

## Minutes

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

The meeting was held via: Zoom

**Franklin County Commissioners' Meeting**

**March 18, 2025**

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Carlton at 10:00 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

**Audience (Present):** Jake Nichols, Susan Pratt, Ryan Close, Nathan Hiltz, Louise Hiltz, Jake Ducharme, Robert Lightbody, Earl Martin, Nick Palmer, Margot Joly, Brad Timberlake, David St. Laurent, David Rackliffe, Allision Prior, Heidi Jordan, Hart Daley, Susan Black Sarah Caton, Anne Lambert, Neil McLean, AAG, Steve Lowell, Scott Nichols, Leeanna Lavioe, Andre Cushing, Pamela Prodan, Mt. Blue T.V., Amy Bernard, Tiffany Baker, and Jamie Sullivan.

**Audience (Zoom):** Olivia Ruhlin, Kate Phillips, Brenda Bitle.

**RECOGNITION: None**

**APPOINTMENTS: None**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Administrator's Report - Motion to accept the Administrator's Report: Tom Skolfield/Tom Saviello (5/0).**
2. **Minutes - Motion to approve March 4, 2025, and March 10, 2025, Minutes: Tom Skolfield/Tom Saviello (5/0).**
3. **Treasurer's Report – Motion to accept the Treasurer Report: Tom Skolfield/Tom Saviello (5/0).**
4. **Andre Cushing, III, President of the MCCA – Update –** Andre Cushing, III serves as a Commissioner for Penobscot County, and is the President of the Maine County Commissioners Association. He discussed the moving to a larger board allows a Commissioner to speak to another Commissioner without violating the "Sunshine Law" or transparency. He indicated that the organization was valuable in that it represents our county organizations and is one of the closer forms of government to the people that are ultimately the bosses. He also indicated that the organization has a better understanding of

the difficulties that our counties face better than the people that we send to Augusta or Washington. He stated his goals as president is to the strengthen the organization by strengthening the relationships with the Maine Sheriff's Association, Maine Municipal Organization, Deeds, Probate EMA, etc. and to find way to collaborate with those organizations. **No Motion Required.**

5. **LD 870** – Bill being submitted to legislature for public hearing on March 20, 2025, regarding the increase in members of the LUPC from nine to thirteen. The additional members will be appointed by the Governor, which does not have the residency requirement of living in the UT. The Bill also limits the County Commissioners timeline to appoint a member from 90 working days to 30. Commissioner Carlton stated that this timeline becomes an issue due to the requirement of notice and acceptance of the application can take over a month. He also indicated that the LUPC essentially is the planning board for the UT, therefore members should reside in the UT. Commissioner Carlton also requested approval from the Board to testify in opposition to this Bill. **Motion to approve Commissioner Carlton to testify in opposition to LD 870 as currently outlined: Tom Skolfield/Fen Fowler (4/1) Tom Saviello opposed. Commissioner Saviello requested that his name be removed from the testimony as he will be attending as an individual to offer an amendment in favor the Bill.**
6. **Sheriff Office – Ace K9 Hot-N-Pop Heat Alarm System** – Wayne Robichaud from K9 Ballistic Vest, a nonprofit organization has raised funds to donate two Ace K9 Hot-N-Pop Heat Alarm Systems for K9 Atlas and K9 Rahka's cruisers. This system sets off the siren, lights and rolls down both rear windows if the temperature in the cruiser reaches a certain level. Some of these systems come with pagers. The cost of installing the systems are approximately \$1,100, which the Sheriff's office currently has funds for in the K9 budget. **Motion to approve the donation from K9 Ballistic Vests: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0).**
7. **Sheriff's Office State of Maine Grant for XRB Shots** – The Sheriff's office requested to apply for a grant through the State of Maine for Extended-Release Buprenorphine shots for the jail. This is part of a program that they have been working on to provide a higher-level medication that is better for the staff and the residents. The shot is good for 30 days verses giving a daily pill. A benefit to this is that they can give it to a resident when they leave jail. This will ultimately help with the reductions in overdose and revisits. **Motion to authorize the Sheriff Office to apply for the State of Maine Grant for XRB Shots: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0).**
8. **Jail Remodel – Review of revised cost proposal from E.J. Perry – Back in February**, the Sheriff's office requested to negotiate with E.J. Perry Construction regarding the bid that was presented. Some requests were not included in the bid and some parts of the proposal were not required. E.J. Perry Company came back with a revised cost proposal in the amount of \$162,800. **Motion to award the bid to E.J. Perry Construction for the**

