

# COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING

March 4, 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, March 4 , 2020 A. D. at 4:30 P. M.

## COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

County Manager Gregory Zinser was present at the meeting.

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

### 03-04-20      ITEM

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

None

**2      TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 19, 2020 MEETING**

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Dutremble seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

**3      TO APPROVE TREASURER'S WARRANTS**

a. Approve treasurer's warrant dated February 19, 2020 in the amount of \$232,129.01  
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the warrant. Commissioner Dutremble seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

b. Approve treasurer's warrant dated February 12, 2020 in the amount of \$437,298.18  
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the warrant. Commissioner Dutremble seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

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

a. Commissioner Cote to report on Bicentennial committee meeting of February 25<sup>th</sup>-  
Commissioner Cote informed all that the Sanford School District is working with us on the parade float. He added that the passport program has been eliminated and a

photo contest at high school level has taken its place. The Committee has decided that at the elementary and middle school level, there will be a student art show. The lecture series committee should have a final list very soon with dates, locations and times. There is a historical hiking map that is almost ready. Also, Commissioner Cote reported that the coins have been ordered. Linda circulated a photo of the County bicentennial coin ordered.

Commissioner Sicard asked if the public will be allowed to purchase these coins. Commissioner Cote responded that he would say yes. But, he stated we do want to use them as much as possible as awards. The Committee also had a discussion regarding the Bicentennial logo. The Committee was asked by the Lyman Historical Society to use the County's bicentennial logo to which the Committee was okay with. Other bicentennial events include a birthday party for the State of Maine on Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 to 1:00. Commissioner Cote concluded that the Bicentennial Committee will meet again on March 10, 2020 at 3:0 p.m. and that as always, the meeting on public is invited to attend.

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

None

**6 NEW BUSINESS**

a. Begin initial discussions and review of York County Fire & EMS Assistance Office Strategic Plan- The County Manager gave a brief introduction. He stated that he is thankful to have Rod here leading the Fire and EMS Office. The presentation that Rod has created and is presenting tonight is a draft and anything we do has to be approved by you (Commissioners). Greg applauds Rod Hooper and EMA Director Art Cleaves on the work they put into this document. County Manager Zinser added that the document shows a great vision as to what we can do and become.

Art Cleaves addressed the Commissioners and stated that this program has already been a success. He reminded all that the fire chiefs came to us a year and a half ago asking for a fire liaison and we are very lucky Chief Hooper took the job. Director Cleaves reminded the Commissioners that this is a draft program that we are looking at. The Fire Chiefs are asking for these (items and positions) and we cannot do them all.

Chief Hooper showed a powerpoint from the booklet he created that the Commissioners all have. Chief Hooper stated that at the next meeting he would like Commissioner approval for the proposed job descriptions and authorization to implement them.

The County Manager explained that we are already doing a lot of this stuff. He continued what we are asking is for you (Commissioners) to formalize a pay plan instead of a stipend. He added, we are already doing a fair amount of education. We are not asking for much at all.

In the short term we feel we are in the position to do Fire Instruction. We believe we can do it cheaper and the revenues that we bring in will pay for the instructors, stated County Manager Zinser. The revenue (from the tuitions) will fund up to 70% of these instructors. Fire Investigators are key items that the communities have identified a need for. We have \$25,000 set aside for stipends. We will be asking for more but not

a huge amount, continued the County Manager. This will be a changing document, he stated.

Commissioner Dutremble asked Rod Hooper how will MMA support the legislation he spoke of in his presentation for fire administration. Chief Hooper replied that is a good question to which he currently does not have an answer for. He added that we are not trying to compete with communities. Commissioner Dutremble asked about the EMA Paramedics mentioned in the power point asking how will Chief Hooper push that through with cities that already have them? Chief Hooper responded it will help take the burdens off the cities (us helping small towns). Commissioner Dutremble asked whether fire chiefs are nervous that the city administrators will want to cut their budgets? Rod replied that he is sure they are and that we need to do this in a way that won't impact the cities' budgets. Their services are already stressed. If we can take the rural pieces off their chests, that is a good thing, stated Chief Hooper.

Commissioner Cote asked for clarification on how the program would work. He asked if a city goes to Acton for example for fire or ambulance, do they charge the municipality? Rod Hooper replied for a fire, no. Acton takes the ambulance call for the paramedic that would be billed. Patient is then billed at the paramedic rate. Mutual aid occurs if a town is busy on another call and a nearby town comes in that there is no payment. Commissioner Cote reviewed the salary request numbers given in the document prepared by Chief Hooper.

County Manager Greg Zinser stated that the issue is a lot of stuff has to come together and maybe putting \$15,000 to \$20,000 in the budget for next year to get this program going would work. We have submitted some grant applications for some equipment. This may or not be ready to go by July 1<sup>st</sup>, the County Manager continued. We want to make this as revenue neutral as possible.

