# COMMISSIONER'S MINUTES

Wednesday, June 5, 2024

MEETING STARTS AT 3:00 PM

**SOMERSET COUNTY COMMISSION CHAMBERS**

**Present: Commissioners:** Robert Sezak, Scott Seekins, John Alsop, Cyp Johnson and Joel Stetkis were present.
**Staff**: Tim Curtis, Leanne Dickey, Patrick Dolan, David Spencer, Sheriff Dale Lancaster, Michael Pike, Pawel Bialczak, Tammy Barker and Tanya Belanger.
**Public**: Richard LaBelle, Todd Pineo, Jake Freudberg

**A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Pledge was observed

**B. CALL TO ORDER:** Meeting was called to order at 3:00pm

**C. MINUTES:**

**Resolution 24 - 102: To Accept the Minutes of May 15, 2024, and the minutes of the Special Meeting on May 29, 2024.**
Motion: Commissioner Seekins motioned to Accept the Minutes of May 15, 2024 and the minutes of the Special Meeting on May 29, 2024.
Second: Commissioner Alsop
Vote: Motion carries 5-0

**D. WORKSHOP:**

**1. Charter/Policy Review:** County Administrator Curtis completed the review of the County Charter and made note of four areas where Somerset differs from other county charters: Separation of administrative duties, filling vacancies, finality of the budget process and recall of elected officials. The Administrator will begin a review of the Employee Handbook at the next meeting.

**2. Discuss Proposed Charter Amendment:** Chairman Sezak had asked the Administrator to prepare language to discuss regarding amendments to the Charter. The Commissioners reviewed language that could change the process of filling vacancies from a caucus of municipal officials to an action by the Commissioners. They also discussed wording related to changing an elected position to an appointed one. It was the consensus of the Board to reword a proposed change from elected to appointed for the Register of Deeds position to place on the ballot for November 2024.

Commissioner Alsop said he would be in favor of developing a slate of potential amendments to the Charter to be considered on the ballot.

**3. Discuss County Membership with Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG):** The County Administrator said he had been in contact with KVCOG regarding an associate membership of sorts for Somerset County. A membership fee of $7,875 was proposed. Administrator Curtis feels this would be beneficial to the County in several ways. Financially, it would allow the U/T to purchase road salt at a lower rate, and there would be services to provide assistance with Emergency Management and Land Use Planning to the Unorganized Territory. It was the consensus of the Board to add this item as a resolution to the next meeting.

**E. PUBLIC HEARING:** None

**F. PUBLIC COMMENT:** (To allow members of the public to comment or reserve time to speak on an upcoming agenda item.) Norridgewock Fire Chief Todd Pineo ask to speak to the Town's grant application if needed.

**G. NEW AGENDA ITEMS: (Commissioners Only):** None

**H. FINANCE REPORTING:** Finance Director Patrick Dolan reported that County currently has 16 job openings which trends favorable to the budget. After the public hearing last Wednesday, the FY25 Budget has been passed.

**I. ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:** Administrator Curtis updated the Commissioners on the status of the U/T TIF, and he and Chairman Sezak have drafted a resolution to support the placement of a medical school in rural Maine.

As proposed at the last meeting, a slightly altered meeting schedule was created for June, July and August.

**J. DEPARTMENT HEADS: Sheriff Lancaster** reported 413 calls for service in the past week. He mentioned that Deputy Bowman and K9 'Reeves' will graduate from a 13-week training. The Sheriff made the commissioners aware of the new law that takes effect July 1 which requires deputies to report perceived color, race, age and gender during all traffic stops. The Commissioners had several questions about this process. The Sheriff said that the process can be facilitated by a new system called 'e-ticketing'.

Commissioner Alsop asked why the Sheriff's Office was still so involved in busting up marijuana grow houses. He said that since it takes up so much time and man-power, law enforcement efforts could be better spent elsewhere. The Sheriff said that the issue isn't just marijuana and there are potential organized crime implications.

