

M.C.C.A.

Stephen Gorden, President
Cumberland County

Brian Hobart, Vice President
Sagadahoc County

Norm Fournier, Secretary-Treasurer
Aroostook County

Lauren Haven
Administrator



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MAINE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION

Board of Directors Meeting

March 9th, 2022, 10:00 am via Zoom

1. Call to Order: Roll Call - Phone attendees will be requested to introduce themselves.

MCCA President Steve Gorden called the meeting to order at approximately 10:20 am due to the late adjournment of the Risk pool meeting. Attendees announced themselves.

DIRECTORS PRESENT:

Androscoggin – Comm. John Michael
Aroostook – Comm. Norman Fournier
Cumberland – Comm. Steve Gorden
Hancock – Comm. William Clark
Kennebec – Admin. Scott Ferguson proxy for Comm. George Jabar
Knox – Comm. Sharyn Pohlman
Lincoln – Comm. William Blodgett
Oxford – Admin. Don Durrah proxy for Comm. Steven Merrill
Penobscot – Comm. Peter Baldacci
Piscataquis – Comm. Wayne Erkkinen
Sagadahoc – Comm. Brian Hobart
Somerset – Admin. Dawn DiBlasi proxy for Comm. Newell Graf
Waldo – Comm. Betty Johnson
Washington – Comm. Chris Gardner
York – Comm. Richard Dutremble

DIRECTORS ABSENT:

Kennebec – Comm. George Jabar
Oxford – Comm. Steven Merrill
Somerset – Comm. Newell Graf

OTHERS PRESENT:

Hancock – Admin. Scott Adkins
Knox – Admin. Andrew Hart
Lincoln – Admin. Carrie Kipfer
Penobscot – Admin. Erika Honey
Lobbyists – Jim Cohen and Clara McConnell
MCCA Risk Pool - Manager Malcolm Ulmer
MCCA - Admin. Lauren Haven

2. Approval of the Agenda

President Steve Gorden asked if there were any additions to the agenda. He said he planned to talk about the annual convention in his report. Hearing no other proposed topics, Comm. Baldacci **moved** to approve the agenda. The motion was **seconded** by Comm. Hobart, and the motion **passed** with no objections.

3. Consent Agenda:

3.1. Approval of the Minutes

3.2. Officer Reports:

3.2.1. Finance

3.2.1.1. Financial Report - Lauren Haven

3.2.1.2. Treasurer - Norm Fournier

President Steve Gorden requested a motion to move the consent agenda. Comm. Hobart **moved** to approve the consent agenda which include the agenda, minutes, and financials. Comm. Fournier **seconded** the motion and it was **passed** with no further comments.

Note: The Legislative Update occurred at this point in the meeting as lobbyist, Jim Cohen, needed to leave early.

4. Administrative Report – Lauren

Ms. Haven reported on recent projects.

5. Officer Reports:

5.1. Budget and Finance Committee – Norm Fournier, Chair

Comm. Fournier stated there was nothing to report.

5.2. NACo: Peter Baldacci & Sharyn Pohlman – Updates on Federal legislation, national programs, and resources

Due to new COVID-19 mandates in Washington D.C., Comm. Baldacci reported that he and Comm. Pohlman attended the virtual sessions for the NACo legislative conference. U.S. President Joe Biden was a featured speaker at the event. The next NACo conference has been planned for a venue in Anchorage, Alaska and it was unlikely he would attend.

Comm. Baldacci said the infrastructure bill is a priority for NACo.

Comm. Gardner asked for an update on the status of the Medicaid bill. Comm. Baldacci said it's still alive and needs to pass in the Senate. Our delegation is 100% supporting the bill and there would be a fiscal note to the federal government. There were likely to be trade-offs.

5.3. President Report

5.3.1. Consideration of the Convention

President Gorden asked Secretary/Treasurer Norm Fournier to comment on the 2022 MCCA convention. Comm. Fournier said Aroostook was on board with attending the convention and asked if other counties were as well. Lauren said she received several favorable responses from county officials. She was able to get dates from Sunday River as well as a preliminary contract. The prices were considerably higher than the last contract that had been drafted, but there might be items that could be negotiated. It was sent to the Executive Committee for their review. She had also polled the vendors which returned an equally split opinion, some vendors planning to participate in live events, and some were not. Admin. Dawn DiBlasi asked if we could send a survey to determine the level of interest for all of the counties. Steve said he particularly enjoyed the thought-provoking futurist who spoke at the last convention, and it would be very interesting to hear new ideas about the future after the pandemic.

