

## COMMISSIONERS MEETING

April 14, 2021

*YORK,ss*

At a special meeting of the County Commissioners of the County of York, begun and holden at the York County Government Building in Alfred, within and for the County of York, being held on Wednesday, April 14, 2021 A. D. at 3:30 P. M.

### COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Richard R. Dutremble  
Richard Clark  
Robert Andrews  
Allen Sicard  
Donna Ring

County Manager Gregory Zinser and Deputy County Manager Linda Corliss were present at the meeting.

### YOU ARE INVITED TO RISE AND SALUTE THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES

#### APRIL 14, 2021    ITEM

**1    PUBLIC COMMENT(S) ON ANY ITEM(S)**  
None

**2    PRESENTATION/REVIEW OF FY 2020 AUDIT**

Christina Howe from RHR Smith and Company presented the audit via ZOOM. She also reviewed the Management Letter. One of the items contained in the letter is that almost every department reconciles their own bank statements and then gives them to Finance. The auditors recommend that they are looked at and signed off as reviewed. Also, the auditors recommended that an accounting policies and procedures manual be established to assist in guiding the Finance Department. Commissioner Clark asked if this (audit) was a final version and if so, can it be voted on at this meeting. The County Manager replied that it was and could be approved at this meeting. Commissioner Clark requested that the issues raised in the Management Letter are responded to in a reasonable timeframe. He asked that the County Manager and Finance Director report back in thirty days.

Chairperson Commissioner Dutremble agreed.

Commissioner Ring agreed with Commissioner Clark and added that she is concerned with the timeliness of the audit and accepting it without a thorough review. We shouldn't have to accept and approve it (the audit) within a few days after receiving it, she commented.

Commissioner Sicard stated that the County is in good financial state and that the management letter seems to be easily rectified. This was a difficult year due to COVID-19 but it seems like the audit came together nicely. Commissioner Dutremble added that it was a different year because of circumstances including the retirement of the Finance Director.

Commissioner Ring replied, but that position was not replaced for a long time.

Commissioner Clark moved to accept the fy'2020 audit. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 4-0 (Commissioner Andrews not yet present at the meeting.)

**3 COMMISSIONER RING TO PRESENT REVISED PTO POLICY (attached as record to these minutes)**

Commissioner Ring stated that she has been concerned with this (policy) for a long time. "This is the third time in thirty (30) years there has been a problem with management positions accruing time. When they leave, it's a large payoff, stated Commissioner Ring. The last one (payoff) was in 2007, she continued. Twice it has been voted that this would not be allowed (accrual of time) and here we go again", commented Commissioner Ring. She continued that these individuals are being paid an additional 7% to 10% in buyback. "Management can determine when they can take their time off and they can control their schedule", commented Commissioner Ring. "We should not be accruing that liability in our budget", stated Commissioner Ring. She stated that she would like to see some type of cut off as she believes carrying over (time) and buy back (of time) seems a bit ridiculous. Hourly employees should have to accrue it as we are paying thousands of dollars up front. (*referring to her submitted policy*) Commissioner Ring stated that she feels her policy is fair and equitable. "As it is now, it is very, very expensive. Managers can take their time off. They don't account for every hour they work or take off. If they can't take the time, said Commissioner Ring, "let's start documenting the time they actually work". Commissioner Clark asked if Commissioner Ring has numbers to back up her comments. He stated, "You said somebody had a buyout in 2007 and that was fourteen (14) years ago so it doesn't seem like a major issue to me". "I don't know what you are trying to accomplish. I need actual numbers", stated Commissioner Clark.

He added that Commissioner Ring has some allegations that there is a problem but no facts to back it up.

Commissioner Sicard stated that he echoed Commissioner Clark's concerns

and added that it is difficult to pull the rug out from people already in this (pto benefit) and coming out of the pandemic, one won't attract good people. He added that maybe now is not the time to do this. Commissioner Sicard suggested perhaps, at a later time, creating a sub-committee to report back to the Commissioners but that he does not see a need for a change at this time.

Commissioner Dutremble stated that he agreed with both of the Commissioners. We will lose good people if we institute this.

Commissioner Ring replied that this is a policy, not a contract. The working people of York County that have been in the trenches don't have this kind of luxury. It needs to be equitable for all, not just a few.

Commissioner Clark responded to Commissioner Ring's statement that some employees are working people and some are not but stating that he is not going to go down the road with that kind of foolishness.

Commissioner Ring replied that she does not think her comment is foolish and is referring to the employees who are working under contracts. Union employees do not have this kind of benefit. She added that she was trying to look at what was fair and equitable for all.

Commissioner Sicard stated that this is done by negotiations. If Union employees want more benefits, they should bring this up in collective bargaining.

Commissioner Dutremble added that the difference between contract people and management is management does not get paid for overtime.

Commissioner Clark motioned to reject the proposed revision.

Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 3-1 (Commissioner Ring opposed and Commissioner Andrews not yet present at meeting).