**Jail Remodel which will be funded through the COSSUP Grant: Fen Fowler/Tom Saviello (5/0).**

**9. Courthouse Upgrade**

**A. Disposition of Excess Equipment and Furniture** – Due to EMA, IT and the Commissioners office moving to the new EOC building, there is furniture and equipment that is not being utilized. We are looking for permission to sell or discard this excess equipment and furniture. **Motion to authorize the Administrator to dispose of the property in the best interest of the County. Tom Skolfield/Tom Saviello (5/0)**

**B. Proposed Probate Courthouse Space** – Commissioner Gilbert and administration walked the building and proposed that the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor (radio room) be used as the Probate Courtroom. There were questions as to the safety of mezzanine. Judge Joly requested that a structural engineer come in and look at the space. There were also concerns about ingress and egress. The County Administrator is looking for authorization to have an engineer come and review the third-floor space. **Motion to authorize Administrator to hire an engineer to do a study on the third-floor space: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield. Amend prior Motion to see if we are in ADA Compliance first before hiring an engineer: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield. Commissioner Saviello withdrew his motion, and Tom Skolfield withdrew his second. Motion to see if we are ADA Compliant with regard to the third floor. Bring the results back to the Commissioners for further guidance: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0).**

**C. Department Closures for Window Installation** – Lead tests were performed on the interior and exterior portions the windows by Community Concepts. Those results showed positive for lead. The exterior was higher than the interior. The Administrator spoke with OSHA who advised her to isolate/quarantine the areas during construction where lead was present. DEP was onsite to ensure the contractor was following proper procedures. It was suggested by Commissioner Carlton to work with Deeds, Probate, and the Contractor for a schedule that works for everyone.

**D. RFP for Services** – We are installing a 3-phase mechanical panel at the Courthouse. In February the Administrator was instructed to order the panel since it would take 8 weeks for it to come in. The Counties Purchasing Policy does not have the same language as the State when it comes to upgrades to facilities. The Administrator was directed to go out to bid for 3-phase mechanical panel project. An RFP was sent to Adrenaline Electric, IEC as well as being posted on the website, the Daily Bulldog and the Maine Municipal Associations site. The Administrator requested that we go out to bid annually for a preferred vendor for electrical, HVAC, the boiler, plumbing, etc. to use in

case of emergencies and still meet the intent of the law. **Motion to authorize Administrator to go out to bid for preferred vendor for facility services for the County for when emergencies arise: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0).**

