

**FY2018 WALDO COUNTY BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING AND
FINAL BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
DECEMBER 8, 2017**

PRESENT: Budget Committee Richard Desmarais (Chairman), Herb Harnden, Joshua Gerritsen, Gabriel Pendleton, Peter Curley, Peter Rioux, Penny Sampson, and Cheryl York. Also present were County Commissioners William D. Shorey, Amy R. Fowler and Betty I. Johnson, Deputy Treasurer Karen Trussell, Human Resources Director Michelle Wadsworth, County Clerk Barbara Arseneau and Assistant County Clerk Lynn Patten. There were also several department heads and employees in the audience.

Call to order: Budget Committee Chairman Richard Desmarais called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

R. Desmarais explained for the public attendees who may not be familiar with the process how the Committee is derived. The County is divided up into three Districts with three Committee Members from each District to total nine members. R. Desmarais feels this is a good set up because you will have a diverse group of people that work with the city, industry, farming, etc.; it is spread out so that not just one area has the train of thought for the whole county.

Budget Committee controls about 20% of the budget and the other 80% is personnel, which the Committee cannot touch.

Introductions were made.

PUBLIC HEARING:

R. Desmarais opened it up to the public. Copies of the drafted FY2018 Budget were supplied for attendees. Chairman Desmarais asked if anyone had any questions on anything within the budget, letting them know this is their opportunity to speak. Nobody wished to speak or pose any questions.

****P. Curley moved, G. Pendleton seconded to close the Public session and to go into the regular session. Unanimous.**

Chairman R. Desmarais would like to talk about each department individually. Anyone that has something to say about that department's budget, they will discuss it before voting on the bottom line. If there is no discussion then they will vote on the bottom line and move on to the next department. When they take the final vote, then that will be the FINAL vote, no more changes will be made until next year.

FINAL BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING:

1010 – Emergency Management Agency

No discussion.

****R. Desmarais moved, P. Curley seconded to fund the Emergency Management Agency at \$129,410.00. Unanimous.**

1015 – District Attorney

P. Curley asked about the Consulting/Professional Services line. In 2017 the appropriated amount was \$13,000.00, the same amount is requested for 2018, however to date only \$6,150.00 has been expended; P. Curley wanted to know if that line could be dropped to \$11,000.00. D.A. Jon Liberman explained the \$13,000.00 is to allow for the hiring of a new person at Maine D.A. Technical Services which is the agency that the DA's office consults with for their specific software that they use regularly during the prosecution of cases. The individual was not hired until recently, so the line was not totally expended, however it will be fully expended in 2018. Also, the DA's office is billed quarterly for the services and will not get the last quarter's invoice until after the first of the year.

****R. Desmarais moved, P. Curley seconded to fund the District Attorney's budget in the amount of \$265,977.00. Unanimous.**

1020 – Commissioners

No discussion.

****R. Desmarais moved, J. Gerritsen seconded to fund the Commissioners budget in the amount of \$330,446.00. Unanimous.**

1025 - Treasurer

No discussion

****R. Desmarais moved, P. Rioux seconded to fund the Treasurer's budget in the amount of \$79,379.00. Unanimous.**

1030 – Facilities

P. Curley stated only \$20,100.00 has been spent as of December 6, 2017 under the heating lines 5205-5211. Facilities is asking for \$32,500.00, so it would seem that that could be reduced to \$25,000.00 or 26,000.00. K. Nealley said we have had a really mild October and November so the fuel that is typically used by this time has not been used. The County is locked in for heating oil at \$2.08 per gallon and he based the figures on an average of what has been used in previous years, and it would depend upon what the temperatures are after the first of the year. A couple of the buildings are heated with propane as well. The County got a favorable rate on propane at \$1.27 per gallon. It is anybody's guess when comes to what the temperature will be in January. K. Nealley would like to make sure he doesn't go over and would like to keep it at the amount he requested. He further explained that they go out to bid as early as possible; it used to be as early as January, however oil companies do not like to project out that far ahead, so now it is around March when they go out to bid and get locked in.

W. Shorey said that the stock market drives the cost of fuel oil and he feels the County is lucky to have such a good locked in price.

