

**WALDO COUNTY FOR YEAR 2010 BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
NOVEMBER 6, 2009**

PRESENT: Budget Committee Members Bill Sneed (2009 Chairman), Nakomis Nelson, Evelyn Adams, Richard Desmarais, James Bennett, Ronald Price and James Kenney. Also present were County Commissioner Donald P. Berry, Amy R. Fowler and William D. Shorey, County Clerk Barbara Arseneau, Deputy County Clerk Veronica Stover to take the minutes and various County employees.

Budget Committee Chairman Bill Sneed opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY (1010) BUDGET REVIEW:

B. Sneed: The District Attorney is laid low with the flu, as is his whole family, so there is no one here from that. He sent along an email. Most of this stuff is pretty straight-forward. Let's go over to contractual services – line 4025 – Laboratory tests, 4045 medical, surgical, dental and if you look, lots of times they don't spend that money, so the question is why do they have so much if they don't spend so much because they never know how much they are going to have to spend. The DA has given us an email with a couple of sentence explanations for each one. Again, I will leave it for you to read it. They don't know how much it is going to cost or how many witnesses they are going to need. Karen tells me that Witness Fees have gone up, so that requires a little bit more money than what would normally happen. But, other than that, I have nothing to say about it. Does anybody have any questions about it? Jim [Bennett], do you have your standard complaints?

J. Bennett: I do. If I had my say I would not fund them a dime. I am being honest and I would say it if he were here, as I said it last year. I don't think that we should be taking taxpayers' money when people go out and paint circles around your potholes in the town and they destroy this and they destroy that and the police take them down there and they forget it and let them go. I don't think the taxpayers' money ought to fund them for nothing and the town had to foot the bill to clean the mess.

J. Kenney: That is an interesting point because I asked my wife, "Why does the County have to have a District Attorney?" The County doesn't have laws; the State has laws, so I am almost in agreement with you, but my wife says that is the way it is.

A. Fowler: It is what it is.

J. Kenney: We prosecute violators of State laws and federal laws.

J. Bennett: I guess my thing is, and I am sure everybody is sick of hearing it; a bunch of hoodlums go out and paint the front of the building and I am sure that the Commissioners are going to be some mad if he doesn't prosecute them. But how can he prosecute them when he won't take care of things out in the country? We can't even get a phone call out of that office.

Commissioner Fowler knows that because she was on the board with me and we had an incident and we called and called and we couldn't even get a phone call out of them.

****B. Sneed moved, J. Kenney seconded to accept the District Attorney Budget (1015) at \$171,441.00. Motion passed with 1 opposed (J. Bennett.)**

REGISTER OF DEEDS (1065) BUDGET REVIEW:

Present for the discussion was Register of Deeds Deloris Page.

B. Sneed: I have no questions about anything in here. Does anybody else?

N. Nelson: The only two questions that I have is, one; last when we talked you had some of the off-setting revenues for deeds transfers were projected - have you seen any change in that trend starting? Are they picking back up?

D. Page: Well, we have been a little busier and it has sort of picked up. A lot of them are foreclosure sales.

N. Nelson: I guess that was it.

B. Sneed: For those of you that don't know, this is a profit center for the County - a significant one - \$220,000.00, give or take. There is a series of blue pages in the back and I will leave it to you to read it.

A. Fowler: Which we put in there specifically for you, the Budget Committee members, so that you could be aware and see what exactly was going on.

B. Sneed: I am perfectly aware of MAC IMAGE and what is going on. This group of trust funders landed in Hancock 15 years ago.

N. Nelson: What is happening with that? I have read it.

D. Berry: They are demanding all of the information. There are a couple of things taking place right now. We all have legal counsel and there are a couple things legislatively as well, and so the point is the fact that you should be able to, at least, what your costs have been in the system. It seems like the answer that existed out of Hancock County was no real recovery of the millions of dollars that taxpayers in each county have put into the recording of information in years and this group just simply wants it handed over so they can then sell it on the Internet to other people. That is the scary piece right now for us because of what will happen right there.

B. Sneed: The reason that Ms. Page can turn over stuff in bulk is because the taxpayers of this county spent hundreds of thousands on the computer systems that allow them to do bulk transfers. Otherwise these "yo-yos" would be getting stuff one by one from a clerk.