10. **On-Call – IT/EMA – Motion to Table: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0).**
11. **Suggested Meeting time/places for future Commissioner Meetings – Motion to Table: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0).**
12. **County Administrator Residency – Motion to allow County Administrator to live outside of the County: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0).**
13. **County Administrator/UT Manager – Motion to comply with Title 30-A § 82B, the Administrator may not hold any other elective or appointed positions within Franklin County: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (4/1) Bob Carlton opposed.** The position as UT Manager is listed in the County Administrator's Contract with Franklin County, as well as being in the job description. There are no changes to the Administrator's position, she will just not hold the title of "UT Manager".
14. **Salary Structure –** The Commissioners were provided with different salary structure models to choose from. **Motion to use 2.4% COLA increase, Model 4 with the exception of the Administrator and Human Resources: Tom Skolfield/Tom Saviello (2/3) Bob Carlton, Jeff Gilbert and Fen Fowler opposed, Motion failed.** Commissioner Saviello indicated that the Lieutenants should be set at Grade 9 on the pay scale. He also indicated that he would like to give a non-standard salary increase of 15% to certain employees, based on the risk and hours worked. Commissioner Fowler indicated that you could exclude the Administrator, because she is working under a Contract, but would be uncomfortable with excluding the HR Director, thereby setting a standing for employees, with the exception of one. Commissioner Skolfield indicated that his reasoning for excluding those two positions was due to those positions receiving significant increases over the past 24 months. Commissioner Carlton clarified that during that time period there were five additional positions that received significant increases as well. The current policy relative to the COLA increase indicates that we use the consumer price index as of December, which is 2.9%. Commissioner Gilbert stated that the County is paying for experience. If the County is going to grow, then we need the right people with the right experience in those positions to move forward. **Motion for a 3% COLA for non-union and elected officials: Fen Fowler/Jeff Gilbert (4/1) Tom Saviello opposed. Motion to review the increase and rebalances among grades that is put before us as best proposed in the 3% COLA increase for the non-union: Fen Fowler/Tom Saviello (No Vote).** Commissioner Fowler indicated that there is a lot of work to be done to move forward, do we need reorganization in county government, do we need different personnel policies, we are moving to a new space, and we are taking on more longer-range issues. He stated that we need employees standing behind us that feel they are treated fairly. Commissioner Fowler proposed that we rebalance the salary structure grades this budget session for the amount of \$138,044, which was the proposed 3% increase for Nonunion including

rebalanced among grades. **Motion for a 3% COLA for the non-union including the rebalance of grades as well as a 3% increase in COLA for the elected (Model Three): Fen Fowler/Jeff Gilbert (4/1) Tom Saviello opposed.**

**15. Schedule Budget Review Meeting – Motion to for budget review meeting on March 25, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0).**

**OLD BUSINESS: None**

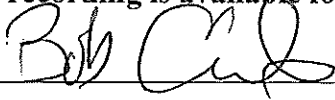
**MISCELLANEOUS:**

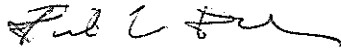
1. Commissioner Carlton indicated that a Letter of Intent to purchase steel is needed for Wyman & Simpson, the contractor replacing the bridge in Madrid Township. Motion to authorize Administrator or Commissioner Chair to sign Letter of Intent: Tom Skolfield/Tom Saviello (5/0).
2. UT Road – All roads in the UT have been posted. They will remain posted until June 1, 2025, unless conditions allow.
3. Due to the rain on March 17, 2025, there was a washout on Center Road, Madrid Township. Tyson Chase brought in gravel to make it passable. Ditching and culvert work will need to be done this summer.
4. The Franklin County Extension Homemakers Spring Meeting – Commissioner Saviello would like to attend.
5. Commissioner Fowler drafted a sample letter that he is intending to send to potential investors in the Sandy River Forums that he hopes to hold. He is asking the County to be a fiscal agent in receiving the money. The Sandy River Watershed is asking area organizations to share in the costs of the forums. The costs are approximately \$12,600. He is looking to the county to pay for the cost of utilizing Mt. Blue T.V. and has asked Amy to look into budgeting for those costs.
6. Commissioner Fowler testified before the Legislature for LD 758. Which is a proposed bill to update flood mapping in the Sandy River Watershed to Federal Emergency Management Agency Standards. The Department of Community Affairs spoke neither for nor against. He stated that Senator Black believes that it may be funded through LD 1.

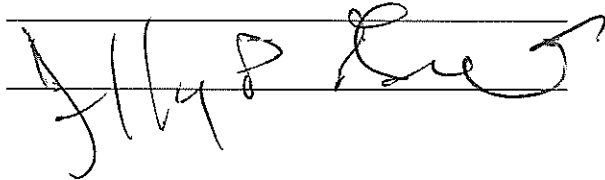
**WARRANTS: County AP, UT, TIF and Payroll – Motion to sign Warrants: Tom Skolfield/Jeff Gilbert (4/1) Tom Saviello opposed.**

**ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn at 1:24 p.m.: Jeff Gilbert/Tom Skolfield (5/0)**

A recording is available for this meeting.








FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

ATTEST:

 CLERK