Minutes

PRESENT: Commissioner Carlton, Commissioner Skolfield, Commissioner Saviello, Commissioner Gilbert, and Commissioner Fowler
The meeting was held via: Zoom
Franklin County Commissioners' Meeting
September 15, 2026

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

AUDIENCE: Mt. Blue T.V, Jake Nichols, Tamra Benson, Andre Cushing, Jake Ducharme, Susan Black, Mark Green, Tim Hardy, Kyle Ellis, Ryan Close, Andrew Morgan, Shawn O'Leary, Karen Rea, Susan Pratt and Jamie Sullivan.
ZOOM: Matthew McIntyre and George Buswell

RECOGNITION: Commissioner Fowler recognized a 2004 Mt. Blue High School Graduate, Nate Underkuffler. Nate won the 2026 Primetime Emmy for Outstanding Sound Editing for a Comedy or Drama Series (Half-Hour) and Animation for the horror-comedy Widow's Bay.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

APPOINTMENTS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Administrator's Report – Motion to Accept the Administrator's Report: Tom Skolfield/Tom Saviello (5/0).**
   Motion to approve the hiring of Ciara Pelkey for the part-time Corrections Officer position with the Franklin County Detention Center: Tom Skolfield/Tom Saviello (5/0).
2. **Minutes – Motion to accept the Minutes as provided: Tom Saviello/Jeff Gilbert (4/0/1) Commissioner Fowler abstained.**
3. **Treasurer's Report – Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0).**
4. **Western Maine Mountain Housing Project** - Mark Green of Western Maine Mountain Housing provided an update regarding the organization's workforce housing project. Mr. Green discussed the history of the project, including start-up money received from the Commissioners, provided through ARPA funds, zoning-related issues encountered in Kingfield, as well as the acquisition of property in 2025. In 2025 Weyerhaeuser Corporation donated a 20-acre parcel of land, just beyond the Sugarloaf Access Roads on Route 27. He reported that final Planning Board approvals had subsequently been received from the Town of Carrabassett Valley for construction of 54 units of workforce housing. The project will be constructed in phases. Phase One is anticipated to begin in the spring

of 2027 and includes the entire construction of the road, sewer and construction of the first 14-unit apartment building. The development is intended to provide housing at rates below the median for Franklin County. Mr. Green indicated that they are continuing to fundraise for this project, he reported that funding had been secured from several sources, including approximately $1 million from the Northern Border Regional Commission and approximately $1.5 million in Congressionally Directed Spending Grant. Western Maine Mountain Housing is continuing fundraising efforts for the project. Mr. Green thanked the Commissioners for Franklin County's initial ARPA funding assistance. **No Action Taken.**

5. **Andre Cushing** – MCCA Chair - Andre Cushing, Chair of the Maine County Commissioners Association (MCCA), met with the Commissioners to provide an update regarding matters affecting county government throughout Maine. Mr. Cushing discussed Title 30-A and issues involving sheriffs, county administrators and county commissioners, as well as proposed legislation. Discussion also included the MCCA conference, a proposal for an executive director, jail funding and efforts to strengthen relationships between counties and municipalities. A significant portion of the discussion focused on regional collaboration, particularly fire and EMS services. Examples of regional approaches were discussed, including opportunities for communities to collaborate in an effort to stabilize costs. The discussion also addressed the use of data and heat-map analysis and opportunities for regional cooperation in other areas. **Motion for a letter to be sent to the Franklin County Firemen's Association asking to convene a group to begin discussions regarding collaboration among municipalities for fire and EMS services: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0).**
6. **TIF – Scholarships -** The Commissioners reviewed the TIF Scholarship recommendations presented by the TIF Committee. Six students were recommended scholarships. The total amount awarded was $55,107. **Motion to approve the list: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield 95/0).**
7. **Department Presentation – Communications Center** - Kyle Ellis, Franklin County Regional Communications Center Director, provided the Commissioners with an overview of the Communications Center, including operations, staffing, current initiatives and recent accomplishments. The Communications Center was reported to be fully staffed. Two trainees are attending the Academy, which involves approximately four weeks of training. Recertification is required every two years. An update was also provided regarding the Radio Infrastructure Committee and the RFP for a Radio Communications Systems Consultant. Several organizations attended a recent meeting/site visit related to the RFP. The Commissioners were advised that the Communications Center console replacement project had been completed and that staff were pleased with the new equipment and configuration. **No Action Taken.**
8. **Registry of Deeds – Third Floor Storage –** Commissioner Carlton requested that this matter be discussed due to concerns regarding the weight of books stored on the third floor of the building. He noted that Port City Architecture had previously conducted an assessment of the area, which identified concerns regarding the structural capacity of the floor. Sue Black explained that only a limited number of index books are currently stored on the third floor, with the majority of her books located in the attic. She further indicated that there is currently no other available space within the building to properly store the books. As a possible solution, Sue stated that she has been exploring the purchase of a Conex storage container to provide additional storage space. The purchase of a conex box

could be funded through her surcharge. The Commissioners had requested to review the floor assessment from Port City Architecture. **No Action Taken.**