N. Nelson: It seems like they want it all turned over - you ought to give it to them in shoe boxes? It's too bad that there couldn't be some kind of a county policy where if you want more than ten copies of a deed...

D. Page: It's "Right to Know"; Freedom of Access.

D. Berry: See, this is where the question federally is coming into play. Is it truly right to know? If we talked about the right to know about the deed for the County land up here, that is one thing. But the deed between you and I for a piece of land, that really may not be that much public information.

N. Nelson: It seems that the information could be given to them in a format that would make it inconvenient for them to want them to do this electronically.

D. Berry: They would come at us in court, of course.

N. Nelson: Well, that is their problem.

D. Berry: So, there are several things going on but this is a scary scenario for the county and every county in Maine price-wise.

B. Sneed: Any other questions about Deeds?

R. Desmarais: The air conditioners – 1,500 BTU - should it be 5,100 BTU? Is that a miss-print?

D. Page: It should be 15,000 BTU. Sorry about that.

****J. Bennett moved, N. Nelson seconded to accept the Registry of Deeds Budget (1065) at \$226,262.00. Unanimous.**

**ADVERTISING & PROMOTION (1080) BUDGET REVIEW:
WALDO COMMUNITY ACTIONS PARTNERS (1080-4715):**

Present for the discussion was Edward Murphy of Waldo Community Action Partners.

E. Murphy: Good evening. My name is Edward Murphy. I am the Transportation Director from Waldo Community Action Partners.

B. Sneed: Does anybody have any questions? I will do a little bit of history. These guys used to inhabit part of this building, and then two years ago they were cast out into the street and in order to make some sort of amends, the County gives them a little money since then.

J. Bennett: This says we give them \$10,354.00.

D. Berry: That was the combined of all three, Jim. If you go to Contractual Services, they are at the same as last year and the year before; \$3,500.00.

J. Kenney: What does the County gain from the \$3,500.00? Goodwill is what I heard.

D. Berry: Oh, it is a lot more than Goodwill. This is millions of miles of travel of servicing people in the County.

J. Kenney: I understand because each town is approached by Waldo CAP for contributions.

E. Murphy: We started this program in the early '70's in partnership with the County. It was a partnership between WCAP and Waldo County and over the years we served the general public and I think we served them real well. This past year we served 2,200 Waldo County people. We provided 2.6 million miles for a total of 88,700 trips. Some of it is done with a fee for service, but the money that we get from municipalities and the County is used solely for matching purposes to bring in funds to fund services where people cannot afford to pay a fee. We do a lot of cancer dialysis and life threatening transportation things from all the way here in Belfast, Maine to Portland, to Boston, to Chicago; we have been to Alabama and places that people need to get for medical appointments. It is a County-wide service and especially the large portion of riders is the senior population who paid taxes in this County all of their lives. So, they are getting a little help back when they no longer have a driver's license or the ability to drive. It is critical to them and should any of you ever have an issue where you need help getting somebody a ride, especially to a medical appointment, if you call me I will see that it happens and I will make sure it does.

J. Kenney: Thank you for the explanation.

R. Desmarais: I will go along with what you say that we give a sizeable chunk in our towns. I have brought it up that we have already given something at the County and now we are giving 100% of the town and it is tough on us.

J. Bennett: I will tell you that we have a couple of persons in our town that use this to get back and forth to the doctors and get back and forth to wherever and all they have to pay is \$2.50 to come to Belfast. This week I had an elderly lady that lived in another town that called me and because she was being charge \$0.44 a mile, I called in and talked with Ed and it all got straightened out and this lady is riding for free.

E. Adams: Is it just for elderly?

E. Murphy: No, it goes from zero to one hundred. We transport all ages. Every one of us in this room could ride the bus on the scheduled route. For individual medical transportation, we need to at least pay our volunteer drivers mileage to get them there somehow and we do that through town and County funds that are used as a matching ratio to get those dollars.

E. Adams: Yes, we do the same thing in Frankfort. This is just for medical appointments?

E. Murphy: No, we take people grocery shopping; we take them on scheduled routes. We go through Frankfort every day of the week.

