

## **Minutes**

**PRESENT:** Commissioner Carlton, Commissioner Fowler, Commissioner Gilbert, Commissioner Saviello, and Commissioner Skolfield

The meeting was held via: Zoom

### **Franklin County Commissioners' Meeting**

**February 4, 2025**

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Carlton at 10:01 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

**Audience (Present):** Jake Nichols, Susan Pratt, Ryan Close, Nathan Hiltz, Louise Hiltz, Jake Ducharme, Robert Ayer, Robert Lightbody, Charlie Woodworth, Nick Palmer, Margot Joly, Sheri Lopez, Dale Bryant, Nick Palmer, Brandon Gray, Pamela Prodan, Mt. Blue T.V., Amy Bernard, Tiffany Baker, Jamie Sullivan, and Brenda Bittle.

**Audience (Zoom):** Ralph Parker, Deeds, and Brad Timberlake.

**RECOGNITION:** The following individuals were recognized for their role in stepping in to ensure that a citizen was taken care of during a medical incident at the Courthouse on January 23, 2025: Margot Joly, Heidi Jordan, Sheri Lopez, Jamie Sullivan, Nick Palmer and Brandon Gray. Commissioner Carlton stated that it takes a special person not to run away, but to jump into action.

### **APPOINTMENTS:**

1. Appointment of Amy Bernard from Rumford, Maine as the County Administrator – Motion to Table: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0).
2. MCCA Legislative Policy Committee - Motion to nominate Commissioner Saviello as the MCCA Legislative Policy Committee representative: Tom Skolfield/Fen Fowler (5/0).
3. MCCA Bylaws Working Group – Motion to nominate Commissioner Saviello as the MCCA Bylaws Working Group representative: Tom Skolfield/Fen Fowler (5/0).
4. UMF Board of Visitors – Motion to nominate Commissioner Saviello as the UMF Board of Visitor representative: Tom Skolfield/Jeff Gilbert (5/0).

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Administrator's Report - Motion to approve the Administrator's Report: Tom Saviello/Jeff Gilbert (5/0)
2. Treasurer's Report – Motion to accept the Treasurer Report: Tom Skolfield/Tom Saviello (5/0)
3. Sheriff's Department K-9 Bain – K-9 Bain retired in December 2024, in order for him to not be a responsibility of the County, the County would need to give him to his handler.

The Sheriff has requested permission to gift K-9 Bain to his handler. **Motion to authorize the gift of K-9 Bain to his handler, retired Sergeant Bean: Fen Fowler/Tom Saviello (5/0)**

4. **Route 27 Corridor – Boarder Issues** – This past Summer the County received notice from the Federal Government that the border crossing in Coburn Gore was going to be rebuilt. Commissioner Carlton discussed the concerns with how this will affect Route 27. At this time, any commercial traffic that goes through the border must be pre-permitted so that limits the traffic. Once the border crossing is rebuilt, they will be able to permit loads right at the crossing. This will increase commercial traffic. Commissioner Carlton discussed the concerns about how this will affect our roadways, specifically, Route 27, Fire, EMS and the DOT. Commissioner Carlton would like to create a working group to make improvements and raise awareness of the effects of the border crossing rebuild. **Motion to approve Commissioner Carlton and Commissioner Skolfield to work with/create and report back to the Commissioner on the findings of the effects of the border crossing rebuild in Coburn Gore: Tom Saviello/Fen Fowler (5/0)**
5. **Greater Franklin Economic and Community Development MOU** – Greater Franklin Economic and Community Development has requested a \$5,000 increase in the compensation that it receives for being the TIF Coordinator for the application process and the facilitator of the TIF Committee members. Amy and Charlie Woodworth had a discussion based upon that discussion, as well as the TIF SOP that was developed last year an MOU was developed. Charlie reviewed the MOU and has requested some changes to the MOU. **Motion to award the MOU at \$15,000 to Greater Franklin and to work with the Administrator to change the wording as appropriate: Fen Fowler/Tom Skolfield (No Vote), Fen Fowler withdrew his Motion, Motion to table: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (4/1) Jeff Gilbert opposed.**

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

1. **Betterment Grant Fund** – The County is looking to apply for the Betterment Grant Fund to help establish a county wide Animal Control Officer to help with towns that are struggling to find an ACO or consistency with the ACO that they have. The intent is for this to become a pilot project with hopes that it would become self-funded through the towns and the UT. The County has received several letters in support of the program. Currently, when an ACO is not available, the Sheriff's department is responsible for taking the call. With the regionalization of the ACO we anticipate the sharing of resources and services for all of Franklin County. **Motion to authorize the County Administrator to apply for the Betterment Grant Fund: Tom Saviello/Fen Fowler (5/0).**
2. **Opioid Settlement Committee Update/Progress** – Commissioner Saviello gave an update on the status of the Opioid Committee and the redevelopment of the grant application process. The Committee worked closely with the University of Maine, Maine Opioid Support Center to develop an online application process that allows research-based results. The new online application process is set to go live in March. **No Motion Required.**

#### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

1. Commissioner Saviello discussed having the President of UMI come and speak at one of the Commissioner Meetings. He was going to reach out to him.
2. Commissioner Saviello discussed the County Website. He thinks it's great, however, that we could add more to it to make it more informative for the public.
3. Commissioner Saviello discussed the security system and the concerns that were brought up by the District Attorney's Office and that we are working with them to resolve those concerns. He would like a letter of understanding on how and what will change when they move back to the building.
4. Commissioner Saviello acknowledged that he had a conversation with Commissioner Fowler and Commissioner Skolfield on different subjects prior to the meeting.
5. Commissioner Fowler thanked the Commissioners that attended the Agriculture and Rivers Coexisting meeting addressing the flooding risk on the Sandy River.
6. Commissioner Skolfield also discussed the conference, and the Federal Delegation wants to have one entity to be the lead agency to contact when dealing with the issue of the flooding on the Sandy River. He inquired about Franklin County being that lead agency. Commissioner Fowler had conversations with other entities. They have agreed to go back to the Federal delegation and ask them who they believe should be the lead entity. He didn't believe there would be one lead entity as it was going to be multifaceted over a period of time.
7. Susan Pratt informed the Commissioners of the progress of the new EOC buildings and that we have begun drawing down money from the USDA.
8. Commissioner Skolfield received a complaint from a Bail Commissioner about the printer/copier not working at the jail and asked if this matter be looked into.

**WARRANTS: County AP, UT, TIF and Payroll – Motion to sign Warrants: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0)**

**Executive Session 1 M.R.S. 405(6)(D) - Personnel Matter - NCEU Request: Motion to enter Executive Session 1 MRSA 405(6) (A) Personnel Matter – NCEU Request at 11:22 a.m.: Fen Fowler/Bob Carlton. Motion to support Sheriff in regard to the program/reentry coordinator: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0). Motion to exit Executive Session 1 M.R.S. 405(6)(D) - Personnel Matter - NCEU Request at 12:37 p.m.: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield.**

**Executive Session 1 M.R.S. 405(6)(A) – Personnel Matter – IT Request: Motion to enter Executive Session 1 M.R.S. 405(6)(A) – Personnel Matter – IT Request at 11:40 a.m.: Bob Carlton/Tom Saviello. No Action Taken. Motion to exit Executive Session 1 M.R.S. 405(6)(A) – Personnel Matter – IT Request at 12:08 p.m.: Bob Carlton/Tom Saviello.**

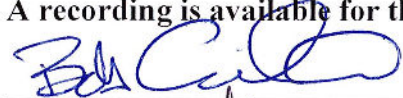
**Executive Session 1 M.R.S. 405(6)(F) - Lease Agreement 124 Main Street, Farmington: Motion to enter into Executive Session 1 M.R.S. 405(6)(F) - Lease Agreement 124 Main**

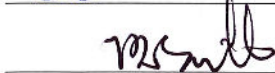
Street, Farmington at 12:09 p.m.: Bob Carlton/Tom Saviello. Motion to authorize Commissioner Saviello to reach out to Craig Jordan to discuss an extension of the Lease not to exceed three months: Tom Saviello/Fen Fowler (5/0). Motion to authorize County Administrator to use the interest from the ARPA fund for building improvements for the District Attorney's office move: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0). Motion to end Executive Session 1 M.R.S. 405(6)(F) - Lease Agreement 124 Main Street, Farmington at 12:30 p.m.: Fen Fowler/Tom Saviello.

Executive Session 1 M.R.S. 405(6)(A) – Personnel Matter – Title 30A (82) County Administrator: Motion to enter into Executive Session 1 M.R.S. 405(6)(A) – Personnel Matter – Title 30A (82) County Administrator at 12:35 p.m.: Bob Carlton/Tom Saviello. No Action Taken. Motion to exit Executive Session 1 M.R.S. 405(6)(A) – Personnel Matter – Title 30A (82) County Administrator at 1:17 p.m.: Bob Carlton/Tom Saviello.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn at 1:17 p.m.: Bob Carlton/Tom Skolfield (5/0)

A recording is available for this meeting.











FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

ATTEST:

 CLERK