#### **4 TO CONTINUE REVIEW OF THE FY 2022 BUDGET**

**Deeds budget-** Register of Deeds Nancy Hammond addressed the Board and explained that the Deeds department has gone through a lot of changes. The office has had no COVID exposure. We have managed to condense and have all the staff in one area while maintaining our six (6) foot distance. Two people (in the deeds department) are still working from home and are very productive. As of today, we have a \$300,000 increase in revenue to the county. We are seeing a huge increase in sales of properties and mortgages. We are not seeing many foreclosures. The State of Maine is not recording many liens. Those will come around once the real estate bubble is over. We have a candidate for the vacant position who I believe will be a great addition to the staff.

Commissioner Clark questioned the dramatic increase in postage. Register of Deeds Hammond explained that she decreased that number in the budget last year as she delivered deeds to towns in years past to put a face to the Register of Deeds.

Commissioner Ring commented that the online service (for deeds) works great and that Register Hammond has done a great job with it.

Register of Deeds Hammond reminded all to sign up for the new fraud alert program.

Commissioner Ring asked Register Hammond when she will have all of the books online? Register Hammond replied they continue to work daily on this and are also creating a complete, in-order set of microfilm.

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the deeds budget in the amount of \$646,776.00. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 4-0 (Commissioner Andrews not yet present).

**Probate budget-** County Manager Greg Zinser stated that the majority of increase (in this budget) is wages and benefits. One of the requested increases is to the Judge's salary in the amount of a \$10,000.00 increase. Register of Probate, Carol Lovejoy, presented her budget to the Commissioners. Judge Houde attended the presentation via ZOOM. Deputy Register of Probate Casey Hartford was also present for the meeting. Register of Probate Lovejoy stated that Judge Houde is in the department two days a week and every other Wednesday. He schedules workout conferences (mediation without the mediator present to attempt to settle the case prior to going to court). From July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020, we had 42 Petitions for Appointments of Guardians. From July 1, 2019 up to today, we have had 102 Petitions for Guardians of Minors and from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020 we had 69 Emergency Motions. The Judge has to write detailed Findings of Facts for each case. He is doing this nights and weekends. The new law court mandate states that all parents need a court-appointed attorney in guardian for minor cases. Register of Probate Carol Lovejoy continued that most cases are done via ZOOM but when they do hold "in-person" court, everyone is six feet apart. Commissioner Ring asked what the professional services line consists of. Register Lovejoy responded that it is for court appointed guardians for indigents.

Commissioner Sicard asked if the Clerk III position will be filled this year? Register Lovejoy responded that the position started as a part-time one but she would like to move it to a full-time one in July.

Commissioner Sicard asked if the salary will still be \$33,000.00. Register Lovejoy replied that it would be.

Commissioner Clark moved to approve the Probate budget in the amount of \$689,177.00. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 4-0. (Commissioner Andrews not yet present at the meeting.)

**District Attorney Budget-** York County District Attorney Kathryn Slattery presented her budget. She began by stating that due to COVID-19, the court shut down on March 13, 2020. A lot of remote proceedings began in May of last year. The courts are starting to work on beginning to hold in person trials in June. Assistant District Attorney staff have been working hard to resolve cases. We have increased the use of our technology and have fully implemented our cases online in the Justware system. We can deliver through sharefile cases to the defense counsel. She stated that she is not

sure how the “in-person” court hearings will work out with the courtroom situation in Alfred. The grand jury just began and handed down 134 indictments last week.

County Manager Zinser informed all that he and the Sheriff and District Attorney have had conversations regarding a more case-based and diversionary type approach. He went on to explain this could be accomplished by bringing on social workers and case workers that can perhaps handle cases before they have to go to court.

District Attorney Slattery stated that everyone on her staff stepped up to the plate and that her department has received many compliments from the Judges.

Commissioner Sicard commented that he recently drove by the new court facility. He added that we need to figure out where the D.A. and her staff will go. County Manager Zinser replied that he is not sure where conversations will go but that at some point, there will have to be a conversation as to what is going to be done. He added that perhaps some of the COVID money the County will be receiving will be allowed to be used for this type of use.

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the District Attorney’s office budget in the amount of \$1,519,133.00. Commissioner Sicard seconded the vote. Vote 5-0. (Commissioner Andrews present).

**Juvenile Fire Prevention-EMA** Director Art Cleaves explained that the program is run by two part-time individuals, Matt Leach and Molly Cunningham. The program is designed to prevent any fire issues from happening. This program is the model for the State of Maine. This program has been taken to York County schools. The program provides private counseling sessions. York County is the only county that funds this initiative. The budget shows a small increase to allow them a few more hours.

Commissioner Clark asked if Director Cleaves had any numbers to share with them. Director Cleaves responded that he did not but will get them. Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the juvenile fire prevention budget in the amount of \$33,664.00. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

**Layman Way Recovery Center**-Steve Mazza and Megan Gendron were present. (handout with information included as record of these minutes) Ms. Gendron addressed the Board and informed them that the Center has had 143 admissions and has graduated 79. These figures represent a completion rate of 55%. That is 10% above the national average.

