

OXFORD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES

October 21, 2025

Meeting Convened

At the Court of Oxford County Commissioners begun and held at Paris, Maine within and for the County of Oxford at 11:00 am on Tuesday, October 21, being a regular session, there were present:

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| Timothy Turner | Chair |
| Lisa Keim | Commissioner |
| Sawin Millett | Commissioner |

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Minutes Approval

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

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| September 16 | approved |
| October 9 | approved |

Agenda Adopted

The agenda was adopted with the addition of considering the hire of a part-time deputy and the submission of grant application regarding body cameras.

Public Comment

Kristy Chapman of the RSU #10 School Board said she feels like the safety of the school is being held hostage by the Sheriff's decision to remove Percy Turner as an SRO and refuse to join an MOU with Rumford PD to fill that vacancy. She asked to be able to speak during the RSU #10 SRO discussion later in the agenda.

Joan Kelly of Hartford (remote via Teams) spoke as follow-up to the September 16 meeting where she referred to a complaint regarding former Deputy Steinort and allegations of misappropriation of funds due to him not working but getting paid. County Administrator Loper says the MCJA recently notified the County of the closing of the case. It was explained that during the period the former deputy was supposedly uncertified but working, he was assigned to other duties. Commissioner Keim questioned what the duties he was performing were if not law enforcement. Sheriff Wainwright said that for the 20-day period he was on a provisional certificate he was reassigned to administrative duties, such as detailing cruisers for bid, then finally passed the certification test. Sheriff Wainwright stated that he was not assigned calls for service during this time. Sheriff Wainwright also stated that he was disturbed that someone apparently gave her (Ms. Kelly) confidential information and said she is a disgruntled former employee. Ms. Kelly explained that the information provided to her came through FOAA requests and from Sheriff's Office employees directly. Ms. Kelly ended her public comment by saying she's disturbed he's still Sheriff.

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's Report

Sheriff Christopher Wainwright updated the Commissioners on departmental matters.

Commissioner Keim requested a list of number of spare vehicles and justification for the amount. Sheriff Wainwright explained that due to the high mileage of other vehicles, it is essential to make sure there are spares available when one is being worked on. Chief Urquhart also noted that part-time deputies only use spares as they don't have a vehicle assigned to them.

The Commissioners authorized Administrator Loper to auction two vehicles.

The Commissioners discussed the substations throughout the County. Commissioner Keim questioned the need of the West Paris substation as it's not being used and is already close to the County's offices. She specifically mentioned the funds and resources being drawn from the IT department to maintain it.

Sheriff Wainwright asked about opening the SRO position for RSU #10, arguing that the contract for service is not tied to a specific deputy. Deputy Administrator Shanor pointed out that the contract was based on process built around a specific deputy's wage and benefits, and that the price could be different if another deputy took that role. Commissioner Turner agreed that the breakdown page of the contract is relevant to the cost of the contract the Commissioners authorized. Commissioner Keim pointed out that since the employee in question has not formally resigned or been terminated, there is no opening. She reminded the Sheriff that the Commissioners authorized a contract that he did not follow through with and feels the Sheriff's management created the issue (no SRO assigned to the school) but wants the Commissioners to fix it. Commissioner Turner agreed that the Sheriff caused the issue by not fulfilling a contract that was authorized. Commissioner Millett expressed concern that it is now seven weeks into the school year, but the school doesn't know when to expect an SRO. Kristy Chapman of RSU #10's school board stated that the school district wants law enforcement presence but feels caught in the middle. Commissioner Turner proposed a compromise to allow the Sheriff to post the SRO position but not make a hire until the current employee in that position formally resigns. Commissioner Keim expressed her concern for the potential liability of posting a position that is currently filled but understood Commissioner Turner's reasoning. The Commissioners authorized the posting of an SRO for RSU #10 contingent upon an anticipated opening.

The Commissioners and Sheriff Wainwright discussed possibly using the County's opioid settlement funds to pay for Sublocade injections. Commissioner Keim also encouraged researching grant opportunities in addition to the settlement funds.

The Commissioners tabled discussion of the regional jail proposal to November 6 due to timing.

The Commissioners authorized the acceptance of a Maine Bureau of Highway Safety grant regarding seat belts.

The Commissioners authorized the submission of a Department of Justice grant application regarding body cameras.

The Commissioners acknowledge the promotion of Corrections Corporal Renee Shanks to Sergeant effective October 12 with a wage rate of \$27.71.

The Commissioners acknowledge the promotion of Corrections Corporal Jacob Paar to Sergeant effective October 19 with a wage rate of \$27.30.

The Commissioners acknowledge the promotion of Corrections Corporal Alexander Gallant to Sergeant effective October 26 with a wage rate of \$25.96.

Sheriff Wainwright addressed the hiring requests that were tabled at the last meeting, noting that there is an anticipated opening and wants to move forward with hiring one of the applicants.

The Commissioners authorized the hiring of Curtis LaBelle as a part-time Sheriff's Deputy with the following confirmed:

- Effective Date: October 21, 2025
- Wage Rate: \$23.75/hr (PT certified rate)
- Special Conditions: none

The Commissioners noted that the Sheriff should be cautious of hours to be sure the employee does not reach full-time levels.

Treasurer's Report

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

The Commissioners tabled discussion about use of opioid settlement funds to Thursday's budget review meeting.

Personnel Updates and Actions

The Commissioners authorized a shift re-bid for Dispatchers.

The Commissioners acknowledged the promotion of Kelsey Tibbetts from part-time Dispatcher to full-time Dispatch Supervisor effective November 3 with a wage rate of \$26.74 (3rd year).

The Commissioners tabled approval of a job description for the position of Systems Administrator (IT).

The Commissioners discussed the County's building inventory. Commissioner Keim suggested it may be worthwhile assessing if any of them should be sold if the County doesn't have plans to utilize or repair them.

The Commissioners entered an executive session (1 M.R.S.A. § 405-6 A) to discuss a personnel matter. They returned to open session and authorized a one-time net payment of \$500 each for Maintenance Workers Marc Rainey and Samantha Cilley in recognition of their additional duties during a long-term leave in their department.

The Commissioners entered an executive session (1 M.R.S.A. § 405-6 D) to discuss union contract negotiations. They returned to open session and authorized a \$1.00/hr increase for the dispatch unions effective October 26.

Airport/UT Supervisor's Report

The Commissioners reviewed proposals submitted for snow removal at the airport and awarded the bid to Sumner Sessions Inc. of Oxford for \$48,000/yr for a three-year period.

The Commissioners approved a lease between Oxford County and MAXQ Composites for rental of space at the Regional Airport.

Update on Community Resilience Project in Albany Township

Tamra Benson and Anya Wright announced the service provider grant award for Albany Township to conduct resilience projects in the estimated amount of \$75,000.

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

1. Adopted Administrator's report.
2. Discussed the Dark Sky Initiative and agreed to hear a presentation over the matter after the budget process is completed.
3. Authorized three-year contract renewal with Catalis for e-filing in the Probate Office.
4. Authorized Administrator Loper to work out a contract proposal with SIEMENS to maintain the Jail's new HVAC system.

Adjournment

The Commissioners then held a public hearing on the proposed 2026 budget which concluded at 8:20pm.



Timothy G. Turner, Chair



Lisa M. Keim, Commissioner



H. Sawin Millett, 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.*