

OXFORD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES

August 18, 2026

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 18, being a regular session, there were present:

Lisa Keim	Chair
Sawin Millett	Commissioner
Timothy Turner	Commissioner

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Minutes for Approval

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

August 6 approved

Agenda Adopted

The agenda was adopted with the correction that the meeting minutes being reviewed are from August 6 and not July 9 as mistakenly printed on the agenda.

Public Comment

Joan Kelly of Hartford spoke in reference to the Sheriff's legal bill agenda item. She said she hopes there will be a transparent conversation about the fees and stated that she hopes Commissioners will be more vocal about issues in Sheriff's Office, especially since the position is up for election this fall.

JP Jagusiak of Albany reiterated his request to extend road maintenance on Hutchinson Pond Road by 2/10 of mile. He said it used to be maintained but no longer is. It was explained that the road is not in the county's "road bible" which is used to determine which roads it's responsible to maintain. Mr. Jagusiak noted that former County Administrator Scott Cole allowed maintenance in previous years and asked if there was a process to request an extension. UT Supervisor Tony Carter noted the County doesn't have a formal process for the UT to expand road maintenance. Commissioners Keim acknowledged the emails from former Administrator Cole, but noted he was not authorized to do so and the Commissioners should not uphold his word if there was no formal vote.

It was noted Chief Mick of Fryeburg PD was tied up in business matters, so the Commissioners reviewed written submission regarding a request for opioid funds in hopes that the Commissioners will open another round of funding.

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.

Sheriff Wainwright briefed the Commissioners and Department Heads about an especially difficult day for the deputies the day prior to the meeting including an officer involved shooting. The Sheriff announced that all deputies made it home safely and thanked Fryeburg PD for their assistance, which included use of their office space and providing meals for officers.

Sheriff's Report

Sheriff Chris Wainwright updated the Commissioners on departmental matters.

The Commissioners reviewed the proposed job description for a Chaplain. Commissioner Keim questioned the reference to a stipend and whether there was money set aside for that or if it should be removed. Sheriff explained that he wants to leave it in to allow for the possibility of a mileage stipend or other future funding. Commissioner Turner agreed that the reference to a stipend should be removed until there are funds approved through the budget process in order to give the public clear expectations to which the Sheriff agreed. Commissioner Keim also questioned the cost of certification for the position and who would pay for it. The Chief mentioned that the training cost is very minimal, about \$250, and also noted that several candidates have already received the training. The Commissioners approved the amended job description with the removal of stipend language and rewording of the last paragraph.

The Commissioners authorized the purchase of evidence tracking system Tracker in the amount of \$6,754.06 which will be fully reimbursed through the Maine Law Enforcement Accreditation Program. Commissioner Keim asked that the Sheriff's Office double check that the program is not built and operated by a Chinese company to ensure the County does not violate state law.

The Commissioners authorized an enhanced patrol contract with Mexico with the following amendments; change date of payment to the 1st of each month and changing notice of termination of contract on both sides to 6 months.

Administrator Loper updated the Commissioners on his conversation with Attorney Tarasevich regarding payment of the Sheriff's legal bills and relayed that he thinks the County should pay them. Commissioner Keim said it was noted in minutes that the fees were for upcoming grievance hearings, and that there seems to be an ongoing service and conversations, and noted that the County already paid for an attorney (Tarasevich) for a significant amount of work on the matter. She said she's worried about paying to rebuild the case and believes the work was beyond the scope of what was authorized. Administrator Loper explained that there was a bill for a specific matter that was not authorized to discuss, which he relayed to the Sheriff's attorney who agreed to cease those services in that case. Commissioner Millett expressed concern about ongoing nonpayment of the bills, some of which date back to the previous fiscal year. Commissioner Keim agreed that the matter needs to be settled but suggested there be a clear end date for services. The Commissioners voted to authorize a new contract with the law firm, Brann & Isaacson, with the County being the client and made it clear that the contract will end immediately after the grievance hearings are over.

