

**FY2017 WALDO COUNTY BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING AND
FINAL BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
DECEMBER 2, 2016**

PRESENT: Budget Committee Members Bill Sneed (Chairman), Harry Dean Potter, Arthur Durity, Penny Sampson, Herbert Harnden, Peter Curley and Richard Desmarais. Also present were County Commissioners William D. Shorey, Amy R. Fowler and Betty I. Johnson, Treasurer David Parkman, Deputy Treasurer Karen Trussell, Human Resources/Payroll Director Michelle Wadsworth, County Clerk Barbara Arseneau and Deputy County Clerk Marilyn Saucier.

Call to order: Budget Committee Chairman Bill Sneed called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and all made introductions.

B. Sneed stated that the first order of business was to elect a chairman for 2017.

Minutes for October 27, 2016 B.S. moved, P. Curley seconded to approve as accepted.
Minutes for November 5, 2016 B.S. moved, P. Curley seconded to approve as accepted.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Kathy Littlefield commented that it was a terrific budget and had to look hard to find questions. She noticed that on the top sheet, it used an amount taken off the final figure. She asked if that was what the State gave back on the Jail. K. Trussell explained that one figure was from the County and the other was Jail funds from the State that were separate from the County. K. Littlefield asked the following additional questions:

1. K. Littlefield noticed on several pages on total stated expended 2015 and it said "Previous Year". It was not on every sheet but on some of them. B. Arseneau said that she believed that it was related to Personnel figures that were lumped all together and that there were a number of budgets that have no personnel so those figures would not show under "Previous Year".
2. Under Treasurer 1025, Capital Outlay, she wondered what the funding was for. K. Trussell explained that it was for licensing for the accounting software for the Treasurer's Office.
3. K. Littlefield asked if there were step increases this year and was told yes. She commented that there was about \$227,000.00 in raises this year. H.R. Director Michelle Wadsworth explained that there was a 2% cost of living increase for 2017. She also noted that they were in union negotiations with one contract and that some also were reaching pay step increases on their departmental pay scale.

B. Sneed commented that personnel makes up about 75% of the budget and that this kind of increase was to be expected.

4. K. Littlefield inquired about page one in the Sheriff's budget and wondered what the figures in red were. Sheriff Jeffrey Trafton explained that the figures in red under personnel is funding that come in from other agencies – for one example, one of the detectives is funded by

the State Computer Crimes Unit, and one of the officers is a School Resource Officer is funded 75% by the school system. She also inquired about the Domestic Violence Detective and was told that this is funded 100% by a grant fund.

R. Desmarais asked what would happen when the grant fund runs out. The Sheriff explained that he would be applying for the grant again in 2018 and usually these positions are funded that way for a number of years in a row. Depending on the availability with the funds, if not awarded the grant, he would ask the Budget Committee to fund it in the future.

5. In the Communications Center budget, 1076, that personnel line seemed higher than any of the others. She asked if they hired extra people or not. O. Smith explained that several of the dispatchers were simultaneously reaching pay step increases.

6. Under Employee Benefits, K. Littlefield inquired about Employee Benefits 2025-4735 MEPEERS line. M. Wadsworth explained that this was the former Maine State Retirement. K. Littlefield asked why this was so much higher. M. Wadsworth explained that a few years ago MEPEERS changed their ruling a few years ago and increased both the employer contribution and the employee contribution each year ongoing.

7. Regarding the Reserve Budget, 2045, K. Littlefield said the Budget Committee used to get a page that showed what was in each reserve for funding and what had been spent. B. Sneed said that they still do receive those pages as a committee. K. Trussell offered to provide one after the meeting and K. Littlefield said she would pick one up later.

8. Regarding Corrections 1050 budget, she couldn't figure it out as to the personnel line. She asked if that was capped. K. Trussell explained that it has been capped since it was separated from the County budget. K. Littlefield asked how many employees there were and M. Wadsworth responded that there were about 14 employees. K. Trussell also explained that benefits for the Corrections staff has been included in that budget.

B. Sneed explained that for the most part, the Budget Committee hasn't even reviewed that budget for a number of years because the budget is capped and the Commissioners basically decide where the funds are distributed.

K. Littlefield also inquired about contractual services – board, medical, etc. and whether or not the County has to pay the medical. Sheriff Trafton explained that the jail that boards them takes care of the medical. She asked why it was funded and the Sheriff explained that there is still a 72-hour hold and also residents for the Reentry Center.

B. Sneed asked if there were any other questions from the Public. He explained that the Budget Committee would now move forward with their portion of the meeting, which is to review each department budget rather quickly. He asked if the District Attorney had any additional things for that budget and the District Attorney replied that he had only one that had come in late. Commissioner Shorey asked if he could make a presentation and was told yes. He stated that the County has appreciated the work that Bill Sneed has done over the year, his knowledge of the budget process, the way he conducts the meetings and the Waldo County Commissioners wished

to present him with a plaque for all his years of service, including serving as chairman for the past 12 years. B. Sneed expressed his thanks, and acknowledged that everybody deserved thanks for their work on this committee.

