

M.C.C.A.

Stephen Gorden, President
Cumberland County

Brian Hobart, Vice President
Sagadahoc County

Norm Fournier, Secretary-Treasurer
Aroostook County

Peter Baldacci, Past President
Penobscot County

William Blodgett, Emeritus
Lincoln County



Lauren Haven
Administrator

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MAINE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

May 11th, 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 10:00 am. Attendees announced themselves.

DIRECTORS PRESENT:

Aroostook – Comm. Norman Fournier
Cumberland – Comm. Steve Gorden
Hancock – Admin. Scott Adkins proxy for Comm. William Clark
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:

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

OTHERS PRESENT:

Knox – Admin. Andrew Hart
Lincoln – Admin. Carrie Kipfer
MARP – Registrar Kathleen Ayers
MCCA Risk Pool - Manager Malcolm Ulmer
MCCA - Admin. Lauren Haven
MSA – Sheriff Ken Mason
MSA – Sheriff Dale Lancaster
MSA – ED Mary-Anne LaMarre
Piscataquis – Manager Mike Williams
Verrill Dana – Lobbyist Clara McConnell

2. Approval of the Agenda (Anyone wish to add topics?)

President Steve Gorden asked if there were any additions to the agenda. Comm. Fournier **moved to approve the agenda with the exception of moving the discussion of the subject of "Rural Patrol" (item 2.d.ii.) to the top of the agenda. The motion was **seconded** by Admin. Donald Durrah, and the motion **passed** with no objections.**

3. Consent Agenda:

- a. Approval of the Minutes
- b. Monthly Reports: Finance:
 - i. Financial Report - Lauren Haven
 - ii. Treasurer - Norm Fournier

President Steve Gorden requested a motion. Comm. Hobart **moved to approve the consent agenda which included the minutes, the financial report and the Treasurer's report. Comm. Erkinen **seconded the motion, and it was **passed** with no further comments.****

4. Reports & Presentations:

- a. Legislative Policy Report – Brian Hobart, Chair
 - i. Legislative Update, James Cohen, Verrill Dana

Lobbyist Clara McConnell reported that the Maine Legislature had adjourned. Therefore, unless a special session is called, everyone will be in campaign mode. Some will not be returning and some will have termed out so there will be lots of new members in the next session. The Maine Senate may switch control from Democrat to Republican and there will be a gubernatorial election.

1. Review of Legislative year: bills that did/did not pass effecting counties

Ms. McConnell said the updated legislative tracker distributed at the end of the week will tie up all the bills and report on their outcome. LD 1950, "An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Commission To Create a Plan To Incorporate the Probate Courts into the Judicial Branch" was not funded, and died on the Appropriations table.

Comm. Gorden asked what other bills were passed that will affect counties. Clara mentioned the bill regarding workers compensation for corrections officers with heart disease passed but the reference to counties was taken out of the bill language. We are no longer subject to that legislation. She said there may be others that will be included in the weekly legislative update.

2. New Legislation Proposals for the 131st Legislative Session?

President Gorden requested that ideas for new legislation be emailed to Lauren Haven for the group to consider.

- ii. Jail Funding Legislation: L D 1654

LD 1654 passed successfully without many amendments and was signed by the Governor. Comm. Gorden asked, according to LD 1654 counties will get paid quarterly now? Clara says yes. This effects all counties cash flow.

1. Jail Budget Projections Required
2. Quarterly Payments dependent upon Jail prisoner monthly reports

Also, LD 853, "An Act To Increase the Fees Paid to Sheriffs and Their Deputies for Service of Civil Process Documents" passed after being funded by Appropriations without the Governor's signature.

- iii. Proposed Legislation for the 131st Legislative Session? (Please submit to Lauren in writing, prior to June MCCA Meeting)

b. Administrative Report – Lauren

Administrator Lauren Haven reported that MCCA's 2020-2021 financial audit was in the last stage of completion. RHR Smith was expected to develop an opinion and produce a report for the June or July Board of Directors meeting.

c. Treasurer's Comments - Norm Fournier

Comm. Gorden asked about MCCA membership dues. Treasurer Norm Fournier reported that all dues had been received and deposited.

d. President Reports:

- i. Appointments to State Committees? List of committees?
 1. 911 Advisory Council, Vacant

Comm. Gardner said there has been a shift over time from people reporting emergencies on landlines, to people calling on cell phones. Currently 80% of 911 calls are on mobile phones. This changes the funding needs. Either money needs to be charged on the phone bill or the legislature needs to assist in funding expansion of the communication infrastructure.

Admin Carrie Kipfer brought up a new 911 bill to study EMS. She would be interested in serving on one or both of the PSAP related committees.

2. Advisory Board of the Maine GeoLibrary: Betsy Fitzgerald

Administrator Lauren Haven reported that Washington County Manager, Betsy Fitzgerald had emailed her and said the state never confirmed her even though they had the necessary documentation to do so. As a result, she is no longer interested in serving on this board.