Commissioner Stetkis had asked at the last meeting for a cost breakdown per each marijuana bust. The Sheriff estimated that each incident takes about $3,000 of manpower, but that does not include the additional research done ahead of time.

**Mike Pike** said that the Jail's Transportation Van that was purchased in November has finally been equipped and is on the road for service. There has been a typical summer slowdown in job applicants to fill the seven current openings in Corrections.

**Dave Spencer** told the board about his meeting with FEMA regarding the damage to the Carrying Pond Road in the Unorganized Territory. There may be questions about FEMA funding due to the fact that the UT Road Commissioner recommends moving a portion of the road away from a large drop off.

**Pawel Bialczak** reported on various I/T projects at the Courthouse, Jail and Communications Center. The final stages of the Central Square installation will start this summer connecting all County public safety transmissions.

**Tanya Belanger** with the Registry of Deeds reported that 1,115 documents were processed in May with 558 through e-file and 557 on paper. This marks the first month that more documents were processed electronically.

**Tammy Barker** told the board that for the month of May there were 6,471 calls taken at the Comm Center, 1,995 were 9-1-1 calls. Work continues on generator installs with the latest completed at the Madison Tower.

**K. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None

**L. NEW BUSINESS:**

**Resolution 24-103: To make adjustments to the Commissioners Meeting Schedule for the months of June, July and August.**
Motion: Commissioner Seekins motioned to make adjustments to the Commissioners Meeting Schedule for the months of June, July and August.
Second: Commissioner Stetkis
Discussion: Commissioner's meetings will fall on June 26, July 10, July 24, August 7 and August 21.
Vote: Motion carries 5-0

**Resolution 24-104: To authorize job postings for the positions of Emergency Management Director and Deputy Communications Director.**
Motion: Commissioner Seekins motioned to authorize job postings for the positions of Emergency Management Director and Deputy Communications Director.
Second: Commissioner Johnson
Vote: Motion carries 5-0

**Resolution 24-105: To approve the promotion of Savannah Beaudry to Programs Manager at the Somerset County Jail.**
Motion: Commissioner Seekins motioned to approve the promotion of Savannah Beaudry to Programs Manager at the Somerset County Jail.

Second: Commissioner Alsop
Vote: Motion carries 5-0

**Resolution 24-106: To award a Community Benefit Matching Grant to the Norridgewock Fire Department for the purchase and equipping of a side by side to provide fire and rescue services along the newly opened Rail Trail. Request: $15,000. Review Committee Recommends: $0**
Motion: Commissioner Seekins motioned to award a Community Benefit Matching Grant of $15,000 to the Norridgewock Fire Department for the purchase and equipping of a side by side to provide fire and rescue services along the newly opened Rail Trail.
Second: Commissioner Alsop
Discussion: Commissioner Stetkis said he would be more in favor of $10,000. Commissioner Alsop said the County has the money to be generous, but that will not always be the case.
Vote: Motion carries 5-0

**Resolution 24-107: To award a Community Benefit Matching Grant to the Moose Alley ATV Riders for repairs to trails. Request: $15,000. Review Committee Recommends: $15,000**
Motion: Commissioner Johnson motioned to award a Community Benefit Matching Grant of $15,000 to the Moose Alley ATV Riders for repairs to trails.
Second: Commissioner Seekins
Discussion: Commissioner Stetkis confirmed that this application was changed from building a hub in Bingham to a more pressing need of trail repair.
Vote: Motion carries 5-0

**Resolution 24-108: To award a Community Benefit Matching Grant to the Friends of the LC Bates Museum for marketing funds. Request: $2,066. Review Committee Recommends: $2,066**
Motion: Commissioner Alsop motioned to award a Community Benefit Matching Grant to the Friends of the LC Bates Museum for marketing funds. Request:
Second: Commissioner Seekins
Discussion: Commissioner Sezak mentioned that the applicant is the "Friends of LC Bates" which is separate from Good Will Hinkley. Due to his affiliation as a Good Will Hinkley board member, Mr. Sezak abstained.
Vote: Motion fails 2-2 (Stetkis and Seekins opposed). After the vote Commissioner Alsop asked why the two commissioners opposed. Commissioner Stetkis said he is more in favor of projects that provide public safety and recreation. Commissioner Seekins said he believed that this organization had other avenues of funding they could utilize.

