

## COMMISSIONERS MEETING

September 16, 2020

YORK,ss

At a regular 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, September 16 , 2020 A. D. at 4:30 P. M.

### COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Richard R. Dutremble via phone  
Michael J. Cote  
Richard Clark  
Robert Andrews  
Allen Sicard

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

09-16-20      ITEM

**1      PUBLIC COMMENT(S) ON ANY ITEM(S)  
(both comments via phone)**

Janet Drew of York ME who is a member of the Maine Prisoner Advocacy Council spoke about her concern regarding increased COVID cases in prisons and Sheriff's Offices. She commented that she feels the Commissioners have some power to make us all safer in the community and in the jail. Ms. Drew continued that some consideration should be made to avoid arresting people for non-violent issues to try to reduce the jail population and who might be appropriate for early release. She stated to the Commissioners that this matter deserves their attention.

Cheryl Mills of Wells, ME stated that she has served on the Y.C. Board of Visitors since 2019. She resumed by stating there is a national call to stop arresting people unless they pose a threat to the community.

She expressed her disappointment and anger that COVID protocols were not followed by the Sheriff and that (*in her opinion*)leaving it up to employees was not effective and put those who are incarcerated and employees at risk. She called for all CDC protocols to be strictly followed from now on. Ms. Mills added that we are fortunate there have been no deaths and that there has to be some accountability for what has happened. Ms. Mills informed the Board that she will be present at the next meeting and that she hopes the Commissioners will be able to respond to some of the requests that she has made.

- 2 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS:**
- a. Special Meeting of August 25, 2020  
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.
  - b. Regular Meeting of September 2, 2020 -  
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.
  - c. Special Meeting of September 4, 2020  
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

- 3 TO APPROVE TREASURER’S WARRANTS**
- a. Approve treasurer’s warrant dated September 2, 2020 in the amount of \$761,244.68  
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the warrant. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.
  - b. Approve treasurer’s warrant dated September 9, 2020 in the amount of \$403,620.18  
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the warrant. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion.  
Vote 5-0.

**4 TO HEAR ANY REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Cote spoke of the Spirit of America Awards and how due to COVID-19, the Commissioners can’t do what they normally do and that maybe they can recognize these people in a different way.

County Manager Greg Zinser agreed and stated that there are a couple of options such as honoring them by district over a couple of meetings and have them bring only one guest. Another option the County Manager mentioned is to perhaps hold a recognition ceremony at a regular meeting and have the Commissioners read about the awardees and send them a plaque.

Commissioner Clark stated that he is comfortable with whatever the Board wants to do. He stated that he would allow the honoree to come in with one guest and if they don’t, the Commissioners can read the proclamation.

Commissioner Clark stated that this could be done on several nights or we could have people sit in the parking lot and call them in when it is their turn. Commissioner Clark added that the ceremonies could start at 3:00, prior to the regular Commissioners’ meetings. Commissioner Andrews agreed.

County Manager Greg Zinser replied that we will come up with some ideas and present them to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Cote added that the woman who made all the masks (for County employees) should be recognized. The County Manager stated that the Commissioners can certainly nominate her.

Commissioner Cote informed the Board that he participated in the MCCA Board of Directors meeting last Wednesday. After review of quotations and interviews for a lobbyist, the Board of Directors narrowed it down to one and approved Attorney Jim Cohen with Verrill & Dana for a term of 15 months to lobby for the counties.

Referring to limited in-person meeting access, Commissioner Cote stated that this situation will most likely be occurring for awhile. He stated that he believes it

would behoove us to consider doing something different with our access to the public as far as utilizing ZOOM. Commissioner Cote continued that enabling people to participate in ZOOM calls would provide better audio and video than what we have now. I don't what the other Commissioners think, but I think we should move forward. Commissioner Clark agreed and suggested the County Manager to work with the County's IT people to come up with proposals for costs.

While Commissioner Andrews agreed, he asked that the Commissioners be presented with what the costs are and reminded them that York County's tourism fuels our economy so we need to be cognizant of costs. Commissioner Cote agreed and added that his concern is we are not getting out to the public and that there is a disconnect here that government and people shouldn't have.

The County Manager said it is more an issue of how we hook it up in here. Can overhead cameras be hooked up to ZOOM? But, we can find out.

Commissioner Cote added that while the Board is comfortable with what they are doing (coming in), we need to get out to the public. It is a reasonable thing.

County Manager Zinser responded that he will work with IT. Commissioner Clark stated if we fix up the room we should let other departments use it. Commissioner Cote agreed and added that it makes sense to have one central place to use it (equipment for ZOOM meetings).

## **5 TO HEAR ANY REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY MANAGER**

County Manager Zinser reported to the Commissioners in regards to the County's response to COVID -19 at the jail. He stated that the inquiry is under way, information is being gathered and interviews are in the process of being scheduled. He added that he has no further information on that at this time and that he does not know when we will have the results.