E. Adams: I have just wondered if you are the little bus at Steamboat every Friday.

E. Murphy: Yup, it is one of my buses.

B. Sneed: The town of Prospect figures we get more bang for the buck out of this thing.

E. Murphy: We provided \$1.8 million dollars of services this past year and between the County and the Towns, we raised a total of \$45,000.00. We were real creative on how we used Town and County funding. We bring a big buck back to this area for that little amount of money.

****B. Sneed moved, J. Bennett seconded to fund Advertising and Promotion Budget (1080-4715) – Waldo Community Action Partners at \$3,500.00. Unanimous.**

ADVERTISING & PROMOTION (1080) BUDGET REVIEW:

EASTERN ME DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (1080-4716):

Present for the discussion was the County Commissioners.

D. Berry: As you can see, we chose to fund them at zero.

B. Sneed: That seems fair.

****R. Desmarais moved, N. Nelson seconded to fund Advertising and Promotion Budget (1080-4716) – Eastern ME Development Corporation Budget at zero. Unanimous.**

ADVERTISING & PROMOTION (1080) BUDGET REVIEW:

TIME & TIDE RC&D (1080-4718):

Present for the discussion was the County Commissioners.

A. Fowler: I don't believe there is anyone here to speak on behalf of this.

B. Sneed: This is an odd one because when I first started, they always got some money; then for a few years they sort of disappeared from the face of the earth and then a young fellow came in and really made a pitch and then I think he has actually carried through on it (the organization), even though there is no one here to speak on it they do seem to be holding up their end the last few years.

A. Fowler: If I may, Mr. Chairman, they have organized - I've known of several groups within Unity where they work in conjunction with everything from the Lion's Club, to the Barn Raisers, and Unity Hardware Store - and they have helped insulate people's homes and teach them how to do some of these projects on their own. They are quite worthy and very crafty.

J. Bennett: Last year they gave out bags of insulation and plastic to put on your windows. They also had a group of volunteers and they went from house to house, like Amy said.

J. Kenney: Generally, I squeeze down hard on these and like the numbers to be zero. Time and Tide is now working with the Unity Board of Selectmen on an application for a grant that doesn't come from taxpayers but I would usually squeeze to zero, but I sat with them Monday and going over the application, and he is not charging Unity.

J. Bennett: And they are going to work on one with us.

J. Kenney: I would get lost as to why the County would need to be paying for this. They did good work in Unity but it's like they have a source of unending monies coming from other places. They don't ask Unity for money. I wonder why they are asking the County for money.

A. Fowler: I think because they utilize the entire County of the municipalities within it.

B. Sneed: They used to have a building over on East Belfast on the south side of the road and then that disappeared. Don, do you have any explanation?

D. Berry: No. As you were saying, they simply disappeared for a while as far as a viable organization, and then they came back a year ago, actually, to us and requested at that time, and we funded them then at \$3,854.00.00. They requested, as you can see, \$3,974.00 this year and we funded and recommend \$1,974.00 as our recommendation for funding. The data we were seeing is - most of the funding from then that we were seeing -was related to their office operation, and so they weren't asking for that much support in the other areas. I was involved in one of the meetings up there with the insulation when that first got going last year. So, our recommendation is \$1,974.00 for them.

****J. Bennett moved, J. Kenney seconded to fund Advertising and Promotion Budget (1080-4718) – Time and Tide RC&D Budget at \$1,500.00. Motion passed with one opposed (B. Sneed.)**

WALDO COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE (2005) BUDGET REVIEW:

Present for the discussion was Rick Kersbergen.

R. Kersbergen: I work for the University of Maine Cooperative Extension. Our budget this year, we are asking for a slight increase. Our budgets have declined the previous three years. The difference is we hired a new support staff person and when we hire someone new, we have to pay their salary. Usually, if we have someone that gets cost of living a raise, the University picks up those salaries.

B. Sneed: For those of you wondering why there are no personnel costs in here, it is the University that pays for it. I have a question. What is the \$400.00 Capital Outlay for?

R. Kersbergen: That is not this year's request. It should not be in there.

K. Trussell: That is under 2008.

****N. Nelson moved, B. Sneed seconded to fund Waldo County Extension Office (2005) Budget at \$42,702.00. Unanimous.**

B. Sneed: As you flip through this page, you will see that a couple of lines where it says, “Now in the Facilities Budget.”

