

## Minutes

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

The meeting was held via: Zoom

**Franklin County Commissioners' Meeting**

**March 25, 2026**

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

**AUDIENCE:** Mt. Blue T.V, Amanda Simoneau, Sarah Caton, Neil McLean, Susan Black, Pam Prodan, Heidi Jordan, Margot Joly, Jacke Nichols, Scott Nichols, Steve Lowell, Steven Marcotte, Richard Morton, , Grace Kendall, Christine Myer, Rachel McCellan, Craig Zohurst, Rebecca Gage, Noelle Coyne, Lauren Robinson, Henry Hardy, Jeb Enoch, Joe Teranova, Kristen Filbeck, Renee Whitely, Nick Rowley, Mary Redman-Luce, Tim Hardy, Ericka Buote, Amy Bernard, Shawn O'Leary and Jamie Sullivan.

**ZOOM:** Leeanna Lavoie.

**RECOGNITION:** Commissioner Carlton recognized Shawn, O'Leary, Jamie Sullivan, Mary Richards, Lexi Daggett and Amanda Simoneau for their efforts in putting the Budget Books together.

Commissioner Fowler recognized Amy Bernard for putting together a community forum for senior citizens.

**APPOINTMENTS: None**

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1. Jail - Gease Trap Agreement – Sign –** The County Attorney reviewed and approved the Agreement between the County and H.E. Callahan for the Grease Trap project at the jail. **Motion to authorize the Commissioner Chair signed the Agreement with H.E. Callahan: Tom Skolfield/Fen Fowler (5/0).**
- 2. Jay Redemption Redevelopment –** A request was received from Tony McDonald indicating that there is a bill being presented that is a threat to the redevelopment plan. A letter has been drafted to the Speaker of House, the President of the Senate and the Governor, in support of the redevelopment plan of the Jay Mill. Commissioner Saviello indicated that a letter should be addressed to the Committee Chairs, with copies to the Governor and the leadership. **Motion to send letter of support to the Committee as proposed by Commissioner Saviello: Tom Skolfield/Tom Saviello (5/0).**
- 3. FY2027 Budget Review**

Commissioner Saviello requested each department to include in their presentation what does not get done if they decrease their budget by 10%.

- A. 10 – EMA** – The majority of the increase for this department is the personnel line. Added to the budget this year is line 10-7224 – Consultant fees for \$30,000. A communication study on the infrastructure was completed in 2015. This study gave ideas and suggestions to improve the infrastructure. Today there are safety concerns for our first responders in the field. These funds, along with funds from other sources, would be used to complete the new study that is needed. Without these funds, the propagation study to see which zones are not receiving coverage would not be able to be completed, which would be a deficit for our first responders.
- B. 15 – District Attorney** - Neil McLean, District Attorney indicated that this budget's majority increase was due to salaries, he indicated that other than salaries, he had five (5) lines that showed increases which totaled \$2,749. His revenue is approximately \$30,000 which includes supervision fees (Deferred Deposition). Amy indicated that the State provides a grant for Victim's Witness Advocates, which is what the \$30,000 in revenues is from. Commissioner Saviello did not request the District Attorney's office to cut the 10% previously requested.
- C. 16 – Superior Court** – These funds are used for witnesses for trials to house them and pay their travel fees.
- D. 20 – Commissioner's Office** – Most of the increase is associated with not having the HR Director and Deputy Administrator being a dual role, with 1/3 of that salary being paid out of the UT. The Commissioner's office now bears that entire cost. Legal fees are experiencing a \$30,000 increase due to the increase in the number of abatement appeal hearings the County has seen this year. Commissioner Saviello suggested that a % of the HR Director's salary be taken out of the UT budget. Amy indicated that it would not be very cost effective. She recommended adding it to the revenue line for the Commissioner's office and having the UT offset those costs. Commissioner Saviello asked what the status of the website renovation was, Amy indicated that we went out to bid for a new design and the bids came in anywhere from \$8,000 to \$100,000. She indicated that she was going to ask to carry forward funds from this year to next year. The current funds are not enough to renovate the website to the County's expectations. Amy indicated that this may be one of those items that may need to be cut from the budget.
- E. 25 – Treasurer's Office** – The increase in the Treasurer's office is due to turnover. The Bookkeeper hired to replace the former Bookkeeper came to the County with over 25 years of experience, therefore, being hired at a hire step on the salary structure. The Auditor line (25-7221) increased significantly due to the Federal Compliance Audit. Commissioner Saviello asked when we receive a grant, are we budgeting funds to pay for the audit? What are other Counties doing? He also asked why the Professional Services line (25-7222) increased for BlueStar Accounting Service? Pam indicated it was due to turnover. BlueStar Accounting also assists the County with the auditing process. The County Audit cost \$18,750. We are in the red for this year due to it being cut last year. Amy spoke in support of what the Treasurer presented with respect to increasing these two lines. Commissioner Saviello also questioned why the County was not doing payroll, why is it being outsourced. Amy indicated that we do not have a system for doing our own payroll. It would cost the County between \$7,000 and \$8,000 for the system, and it would take several years for the system to be created. The County's payroll is very