R. Desmarais expressed concern that the agenda said that the public portion of the meeting was not supposed to end until 7:00 p.m. He requested that in the future, that the agenda indicate that as soon as all public comments were over, the Budget Committee would immediately follow that with the second portion of the meeting. All agreed.

W. Shorey was asked to give a brief report on the garden, and for there to be a report on the future new courthouse. W. Shorey said he would speak about the garden, but he would have County Clerk Barbara Arseneau report on the future courthouse, as she is the Commissioners' representative on that committee.

W. Shorey reported that the farm has grown tremendously when they started it 7 years ago. The first year the garden produced 7,000 lbs. This year, 78,000 lbs. of produce was grown and distributed. The YMCA alone received about 17,000 lbs. this year and they serve as a pick-up point. 7.5 acres is farmed and next year they will increase to 10 acres, which should produce about 100,000 lbs. of produce each year and allow for crops to be rotated. The reentry center sends about 6 residents each shift, and Corporal Christopher Albert or Officer Walter Wagner comes out with them. When they pick potatoes, Captain Robert Walker comes out and W. Shorey commented that if they had more like Captain Walker, they could really show Aroostook County something.

He explained that they grow all the primary vegetables and also squash. He said it was not uncommon to pick 1500 to 1800 vegetables a day during the season. The farmland was purchased for a very good price. The farm is a great benefit to the county and produce \$110,000.00 to \$120,000.00 worth of produce to citizens of Waldo County. The Commissioners are very happy with the way it is run and they commended the Sheriff for his constant support.

B. Arseneau asked Commissioner Fowler to jump in as well, because Commissioner Fowler knows the history of the courthouse schedule since she has worked with Chief Justice Saufley for years. The State's goal has been to consolidate both Superior and District Courts, and have been carrying that out for reasons of efficiency, safety, etc. Waldo County is on the docket for a new courthouse along with Oxford and York Counties. The State was gracious enough to invite the Commissioners to have a representative sit on the planning committee to be aware of things and provide some input. Barbara has attended, as well as Commissioner Fowler when Barbara couldn't attend. There have only been three meetings so far – the first being at the end of June. The first biggest holdup up was trying to find nearby property. The general consensus has been to try to keep the location downtown, where the public is used to it, where it is easily accessible to attorneys, etc. Parking though has been a challenge – it has been difficult for years and years. The current Superior Courthouse is 162 years old, so it was horse buggy era when the roads were built. The good news is that they have found some property and have signed purchase and sale agreements with properties bordering Church Street, Market Street and Anderson Street; and they believe that they will have the amount of parking they are looking for. They plan to build an approximately 30,000 square foot courthouse. It will be very close to where it is now. They

originally hoped to try to attach it to the existing Superior Courthouse, but could not obtain the property on that side of the building. They have a very ambitious goal of having it completed by June of 2018. They already have an architect hired. The next meeting is December 8, 2016 and they will be having preliminary design discussions, getting input from interested parties on the development, project schedule overview, etc. The pace should really pick up from here.

B. Sneed asked what would happen with the vacant space in the District Courthouse. W. Shorey responded that it will be renovated sometime in the future and possibly the Registry of Deeds might move over, the staff in the Commissioners/Treasurer's Offices have been cramped for many, many years and will be able to spread out. Things will need to be figured out and it will likely be three to four years before those changes are made. There will be administrative staff that will need to stay in the courthouse for a while and possibly the County may rent out some of the space. They also hope to make the Old Superior Courthouse as energy efficient as possible. The whole situation will need to be looked at carefully to figure out what makes the most sense, what type of renovations need to be made, how to use both buildings as practically as possible and as cost-efficiently as possible.

There was still concern that the Budget Committee allow more time for the public to speak until 7:00 p.m. District Attorney Geoffrey Rushlau volunteered to use some of the time speaking about the new courthouse space.

G. Rushlau said that one thing that is an issue is that when the State builds a new courthouse, they don't often give a whole lot of thought to the District Attorney's office even though the District Attorney's Office works with them in the courts day in and day out for 40 hours a week. He was very glad to hear that the Commissioners were working with the planners so that the D.A.'s Office is not left out of the planning. It is always an issue to make sure that they don't build a courthouse that is so far away that it is nearly inaccessible from the District Attorney's Office. In Bangor, they have built a new, large courthouse and the D.A.'s Office is still in the old courthouse over a mile away. He is pleased to hear that the new courthouse here will be close to the current D.A.'s Office. He is hoping that the planning will include accessibility for the District Attorney's Office. He knew that there had been some preliminary drawings and the space for the District Attorney was so small it was nearly closet space. He didn't think they would need large space since the new courthouse would be so close, but it bore watching so that it would be a feasible space to function in.

