

# COMMISSIONERS MEETING

September 18, 2024

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, September 18, 2024, A. D. at 4:30 P. M.

## COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Richard R. Dutremble  
Richard Clark  
Robert Andrews  
Justin Chenette (excused)  
Donna Ring

County Manager Greg Zinser and Deputy Manager Linda Corliss were present at the meeting.

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

09-18-2024

### ITEM

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

Janet Drew (via Zoom) informed all that the Board of Visitors held a meeting this past Saturday and got to talk to people in the jail. Concerns about the medical assistance treatment program were mentioned.

#### 2 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

- a. Commissioners' meeting of September 4, 2024  
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Andrews seconded. Vote 4-0.
- b. Commissioners' special meeting of September 12, 2024  
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the minutes of September 12, 2024. Commissioner Andrews seconded. Vote 4-0.

#### 3 TO APPROVE TREASURER'S WARRANTS

- a. Warrants to be approved on September 4, 2024 in the amount of \$297,511.71  
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the warrant. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 4-0.
- b. Warrants to be approved on September 11, 2024 in the amount of \$777,329.28  
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the warrant. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 4-0.

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

None

**5 TO HEAR TAX ABATEMENT DENIAL APPEAL**

County Manager Zinser explained that Mr. Howarth applied for the homestead exemption in 1998 and never received it. He was granted an exemption for the year 2023.

County Manager Zinser swore in Mr. Howarth and Berwick Town Manager, Arthur Capello.

David Howarth addressed the Board. He stated that he had been questioning the clerks for the last two to three years and they told him to fill out another (homestead exemption) form. He continued that he went back to the Berwick Town Hall and told them he still wasn't getting the exemptions. An employee took out his file and found a (homestead exemption) form he filled out in 1998. He only got a refund for one year (2023).

Mr. Howarth stated that he went to see James (former town manager) and he had no answers for him.

Commissioner Ring asked how many times did you fill out the form? Mr. Howarth replied, twice. Commissioner Ring asked Mr. Howarth if there were any papers in his folder? Mr. Howarth responded that there were lots of papers in his file.

The County Manager asked if there were any homestead exemption forms in the file between 1998 and recently? Mr. Howarth replied that he didn't have a clue he could get this (homestead exemption). He stated that a friend had looked at his property tax bill and asked why he wasn't getting the homestead exemption.

Arthur Capello, Berwick Town Manager, approached the Board and explained that on June 18, 2024 this matter was brought to the Board by the town's assessor. The assessor explained that a mistake had been made on Mr. Howarth's tax bill for 2023 so the Board of Selectmen granted him an abatement for one year.

Historically, the Board of Selectmen only goes back one year even though the law does allow up to 3 years, explained Town Manager Capello.

Commissioner Ring asked why not grant three years? Town Manager Capello explained that the Berwick Board only grants one year.

Commissioner Ring commented that since it was missing since 1998, something should've been done. Berwick Manager replied that it (form completed) has to be done every year and we didn't have any until this year.

Commissioner Dutremble commented doesn't it get renewed automatically? Mine does.

County Manager Zinser asked Berwick Manager Capello if Mr. Howarth filed the abatement request for the two prior years?

Berwick Town Manager Capello replied that Mr. Howarth only filed for one year.

Commissioner Clark commented that if he filed in 1998 we can't give him that many years but that he is willing to give him the three (allowed by law).

Commissioner Clark moved to grant the abatement for the last three years.

Commissioner Ring seconded the motion.

County Manager Zinser recommended the motion reflect granting Mr. Howarth the

exemption for 2021 and 2022.  
Commissioner Clark withdrew his motion.

Commissioner Clark motioned that the town of Berwick grant Mr. Howarth the homestead exemption for two additional years. Commissioner Ring seconded the motion. Vote 4-0.

County Manager Zinser explained that the Findings of Fact will be prepared and voted on by the Commissioners at the next meeting. After executed, we will send the Findings of Fact to the Town (of Berwick) and Mr. Howarth.

## **6 NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. To review and discuss county vehicle policy-**

County Manager Zinser explained that this policy was requested by Commissioner Ring at a prior meeting. This started years ago and then Covid hit and we didn't continue, explained County Manager Zinser. If Commissioners have specific issues, let me know.

Commissioner Ring asked if this is protected from any union benefits? County Manager Zinser replied that there will be a conflict so if imposed, there will have to be impact bargaining.

Commissioner Ring stated that she believes it is important that we have a policy.

The County Manager asked the Commissioners if there are specific issues that they want put in the policy given them?