R. Desmarais thought the numbers seemed to be low for this time of the year and if they were just going to be the same numbers rolled over into 2018, then it looks like there is a built-in surplus and may not really need that full amount. He agrees with P. Curley that it should be cut back. P. Curley asked if they are locked in through to next March. K. Nealley said it is locked in until June 30, 2018. R. Desmarais said that it seemed a lot of the lines were half spent or 2/3 spent and felt that there is an awful lot of extra money sitting in those lines. K. Nealley said again it all depends on the weather and that it really has been a good fall.

****R. Desmarais moved, J. Gerritsen seconded to reduce fuel funding in lines 5205-5211 in the Facilities budget to \$25,500.00 a reduction of \$7,000.00.**

Discussion: W. Shorey said he didn't think the County could take a cut of \$7,000.00. The Old Jail will be coming on board as records storage, and the old Sheriff's Office will be coming back on board and neither of those have been heated for the past couple of years.

J. Gerritsen asked if there was a capital reserve available so if it does go over are there monies to pay for excess fuel and how much? K. Trussell explained that there are no reserve accounts for short falls such as that, the department would have to come up with the excess money from somewhere else within their own budget. P. Rioux asked Commissioner Shorey what he thinks would be a safe number. W. Shorey stated he felt it could safely be reduced by \$3,500.00. J. Gerritsen asked what the trend in fuel usage had been in the last five years. K. Nealley again stated that it fluctuates. He pointed out the Superior Court building has a giant boiler that is steam heat. They hold court every other month, if it is a really cold January and there is court every day in that huge courtroom, it would be costly. He just can't predict what the weather will be and he is not comfortable with a \$7,000.00 reduction. When asked if at any time in the last five years the entire fuel budget had been spent, K. Nealley answered that there have been some years where he has gone over budget with some of the fuel lines.

G. Pendleton said looking at the total expenditures in 2016, it was approximately \$30,000.00 under what was budgeted, and now they are looking at an additional amount on top of that. To him it looks like there is room for reduction in this entire budget for this particular department.

J. Gerritsen said he believed that it should be kept the same. No one can predict the weather, and as they have just heard, it has been up and down and they just don't know what the rest of the winter will bring, it has just started. C. York said she agreed, especially after hearing that there will be another building added to the fuel usage.

P. Rioux asked what the thermostats are set at; K. Nealley explained that most of them are programed to 62 at night and weekends and 72 is the norm for weekdays.

P. Rioux said he feels \$7,000.00 may be a little excessive; however there is room to take a little out of the request. K. Nealley agreed with W. Shorey and would be comfortable with half of that amount and reduce it by \$3,500.00 but not \$7,000.00.

****R. Desmarais amended his motion to reduce it by \$5,000.00, no second. Failed**

****H. Harnden moved, P. Rioux seconded to reduce it by \$2,000.00. Passed 7 in favor; P. Curley opposed.**

R. Desmarais said that there were a bunch of air-conditioning lines that add up to quite a bit of money and to date only \$279.00 has been spent; he asked K. Nealley why. K. Nealley stated that there are a lot of window units in the Superior Court Building, the Communications Center has had to have compressors replaced for \$1,800.00. If it's a good year and things don't blow up, it goes along smoothly, if not it can be costly. W. Shorey pointed out that a service call is \$60.00 an hour. R. Desmarais said that they are window units. K. Nealley explained that they are

window units in Superior Court, but there is central air in District Court, at the Comm. Center, and Jail. The compressors can run up to \$2,000.00 if they need to be replaced.

P. Curley said looking at the numbers, it still seemed too high. K. Nealley noted that there are three (3) compressors just in District Courthouse alone.