W. Shorey said that he had heard some of the issue resulted from a previous courthouse project in another county that had included a large amount of office space for the District Attorney but it came with a hefty price tag and then the offices were no longer going to be used by the D.A.

There was a bit more discussion about whether or not the Budget Committee could legally move forward with the rest of the meeting. One of the members pointed out that the agenda says at the top "Subject to Change". R. Desmarais said he hadn't meant for this to be instituted tonight, because most people know the public hearing is immediately followed by the Budget Committee final meeting, he just felt it should not indicate a particular time that it would follow. B. Johnson said that the Budget Committee could vote to move forward on the agenda.

****A. Durity moved, W. Sneed seconded to enter into the final decision stage of the 2017 budget. Unanimous.**

FINAL BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING:

1010 – Emergency Management Agency

****B. Sneed moved, R. Desmarais seconded to fund the Emergency Management Agency at \$121,145.00. Unanimous.**

1015 – District Attorney

****B. Sneed moved, H. Harnden seconded to fund the District Attorney’s budget in the amount of \$262,872.00. Unanimous.**

1020 – Commissioners

****B. Sneed moved, P. Curley seconded to fund the Commissioners budget in the amount of \$333,359.00. Unanimous.**

1025 - Treasurer

****B. Sneed moved, A. Durity seconded to fund the Treasurer’s budget in the amount of \$77,696.00. Unanimous.**

1030 – Facilities

B. Sneed asked K. Nealley if he was satisfied with the budget as proposed. K. Nealley responded in the positive.

****B. Sneed moved, P. Curley seconded to fund the Facilities budget in the amount of \$277,093.00. Unanimous.**

1065 - Registry of Deeds

****B. Sneed moved, H. Harnden seconded to fund the Registry of Deeds budget in the amount of \$231,301.00. Unanimous.**

1070 – Registry of Probate

****B. Sneed moved, A. Durity seconded to fund the Registry of Probate budget in the amount of \$239,119.00. Unanimous.**

1075 – Office of the Sheriff

B. Sneed asked the Sheriff if he was happy with the budget as presented. The Sheriff replied that he was.

****B. Sneed moved, H. Harnden seconded to fund the Sheriff’s Office budget in the amount of \$1,529,984.00. Unanimous.**

1076- Communications Center

****B. Sneed moved, H. Harnden seconded to fund the Communications Center budget in the amount of \$962,621.00. Unanimous.**

1080 – Advertising/Promotion

B. Sneed explained that the Budget Committee added \$750.00 to Time & Tide RC&D's request.

****B. Sneed moved, P. Curley seconded to fund the Advertising/Promotion budget in the amount of \$14,250.00. Unanimous.**

1090 –Audit

****B. Sneed moved, A. Durity seconded to fund the Audit budget in the amount of \$9,000.00 Unanimous.**

1095 – Debt Service

No discussion or vote as there was no debt.

2000 – Tax Anticipation Note Interest

****B. Sneed moved, P. Curley seconded to fund the T.A.N. Interest budget in the amount of \$10,000.00. Unanimous.**

2005 – University of Maine Cooperative Extension

****B. Sneed moved, A. Durity seconded to fund the U. of M. Cooperative Extension budget in the amount of \$42,085.00. Unanimous.**

2025 – Employee Benefits

****B. Sneed moved, H. Harnden seconded to fund the Employee Benefits budget in the amount of \$1,131,000.00. Unanimous.**

2035 – W.C. Soil & Water

****B. Sneed moved, A. Durity seconded to fund the W. C. Soil & Water budget in the amount of \$25,000.00. Unanimous.**

2040 – Records Preservation

No Discussion.

2045 – Reserves

B. Sneed explained that during the last meeting, the Budget Committee added \$25,000.00 to line number 0154, Severance. He asked someone else to explain what that reserve covered and was told that it covered accrued sick and vacation leave. Two employees retired during this past year and it totaled around \$20,000.00. This line needed to be built back up.

****B. Sneed moved, P. Curley seconded to fund the Reserves budget in the amount of \$25,000.00. Unanimous.**

1050 – Corrections

B. Sneed said that the Jail budget is what it is and they don't really vote on it. D. Parkman explained that the Jail budget still has a cap but the counties have taken over the jails. The 2017 Corrections budget was \$2,882,944.14.

****B. Sneed moved, H. Harnden seconded to fund the Corrections budget at \$2,882,944.14. Unanimous.**

****B. Sneed moved, P. Curley seconded to approve the total County Budget at \$8,174,469.14. Unanimous.**

There was some question of whether or not people who attend this budget meeting are aware that the Budget Committee has met before and reviewed the budget prior to this meeting. B. Sneed said that if there had been more people present, he would have explained that.

B. Arseneau added that by law, the proposed budget is mailed in advance of the public hearing to each of the municipalities. She acknowledged, also, that in the past, the Budget Committee Chairman has explained this to the public when more people attended.

****B. Sneed moved, P. Curley seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:44 p.m. Unanimous.**