R. Kersbergen: Keith [Nealley, Facilities Manager] has done a really great job working with us and improving the building and handicap ramp.

WALDO COUNTY SOIL & WATER (2035) BUDGET REVIEW:

Present for the discussion was Kym Sanderson.

J. Kenney: My question: what does this department do?

K. Sanderson: We serve as a liaison between the National Resource Conservation services at the County level. We were put in place to assist with the Federal Government. We started out originally with farmers, mostly, and to get federal money out onto the land to assist farmers after the dust bowl. We were put in place because the federal government felt they needed a liaison because the folks on the ground level were nervous about working with the federal government on their land. So, they developed the Soil and Water Conservation Districts throughout the United States districts, throughout the State and throughout the country. We operate in the federal buildings like the one out on [Route] 137 and the federal and state money pays for our office space, phones, equipment. What they don't pay for is the salaries. So, the money that we get from the counties to keep that office running and from the State, which we get a little bit of money from the Department of Agriculture, goes towards my salary and keeping me there. The rest of the money we earn ourselves with sales. We sell trees and shrubs in the spring; fish, we have gone into writing grants, and we are branching out more and working with Unity Pond with the water quality there. We are assisting individual citizens. We are getting more and more of that as the farms are getting smaller and smaller, and less and less. So, we are getting more individual citizens calling us. Maine DOT has referenced us when they get calls about problems with erosion and ditches. We are also getting calls through DEP; they are saying give the Soil and Water Conservation a call. We have people saying that they have a plan to fix the drainage, “but we have to have you sign off on it.” We are working a lot more in those areas as well. We are also doing a lot more education now. We just hired, this week, a part-time education coordinator which we have never done before. It has always been a one employee group here and that would be me. We are really excited, and she just started this week, and we are going to put together a conservation fair. We are trying to focus a little on the younger students now just to get them interested early on about conservation.

J. Kenney: Did I hear you say you have trees?

K. Sanderson: We sell trees and shrubs.

****B. Sneed moved, J. Bennett seconded to fund Waldo County Soil and Water (2035) Budget at \$20,475.00. Unanimous.**

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS (1020) BUDGET REVIEW:

Present for the discussion was County Commissioners.

B. Sneed: What is the \$6,000.00 part-time for?

D. Berry: We ran into two situations this last year where we actually had to hire, down in the DA's office and in our office, part-time help, and we had no funds available in our account to do that. So, we covered it, but we had considered putting in \$12,800.00. We, as Commissioners, thought it over and we moved it back to \$6,000.00. So, that is what that represents.

B. Sneed: The last time you had a part-time employee, it rapidly became full-time in 2005.

D. Berry: Well, that is prior to me. This is not intended to be any full-time employee. I will not serve here forever and while I am serving this is intended to be part-time, period.

B. Sneed: Now, Ms. Page used to have a similar thing in her budget every year. It was vacation time for employees and some years it came to pass and some years it didn't. Then a few years ago, she decided to take it out or was urged to take it out.

D. Page: I think that this is a good idea because the beginning of last year, I was told to take one of my girls to fill into the DA's office as someone was going to be out for a couple of months.

D. Berry: So, it was my mission to take and move a person because of the load that happens in the DA's office. At certain times of the year, they really needed the help and Deloris was good enough to help out with that and we kept that pay of the person out of Deloris' account because we had no other source for it. As I said, this is our recommendation and this would cover some of those situations where we might have to do that.

B. Sneed: Then I will continue asking questions unless someone else wants to. 4015 – Professional Services – you guys used to break that out for us and then you stopped doing that. I guess I could be nosey and ask why.

D. Berry: In the Professional Services we have payroll which totals \$11,200.00, we have Bond Counsel which totals \$4,000.00, we have County Attorney which totals \$36,500.00, and we have Architect fees at \$1,500.00. The law enforcement and communications stipends and clothing allowances make up professional services. We have a situation where one of the unions, which we had spent large amounts of legal fees on in this last year, decertified. Therefore, those legal fees were just spent and the union did not exist any longer, but it was a cost that we had to deal with.