****R. Desmarais moved, P. Rioux seconded to reduce the Facilities budget by \$2,000.00 to \$282,001.00. Unanimous.**

1065 - Registry of Deeds

R. Desmarais addressed line 4825 Microfilming. He would like to see it reduced by \$10,000.00 to \$58,800.00.

****R. Desmarais moved, P. Rioux seconded to reduce the Registry of Deeds budget in the amount of \$10,000.00.**

R. Desmarais pointed out at this late in the year the Budget is 92% expended and this line has over \$22,000.00 still available. J. Gerritsen asked to explain what is the Microfilming line for; it was explained that Deeds sends all the microfilm to an out of state contractor for archived permanent records that has been mandated by the State; not sure if that line is the full contracted amount for this vendor or if it is billed according to usage. The Register of Deeds S. Grant was ill and available by phone, L. Patten called S. Grant who explained that that line is the vendor's fee. Deeds is required to pay over \$3.00 per page per document and it is paid monthly, November nor December's have been paid as of yet. The monthly bill depends on the amount, the number, and the size of the documents that come into Deeds that they have to have recorded that month. In the past there have been months that their fee has been as high as \$7,500.00. S. Grant based this amount on what she requested last year because it is impossible for her to forecast how much her fees are actually going to be.

****R. Desmarais moved, P. Rioux seconded to withdraw that motion.**

****R. Desmarais moved, P. Rioux seconded to fund the Registry of Deeds budget as presented at \$234,958.00. Unanimous.**

1070 – Registry of Probate

Breakdown reviewed. W. Shorey stated that this particular department has been very conservative over the years and any increases have been less than 2%. J. Gerritsen questioned why Statute books are being bought, feels in the computer world it doesn't make sense. It was explained that individuals come into Probate to look information up and Probate does not have computers available for the general public to use.

****R. Desmarais moved, P. Rioux seconded to fund the Registry of Probate budget in the amount of \$243,270.00. Unanimous.**

1075 – Office of the Sheriff

R. Desmarais asked if there were any questions on this budget.

P. Curley stated that it seemed like a large request for the vehicles and wondered if it would be possible to do with three (3) each year.

****P. Curley moved, R. Desmarais seconded to reduce the budget by one less vehicle.**

J. Trafton asked if he could respond and was told yes. He noted that the previous year three vehicles were appropriated by the Budget Committee, and one more was allowed by the County Commissioners through undesignated funds. This year, the Sheriff stated that they looked at the fleet and in the last few years they had added three new positions to the Sheriff's Office. That is three vehicles right there. For many years the Sheriff's Office had bought just three vehicles per year, but they have had to increase the size of the fleet with those new positions. The other change made at the Sheriff's Office, they have revamped their whole civil process division. The people serving papers were using their own vehicles and were the highest paid employees in the office. So they stripped out a few of the older vehicles and those who serve papers now use those vehicles. The Sheriff's Office will not be trading out any vehicles this year for that reason. There are 23 vehicles that are being used on a daily basis, they need to have one or two spares if a patrol vehicle breaks down. So now they need 25 vehicles just to have a few spares. If they only replace 3 a year, the fleet would soon be dilapidated and they will be replacing engines and transmissions and the County would be paying a lot more. Four vehicles is the bare-bones. This keeps the fleet going and provides the services that need to be provided. They cannot get by on three new vehicles a year.

When asked what it costs, roughly per vehicle, J. Trafton explained that the previous year, the Fords were about \$33,000.00 and then there is the cost of up-fitting. J. Trafton noted that what they had in the budget was for four vehicles, plus the up-fitting of those vehicles. Some years, they try to use equipment from vehicles they are turning in; but he asked all to keep in mind, that this year they are not decommissioning or turning in any vehicles. That whole cost is up-fits. They didn't have any equipment from older vehicles – all of this would have to be purchased new. When asked if fuel economy was considered, he said it is, although the department had experienced a break during the past year or so in the economy because the fuel costs had stayed steady. Six years ago, they were spending \$90,000.00 per year. Now they are budgeting \$60,000.00 per year. This was with adding the additional vehicles. G. Pendleton thought that fuel efficiency might take priority over other things, especially if civil service was the priority for those vehicles. J. Trafton explained that they are using former patrol vehicles for civil process. The SUV's are good and are getting less expensive. They try to buy the cheapest cruisers but the conditions that they are put through day after day, in the snow and mud, pounding 10s of thousands of miles per year is tough. The cars that get better gas mileage don't hold up to the beating that a patrol vehicle takes. The majority of the patrol officers take very good care of their vehicles because they know they will have it for a while.

