group through the bill requests that were being monitored. Some new bills have been introduced seemingly in response to the financial issues in Washington County.

Sam touched on the Maine AI Task Force which had released a comprehensive report on artificial intelligence. He mentioned that question one had failed regarding an act to require photo identification at the polls, and question two, to establish a red flag law, passed again. He also noted that Representative Golden was no longer running for Congress. He said the partisan balance in the House and Senate had changed with Senator Rick Bennett unrolling from the Republican Party to become an Independent. The Senate now stands at 20 Democrats 14 Republicans and one Independent. The house also had some changes. Representative Christian Cloutier had resigned from her seat to take on the role of Chief of Staff. Also, Representative Ed Crockett unenrolled from the Democratic Party to run as an Independent for the for Governor so now the House stands at 74 Democrats 73 Republicans and three unenrolled or independent members. It's certainly tightened in the House and it will make floor votes more interesting this coming session.

Admin. Carrie Kipfer asked about LD 1766, "'An Act to Incorporate Probate Judges into the Maine Judicial Branch" sponsored by Senator Anne Carney. MCCA had provided testimony, but ultimately it had been decided that it was highly unlikely that the bill would move forward so it wasn't actively being worked. The group requested the bill be added to the parking lot issues. The group seemed to agree that it was an issue to have a mixed office with some state employees and some county employees. MCCA may submit a letter.

Comm. Ed Glaser reported on an issue in Knox County in which their budget committee includes nine members elected by popular vote in 98 different districts. Last November, no one ran for five of the seats meaning currently there are only four of the nine members. To complicate things further, the requirement for any action of the budget committee is that there is a quorum of at least five members. Therefore, no action was possible by the budget committee. There cannot be a budget adopted until this conundrum is resolved. They plan to adopt an interim budget which is no more than the previous year. This is also a problem due to inflation. The group talked about the possibility of emergency legislation since the issue can't wait till June for resolution.

Comm. Millett asked if there was an update on the Property Tax Review Group which was supposed to have an initial report in January and the final report next year. Mr. Cohen said he would check into it and perhaps the topic could be discussed at the LPC meeting.

5. Officer Reports

5.1. President Report, Andre Cushing

5.1.1. Two Bridges Tour December 9th

5.1.2. Holiday Reception

5.1.3. December Board Meetings

President Cushing explained that the December board meetings would occur in Lincoln County. On December 9th a tour of Two Bridges Jail was planned at 2:00 pm. An invitation would be distributed with more detail. The jail tour would be followed by a holiday reception and dinner at a nearby resort in Edgecomb. There would also be hotel rooms available for a discounted rate of approximately \$159-\$169 per night for those who would like to stay overnight. Comm. Cushing said the MCCA and Risk Pool board meetings were scheduled for Wednesday morning both virtually by Zoom and in person at a conference room in the jail.

President Cushing introduced a proclamation to publicly support county Sheriffs. The group reviewed the document and discussed a wording change to strike the language including fiscal responsibilities where the budget for the jail and sheriff's office operations fall under the responsibility of the commissioners. It was decided to add this topic as an agenda item for the December meeting.

5.2. Vice President, Robert Sezak

Comm. Sezak said there was no report, but thanked Admin. Carrie Kipfer for her help with document revisions for the Bylaws Review Committee.

5.3. Secretary/Treasurer, Sawin Millett

Comm. Millett announced that the 2026 budget draft would be presented at the December meeting. Therefore, the members of the Budget and Finance Committee, which included Bob Carlton, Joe Pietroski, Betty Johnson, Richard Dutremble, Admin. Ryan Pelletier, and himself would be meeting soon to go through the budget draft and discuss changes that could be made to align the next budget with the vision for 2026 and beyond. The committee members set a date of November 24th for this purpose in person at the Augusta offices and virtually on Zoom. Comm. Cushing said that he proposed to the Budget and Finance Committee to consider making provisions for five in person meetings next year in some kind of rotation of locations so that attendees would be exposed to various parts of the state.

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

President Cushing mentioned the idea of developing a report which would educate people on the role of county government, talk about the departments and their functions and services they

provide. This document would also serve as a marketing tool which would be valuable.

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

MSA - Sheriff Mason reported that an MSA meeting was scheduled for the following week to discuss some legislative topics. He suggested a joint meeting with the MCCA LPC and MSA to talk about potential collaborations.

MACCAM – Tim Curtis reported that their association was planning to meet in Lincoln County during the two-day holiday event. He brought up the idea of group and wholesale purchasing as a way to save money and optimize efficiencies. Admin. Lauren mentioned the Public Surplus Program endorsed by NACo which MCCA participates in that not only gives counties a discount on purchases but also gives MCCA a percentage of the program's revenue as an endorsement income. This is a good source of non-dues income for the association. The group then talked about two administrators who were leaving, Ryan Pelletier in Aroostook County and Scott Adkins in Penobscot County. The conversation moved to the Jail Standards Committee report recommending a single jail audit from each jail among the financial reporting rules. He said this is a state requirement that is in legislation so they are trying to make sure we are complying.

8. Adjournment

President Cushing asked if there were any other comments for the good of the association. Seeing non, President Andre Cushing invited a **motion** to adjourn at approximately 11:45 a.m. Comm. Johnson made the **motion, seconded** by Comm. Pietroski, and the motion to adjourn was **passed**.

Respectfully submitted,



MCCA Administrator, Lauren Haven