

**WALDO COUNTY BUDGET COMMITTEE
FY 2007 WALDO COUNTY PUBLIC HEARING, FINAL BUDGET
COMMITTEE MEETING & JOINT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS/BUDGET
COMMITTEE MEETING
DECEMBER 1, 2006
7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Budget Committee Members Bill Sneed (Chairman), David Pendleton, Richard Crossman, Richard Desmarais, James Bennett, Tim Biggs, and Richard McLaughlin. In attendance as observers were Waldo County Commissioners Hyk, Boetsch and Fowler, Treasurer David Parkman, County Clerk Barbara Arseneau, numerous County Department Heads and County employees, members of the press and several citizens. Also present was Deputy County Clerk Veronica Stover to take the minutes.

PUBLIC MEETING – FY 2007 BUDGET:

Chairman B. Sneed called the Public Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Budget Committee introduced themselves. B. Sneed reviewed the agenda for the evening.

2050 – GRANT WRITING

B. Sneed: It started out at \$11,000.00 and it is down to \$5,000.00 at the moment.

R. Desmarais: I am going to suggest at the proper time that it be zeroed out.

J. Bennett: I feel the same way.

2045 - RESERVES

B. Sneed: It started out at \$293,000.00 and is now down to \$93,000.00.

Kathy Littlefield (Town of Waldo Selectman): I would like ask if there is currently \$265,000.00 plus in that account? (YES). The commissioners asked to add another \$200,000.00. And this is for any county planning, etc.?

B. Sneed: Future Building and land.

K. Littlefield: I would like to make a pitch that is one reason why we are in the fix that we are in now because the county did not always plan well for the future. I know with my own town years ago we did not put any money away either and when something big came up we were caught. Shortly we found out that was not the way to go, it was much better to put money aside each year. I think that everyone knows the situation that the County is in, not only with the issues and problems at the Jail but with the over-crowding in the Registry and in the other county facilities. (She respectfully asked that some of the money be put back into county planning.)

Jethro Pease (Former County Commissioner): One of the things that we addressed is we kept on hearing that there was no planning for the future of this county. At that time they were under construction for a new communication center which to this day is still not right due to the under funding of the building and we didn't plan. This account was set and established when John and I and Bob Gould were commissioners. It was set aside to try and build up money. You have overcrowding in the D.A.'s Office, Jail, Sheriff, and you have courthouses that are wall to wall with files; you have register of deeds that needs space. You have to move forward all of the time. One thing I want to get through to everyone here is when you stand still you are going backwards. You need to move forward. One thing that I want to caution you on is to not cut Planning and Future Buildings because you are going to need it sometime. The other thing that I did want to address is if you are really going to study numbers, then get off your butts and do your research and go back and look at the 10 and 20 year mark, this county is behind all 16 counties. It has only been the last five years this county has moved forward. About 6 years ago, every building in this county had a leaky roof.

S. Story: I think that it is a good idea to put money in for planning but the one thing that I did want to do is bring before you tonight because I had spoken with local reporters about what we are facing next year. The variance will go away next year on October 31st and I am quite comfortable that I will get a month or two out of D.O.C. and with a little begging and pleading; I will get us to December 31st of next year. So I am not panicking this year. 32 inmates are what we can house. If we take a look at what our budget will look like in 2008 doing a modest 3% increase from across the board from the numbers that you have presently approved in front of you, we are looking at 2.1 million dollars and that is if I can keep the variance of 32 inmates. My staff was advised yesterday that we had to look at another option because when the variance goes away it is not going to make sense for me to have the same staffing levels for 19 inmates that I will have to have for the 32 inmates. So with staff reductions in my facility and knowing what the boarding costs will incur for us in the year 2008 with 19 inmates and a staff reduction I can manage to keep it down to 2.4 million dollars. Lastly, I had to take a look at one last thing and that was because it had been mentioned is, what about a 72 hour lock up? And we send the inmates out where there is an abundance of boarding space. I thought I could get these numbers down more and I can't because minimum staffing for a 72 hour hold facility drives the inmate to staff ratio to the roof. That number looks like 2.6 million dollars for the year 2008. I throw these numbers out to you, not as a ploy, but to really echo what honorary Commissioner Pease and Kathy Littlefield had said and that is I went back a few years ago and dug into the archives of the Republican Journal and the Waldo Independent and I remember when the budget committee sat here, which consisted of Kathy Littlefield and Sam Butler, criticized the commissioners at that point that hadn't put money aside, they hadn't planned and they let these things sneak up on them. I throw this out to you because we are going down that path again. Now having said that, I totally understand what you are trying to do to keep under LD 1. Regardless of what you decide tonight, rest assure that my agency will be ready to do what we need to do with or without the variance. We will get the job done for you. I just wanted to throw that out for your information and consideration. Thank you.