P. Curley asked what the deciding factors are when it comes time to purchase vehicles. The Sheriff explained that there are a lot of variables considered. They have been using the Dodge Chargers but those are not user friendly as a cruiser because the windows are so small it is hard to see to go in reverse. Then, when all the equipment and cages are added, it makes it even harder to see in reverse. Plus at 115,000 miles they start to lose engines and transmissions. They changed to the trucks because they became cheaper than the Chargers. The only negative with the trucks is that they are hard to turn around quickly; otherwise they are performing really well.

R. Desmarais said they only wanted to reduce it by one this year. J. Trafton said they asked the Lt. to figure out what was the minimum and four was the number.

P. Rioux asked what the policy is on personal miles. J. Trafton explained that officers are restricted on what they are allowed to use the vehicles for. They are allowed to use the vehicles if they are going to work out at the gym, and may be in street clothes to go to court, but not to go pick up their kids up, etc.

J. Trafton, with input from Lt. Matthew Curtis who was also present, explained that a typical vehicle, all outfitted, is about \$33,000.00. J. Trafton explained that in the capital outlay line, there were other items beyond vehicle items. He noted that there hasn't been a vehicle lost to reckless driving or a serious accident in a number of years, which is amazing considering the type of driving that the officers have to do, such as high speed pursuits, etc. He noted that this time of year, car/deer accidents occur almost daily.

G. Pendleton asked about overtime going up and if there was any way to reduce this. He asked if there were enough people hired. J. Trafton said that there has been a number of vacancies this year and some of those positions have been open. The main personnel line will be underspent because of the vacancies they've had, but because of those vacancies, the overtime has been used more. 13 positions have to be filled so if someone is absent in that 13, someone has to fill it on overtime. Therefore, there is a certain amount of overtime that just can't be avoided. He explained that he has taken funds from the P/T line to use for overtime during 2017 because there are no part-timers right now. One of the deputies has been activated into the National Guard and will be gone starting in the Spring for one year. This position will be filled with a temporary employee. Another deputy is headed to Ranger School in the Army National Guard and could be gone for as long as two years. This is another vacancy. Knowing these vacancies are coming, he added another \$10,000.00 to the overtime line for 2018.

****R. Desmarais moved to take one cruiser out this year, in the amount of \$33,000.00.**

Discussion: R. Desmarais felt that with the spare cars, and three new ones coming in, that the Sheriff's Office should reduce their request by one vehicle. He has heard a few complaints this year, which he hasn't heard in past years, regarding the cost of cruisers this year. He also has heard a lot about the 4.6% increase from local people. **No second. Motion failed.**

R. Desmarais also inquired about line 4200 Vehicle Maintenance/Gas/Tires. J. Trafton explained that a good part of that was because they have added 3 more vehicles to the fleet that are front-line vehicles, so there are more expenses with that; plus they had revamped their civil division and added two vehicles for that. So this is actually including daily use of five more vehicles.

M. Curtis explained that there is an outstanding bill for one of the high-mileage vehicles for a transmission, so please keep in mind that this hasn't been paid yet. J. Trafton further explained that they hold off on spending the budget until the last month of the year. This time of year, they are purchasing snow tires. They wait to be sure there aren't any other unforeseen expenses. He added that fuel has been a reasonable price this year, so that has helped.

R. Desmarais commented that the Sheriff's budget could be nearly at zero at this time of year, if they run it like the military does. J. Trafton said the Sheriff's Office doesn't operate like that. The Sheriff's Office doesn't like to overspend their budget, and they don't spend money just to

spend it by the end of the year. He added that they are buying the longer warranties for the vehicles since they are putting more mileage on them. P. Rioux said he appreciated that this department didn't spend money just because it was there.

R. Desmarais asked if they try to get a jump on the upcoming year. J. Trafton explained that there is no fluff built into the budget. He asked the Committee to keep in mind that these budgets are put together six months before they start the year and still have 5 to 6 months before the current year is over. If they know that they will need extra tires early in the following year, they may order a few of those. He noted that the vehicle mileage is creeping up and there are more maintenance expenses as a result. He does not spend money just because there is money left. The Sheriff's Office tries to present fair budgets. Any leftover money goes into the general fund.