9. **Probate Courtroom – Flooring** - The Commissioners reviewed three proposals received for replacement carpeting in the Probate Courtroom: New Beginnings Flooring, LLC – $2,410.26, Northland Flooring Kitchen & Bath – $3,515.50, Pro-Flooring – $2,688.27. Although Pro-Flooring did not submit the lowest-priced proposal, Brandon recommended Pro-Flooring based upon his review of the proposals. The Pro-Flooring proposal included materials, labor for removal and disposal of the existing carpet and installation of the new carpet, and freight. **Motion to approve the recommendation that Brandon has brought forth: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield. Commissioner Saviello withdrew his motion. Motion to accept the quote from Pro-Flooring in the amount of $2,688.27, funds to be used out of the Probate Reserve Account: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0).**
10. **Franklin County Food Pantries – Review and Award** - The Commissioners reviewed applications received for the Franklin County Food Pantry Support Fund. The applications provided information concerning each organization, the communities and residents served, requested funding, proposed use of the funds and overall financial needs. The summary provided to the Commissioners reflected total requests of $42,179 from the applicants. Requests included Eve's Garden, Care and Share Food Bank, Rangeley Ecumenical Food Cupboard, Livermore and Livermore Falls, The Center for Entrepreneurial Studies, and Beans Corner Baptist Church. The Commissioners have budgeted $20,000. The Commissioners discussed the application process and the information that should be required in future funding requests. Discussion included modifying the application to identify other funding sources and whether matching funds are available to the applicant. The Commissioner's discussed different ways to fund the applicants. **Motion to take $20,0000 and divide it equally between the nine applicants: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield. Amend motion to exclude The Center for Entrepreneurial Studies: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0).**

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Public Comment – Rules – Motion to accept the proposed Rules of Public Comment: Tom Skolfieold/Tom Saviello (5/0).**
2. **Treasurer – Appointed vs. Elected – Discussion –** A discussion was had regarding moving the Treasurers position from elected to appointed. Commissioner Saviello and Commissioner Fowler recently attended a Farmington Town meeting and were asked what the board's involvement would be in moving forward with this matter. It was suggested that each Commissioner meet with the municipalities within their district along with a list of why they are bringing this to their attention. It was also suggested that Commissioner Saviello work with Administrator to prepare the list to present to the board for their approval at the next meeting. It was also suggested to send a letter to the editor. **Motion to have Commissioner Saviello work with the County Administrator to draft a letter to the editor explaining our position for the appointment of a County Treasurer: Tom Skolfield/Tom Saviello (5/0).**

MISCELLANEOUS:

1. Sue updated the Commissioners regarding the CN Brown contract. Due to the current price of heating oil, it was recommended that the County not enter into a contract locking in a fixed price at this time. In the interim, the County will continue to purchase heating oil at the current rack price.
2. The matter of installing fans at the Courthouse. It was determined that Administration will look into moving forward with this project.
3. The Bureau of Parks and Lands has agreed to contribute toward the cost of grading the No. 6 Road in No. 6 Township. A short-term agreement covering the grading work performed during September and October will be required for reimbursement. The Commissioners will need to authorize the Chair to sign the agreement on behalf of the County. **Motion to authorize the Chair to sign contract with The Bureau of Parks and Land for grading purposes on the #6 Road in #6 Township: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0).**
4. Sue provided the Commissioners with the applicable statutes regarding the establishment of a County Board of Assessment Review. Following discussion, the Commissioners agreed to place the matter on a future agenda for further consideration. It was also suggested that Paul Binette and other appropriate individuals be invited to attend a future Commissioners' meeting to provide information and guidance regarding the process for establishing and implementing a County Board of Assessment Review.
5. Tyson Chase requested a letter from the Commissioners confirming that he may continue to use the Madrid gravel pit for sand extraction. **Motion to sign the letter for continued use of the Madrid Pit as described in the letter. Tom Savillo/Tom Skolfield (5/0).**
6. A discussion was held regarding the process with respect to the awarded Watershed grant.
7. Commissioner Fowler discussed a Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) request he recently received. This prompted a broader discussion regarding FOAA requests and the volume of information being requested.

WARRANTS: County AP, UT & Payroll - Motion to sign Warrants: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0).

Executive Session: 1 M.R.S. § 405(6)(A) – Personnel Matter – Teamsters Grievance

Motion to enter Executive Session in accordance with 1 M.R.S. § 405(6)(A) – Personnel Matter – Teamsters Grievance at 12:48 p.m.: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0).

Motion to exit Executive Session in accordance with 1 M.R.S. § 405(6)(A) – Personnel Matter – Teamsters Grievance at 1:32 p.m.: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0).

Motion to postpone the decision until after the next Commissioner's Meeting: Tom Savillo/Tom Skolfield (5/0).

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn at 1:33 p.m.: Tom Saviello/Tom Skolfield (5/0).

A recording is available for this meeting.

FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

ATTEST: _____, CLERK