complex due to having several different union contracts, health insurance and other benefits. Bangor Payroll also provides the year-end documents for the County.

- F. 30 – Technical Services** – IT’s budget has increased due to personnel, and increase in services, including the migration to pro-suite, the new CAD system for dispatch, the sheriff’s office, the detention center, and police departments. This system doubled from last year. This year’s bill is \$138,000, \$71,000 of which the County is responsible for, and the remaining balance comes from surrounding towns/organizations (UMF). Consulting services, (\$41,000) used for network monitoring. This had been removed from the budget previously, which needed to be added back in to pay for these services. Commissioner Saviello asked if there was enough money in the reserve account. Funds have been increased for future server upgrades, to replenish the account and to cover deductibles should we ever have a cyber incident. Significant yearly changes were made as a result of the cyber incident that occurred. Jake suggested that the County hire a CAD administrator in the future.

**Recess at 12:00 noon**

**End Recess at 12:30 p.m.**

- G. 40 – Facilities** – A majority of the increase for facilities is capital outlays for the buildings. Commissioner Saviello indicated the need for budgeting for snow removal of the sidewalks at the Courthouse. The agreement with the Town of Farmington did not work. Commissioner Fowler mentioned the lack of parking at the EOC and questioned whether we were planning on increasing the parking availability. Amy indicated that we could develop the other side of the railroad easement, however we would need to negotiate to purchase the easement from the railroad. The Dispatch Center’s camera and security system needs to be upgraded, that cost is approximately \$40,000. Commissioner Fowler questioned the lifespan of the Whitehouse. Amy indicated that she would like to have a building assessment completed for all of the buildings and build up the reserves for that through the consulting fees in the County-Wide Budget. Susan Black also mentioned installing the fans that were to be installed at the Courthouse as part of the ARPA project. That project still needs to be completed. Adrenaline Electric was awarded that bid, Amy indicated she would reach out to them. It was suggested that we try to collaborate with the Town of Farmington to purchase fuel.
- H. 65 – Registry of Deeds** – No significant changes have been made to the budget from last year. She increased her mileage line for traveling to and from Courthouse to the EOC to drop off money received for recording fees. She budgeted \$6,500 for a new copier. The Lease on the existing copier expires this year. This line may change depending on the bids that are received. Line 65-7690 also increased to purchase three (3) new computers. The current ones are no longer being supported. Sue indicated that she would like to have a placeholder for her salary in the amount of \$70,050 and have a discussion regarding the elected official’s salaries and the salary structure. It was agreed to have a conversation regarding this matter at the Commissioner’s meeting on April 7, 2026.