****R. Desmarais moved, P. Curley seconded to fund the Waldo County Sheriff's budget in the amount of \$1,610,585.00. Unanimously.**

1076- Communications Center

R. Desmarais asked if any questions for O. Smith or any discussion.

****R. Desmarais moved, J. Gerritsen seconded to fund the Communications Center budget in the amount of \$1,011,441.00. Unanimous.**

1080 – Advertising/Promotion

J. Gerritsen said he would like to revisit Midcoast Economic Development (line 4720) and use the \$2,000.00 saved from Facilities and put it back toward MCEDD. He feels it is important for all to remember we are representing the entire County. What is good for one town in the County is good for all of them; and please reconsider funding MCEDD. G. Pendleton agreed.

****J. Gerritsen moved, G. Pendleton seconded to fund Midcoast Economic Development in the amount of \$2,000.00.**

P. Sampson said she was speaking for western Waldo County and could not justify it to her taxpayers, as they have their own economic development committee and pay dues to KVCOG. G. Pendleton "ran the numbers" using the 2010 census data, if funding the Time and Tide and MCEDD, the average person would spend 7 cents.

P. Rioux feels that these organizations are already getting adequate funding from the Federal government and State programs; the residents are already being taxed on this and have already paid for it, and he doesn't feel it is important for his taxpayers to fund this regardless how little the cost.

W. Shorey said that since October, they have loaned out \$710,000.00. He is on loan review committee and if someone from Waldo County comes in to request a loan, they stand a good chance of it getting approved. MCEDD does the same thing and for \$2,000.00 it is a very good investment.

B. Johnson said that sometimes people forget that what helps one town can benefit other towns throughout the County. MCEDD has the same loan programs as EMDC. K. Littlefield had met with the Selectmen's Association and asked for the County to hire an Economic Development

Director. It would have cost thousands and thousands to hire such a person. It is more economical to put funding toward economic development groups. The County needs economic development in order to have our taxes go down. The towns need to go to the organizations to let them know what they want or need; the organization is not going to come to them. K. Littlefield said she felt that the smaller towns were ignored. P. Rioux asked if the County didn't pay this fund, would MCEDD stop providing services for anybody in our Districts. B. Johnson explained they would still service the four towns that are part of it, and they would have to pay a higher due. MCEDD has to apply for grants and other funding just to function.

****Three in favor, five opposed. Motion failed.**

****P. Rioux moved to reduce Eastern Maine Development Corporation from \$2,000.00 to zero. P. Sampson seconded.**

J. Gerritsen asked for P. Rioux's reasoning. P. Rioux explained for the same reason as with MCEDD, he feels that they are already funded and the taxpayers have already paid. The organization won't deny services to anyone whether the County pays them or not. G. Pendleton felt that reasoning could be used within every department here; they could cut \$2,000.00 from every budget and services will still function and provide services. He just doesn't think it is a good idea.

****2 in favor, 6 opposed. Motion failed.**

****R. Desmarais moved, P. Curley seconded to fund Advertising and Promotion in the amount of \$11,500.00. Passed five in favor, 3 opposed.**

1090 – Audit

****R. Desmarais moved, P. Curley 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

****R. Desmarais 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

****J. Gerritsen moved, P. Curley seconded to fund the University of Maine Cooperative Extension budget in the amount of \$42,740.00. Unanimous.**

2025 – Employee Benefits

****R. Desmarais moved, H. Harnden seconded to fund the Employee Benefits budget in the amount of \$1,231,300.00. Unanimous.**

2035 – W.C. Soil & Water

****R. Desmarais moved, J. Gerritsen seconded to fund the W. C. Soil & Water budget in the amount of \$26,000.00. Unanimous.**

2040 – Records Preservation

P. Curley moved, J. Gerritsen seconded to fund the Records Preservation budget in the amount of \$5,000.00. Unanimous.

2045 – Reserves

****R. Desmarais moved, H. Harden seconded to fund the Reserves budget in the amount of \$25,000.00. Unanimous.**

1050 – Corrections

No motions on the Jail.

****G. Pendleton moved, J. Gerritsen seconded to approve the County Budget at \$8,546,269.00. Unanimous.**

****P. Curley moved, J. Gerritsen seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 p.m. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted by



Waldo County Assistant Clerk