B. Sneed: What was the law enforcement, you said?

D. Berry: These are the payrolls that have to be run for those parts.

B. Sneed: Well, you had said something about the clothing allowances?

D. Berry: That is all of those pieces that are part of the payroll where you have to generate separate checks for those payments etc. So, that amount for that piece of it is \$11,200.00.

B. Sneed: Does anybody else have any questions?

R. Desmarais: Line 4820 – Dues – why over a 100% increase?

D. Berry: The biggest piece there is we inherited the Jail funds at one time that was covered; not any more. In the Jail we used to get \$4,200.00 and we now have to pay that.

A. Fowler: The State will not allow us to put the dues into the Jail budget, which is capped. They took those out so now you, the taxpayer, have to assume that \$4,200.00 that is rightfully the Jails.

B. Sneed: They have a \$2.8 million budget and the last time anyone checked, it was \$2.2 million.

D. Berry: No county is able to move it. So, that is the greatest piece of the increase of \$4,200.00 is that.

J. Kenney: For the Jail?

D. Berry: Yes.

J. Kenney: Perhaps I am missing something. Dues are not paid by Jails; by people.

D. Berry: It is the liability insurance, those things that fall into that. They were picking that up prior and now we are picking that up because they would not permit any of the counties under the new law to be able to do that even though they are getting plenty of money.

J. Kenney: So you call it “Dues,” but the description is “insurance,” and it is not part of 4722.

D. Berry: It is part of 4820.

A. Fowler: You have to belong to what is called “the Risk Pool.” The Risk Pool insures the 16 County Jails because no one else will ensure a Jail, and to belong to this Risk Pool you have to pay dues to get in. I apologize for the confusion.

**** R. Desmarais moved, J. Kenney seconded to fund line 4820 at \$9,000.00.**

Discussion:

D. Berry: Right now one of the services that we are providing through the NACo, in amount of \$745.00, is the Prescription Discount Card in the County. That program to people in this County, saved the people here last year from September through January - has totaled \$6,520.57.

B. Sneed: What does that have to do with dues?

D. Berry: It has to do with it because NACo is part of that. We have to pay the \$745.00 in dues to get the Prescription Drug card for the citizens of Waldo County, which has returned over those months, over \$6,500.00. That is one of those programs that is funded in that amount, and so your MCCA dues is \$9,000.00, MMA is \$575.00, and then the other dues that you see here in that line give us in that total, and reducing that - what do we reduce? Required dues to go to other programs.

R. Desmarais: The bottom line will not carry that? The \$117,000.00 will not carry that?

D. Berry: You know we started out with \$130,000.00 in that line. We dropped that to \$117,000.00 and we dropped it down - we just took it down to what we felt was "bare bones" as far as covering the needs for the County.

N. Nelson: You were basically \$30,000.00 less than last year is what you are asking for this year?

D. Berry: Yes, actually we are more than that.

B. Sneed: Any further discussion on reducing line 4820 by \$1,420.00?

MOTION FAILED AS IT WAS A TIE VOTE.

J. Bennett: I have a question on line 3100 – Part-Time. Are you telling us that the part-time person is somebody that is like a floater?

D. Berry: If we needed them in a position, Jim, then we would move them to a position that we needed them in. There is no one on our payroll that fits any of that.

J. Bennett: I have another question. Do they get any benefits?

D. Berry: No, because they are part-time.

A. Fowler: We were really fortunate that Deloris was kind enough to give up one of her employees for an extended amount of time. She lost 12 weeks. We were lucky at that point that we could do that, but - make no mistake - if that happens again, we could do that.

W. Shorey: I think one way to look at this \$6,000.00 from where I sit as being a new commissioner; it is almost like a crisis account. You know it isn't like if you give \$6,000.00, you are going to see someone running through the office. This was money to be used in extreme emergencies and, with no other funds available and the goodness of the good people that work for us, we were able to pull it off by borrowing and stealing some of the help.

****N. Nelson moved, B. Sneed seconded to fund Commissioners (1020) Budget at \$505,503.00. Unanimous.**

RECORDS PRESERVATION (2040) BUDGET REVIEW:

Present for the discussion was County Commissioners.