3. Archives Advisory Board Representative: Greg Zinser

4. County and Municipal Detention Facility Advisory Committee: Chris Gardner

- ii. Rural Patrol Funding: Maine State Policeⁱ versus County Sheriffs' Departments
(Note: This conversation took place at the beginning of the meeting per request.)

A copy of the section of the state statute that talks about this topic was distributed to attendees in the agenda packet. Comm. Gardner said the withdrawal of the Maine State Police (MSP) in rural areas was an alarming trend which affects some counties more than others. It's clearly the responsibility of the MSP to patrol rural areas according to the statute. However, Commissioner Sauschuck who oversees the State of Maine's public safety bureaus, is determined to use the MSP resources elsewhere.

Comm. Baldacci said Penobscot County aggressively pursued funding for this and did not obtain it. Many Legislators are unaware of the change embarked on by MSP, and they don't see it as a big concern. Penobscot tried to educate legislators on the issue. In a meeting with Comm. Sauschuck, MSP representatives admitted there was absolutely no cost savings to the taxpayer simply moving MSP resources from rural patrol to highway patrol. Additionally, the timeframe MSP demanded the changes to take place was unrealistic for the county to be able to hire and train new employees to patrol those Penobscot zones even if there was more than \$400,000 to spend on three new fulltime deputies.

Sheriff Mason said Kennebec County was in the same position 3½ years ago. They did have to hire more personnel and were forced to raise taxes to do it. He said we can demonstrate the impact to the taxpayers from this example. It's an unfunded mandate and the battle is not going to stop here. The pushback needs to be a concerted effort on behalf of all counties working together.

Sheriff Lancaster said it's important for people to understand how we got here. In the 1970's they were assigned a patrol area for which they were responsible 24 hours a day. Fair labor standards cut those hours. Lt Colonel Alfred R. Schofield was named Chief in the 1990's and then PSAP centers (Public Safety Answering Points) followed. Later the call-sharing agreements were developed, and now we have the evolution of MSP redesigning their mission. The State of Maine funds MSP with 51% from the general fund and 49% from the highway fund. The turnpike is a separate entity. It's a paradigm shift and we need to decide what direction we want to go in the future.

Comm. Fournier said he agreed with Comm. Gardner, it will all come back to the taxpayer. We need legislation to fix this and involve MMA because they will be affected as well.

MSA ED Mary-Anne Lamarre said it might be as simple as adding the sheriffs to the statute for compensation. Comm. Baldacci said we are likely to encounter the same lack of understanding in the legislature again, and in order to be successful we will need rural and urban areas to get to band together to gain support. We can do much better next session if we do this.

Comm. Gardner asked what the natural next step would be at this time. Ms. McConnell suggested that a subcommittee be formed and have representatives from all the various organizations put something on paper for legislation, gather info from counties regarding the impact. We can assign this project to Jim Cohen. Comm. Gorden asked Clara to explain it to Jim and tell him we'll need to include as many groups as we can. Comm. Gardner said he appreciated York County being on board as well as Aroostook, both ends of the state.

e. Affiliate Organizational Committee Reports: MSA, MACCAM, Others

Sheriff Ken Mason reported MSA legislation has slowed down. Hancock County Sheriff's Deputy Luke Gross, who died in the line of duty, will be honored in DC during the upcoming National Police Week.

Sheriff Lancaster thanked the MCCA Board for allowing MSA to participate in the meetings and said he looked forward to collaboration with MCCA which would be imperative to our mutual success. Sheriff Mason said, yes, this must be a high priority. MaryAnne agreed and said we need to continue to put our heads together for critical issues.

Comm. Fournier said MSA was appointing two members to the Board of Corrections. We would like to know who they are so MCCA doesn't nominate representatives in the same counties. Mary-Anne responded they should know by May 19th.

MSA ED Mary-Anne Lamarre reported the MSA took a survey of their members regarding new legislation for the next session. They also have planned a summer retreat which will be in end of June in Boothbay harbor to discuss and finalize which ideas they would move forward to propose.

MACCAM has not met lately, therefore no report was given.

MARP Probate Registrar, Kathleen Ayers reported association members will meet at the Botanical Garden on June 24th in Boothbay Harbor. They planned to have a presentation by a computer vendor and some other important trainings. The group has been busy with the guardianship issues everywhere in the state. There is not enough home care available. There was difficulty tracking people. Comm. Gorden asked what committee decides funding for guardianships? Ms. Ayers said the Probate Courts or the parties involved pay for indigent services.

5. Adjournment

Comm. Steve Gorden asked if there were other comments for the good of the organization. Hearing none, President Gorden invited a **motion** to adjourn at approximately 11:15 a.m. Comm. Fournier made the **motion seconded** by Comm. Blodgett, and the **motion** to adjourn was **approved**.

Respectfully submitted,

MCCA Administrator, Lauren Haven

Attested:

MCCA Secretary-Treasurer, Norman Fournier

DRAFT