OXFORD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MEETING MINUTES

August 17, 2021

Meeting Convened
At the Court of Oxford County Commissioners begun and held at Paris, Maine within and for the County of Oxford at 9:00 am on Tuesday, August 17, 2021 being a regular session, there were present:

Timothy Turner        Chairman
Steven Merrill        Commissioner
David Duguay         Commissioner

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Agenda Adopted
The agenda was adopted with the addition of a discussion re Tyler Road during the Unorganized Territory portion of the meeting.

Minutes Approval
The following action occurred regarding sets of minutes of previous meetings:

August 5        approved with amendments

Public Comment
Hartford resident Joan Kelly questioned the process of a recent promotion in the Sheriff’s Office. County Administrator Donald Durrah explained that the process was handled in accordance with the department’s union contract, which required a board of outside law enforcement personnel. Kelly questioned whether the Commissioners reviewed personnel files, specifically disciplinary records, before authorizing a promotion. Administrator Durrah explained that the Commissioners authorize promotions based on the promotional board’s recommendation, the same process that is followed for new hires. He also explained that the Commissioners are purposefully separated from detailed personnel information as they must remain unbiased in the event of personnel action appeal procedures. Kelly stated that it is concerning to the public when employees with such backgrounds get promoted. Administrator Durrah explained that just because an employee was disciplined in the past does not disqualify them from ever being promoted. It was also noted that the employee was never disciplined for the referenced incident as it was never validated.

Department Heads
Department heads met with the Commissioners to discuss a variety of topics, some being unique to specific departments and other topics being of concern to several or all departments.

It was noted that although not everyone is happy about it, department heads have agreed to reinstate a mask mandate for employees and the public inside public spaces due to rising covid-19 cases. Employees may remove their mask in their personal workspace as long as they are alone and at least six feet apart from other workstations. It was noted that despite personal beliefs, everyone understands it is essential in order to ensure county business continues as safely as possible in order to continue serving the public.
Treasurer's Report
Treasurer Beth Calhoun updated the Commissioners on the County’s financial status and distributed written reports.

The Commissioners authorized a contract with Community Concepts Finance Corporation to manage the County’s federal covid-19 relief funds. It was noted that this method was cheaper and more reliable than hiring a temporary employee for that purpose. It was also noted that all town officials within the county will be invited to a meeting to discuss use of those funds together.

Executive Assistant Abby Shanor announced that the county was awarded $5,687 from the Maine Municipal Association for successfully limiting injuries in the workplace and having favorable risk management practices.

Matters Pertaining to the Unorganized Territory
Newly hired Airport and UT Supervisor Tony Carter was introduced to the Commissioners.

The Commissioners reviewed written communication regarding Lincoln Pond Road and access to certain properties. It was noted that the communication had come from a student appearing to be representing the association of properties, and that attempts to contact him were unsuccessful. The board questioned whether the letter was intended to actually be sent to the county office, or if it was part of a school project. The Commissioners decided to let the matter rest as nothing more can be done until further communication is received.

The Commissioners reviewed a request from former Register of Deeds Jane Rich of Andover to clear new tree growth on East B Hill Road which is restricting views of Umbagog Lake and parts of the White Mountains. She feels it could be an attraction to Oxford County, comparing it to The Height of Land in Franklin County. The Commissioners were open to the idea but first need to verify they have authority over that property. Commissioner Merrill seemed to think that the last time that portion of the road was cleared it was done by an outside company, implying it is privately owned. This matter will be looked into further.

The Commissioners discussed concerns regarding a drainage issue on Tyler Road. It is estimated that the repair will cost $50,000. It was noted that the Airport and UT Supervisor would look into the matter further to determine how urgent the repairs are needed.

Personnel Updates and Actions
The Commissioners accepted the resignation of Dispatcher Jonathan Bolduc effective August 22. It was noted that he would like to remain a part-time dispatcher following a 14-day separation period per policy.

The Commissioners then authorized the posting of a full-time dispatch position to fill the vacancy.

Discussion regarding covid-19 precautions occurred during the department head portion of the meeting.
Items for Discussion and Action – Considered as Time Permits Throughout Meeting
The Commissioners discussed the following and acted only as underlined.
   1. Received update from Maine County Commissioners Association.
   2. Reviewed and confirmed budget committee caucus procedures.

Adjournment
The Commissioners adjourned at 11:26am

Timothy G. Turner, Chairman
Steven M. Merrill Commissioner
David A. Duguay Commissioner

Notes:
1) These minutes are intended to be a brief description of meeting actions to provide, in a general sense only, an account of what was discussed.

2) Unless otherwise noted, all votes taken by the Commissioners were unanimous.