The Commissioners authorized the MSAD #55 SRO contract renewals for Officer Blauvelt in the amount of \$54,790.66 and Officer Groetzinger in the amount of \$50,163.63.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Beth Calhoun and Finance Director Lindsay Kay updated the Commissioners on financial matters.

Meet with Employees of the Deeds Office

The Commissioners invited employees of the Deeds Office to provide feedback about working in the office and for Oxford County in general, as part of a plan to do so with all departments one by one at their regular meetings.

Deputy Register Missy Wakefield and Clerk Alicia Taylor expressed their enjoyment working for the community, noting that there is much more to Deeds and record preservation than they had previously thought before working here. They also detailed how well the department works and collaborates together and how much care gets put into recording and maintaining these vital records.

Oxford County Opioid Response

Chair Kari Taylor and Dr. Janet Proulx of the Oxford County Opioid Response Committee encouraged the Commissioners to open a second window of funding from the opioid settlement funds. Commissioner Keim explained that the Commissioners are exploring possibly using the funds on a Sublocade program in the county jail, and that receiving applications at this time may give false hope to organizations if they are not sure yet that they are actually going to award any of them. Sheriff Wainwright also expressed his support for reserving the funds for the jail. Dr. Proulx expressed that she felt the funds would be better spent on the community, including inmates who have been released. She explained that the program won't help the inmates once they leave the jail and is also concerned about what happens when the funds run out and whether the program would suddenly stop. She suggested the county apply for grants, such as the "COSSUP" grant through the Bureau of Justice. The Commissioners will revisit the matter to the October meeting so that Administration can explore grant opportunities and Authorized Administrator Loper to apply for the "COSSUP" grant.

Personnel Updates and Actions

The Commissioners accepted the resignation of full-time Dispatcher Payton Berry effective August 25.

The Commissioners accepted the resignation/retirement of full-time Corrections Officer Ian Baard effective August 29.

Items for Discussion and Action – Considered as Time Permits Throughout Meeting

1. Tabled reviews of proposed changes to certain EMA job descriptions.
2. Reviewed Administrator's work sheet.
3. Considered Upton's request for administrative services during a capital project. The Commissioners tabled a decision until further information is received.
4. Continued discussion on reducing legal fees responding to FOAA requests. Commissioner Keim suggested exploring hiring a temp or local legal office to help get caught up on the backlog of requests. It was also suggested that only county employees converse with the public regarding FOAA matters, reducing the amount of billing time for conversations between the attorney and requestor.
5. The Commissioners authorized spending up to \$12,000 to replace the dishwasher in the jail.

Executive Sessions

The Commissioners entered an executive session (1 M.R.S.A. § 405-6 D) with Major Dillingham, Sheriff Wainwright, Chief Urquhart, and Major Thompson to discuss recent negotiations with the Corrections Union. No action was needed upon returning to open session.

The Commissioners entered an executive session (1 M.R.S.A. § 405-6 A) with Sheriff Wainwright, Chief Urquhart, and Major Thompson to discuss a personnel matter. No action was needed upon returning to open session.

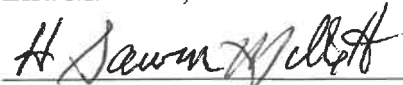
The Commissioners entered an executive session (1 M.R.S.A. § 405-6 A) with Communications Director Geff Inman to review results of a recent retention survey sent to dispatch employees. No action was needed upon returning to open session. It was noted that this item occurred in executive session due to the responses containing names of specific current and former employees.

Adjournment

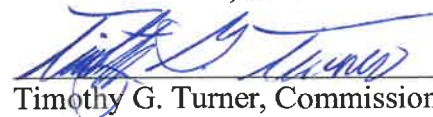
The Commissioners adjourned at 3:55pm.



Lisa M. Keim, Chair



H. Sawin Millett, Commissioner



Timothy G. Turner, 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.*