B. Sneed: There is \$11,602.87 in the Records Preservation Capital Reserve Account.

****B. Sneed moved, J. Bennett seconded to fund the Records Preservation (2040) Budget at zero and take the money out of Capital Reserve Account.**

Discussion:

N. Nelson: Is there anyone that would want to speak?

D. Berry: Karen, is there an earmark on that money? That is the question. I don't think there is.

K. Trussell: I will double check to make sure.

N. Nelson: How are things going?

B. Arseneau: Slow, because it is me doing it. I'm trying to do two jobs at the same time, so I'm picking away at the de-acidifying and rebinding of some very old books that have been sitting and waiting to be done, and that way when people are coming in and looking at them, I am not pulling them out with string around them and trying to turn the pages very gingerly. I know we are down to one book that needs to be done. I haven't been able to do microfilming just from lack of time, but I need to get that done this year. We have some volumes that are completed that need to be microfilmed and that is an essential thing that needs to be done. I would need to drive it to the State and it would need to be developed there and it would be my obligation to sit with the little spinners that go and I would have to make sure that each of those screens is clear to read. If there is a problem, I have to go back and re-microfilm whatever did not come out properly. That is stuff that absolutely needs to be done in 2010. So, that budget allows for that traveling. The rest of it that needs to be kept permanently should be on the proper paper, and you cannot use everyday paper for that but you can use the proper stuff that is acid free, etc. This budget is bare bones. It is just the absolute needs.

Motion passed unanimously.

GRANT WRITING (2050) BUDGET REVIEW:

Present for the discussion was County Commissioners.

N. Nelson: The department request was \$10,000.00. That is a lot over last year and the Commissioners \$5,000.00; that is a realistic number.

****N. Nelson moved, B. Sneed seconded to fund the Grant Writing (2050) Budget at \$5,000.00. Unanimous.**

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS (2025) BUDGET REVIEW:

Present for the discussion was County Commissioners.

B. Sneed: I see that line 4000 says Contractual Services and it pretty much is.

N. Nelson: I bet we could take the \$800.00 in Commodities and move it down to \$795.00.

R. Desmarais: That is what I was thinking.

B. Sneed: For the folks that are new at this, Don, do you want to give a quick history of where this comes from and where it is headed?

D. Berry: The majority of this comes out of the fact that we negotiated over the last year, started with four contracts, three of which were brand new. One of those de-certified. The other two are in effect at the present time and they will be in effect for another full year. The third one has two more years and that is the Communications, one. The other part that comes into play here is the fact that our employees now are paying a percentage this year - 5% of the health insurance rate and next year it is 10%. The one contract we have for the following year is at 12% of rates they are paying for their health insurance. So, much of this is tied up simply within the contracts themselves as what is occurring there. The contracts are public information; there is a whole shelf of them downstairs as to where and what those things are. It was a long tedious task trying to get all of this together but finally it came together as those members who were here last year know - just right in the middle of this process; it happened - which was really difficult and hard to get explained and readjust budgets and all of a sudden the sheets in front of you were not valid because they were now contractual items instead. It has probably been one of the better things that has happened for us because we are not having to deal with guessing every single year as to where we are going; how much is being spent. It is within the contracts. We do have a few situations that we have to deal with at times but those things will iron out in the end. So, the obligation that you see here is all the benefits, all of the pieces that come into play here as far as us looking at MEPERS, which is Maine State Retirement; the FICA taxes, Workers Comp, retirement, the health insurance premiums themselves those are all part of what we are dealing with. So, briefly, that is what this page is about is majority of it is all obligation through contract.

B. Sneed: Could you explain to the folks that are new at this how the 4724 – Health Insurance Premiums - took such a nose dive between 2008 and 2009?

D. Berry: One of the big things that happened there is the fact that we went self-insured, for one thing. That has actually saved us quite a bit as far as the insurance cost, even though people have contributed into the system. We are the ones that are running the system now. At this point in time, since we are doing our own insurance, it has had its growing pains. We have ironed out most of the growing pains and most of those have happened just down the street here [Waldo County General Hospital] where we had to straighten it out. We now seem to be doing very well as far as our process.

R. Desmarais: How many full-time employees do you have in the County?

M. Wadsworth: 75 full-timers.

****B. Sneed moved, J. Bennett seconded to fund the Employee Benefits (2025) Budget at \$909,348.00. Unanimous.**

B. Sneed: Before we go home tonight, I just have one question that you may or may not want to answer. The budget is up very little over last year and all of the employees got a cost of living and I want to know how you did it.