The County Manager conveyed his thanks to all of the employees for all of their hard work at the jail. He added that the focus right now is on taking care of the situation and that our employees and their families are safe.

County Manager Zinser reported that seventeen (17) Correction Officers tested positive for Covid-19 and that all but two (2) are recovered. The other two have been experiencing ongoing, minor issues. He stated that they expect one to come back this Monday so that would leave one. Forty-eight (48) inmates have tested positive and only Four (4) are still within their quarantine period. Four inmates have been moved to the medical unit simply due to a spacing issue to keep them away from others. No inmates (with Covid-19) have been taken to the hospital. By Friday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, we anticipate all of the inmates to be clear from quarantine. We also are aware of seven family members of our Corrections Officers that have been affected by this. Two of whom are still experiencing mild symptoms.

County Manager Zinser continued that the last round of testing for inmates and correctional staff occurred last week and all results were negative.

Testing done on September 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, have also all come back negative. Inmates are being testing today and by September 18<sup>th</sup>, we should begin getting those test results back.

County Manager Zinser thanked EMA and the Hazmat team for their continued attendance at the jail to do a thorough decontamination. He also thanked the Sheriff and current jail administration for the work they are doing.

County Manager Zinser informed all that they had a meeting with CDC and the DOC

today and that those meetings happen on a weekly or biweekly basis. He continued by stating “we are heading in a good direction”. Mr. Zinser added that all employees are wearing masks and performing daily health assessments.

County Manager Zinser explained that universal testing was being done a week or two weeks ago but now we are starting to reduce the people we are testing (corrections officers, inmates and vendors in the jail). He added that prior to the outbreak the daily average population hovered around 200 and that now it is 89 (inmates). The County Manager continued that has been accomplished because fewer people have been arrested. The outbreak is closed after two rounds of testing come in negative (28 days after the last positive test). Therefore, near the end of September we should be cleared. There is perhaps one variable in that one test came back and it is an anomaly and is regarding one of our vendors. It’s not clear if the case is from the jail or community transmission from some other source. That will dictate as to when the process will be closed. The County Manager again thanked all involved with the dedication they’ve been showing.

Commissioner Cote asked is it accurate that the jail remains closed to new inmates and all arrestees are diverted to Cumberland County? The County Manager replied, yes.

Commissioner Sicard referred to the memo that the County Manager recently sent to staff talking about their extra- curricular activities. He stated that Sanford is a hot bed and that hopefully the Manager’s memo is being well received. He asked if there has been any feedback from employees? County Manager Zinser stated that he hadn’t had any feedback.

Deputy County Manager/H.R. Director Linda Corliss reported that a couple of employees had a few questions and she explained to them that the County is not dictating what they can do on their own time but we wanted to remind folks to be vigilant and to try to avoid large groups and practice CDC guidelines and complete their health self- assessment everyday. She added the response was positive.

## **6 NEW BUSINESS**

a. Introduce H.R. Director Linda Corliss to request hiring approval for the following positions:

i. Chloe Cassidy as a Reserve Hazmat Operator in EMA with a requested start date of September 17, 2020.

Commissioner Clark approved the hiring of Chloe Cassidy in the position noted above with the start date of September 17, 2020. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

ii. Tyler Hansen as a Reserve Hazmat Technician in EMA with a requested start date of September 17, 2020.

Commissioner Clark approved the hiring of Tyler Hansen in the position noted above. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

b. Introduce Chief Fire Administrator Rod Hooper to request authorization to purchase bio-decontamination system utilizing funds from the DOJ grant- Chief Hooper approached the Board and explained that the monies that will be used come from a Grant found by the Sheriff. The system we wish to purchase is a portable, medical grade disinfection system. We want to build it in a trailer to decontaminate many places and items like ambulances. We can extend the use of PPE. This is a proprietary system. There are other companies that make this product but this company has field grade products. Half of our grant will be used in the amount of \$31,527. The other half of grant, explained Chief Hooper, will be used for housing of

equipment and training.

Commissioner Sicard asked have the towns been asking for this? Chief Hooper replied yes they have and we have done the Berwick cruiser and the Berwick and Buxton town halls. Commissioner Sicard asked if a specific person will be assigned to use the equipment? Chief Hooper replied, absolutely and that part of the grant provides us with trainers to train our people. Commissioner Andrews asked what about ongoing costs? Chief Hooper replied that the materials will have to come out of our operating budget. Commissioner Cote asked if the monies left over in the grant can be used for chemicals? Chief Hooper explained that those monies will be used to buy a trailer and training. Commissioner Sicard advised Chief Hooper to keep a running total and hopefully we will get some reimbursement from the Federal Government.

Commissioner Clark asked if the dedicated operator is someone already here? Chief Hooper replied it is someone on the County's hazmat team and they will work additional hours or hours already budgeted for hazmat training.

