

M.C.C.A.

Richard Dutremble, President
York County

Norm Fournier, Vice President
Aroostook County

George Jabar, Secretary-Treasurer
Kennebec County

Stephen Gorden, Past President
Cumberland County

William Blodgett, Emeritus
Lincoln County



4 Gabriel Drive, Suite 2
Augusta, ME 04330
207-623-4697
www.mainecontinies.org

Lauren Haven
Administrator

MAINE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes March 13th, 2024 at 10:00 am via Zoom

1. Call to Order

MCCA President Richard Dutremble called the meeting to order at approximately 10:05 am.

DIRECTORS PRESENT:

Aroostook – William Dobbins proxy for Comm. Norman Fournier
Cumberland – Comm. Steve Gorden
Franklin – Admin. Amy Bernard proxy for Comm. Bob Carlton
Kennebec – Comm. George Jabar
Lincoln – Admin. Carrie Kipfer proxy for Comm. William Blodgett
Penobscot – Comm. Peter Baldacci
Piscataquis – Manager Mike Williams proxy for Comm. Paul Davis
Sagadahoc – Comm. Charles Crosby
Somerset – Comm. Robert Sezak
Waldo – Comm. Betty Johnson
Washington – Comm. Chris Gardner
York – Comm. Richard Dutremble

DIRECTORS ABSENT:

Androscoggin – Comm. Garrett Mason
Aroostook – Comm. Norman Fournier
Franklin – Comm. Bob Carlton
Hancock – Comm. John Wombacher
Knox – Comm. Sharyn Pohlman
Oxford – Comm. Steven Merrill
Piscataquis – Comm. Paul Davis

OTHERS PRESENT:

MCCA Risk Pool - Manager Malcolm Ulmer
MCCA - Admin. Lauren Haven
MSA – Sheriff Ken Mason
Penobscot – Comm. Andre Cushing
Penobscot – Admin. Scott Adkins
Sagadahoc – Admin. Amber Jones
Verrill Dana – Lobbyists Jim Cohen and Brody Haverly-Johndro

2. Consent Agenda:

- 2.1. Approval of the Agenda
- 2.2. Approval of the Minutes
- 2.3. Financial Reports: Lauren Haven

Comm. Baldacci moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Comm. Gardner, and the motion passed with no opposition.

3. Officer Reports:

- 3.1. Secretary/Treasurer, George Jabar

Admin. Lauren Haven spoke on behalf of comm. Jabar reporting that a purchase requisition had been processed to buy a Meeting Owl like the one that had been used at the annual meeting. The cost would be a little over a thousand dollars.

- 3.2. Vice President, Norm Fournier
- 3.3. President Report, Richard Dutremble

4. Standing Committee Reports:

- 4.1. NACo Update: Peter Baldacci & Sharyn Pohlman

NACo representative Peter Baldacci reported that he and Comm. Pohlman had both attended the Legislative Conference in February in Washington DC. Highlights included opportunities for engagement with fellow county leaders and our federal partners. President Biden spoke to the group about his county background and the many improvements made during his administration. There were many conversations at the conference about AI generative intelligence in which the technology gets “smarter” as more and more data is gathered and it essentially “learns” more things. The discussions involved how to take advantage of good things the AI technology has to offer while working to prevent any negative impact that might come with it. A committee was formed to investigate how AI could impact counties. The federal Medicaid statute was a topic of discussion and the limits which prohibit federal reimbursement for care provided in psychiatric or other residential treatment facilities with more than 16 beds, defined as Institutions for Mental Diseases (IMDs). In jails, this limit is four beds. The effects of these limitations can be seen on the streets. There was an initiative to push congress to review the data and consider increasing this number. ARPA was also discussed with respect to the funding and allocation deadline of December 31st, 2024. A couple of take-aways were that if a contractor was not complying, counties can switch companies. ARPA can pay for legal and auditing services. It can pay for substance abuse treatment programs and the building of crisis triage centers. Several counties are preparing to do that. Maine will be able to monitor the progress as the project is being tested in other states. There were resources being made available with case studies. NACo is growing with 85% of all US counties having joined as association members. A NACo partnership was made with SAVI to assist public employees having trouble with student loan debt. They educate employees on the best options available.