Commissioner Sicard congratulated Ms. Gendron on the work that they have done and keeping everyone safe and healthy during COVID-19.

Commissioner Sicard commented that the Center currently is down to 10 residents and asked if Ms. Gendron thought it might get back to full capacity soon. Ms. Gendron replied that since the report that was circulated, the

count has increased to 13. She added that they have partnered with other agencies and forged some new relationships. Ms. Gendron stated that they look forward to the courts becoming their main referral source once again. Commissioner Sicard asked Ms. Gendron what her largest need was if she had a wish list. She replied that it is recovery houses. The women's recovery residence had a tree fall on the roof so now that has to be replaced. We are very focused on our need to open more recovery residences. Commissioner Andrews asked if they had considered allowing women in recovery to have their children in the homes with them? Ms. Gendron responded, absolutely but that it is difficult with congregate living. She added that they have dedicated a space in their recovery home for women and their children to visit. Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the Layman Way Recovery Center budget in the amount of \$957,800.00. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

**Commissioners' Budget-** Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the Commissioners' budget in the amount of \$71,123.00. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

**Management/Administration Budget-**County Manager Zinser explained that the increases in the budget are largely due to the increase in the phone system and wages. Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the Management/administration budget in the amount of \$1,101,732.00. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

**Treasurer's Budget-** Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the treasurer's budget in the amount of \$562.00. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

**Communications/Dispatch-**The County Manager explained that the City of Sanford provides these services for York County. Commissioner Dutremble asked the length of the contract. County Manager Zinser replied that the contract is for five years and that it was signed a couple of years ago. Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the Communications/Dispatch budget in the amount of \$681,354.00.00. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

**Retirement Benefits-** Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the retirement benefits budget in the amount of \$550,876.00. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

**Medical and Dental Insurance-** Commissioner Sicard asked why the double digit increase (17.87%) and asked if the County Manager was expecting double digit increases from the insurance company? County

Manager Zinser responded, no but we are anticipating some additional contributions as we negotiate contracts.

Commissioner Ring asked if the increase was from more people using the insurance program as she thought the employees absorbed the increases. She also asked if this (increase) included the jail staff.

County Manager Zinser replied it does not include the jail staff and that it is necessary to factor in what might be a premium increase as we do not know where we are going with other Unions yet.

Commissioner Ring added that every one of the Unions has a different contribution.

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the medical and dental insurance budget in the amount of \$970,454.00. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 4-1 (Commissioner Ring opposed).

**Debt Service-**Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the debt service budget in the amount of \$493,832.00. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

**Public Agencies-** County Manager Zinser informed the Commissioners that none of the three agencies funded requested any additional funding this year.

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the public agencies budget in the amount of \$128,700.00. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

County Manager Zinser informed all that there is no contingency funding request this year.

Commissioner Chairperson Dutremble informed all that the next step will be to forward this budget to the Budget Committee.

Commissioner Ring stated that she had looked at last year's budget and year to date expenditures. Every department had a surplus last year in their salary budgets and will also have one this year. She asked why are these lines being overfunded and why are positions not being filled in a timely fashion. We have not funded for any union negotiations. Last year we spent less and now we are asking for another 4 to 5%. Is this money to have just in case?, asked Commissioner Ring.

County Manager Zinser explained the funds are for potential union negotiations. He gave the example that if the budget was designed with actual wages, there would not be enough to fund the contract that the Commissioners are going to be asked to approve next week.

Commissioner Dutremble replied that he had the same questions and went on to explain that some of the positions are part-time and other positions that will be filled this year. Some employees have left and their positions were not filled right away. An example of this would be the administrative

position in the Sheriff's Office that has not been filled since December but the money is in the budget. You cannot eliminate the funds in the event the Department Head wishes to fill that position later in the year.

Commissioner Ring replied that she understood but that it is funded at the high level.

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the fy'22 budget in the amount of \$21,369,734.00 and send to the Budget Committee. Motion seconded by Commissioner Sicard. Vote 4-1(Commissioner Ring opposed).

**5 PUBLIC COMMENT(S) ON ANY ITEM(S)**

Susan Wiswell asked if the reason the phone lines increased in most budgets was due to COVID-19? County Manager Zinser explained that we went through the entire phone system and re-allocated and figured out cost per phone line and number of phones per departments. We also did increase our bandwidths. In the prior budget you will note those costs were usually over budget. Susan Wiswell also asked if the audit will be posted onto the county's website. The County Manager replied that it would be posted tomorrow.

Commissioner Ring commented that she would like to see more backup information with these budgets. She stated that she would also like to see the year to date figures on the cover sheet so all can see where each department is at.

**6 ADJOURN**

Commissioner Clark motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 4:34 p.m.