Commissioner Clark motioned to waive the County's procurement process and authorize the sole source purchase in the amount of \$31,527.00. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

c. Jail construction update/project termination-

County Manager Greg Zinser reminded the Commissioners that it was discussed at a prior meeting in July to take a wall down to combine B1 and B2 units at the jail. It has become apparent that for the safety of all involved we should not embark on this (project), stated the County Manager. From a quarantining perspective and the realization that perhaps we will be in this situation for awhile so effectively quarantining inmates is more important right now. We ordered a full stop last week, stated Mr. Zinser. He added that it was a really labor extensive project but that there will be some costs involved.

Commissioner Clark moved to terminate and asked that the County Manger present to the Board at the mid October meeting, the costs incurred. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Sicard commented that he agreed this is the prudent thing to do. He added, that if we have plans, we should keep them. The County Manager replied that, yes, we have them as we paid for them. Vote 5-0.

d. Extension of Jail state of emergency, if necessary-

County Manager Zinser reminded the Commissioners that as of September 16<sup>th</sup> (today), the previous State of Emergency at the jail expires. The Sheriff will request an additional extension. Sheriff King addressed the Board and stated that he needs the state of emergency until at least September 26, 2020. He added that on the 25<sup>th</sup>, we hope to open our intake area.

Commissioner Clark motioned that in light of the fact that the next Commissioners' meeting is October 7, 2020, his motion is to extend it (SOE) to this date so there won't be the need for a special meeting. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Sicard asked the Sheriff will one positive case "squash" you from opening on October 25<sup>th</sup>? Sheriff King replied, yes, we are working with CDC on one but we don't feel it was due to the York County Jail.

Vote 5-0.

- e. Review and approval of snow removal bids-  
Facilities Manager Rick deRochemont addressed the Board and distributed a sheet with the bids to the Commissioners (this item as well as original bids and minutes of bid opening attached to these minutes as record of the meeting).

Director deRochemont informed the Commissioners that Seth McCoy is his recommendation. Commissioner Clark asked if the County had used Seth McCoy before? Rick deRochemont replied, no.

Commissioner Clark moved to approve Seth McCoy Trucking and Excavation for the jail, government building and courthouse for 3 years for a total cost of \$135,000. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve Tim Tibbetts Landscaping's bid for \$24,750 for 3 years. Commissioner Sicard 2<sup>nd</sup>. Vote 5-0.

**7 OLD BUSINESS**  
None

**\*\*\*Heard after Public Comment(s) item #9\*\*\***

**8 TO CONDUCT AN EXECUTIVE SESSION ON PERSONNEL ISSUES PURSUANT TO 1 M.R.S.A. §405 (6) (A), ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY OR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PURSUANT TO 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (C), LABOR NEGOTIATIONS PURSUANT TO 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (D) AND CONSULTATION WITH LEGAL COUNSEL PURSUANT TO 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (E), REVIEW OF CONFIDENTIAL RECORDS PURSUANT TO 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (F)**

- a. To conduct an executive session pursuant to 1M.R.S.A. §405 (6) (A) personnel issues-

Commissioner Clark motioned to enter into executive session pursuant to the above-noted statute. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

Commissioner Clark motioned to come out of executive session. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

Commissioner Clark moved to grant the request for continuation of an employee leave of absence through November 4, 2020. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

- b. To conduct an executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405 (6) (A) additional personnel matter(s) and/or 1 M.R.S.A. §405 (6) (E) consultation with legal counsel (if necessary)-  
This session was not held.

**\*\*\*Heard prior to item #8\*\*\***

**9 PUBLIC COMMENT(S) ON ANY ITEM(S) (via telephone call in)**

Susan Wiswell of Kittery asked for the name and amount of the bid of the company awarded the snowplow contract and shoveling bid. Commissioner Cote provided the information. Janet Drew stated that it appeared that arrests have really gone down. She asked if bail was being allowed or not. County Manager Greg Zinser responded that it is fair to say that the number of arrests in York County as well as statewide, have decreased. This has been accomplished through a series of judicial actions when the system released a lot of individuals from county facilities. Yes, there is a reduction in the amount of people being arrested. He added that York County has an arrangement with Cumberland County jail to contain the virus and stop any new people from entering the York County facility. All arrests are being diverted to Cumberland County. He added that he doesn't have the number of arrestees to Cumberland County. County Manager Zinser continued that in the beginning, about a week ago, only about 12 people in York County were arrested and sent to Cumberland County. Six or seven of those made bail right away.

Cheryl Mills thanked the Commissioners for discussing better audio for meetings so that the general public can participate. One piece that she couldn't hear was when intakes would resume? County Manager Zinser answered that we are prepared to resume the normal intake process on or about September 26, 2020. If, however, we get one positive result, (and there is one now, but, it is questionable if the CDC is going to apply that to us) between now and September 26<sup>th</sup>, they will continue to go to Cumberland County. If we are unable to resume the normal process, the 28- day process would then commence.

## **10      ADJOURN**

Commissioner Clark motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Sicard seconded the motion. Vote 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 5:44 p.m.