4.2. Convention Planning Committee (CPC): Lauren Haven

Admin. Lauren Haven reported that the CPC had met on March 1st and they accepted the proposal from Sugarloaf for the 2024 convention as the Samoset proposal was not within the MCCA budget. The Sugarloaf contract had been included in the agenda packet. The dates agreed upon for the conference were September 24th to the 26th. These were weekdays as the price for the conference was going to be significantly lower than it would be if the event was scheduled during the weekend. The committee planned to visit the venue in April to meet with the event coordinators and do a walk through of the facility.

4.3. Legislative Policy Committee (LPC): Steve Gorden, Chair

4.3.1. James Cohen, Verrill Dana

- Legislative Update
- Next Steps

LPC Chair, Steve Gorden reported that things were winding down in the Legislature. Comm. Gorden asked Lobbyist Jim Cohen to update the group on legislative activities. Mr. Cohen reported that the supplemental budget committee meetings were completed. The three elements of the budget we were focusing on were as follows:

Funding for indigent legal representation. This involved defense services in which the case proceedings would move much more quickly once the defendant has obtained legal representation. That spoke to one of our goals which was to reduce pretrial time. Comm. Baldacci said we should support the new bill aimed at ensuring a person's Sixth Amendment right to a speedy trial in the Maine judicial system. LD 1771, An Act Regarding Speedy Trials, would set limits on the amount of time that can elapse between a defendant's arraignment and the start of their trial. Inadequate court staffing was an issue continually causing delays. *Comm. Baldacci moved to support LD 1771 seconded by Comm. Gardner and the motion passed.*

Supplemental Jail Funding: There was four million set aside in the supplemental budget for MAT (medically assisted treatment) in jails which had been unfunded up to this point. However, the four million wasn't enough as counties spent \$7.85 million and this didn't address the jail budget shortfalls. Furthermore, it was unclear whether these funds would be annual for the MAT program ongoing. It could turn out to be another area in which jails would need to fight for funding every year. The group talked about injections as an alternative method for treatment as it reduced bullying in the jails. Other inmates would not be able to get access to it, but it was more expensive. The MAT program is approved for opioid funds, so counties could look at reimbursement from the settlement. It was on the list of approved programs which might allow counties to stretch these funds. We would need to gather more information.

Rural Patrol: LD 2109 was the emergency bill MCCA was supporting that would return Maine State Police (MSP) rural patrol services to 2020 staffing levels. The Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Committee (CJPS) reported it out and was supporting the bill. It was still on the Appropriations table. The final language states there will be an additional 32 positions in the budget to help fund rural patrol. The Transportation Committee and the CJPS supported (2 opposed), but the majority strongly supported the bill. There were many questions posed on Monday. MSP Comm. Sauschuck said the bill would reduce thousands of hours of overtime annually. The most important thing was for county representatives to keep in touch with legislators to keep these issues top of mind. Every communication will help.

Comm. Gardner raised concerns that the funds would go unspent at the end of the year and the money would then be used for another pet project instead. Comm. Baldacci asked if it was approved, would we be able to hold MSP to their call sharing agreements? Mr. Cohen said we would need to question the Appropriations Committee because the legal language is unclear. There is a difference between honoring the agreement fully and honoring the agreement with less capacity. Comm. Baldacci said it would have some value if MSP must hold to the existing agreements.

5. Association Reports - MACCAM, MARP, MRODA, MSA, others.

MSA: The group was reminded about the upcoming MSA conference the following week at the Samoset Resort on March 20th and 21st.

6. Adjournment

President Dutremble invited a motion to adjourn at approximately 11:55 a.m. Comm. Gardner made the motion, seconded by Comm. Gorden, and the motion to adjourn was approved.

Respectfully submitted,



MCCA Administrator, Lauren Haven

Attested:

MCCA Secretary-Treasurer, George Jabar