- I. **70 – Probate Court** – Probates budget has decreased by 5.5%, largely due to consolidating a few lines into a professional services line as well as prepaying for their on-line filing software used by the probate offices statewide. The large only purchase for the department will be for a new copier.
- J. **75 – Sheriff's Office** – The majority of increases to the Sheriff's Office consist of personnel, which is contractual and services. K-9 services are increasing due to the need to purchase and the training of a new dog, due to the declining health of Major Rackliffe's K-9. The other major increase is for the purchase of three vehicles this year. The cost of outfitting these vehicles has increased significantly. Other increases within the department were minimal. A discussion was held regarding the Sheriff's office handling Civil Process. The Sheriff would like those revenues collected and put towards the vehicle reserve account. He also indicated that the Stonegarden funds need to be transferred into the vehicle reserve account, this has not been done since 2024. The Commissioner must authorize this to be done. Amy noted some of the calculations may have been incorrect in the incentive line and flex benefit line. These will be double checked. A separate line for the Major will be created.
- K. **80 – Communications** – Ther increases for this department were attributable to personnel, which is contractual. A Software Licenses and Support line was added this year in the amount of \$23,000 for the I Am Responding program for the paging services for the first responders. This was previously budgeted as a reserve account. Amy indicated that operational costs should not be budgeted as a reserve. Other significant changes are in training and development due to turnover.
- L. **100 – Jail** – The Jails overall majority increase is due to the contractual salary and benefit increases. The other major increase was the addition of line 100-7228 – Boarding of Prisoners for \$95,000. This fund covers the cost to house inmate at other facilities when our facility is full. Other increases are contractual and are required by the DOC standards and state law to provide. He has also budgeted \$5,000 to purchase a new copier. A discussion was held regarding the COSSUP Grant as well as a purchase of a body scanner for the facility.
- M. **County-Wide**
  - i. **Other Expenditures**
  - ii. **Program Grants** – The Commissioner's had the opportunity to listen to the non-profit's listed below present their organization's request for funds. This year, two new non-profits have requested funds from the County.
    - a. **Care and Share Food Pantry** - \$5,000 requested, new this year
    - b. **Franklin County Extension Association** - \$72,476 requested. A \$2,591 increase over last year.
    - c. **Franklin County Soil & Water Conservation** - \$36,000 requested. A \$6,000 increase over last year.
    - d. **Franklin County Children's Task Force**- \$15,000 requested. No increase over last year.
    - e. **Franklin County Adult and Community Education** - \$10,000 requested. Funds not requested last year, a \$1.00 placeholder was requested.

- f. **Western Maine Community Action** - \$56,000. A \$150 increase over last year.
- g. **Seniors Plus** - \$45,000 requested. A \$5,000 increase over last year.
- h. **SAPARS** - \$20,000 requested. No increase over last year.
- i. **Andwell Health Partners** - \$30,000 requested. No increase over last year.
- j. **Greater Franklin Development Corporation** - \$1 requested as a placeholder. No increase over last year.
- k. **Franklin County Firemen's Association** - \$3,700 requested. No increase over last year.
- l. **Western Maine Transportation** - \$45,000 requested. A \$5,000 increase over last year.
- m. **Safe Voices** - \$25,000 requested. No increase over last year.
- n. **Franklin County Healthy Community Coalition** - \$100,000 requested, new this year.

- iii. **Debt Services Principal**
- iv. **Debt Services Interest**

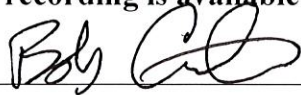
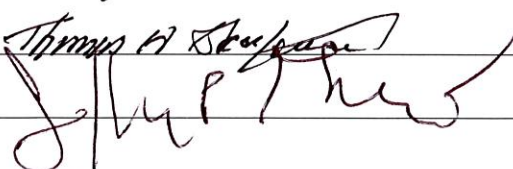

**OLD BUSINESS: None**

**MISCELLANEOUS: None**

**WARRANTS: None**

**ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn at 4:24 p.m.: Jeff Gilbert/Fen Fowler (5/0).**

**A recording is available for this meeting.**

  
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FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

ATTEST: , CLERK

**Memo**

**To:** County Commissioners

**From:** Amy Bernard

**Date:** April 6, 2026

**Subject:** Proposed Budget Reductions –Facilities Department

The following budget adjustments are recommended for the Facilities Department:

- **Account 040-7252:** Reduce by \$5,000
  - Note: This reduction assumes minimal unexpected equipment or facility breakdowns.
- **Account 042-7640:** Reduce by \$30,000
  - Of this amount, \$20,000 will be set aside and redirected toward a future camera upgrade project.

**Total Proposed Reductions:** \$35,000

These adjustments are intended to reallocate resources while maintaining essential facility operations and planning for priority capital improvements.