

COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

February 19, 2025

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, February 19, 2025, A. D. at 4:30 P. M.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Richard R. Dutremble
Richard Clark
Robert Andrews
Justin Chenette
Donna Ring

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

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

02-19-2025 **ITEM**

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

Susan Wiswell from Kittery addressed the Board and stated that during the annual Board of Visitors report, a couple of questions came up. The first one was where is the \$600,000 in income received from the boarding of prisoners from Oxford County go? County Manager Zinser responded that it stays with the jail and covers expenditures of the jail. For example, the State didn't give us what we expected in this budget that resulted in a \$400,000 deficit.

Ms. Wiswell asked with the closing of Layman Way in June and the recovery center not opening until 2026, are there any provision between times? Where will the people go for treatment? County Manager Zinser replied that no one else is helping, including the State. He continued by explaining that the bottom line is the money currently set aside for the Layman Way Recovery Center will be used for the new building. It will put a little bit further burden on the medically assisted treatment program at the jail.

Sarah Johnson from Sanford addressed the Board and stated that we are told that York County is taking a lot of ICE holds. She questioned if the federal government pays for that? Is this true and does it cost the county? Secondly, she is being told that an inmate at the jail is receiving Sublocade. She asked who is paying for that and can more inmates be using it and who pays for it? County Manager Zinser explained that we are taking ICE people. We will not be going out there and

participate in any type of raid or immigration issue. We are commanded to house individuals. We receive SCAAP money on a yearly basis from \$6,000 to \$20,000 a year. This is money we receive to house illegal immigrants. We will follow the law. To answer the second question, County Manager Zinser replied that is news to him and discussions about Sublocade. He stated that it costs \$1800 per shot. vs. \$12 for administration of Suboxone. The County Manager added that it does take less staff time for a one month shot of Sublocade. We are working on getting grants for it. If we are doing it, it is most likely on a trial basis. He added that he does not know if it is covered by Medicaid.

2 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS:

- a. Commissioners' meeting of February 5, 2025
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

3 TO APPROVE TREASURER'S WARRANTS

- a. Warrants to be approved on February 5, 2025 in the amount of \$454,728.59
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.
- b. Warrants to be approved on February 12, 2025 in the amount of \$768,876.87
Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the warrant. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

4 TO HEAR ANY REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Clark reported that he attended the ribbon cutting at Mainspring in Kittery recently. He added that there was a significant amount of people there. Commissioner Clark reminded all that the Commissioners provided \$750,000 from the ARPA funding towards this project. He stated that there is also a food pantry, store and housing for homelessness. Commissioner Clark added that he is proud to say we had a part in it.

5 NEW BUSINESS

- a. To hear tax abatement denial appeal of Brian and Janet Deshaies (property in Limerick)
County Manager Zinser swore in Janet and Brian Deshaies (via Zoom).

Mr. Deshaies stated that they are in front of the Commissioners as they don't agree with the town. We have inconsistencies in land valuations. Our property is valued on the high side, he stated.

Mr. Deshaies continued that they presented five other waterfront properties. They feel there is no equity and Mr. Deshaies stated that they don't see any methodology. Mrs. Deshaies added that they would like to know what formula is used.

The Deshaies responded to the nine properties that Mr. O'Donnell (tax assessor for the Town of Limerick) believe are all on Sokokis Lake. They reviewed these properties with the Commissioners.

Mr. O'Donnell stated that we have a peninsula, said Janet Deshaies. She said that she spoke to someone about water frontage from Maine.Gov. In Maine,

the assessment is not solely based on the amount of waterfront. Highest and best use as well as other things can be included, she was told. The peninsula is only 12' to 15' wide (peninsula).

Commissioner Chenette commented to the Deshaies that the Town of Limerick has already granted you an abatement to reduce your property over \$18,000.

Janet Deshaies responded that was based on when they found out there wasn't a finished basement.

Commissioner Ring stated that she looked at all of the Deshaies comps. She continued that unless we can physically see the land and it is all waterfront, (in her opinion) they didn't put a lot of value on your property and gave you the rebate on the building. Commissioner Ring explained that she averaged out the seven properties and that the average tax was \$22.76 a square foot. Commissioner Ring said to the Deshaies that their average was \$14.85 square foot and the highest is \$40.92. She added that she can only assume that maybe it has to do with the actually waterfront. You are paying less than the average from these comparables. You are second to the lowest when you calculate your square footage, explained Commissioner Ring.

Mr. Deshaies replied that he sees her point on the averages and her reasoning that it is still on the water. Commissioner Ring added that there could be a lot of reasons to include a value to more water frontage and a flat lot.

Mr. O'Donnell, town assessor, was sworn in by County Manager Zinser. Commissioner Ring asked if when Mr. O'Donnell valued this property does he look at the land to see if there are hills and low land?