**Resolution 24-109: To award a Community Benefit Matching Grant to Maine Laboratories LLC to expand PFAS testing. Request: $15,000. Review Committee Recommends: $5,000.**

Motion: Commissioner Stetkis motioned to award a Community Benefit Matching Grant of $5,000 to Maine Laboratories LLC to expand PFAS testing.
Second: Commissioner Alsop
Vote: Motion carries 3-2 (Stetkis and Johnson opposed)

**Resolution 24-110: To award a Community Benefit Matching Grant to the East Pond Association for dam repairs. Request: $15,000. Review Committee Recommends: $15,000.**
Motion: Commissioner Alsop motioned to award a Community Benefit Matching Grant of $15,000 to the East Pond Association for dam repairs.
Second: Commissioner Seekins
Vote: Motion carries 5-0

**Resolution 24-111: To award a Community Benefit Matching Grant to SAD 12 to replace the bleachers at Forest Hills School in Jackman. Request: $15,000. Review Committee Recommends: $5,000.**
Motion: Commissioner Alsop motioned to award a Community Benefit Matching Grant of $5,000 to SAD 12 to replace the bleachers at Forest Hills School in Jackman.
Second: Commissioner Seekins
Discussion: Commissioner Seekins questioned whether these funds could be paid for by the school district. Commission Alsop said the small recommended amount would impact the community use of this facility, over and above the school use.
Vote: Motion carries 5-0

**Resolution 24-112: To award a Community Benefit Matching Grant to the Sno-Devils Snowmobile Club for repairs to a storage facility. Request: $15,000. Review Committee Recommends: $5,000.**
Motion: Commissioner Alsop motioned to award a Community Benefit Matching Grant of $5,000 to the Sno-Devils Snowmobile Club for repairs to a storage facility.
Second: Commissioner Stetkis
Vote: Motion carries

**Resolution 24-113: To award a Community Benefit Matching Grant to Spineology Chiropractic to make ADA improvements. Request: $15,000. Review Committee Recommends: $0.**
Motion: Commissioner Alsop motioned to take the Committee recommendation not to award grant funds to Spineology Chiropractic to make ADA improvements.
Second: Commissioner Seekins
Vote: Motion carries 4-1 (Sezak opposed)

**Resolution 24-114: To award a Community Benefit Matching Grant to the Mercer Historical Society to install a heat pump in their building. Request: $4,000. Review Committee Recommends: $4,000.**

Motion: Commissioner Johnson motioned to award a Community Benefit Matching Grant of $4,000 to the Mercer Historical Society to install a heat pump in their building.
Second: Commissioner Seekins
Vote: Motion carries 4-1 (Stetkis opposed)

**Resolution 24-115: To award a Community Benefit Matching Grant to the SKILLS INC to provide safety and mobility improvements at 5 group homes in the area. Request: $15,000. Review Committee Recommends: $15,000.**
Motion: Commissioner Alsop motioned to award a Community Benefit Matching Grant of $15,000 to the SKILLS INC to provide safety and mobility improvements at 5 group homes in the area.
Second: Commissioner Stetkis
Vote: Motion carries 5-0

**Resolution 24-116: To award a Community Benefit Matching Grant to the Somerset Economic Development Corporation to equip a Tech Lab. Request: $15,000. Review Committee Recommends: $10,000.**
Motion: Commissioner Alsop motioned to award a Community Benefit Matching Grant of $10,000 to the Somerset Economic Development Corporation to equip a Tech Lab.
Second: Commissioner Johnson
Vote: Motion carries 5-0