5.3.2. Maine State Police Withdrawal from Rural Patrol

According to Comm. Baldacci had been a Zoom meeting to discuss the topic with the Penobscot legislative delegation. The Maine State Police (MSP) was represented at the meeting. The MSP wants to divide Penobscot county into three zones. Currently there are four zones. This was an ultimatum; either change to three zones or there would be no zones patrolled by MSP. The legislature had been notified with concerns about the unrealistic and unreasonable demand.

From the perspective of the MSP, they had asked for additional staffing through the legislature and the request was not granted. This seemed to be a way to fight back by demonstrating they didn't have the manpower to cover those rural areas. Comm. Gardner said regardless of this instance, there had been a slow degradation of service from the MSP over the last decade. Ultimately, the onus is on the MSP. Counties are not required by statute to handle rural patrol. This is an administrative issue; they must compromise by splitting the duties at the very least. The issue has been communicated to Commissioner Mike Sauschuck of the Department of Public Safety who oversees the State Police, and Governor Mills, to whom he reports. Unfortunately, the MSP has also taken over the Criminal Justice Academy in the sense that the tests are geared toward police and not county needs. Comm. Pohlman said this is a good time to bring the issue to the forefront, as it's an election year, and affects everyone. We should take the opportunity to raise awareness. The group agreed.

5.4. ARPA Funding Final Regs: Updates and Discussions Surrounding Projects – No discussion occurred.

6. Committee Reports:

6.1. Standing Committees:

6.1.1. Legislative Policy Committee – Brian Hobart, Chair

6.1.1.1. James Cohen, Verrill Dana

Adjournment for the Legislature has been set for April 20th.

The Governor is not supportive of LD 1950, "An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Commission To Create a Plan To Incorporate the Probate Courts into the Judicial Branch". It's likely that the fiscal note will be substantial.

Admin. Scott Adkins asked if there was any progress made on the Washington/Hancock County Bill. This was a reference to LD 272, "An Act To Establish Separate Prosecutorial Districts in Downeast Maine." Jim said, no, he didn't have an update. Comm. Gardner said they were probably waiting it out until after March 15th when signatures must be submitted for elections. It's still a hot potato and he didn't know if it would move forward.

- 6.1.1.1.1.Legislative Update
- 6.1.1.1.2.Jail Funding Legislation

The outcome of LD 1654, "An Act To Stabilize State Funding for County Corrections" was yet to be determined and more work is needed. The Governor was not supportive of the language in the bill tying a specific number of prisoners to the state. Jim was optimistic that the Democrats in the Criminal Justice and Public Safety (CJPS) Committee were on board. They were trying to get a head count. Negotiations were planned for March 10th and then a strategic decision about voting would be made. The bottom line was the money should fix a system that's been broken for a long time.

Steve Gorden asked Comm. Richard Dutremble about his conversation with the Chair of CJPS Senator Susan Deschambault. Comm. Dutremble said the \$50 for state sanctioned inmates is a record keeping problem. He had spoken with the Senator, and that is the sticking point. A percentage is better and would be more consistent. Jim Cohen said he and Clara would be trying to stay together with our other partners on this. Comm. Gardner said he would be willing to call Senator Scott Sirois, who was in opposition. Comm. Baldacci said he'd be okay with taking out the "state sanctioned" inmates as a percentage would be much better. It would be a healthy improvement which would save us many fights over funding in the future.

- 6.1.2. Affiliate Organization Committee Reports - recognize those in attendance or submitted
Information: MSA, Others

Comm. Norm Fournier asked President Gorden if he would report on the status of the supplemental funding distribution request to DOC. Comm. Gorden said MCCA submitted the report from MACCAM and quickly received a response from Department of Corrections Commissioner Liberty. As of last Monday (March 7th) Comm. Liberty said he planned to get the checks out as identified in the submitted report.

7. Adjournment

MCCA President Steve Gorden invited a **motion** to adjourn at approximately 11:05 p.m. Comm. Gardner made the **motion** seconded by Comm. Fournier, and the **motion** to adjourn was **approved**.

Respectfully submitted,



MCCA Administrator, Lauren Haven

Attested:

MCCA Secretary-Treasurer, Comm. Norman Fournier