D. Berry: The three of us worked very hard just really scrutinizing every single one of the budgets that came to us and we knew what our fixed costs were going to be, and those were the salaries. But even with the increases that occurred for everyone in the County, we were able to save and now it has increased a little bit more with your help. Our goal was to try to get very honestly as close to zero as we could as far as increase and we felt that where we ended up and where we are at right now, people, on my computer is 1.03 percent. That is what my sheet is showing right now as an increase for the County. That is minus everything we have done tonight but that is where we are at right now.

J. Kenney: This has been a good learning session for me and I am an engineer and I like numbers. I would make a request; with these handouts that we have been getting, it shows the expense. If they could be made available, at least to me by electronic, or mail, or something as they are generated, that would help me prepare for the next round for next year.

D. Berry: That is not a problem.

J. Kenney: I am pleased to be here. It has been a learning experience for me, but I thank you for your willingness to make that available on a continuous basis for me.

D. Berry: Personally, and I think speaking for the other Commissioners and our office staff and our other Department Heads, we really appreciate you people, too. Friday night is a commitment. We appreciate your work with us here, too.

N. Nelson: I suggest that maybe next year if we are in this situation to a budget similar to what we had this year on a 20% increase or something, that maybe we would want to consider doing

this in a day session - start 9:00 in the morning and go to 3:00 p.m. and then have a break at lunch. That might suit other people, but it would suit me as consideration.

J. Bennett: That would work for me, but we've got people on the board that I think they work days.

N. Nelson: Or a Saturday even. It would be a lot easier to come for one day coming from the island.

B. Sneed: It doesn't matter to me one way or the other. But for those folks that have jobs, it may not be possible.

N. Nelson: This is for next year; just something for consideration.

B. Sneed: The next meeting will be November 20, 2009 - the Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m. That is a two-part meeting. The first part is the Public Hearing and anyone that sits out there, whether they are an employee or not; they can ask questions. Once that is over, we have the budget meeting that includes the Commissioners because if they had exceeded their L.D.1 Cap, we would have to vote on allowing them to go over, but that doesn't look like it is going to happen, so that part of the meeting is moved, thank goodness.

D. Berry: At this point in time, we are well under the Cap.

B. Sneed: In years past, I've gone through every one of these departments quickly. You can ask questions again and you can modify the budget at that point; it is not cast in stone until we vote on it that one last time. Then we are done for the year and you can turn in your travel expenses. We can get traveling expenses for anyone that comes to the meeting. So, anyone that wants to, feel free.

J. Kenney: Back to learning again. I received an email and it was you were going to be considering the budget and I showed up. I would like to keep seeing those, if we can, to see the process as a foundation.

D. Berry: We will.

N. Nelson: This year is my third year that I have been on and being a selectman. Assuming I do, does my term on the Budget Committee expire in the fall? How does that work?

B. Arseneau: This is your third year. That would need to come up for a nomination next year at the budget caucus, which is in August.

W. Shorey: When we were working on this budget, I said back then, and I say tonight, that the Commissioners - our goal was to see if we could present a budget that was within \$1 to \$2,000.00 of where it would wind up and, if we are doing our job, that is what you should expect almost every time. We had a lot of difficult meetings developing this budget and I am pleased

with this budget and extremely pleased with the participation of this Budget Committee because it seems like we are working together as a team instead of “us against them.” I think that is the way it should go.

R. Desmarais: I agree.

J. Bennett: We are used to getting budgets with a 20% increase, so this one was a treat.

N. Nelson: The only problem is it is harder to go back home to the selectmen and brag about what our big accomplishment was.

W. Shorey: But I think three different people came in while we were developing the budget this year, and it was interesting, and we were glad to have you.

A. Fowler: It was three different selectmen and you are right; it was nice because we would stop and ask what their thoughts were on that. I know Mr. Plausse came in and we handed him the budget and we got someone else’s take on that. It is nice.

B. Sneed: The total so far for the budget is \$7,456,172.00

****B. Sneed moved, R. Price seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 P.M. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted by Veronica Stover
Veronica Stover, Deputy County Clerk