

COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING

March 3, 2016

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 Thursday, March 3, 2016 A. D. at 4:30 P. M.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Sallie Chandler
Marston D. Lovell
Richard R. Dutremble
Michael J. Cote
Gary Sinden

County Manager Gregory Zinser was present at the meeting.

All present were invited to rise and salute the flag of the United States.

Call Meeting to Order

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

03-03-16

ITEM

- 1 PUBLIC COMMENT(S) ON ANY ITEM(S)**
None
- 2 TO REVIEW AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING OF FEBRUARY 17, 2016**
Commissioner Dutremble motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Cote seconded the motion. Vote 5-0
- 3 HEAR ANY REPORTS OF THE COMMISSIONERS**
Commissioner Chair Sallie Chandler reported that she recently visited the Maine State Prison.
- 4 TO HEAR ANY REPORTS OF THE COUNTY MANAGER**
 - a. Report out on LD1614- County Manager Zinser reported that a work session, which he attended, was held in Augusta on March 3rd. The Majority report which was approved will provide \$2.4 million in state funds for this year and next. Representative Chennette went after York County stating that we didn't utilize the

tools given us to increase taxes to meet the demand of the jail. The Majority report was issued in which conditions were put on similar to those used a year or two ago. They will appoint someone to work with each County to figure out how much they need. Mr. Zinser added that they did not use the formula they originally used. According to the County Manager, Ricky Long stated that the minority report would state that funding will be provided to county jails for the next two years and eliminate all of the County tax caps. County Manager Greg Zinser feels this is dangerous. He added that the County Commissioners' Association will not support the elimination of the tax caps. The Maine Sheriff's Association is an advocate of breaking the tax cap, however.

There was a lot of focus on York County and a discussion on caps in general and whether or not to do away with 3% or do away with the tax cap all together. Commissioner Sinden asked, "*Why does the legislature go immediately to tax increases to solve problems? Money doesn't always solve problems in efficiency.*" He continued that there is a rumor running around the committee that York County may have been diverting funds from the jail to renovations and asked if we have any idea where outright falseness like this begin. He questioned Finance Director, Vicki Ridlon, if there was any possible way for this to occur? Vicki replied, "*Not on my watch.*" The County Manager reported that he is following up to try and find the source.

Commissioner Dutremble commented that he has been involved in politics since the 1950's and has not seen dirty politics such as is happening in the County currently and that he won't stand for it. "*It will be detrimental to the whole County and it better stop in a hurry*", cautioned Commissioner Dutremble.

Commissioner Lovell questioned if this action returns the jails to the County. County Manager Zinser responded that he believes there is a fallacy that public law 335 returned control to the counties and reminded all that we have always been responsible for administration, etc. The law simply altered the funding formula and changed the level at which decisions were to be made. Now it's at the local level. The Minority Report only seeks to eliminate the tax cap but does not change any of the other outstanding issues, clarified Mr. Zinser.

5

OLD BUSINESS

a. **Continuation of NCEU grievance hearing-** The County Manager recapped that at the last meeting the Commissioners requested a memo mentioned by Sgt. Sweeney. It appears it is a pass on of information and was sent to the Commissioners for their review prior to the meeting.

Commissioner Dutremble motioned to deny the grievance. Commissioner Sinden seconded the motion. Vote 4 with 1 with Commissioner Lovell abstaining.

Commissioner Dutremble asked Commissioner Lovell if he was abstaining for a personal reason. Commissioner Lovell replied, yes. Commissioner Sinden asked if it was due to a conflict of interest. Commissioner Lovell replied, no.

b. **Jail budget funding-** The County Manager reminded all that currently the jail has a \$713,000 deficit. Some supplemental funding has cleared the first hurdle but we don't know what we will get. Commissioner Sinden asked if since the last meeting there are any ideas of how we are going to eliminate the deficit. Sheriff King replied that he has a couple of ideas floating around on how to decrease overtime. Commissioner Sinden reminded all that time is running out. Sheriff King stated that he doesn't have a \$713,000 fix. Commissioner Chair Sallie Chandler commented, "*So we don't have a plan. Is that what I understand?*" County Manager Greg Zinser replied that is correct as the Sheriff has stated that he has a few ideas

but no plan for a \$713,000 fix. Commissioner Lovell asked the Sheriff if low risk inmates could utilize home visitation ankle bracelets and how does that work in Maine- is there a law that supports this. Sheriff King answered that he does believe we can do that and that he and his department are researching this right now. He added that 78% of the people in the jail are pre-trial. The County Manager asked the Sheriff if they ever looked at Commissioner Dutremble's point about funding bail. Sheriff King responded that they did have that and it is applicable to low level offenders that needed to go to the hospital so staff didn't need to stay with them while hospitalized. Commissioner Sinden commented that without a plan in place it's going to be hard for this Board to raise taxes. He added that, "*We can't do anything in the jail as that's the Sheriff's domain. Our only concern is the budget. Without a plan in place, I don't know how the citizens are going to react to this. That's my frustration*". Commissioner Cote stated that if a plan isn't in place we will have to make cuts. He added that we can wait and see what transpires. If we get State money, we need to look at other avenues that might help and then after that, what we have to do to make adjustments/changes in. No one has a simple answer. He suggests that if we can't come up with a plan, we need to make a reasonable budget. He hears from residents that they don't want their taxes to go up. Sheriff King addressed the Board and requested a meeting or committee to talk about this issue and come up with a plan. He added that he is open to any ideas. It was decided to hold a workshop on March 16th at 3:00 p.m. regarding jail funding.

c. **Audit circulation and update-** There will be an audit presentation at the next meeting, reported County Manager Zinser. He added that an electronic version is on our website.

6 NEW BUSINESS

- a. **County Day on April 27th at the State House-**The County Manager informed all of this event and stated that there will be a brief meeting on Monday to discuss this upcoming event. He added that if the Commissioners have any ideas, to let him know and attend the meeting as well if they wish. Commissioner Cote added that he will be attending the MCCA next Wednesday and will see what other counties might be doing. He added that we might want to do something here on a local level. People don't know a lot about County government. Commissioner Chair Chandler added that this event is also a benefit for legislators that are at the State House.
- b. **Appoint Commissioner Sinden to courthouse committee-** County Manager Zinser explained that the funding bill for a new courthouse has passed through the committee and a Courthouse Site Selection committee is being chosen. Commissioner Sinden has volunteered to be on the committee. Commissioner Lovell motioned to appoint Commissioner Lovell to the committee. Commissioner Cote seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

7 PUBLIC COMMENT(S) ON ANY ITEM(S)

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).**

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ADJOURN

Commissioner Cote motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Dutremble seconded the motion. Vote 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 5:00.