Commissioner Ring replied that her concerns are addressed in this policy. She asked if we post it before it's implemented?

County Manager Zinser replied that he will reintroduce the document to the Department heads for input before the next meeting. He added that he doesn't see this affecting MSEA, but it would affect Teamsters and FOP and in limited circumstances, non-union (administration.).

The County Manager stated that he can probably get something back to the Commissioners by December. The Commissioners are fine with that.

### **b. Deputy County Manager/H.R. Director Corliss to present the following new hires and/or transfers:**

#### **i. Donald Dundon, Jr. in the position of full-time Maintenance Tech I in the Facilities Department with a date of hire of September 23, 2024**

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the hiring of Donald Dundon, Jr. in the position of full-time Maintenance Tech I in the Facilities Department with a date of hire of September 23, 2024. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 4-0.

#### **ii. Tianna Sutherland in the position of full-time Corrections Officer in the Sheriff's Office with a date of hire of September 23, 2024**

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the hiring of Tianna Sutherland in the position of full-time Corrections Officer in the Sheriff's Office with a date of hire of September 23, 2024. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

Vote 4-0.

#### **iii. Thomas Bryant in the position of full-time Corrections Officer in the Sheriff's Office with a date of hire of September 23, 2024**

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the hiring of Thomas Bryant in the position of full-time Corrections Officer in the Sheriff's Office with a date of hire of September 23, 2024. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 4-0.

- iv. ~~Alexander Chadbourne in the position of full-time Corrections Officer in the Sheriff's Office with a date of hire of September 23, 2024~~

NAME WITHDRAWN FOR HIRING REQUEST

- v. Robert Nejad, Jr. in the position of full-time Patrol Deputy in the Sheriff's office with a date of hire of September 23, 2024-

Deputy Manager/H.R. Director Corliss informed all that Mr. Nejad, Jr. was previously employed by the York County Sheriff's Office.

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the hiring of Robert Nejad, Jr. in the position of full-time Patrol Deputy in the Sheriff's Office with a date of hire of September 23, 2024. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

Discussion: Commissioner Ring asked why did he leave employment at York County? Deputy Manager/H.R. Director Corliss explained that he had a family issue out west but has now relocated back here. Vote 4-0.

Commissioner Clark asked Deputy County Manager/H.R. Director Corliss what the current number of Corrections Officers was. She replied probably around 52 full-time and 6-7 reserves.

- c. Deputy Manager/H.R. Director Corliss to seek approval of new position for Emergency Management Coordinator-

County Manager Zinser explained to the Board that part of the budget approved contemplated a new position in EMA. The job description was given to you. The budget contains a little over 50% of the funding for this position. Grant monies will cover the rest. The coordinator position will assist EMA. County Manager Zinser stated that Art is here and Megan is on Zoom if there are questions.

Commissioner Ring stated that she did not see this position in the budget.

County Manager Zinser stated that the funding was put in (to the budget) and it said it was moved over from the Juvenile Fire moved into EMA budget.

Commissioner Ring stated that from her perspective it was not included in the budget and she is not comfortable creating new positions after the budget has been passed. There was no supporting documentation given showing that this position is necessary.

Commissioner Clark asked what happens to the Juvenile Fire Program as he would not want that (program) to go away.

County Manager Zinser explained that those duties were given to another EMA employee who is a former fire chief.

EMA Director Art Cleaves approached the Board and explained that the Juvenile Fire position is not being let go. Our employee is a former Fire Chief and very well educated in this area.

Commissioner Clark motioned to move forward with the Emergency Management Coordinator position. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Ring commented that with where the budgets and taxpayer's costs are and cost of living that residents have been burdened with, she doesn't see the urgency or the need to create a new position. We are putting quite a burden on our citizens with the \$2 million we are going to be looking for to fund our (building) projects.

Vote 3-1 (Commissioner Ring opposed)

**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)**

Janet Drew (via Zoom) stated that the last discussion was interesting but that she missed the decision.

She also asked if the Commissioners are going to give us a little feedback from their tour of the jail?

County Manager Zinser answered that the Board did approve the item with a 3-1 vote.

County Manager Zinser informed Janet Drew that they are aware of the MAT program and the Board does have a general awareness. Our tour focuses on the building. He continued that the Board needs to be aware of some of the deficiencies like the boilers and generator.

Commissioner Dutremble added that the Maine County Commissioners' Association has requested over \$8 million for the Medical Assisted Treatment program and the State only appropriated \$4 million.

**10 ADJOURN**

Commissioner Clark motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at 5:14 p.m.