**Resolution 24-117: To accept the resignation of Patrol Deputy Jeffrey Brann from the Somerset Sheriff's Office.**
Motion: Commissioner Johnson motioned to accept the resignation of Patrol Deputy Jeffrey Brann from the Somerset Sheriff's Office.
Second: Commissioner Seekins
Vote: Motion carries 5-0

**Resolution 24-118: To approve the hire of Jeffrey Warner as Reserve Dispatcher for Somerset County Communications Center.**
Motion: Commissioner Seekins motioned to approve the hire of Jeffrey Warner as Reserve Dispatcher for Somerset County Communications Center.
Second: Commissioner Stetkis
Vote: Motion carries

**Resolution 24-119: To approve the hire of Allen Jones as Patrol Deputy for the Somerset County Sheriff's Office.**
Motion: Commissioner Seekins motioned to approve the hire of Allen Jones as Patrol Deputy for the Somerset County Sheriff's Office.
Second: Commissioner Stetkis
Vote: Motion carries

**M. CAPITAL RESERVE EXPENDITURES: None**

**N. UNORGANIZED TERRITORY:**

**Resolution 24-120: To Authorize the Continued Payment of Road Maintenance of Camp Roads in Mayfield.**

Motion: Commissioner Johnson motioned to Authorize the Continued Payment of Road Maintenance of Camp Roads in Mayfield.
Second: Commissioner Seekins
Discussion: Commissioner Alsop said he is opposed to this because it provides a specific benefit to a small number of camp owners in the U/T. Commissioner Stetkis said he would support reducing the amount to approximately 50% of cost. It was determined that a split cost would be around $4,500. Commissioner Stetkis moved to amend the motion to reflect a payment from the County $4,500 for the road associations to spend as needed for repair and/or plowing. Commissioner Seekins seconded the amendment.
Vote on the amendment passed 3-2 (Alsop and Johnson opposed)
The amended motion now reads to authorize payment of $4,500 for road repairs and plowing to the same camp road associations in Mayfield that have received funding from TIF in the past.
Motion carries 4-1 (Alsop opposed)

**O. WARRANTS:**

**Resolution 24-121: To approve the Treasurer's Warrant for General Fund, SCJ, Unorganized Territories and TIF Tax Revenue:**

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| **General Fund:** | **$ 54,846.51** |
| **Jail:** | **$262,957.10** |
| **U/T:** | **$ 67,372.56** |
| **TIF Tax Revenue** | **$ 25,950.00** |
| **Total:** | **$411,126.17** |

Motion: Commissioner Seekins motioned to approve the Treasurer's Warrant for the General Fund, SCJ, Unorganized Territories, and TIF Tax Revenue in the amounts shown in the resolution.
Second: Commissioner Johnson
Vote: Motion carries 5-0

**P. MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION ITEMS: (Commissioners Only):** None

**Q. RECESS TO EXECUTE DOCUMENTS:**

**R. EXECUTIVE SESSION(s):**

1. **1-M.S.A. Section 405(6)(D) Labor Contract Proposal Discussion (Corrections/Supervisors)**
   Motion: Commissioner Johnson motioned to enter executive session.
   Second: Commissioner Seekins
   Vote: Motion carries 5-0

The Commissioners entered executive session at 4:26pm.
The Commissioners came out of executive session at 4:45pm with no action taken.

2. **1-M.S.A. Section 405(6)(E) Discuss with Legal Counsel pending litigation (Town of Palmyra)**

   Motion: Commissioner Johnson motioned to enter executive session.
   Second: Commissioner Alsop
   Vote: 5-0

The Commissioners entered executive session at 4:46pm.
The Commissioners came out of executive session at 5:30pm with no action taken.

**S. ADJOURN:** Meeting adjourned at 5:31pm.