Commissioner Cote asked if some of the needed money was already in the EMA budget. The County Manager responded, no, we are not looking to raid EMA. He explained that we are looking at some of the programs we already have and funds already in those programs. Commissioner Cote questioned as to whether or not there might be grant funding? Chief Hooper replied, yes. Commissioner Cote asked Chief Hooper if it was correct that he would like Commissioner approval for these positions at the next meeting? The County Manager replied that they are not looking to add positions, but, simply looking to organize current positions for terms of compensation with new titles in lieu of some we have already.

Commissioner Sicard stated that we want to get buy in from the Towns before we do this as once they get this for free they won't put money into it. He referenced the current issue with Hollis in regards to the contract deputy program.

Commissioner Clark stated that this is a big project and asked if every fire chief had a copy of the document? Rod Hooper replied they did not but they will get it tonight. Commissioner Clark explained that he has a lot of questions and requested numbers for this year's budget through year three. He commented that he has spent a lot of years in municipal government and fire departments are very expensive. He continued buy in from fire chiefs is not as important as it is from the town councils as they are the ones who have to approve paying for it. The towns I represent already

buy equipment for their towns, continued Commissioner Clark. I witnessed the consolidation of volunteer departments and it was a mess. People were angry. He stated that he is a little surprised that you have the buy in you think you have (to Chief Hooper). Commissioner Clark reiterated that he wants to see the costs and that he would want to talk to the folks in the towns he represents and see how they do this stuff. Chief Hooper responded that one of the things we want to do is to see how we can consolidate the York County Fire Academy to have the County provide training. Commissioner Clark asked, at what cost? Chief Hooper replied it costs to have people trained but those costs can be recouped from tuition. It costs \$725 for one person to go to the fire academy. Chief Hooper stated that he is pretty confident that it will generate enough revenue to sustain itself. The County Manager referred the Commissioners to tab 1 on page 19 (costs for the instructors). He stated that it is our goal to provide programs that can help save the towns money. Commissioner Clark stated that there were some costs provided but that these numbers are hourly. He continued that until somebody can give him a decent estimate, a real number as well as historical numbers as to how much they are now collecting for tuition, he will not have an answer, especially in two weeks.

EMA Director Cleaves stated that what Chief Hooper presented to the Commissioners tonight is very broad. If it isn't saving the towns money, you cannot go down that road, he commented. Every time we look at regionalization, we find this is the path to save money.

Commissioner Sicard spoke and said that big municipalities will continue to have their own departments. Chief Hooper responded that communities along the I-95 corridor are going to training but other towns cannot recruit and retain members. We can help them, stated the Chief, without detriment to the seacoast communities. He continued that the money is there but we are just not putting it in the right places. He added that the York County Chief's Association who does the training is just staying alive. We almost went defunct in January.

Commissioner Dutremble emphasized to Chief Hooper that he will have to go to the cities that have their own force and explain how they are going to save money also. Otherwise, this won't get approved.

Rod Hooper replied that every city/town in this county is already sending their fire people to the instructor school.

Commissioner Cote asked how is the York County Fire Chief Association funded? Rod Hooper replied through dues. He added that the Y.C. Fire Academy is funded solely through tuition. Commissioner Cote asked if Fire Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs take the money out of their own pockets? Chief Hooper replied that some departments have it in their budgets and some pay their own tuition.

The County Manager explained that they will regroup and distribute again to the Chiefs and have follow up conversations. Chiefs will have to assist and have conversations with their own municipalities. We will come back in a couple of weeks or a month, stated Mr. Zinser.

Commissioner Clark asked if the information will be available online so that he can talk to the town managers in his district. Rod Hooper replied that he will put on county's web page.

Commissioner Sicard asked if York County's hazmat team would respond to Corona

virus outbreak? Rod Hooper replied, no. He explained that it would be a CDC response.

Chairman Commissioner Cote informed all that Director Cleaves mentioned that he would like us to come to a presentation prior to the next formal meeting. 3:30 on March 18<sup>th</sup> was agreed to by all.

Commissioner Clark commented that the Commissioners visited Layman Way Recovery Center prior to today's meeting and that residents told their stories and it was truly moving.

Commissioner Sicard spoke regarding the Hollis situation regarding rural patrol. He added that a letter has been sent to Com. Sauschack. Commissioner Sicard added that he has been in contact with Senator Chenette who has been in contact with Major Scott in Augusta. Commissioner Sicard stated that he had also reached out to Buxton Selectmen and to date, had received no response.

**7 OLD BUSINESS**

None

**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)**

None

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

None

**10 ADJOURN**

Commissioner Clark motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Dutremble seconded the motion. Vote 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 5:39 p.m.