Mr. O'Donnell replied, yes and it is not a linear relationship. A discount factor is applied for a larger square foot. Because we apply those factors, it can get confusing. We aren't arbitrary. We do make judgement calls but we try to let the body of the decision stand, explained Mr. O'Donnell.

He added that the Deshaies have not provided a value for their property.

To speak to the argument of discrimination of their property to others, two of the examples, the 50' wide lot was discounted a bit because it is so narrow. That one had a lower sale price because of its shape. 8 Emery Corner is an oddball property, explained Mr. O'Donnell. It is a mixed-use property. You would prefer the taxpayer's camp, he added.

The peninsula was mentioned but we didn't offer extra value for that.

We just used the size of the lot. As far as the nine properties that sold (in my letter) the main point I was making is that we haven't seen anything sell for below \$450,000 Often times we see the two season and four season camps sell for the same price as there is no inventory.

Mr. O'Donnell did state that 34 Emery Corner Road has a discount on the land and that he does not know why and we will probably take it away. This is where the mistake is.

Commissioner Chenette asked Mr. O'Donnell since 34 Emery Corner Road has a discount on their land, can you see why that would be confusing for other taxpayers? It does seem like an unfairness and no clear explanation. How are we supposed to take that, asked Commissioner Chenette?

Mr. O'Donnell replied that it is a mistake- a remnant adjustment that never got removed. He added that he would say that is not a discriminatory pattern.

The commercial property (laundromat/mixed use) is the only other one that gets a discount.

Mr. Deshaies responded to Mr. O'Donnell's explanations and stated that the formula did not apply to #34 Emery Corner. We initially sat down with their associates. There was an appraisal higher for 100 Lake Shore Drive. They said to us that they dropped the ball on this one. The final committed value was blatantly changed to \$75,000 less to match the selling price of \$390,00 stated Mr. Deshaies.

Commissioner Dutremble asked the Board if they were ready to make a decision?

Commissioner Ring motioned to deny the appeal of Janet Deshaies.

Commissioner Chenette seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

County Manager Zinser explained that the abatement has been denied and we will create a Findings of Fact and it will be brought back at the next meeting for formal vote.

Mr. O'Donnell addressed all and stated that they publish every assessment on their website. He added that they also publish the mathematical formulas that they use. It is a size/value relationship, he stated.

- b. To hear presentation from Ed Hodgdon, Grant Manager of the Maine Beaches

County Manager Zinser introduced Ed Hodgdon.

Mr. Hodgdon informed all that he undertook this position in July of 2023 and had been a Board member since 2008. This organization operates under a Maine Office of Tourism grant.

Mr. Hodgdon circulated a booklet and presented a PowerPoint presentation.

County Manager Zinser told Mr. Hodgdon that he appreciates the economic impacts that he shared with us.

He added that we are dealing with some of the towns with the storms. He asked Mr. Hodgdon of his thoughts regarding the impacts that the storms had on the coastal towns.

Ed Hodgdon replied that Kennebunk and Kennebunkport do a Paint the Town Red event. They saw some immediate cancellations due to the storms and knowing there was damage. We launched a campaign called Back to the Beaches and by the time May rolled around people were coming.

Commissioner Chenette commented that he was curious to see what the feedback you have been receiving from Canadians Ed Hodgdon replied that they have seen 30% of cancellations already from Canada. He continued that they are going to try and combat this and pivot. They are trying to woo back our Canadian visitors.

- c. To introduce Deputy Manager/H.R. Director Linda Hutchins- Corliss to present new hires and transfers:
 - i. Rachel Bonia in the position of Corrections Officer in the Sheriff's Office

with a date of hire of March 10, 2025- Deputy County Manager/H.R. Director Linda Hutchins-Corliss requested a change in the hire date to February 24, 2025.

Commissioner Clark motioned to approve the hiring of Rachel Bonia with a date of hire of February 24, 2025. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

Deputy County Manager/H.R. Director Hutchins-Corliss reported this will bring the corrections officer count up to 53 full-time C.O.s.

- ii. James Chadbourne in the position of Fleet Mechanic in the Sheriff's Office with a date of hire of February 24, 2025

Commissioner Ring motioned to approve the hiring of James Chadbourne with a date of hire of February 24, 2025. Commissioner Chenette seconded the motion. Vote 5-0.

6 OLD BUSINESS

None

****AFTER PUBLIC COMMENT****

7 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)

- a. Executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405 (6) (D), labor negotiations. Commissioner Clark motioned to enter into executive session. Commissioner Ring seconded the motion. Vote 5-0. Commissioner Clark motioned to come out of executive session. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0. No action taken.

****HEARD PRIOR TO EXECUTIVE SESSION****

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

No public comments

9 ADJOURN

Commissioner Clark motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Andrews seconded the motion. Vote 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 6:17 p.m.