B. Sneed: If we don't change one penny tonight we are \$11,000.00 under LD 1. If we put back \$12,000.00 we are over the cap and you want to put back \$200,000.00. Where does it end?

Dick Snyder (from Northport): I am a tax payer and my taxes have gone up in the last 6 or 7 years, so I am sympathetic with the increased budget. Nevertheless, I believe the \$200,000.00 request for planning is a critical feature for the county to have. I have been working on the jail committee along with a number of selectmen for the last year and a half and I have been astounded by what I have discovered there not only in terms of the conditions of our current jail and the possibilities that exist. I don't think that it would be wise for us to turn our backs despite exceeding the limit here on this \$200,000.00 expenditure for planning. I don't know if anyone has any questions for the Sheriff or Kathy Littlefield. I think that it would be a mistake to eliminate that amount.

B. Sneed: I have one question, where is the money coming from, then? What other departments do we keep cutting? Do we split it and take \$20,000.00 out of the other departments?

D. Snyder: I do not know the answer to that and I wish I did. I am prepared to see taxes raised a little in order to accommodate the real needs of the county.

B. Sneed: One in seven households in this county is at or below the poverty level. There is a story on the front page of the Republican Journal this week that says the soup kitchen and the food pantries are being over whelmed. I bring that up for whatever it is worth.

R. McLaughlin: I don't know what we are going to have left over this year after all of the bills are paid because we can't get a figure on it until the end of the year, but I assume we will have a surplus. My suggestion would be that if the commissioners, if there is money left over this year, instead of it going to reduce the taxes that it go in to the Future Land and Buildings account. I think that everybody is sort of ignoring the fact that we will go over the LD 1 if we put the \$200,000.00 back. Nobody wants it out of benefits, but like Bill said, where do you take it? You have all of these departments and you take \$20,000.00 out of each department, where is it going to come from? When I get my check at the end of the week, my first priority is to pay my bills and then everything left I save it. I know that we have to have buildings. I know that back when I was a commissioner before Jethro Pease was, we didn't have any reserves because the idea was every time you had money left over you put it back to reduce the taxes for the next year. I agree that reserves are really important and you have to have them.

H. Potter: This is my first time through here, but is there a method to overriding this tax limit?

B. Sneed: Yes, that is what we are going to do the last part of the meeting. We have to vote either to allow the commissioners to exceed it or to increase it. As for Dick, I am not sure if we can forgo reducing taxes out of surplus. If you look at the law, if there is any unencumbered surplus the first of it has to go back to repaying any money if it was

taken out of contingency. The second one is to reduce the tax levy. The county is allowed to keep 80% for reducing taxes and then the other 20% can go for all other purposes. There is somewhere around \$180,000.00 of surplus at the moment.

R. McLaughlin: That is still \$36,000.00 that can go into Future Land and Buildings if it stays at \$180,000.00. I didn't anticipate that you have the whole \$200,000.00.

B. Sneed asked if there were any other comments.

Don Hewitt (Taxpayer from Lincolnville): I am concerned about cutting back the reserves. Any prudent financial practice would be planning for the future and would be reserving funds for that. Our basic problem is we have significant escalation due to the jail and employee benefits. We are basically masking those issues by saving money in reserves. We are mortgaging our future to cover current cost problems that we don't seem to be addressing. The fairly simple issue, I think we all understand it; the numbers are pretty hard to avoid them. We don't seem to have any answers to that, or nobody is coming up with the answers. I think that problem is to not cut back funding for the future. The problems are right in front of us.

S. Story: With all due respect, not addressing the problem, but if I do believe if I heard your name correctly, that would be the letter to the editor. I took great offense to the insinuation that we are sitting back and not doing anything at the jail. We have a restorative justice program that is doing a re-entry program. We are doing diversions out of court working with the D.A.'s Office. The Volunteers of America program, which saved us a quarter of a million dollars in its first year of implementation, was with a \$50,000.00 investment. The health insurance premiums but rest assured that this agency is doing a ton of work to reduce those numbers. We are not sitting back blindly and paying for inmates. As a matter of fact, we are one of two counties that are most aggressive in the state for the work that we are doing. I gladly invite you (Don Hewitt) or anybody else to the Sheriff office and sit down in my office and we will go over it. I really think that people should be informed that we are not sitting back idly throwing money at a problem; we are doing everything we can so we don't get to that point.

Ray Lewis (From Lincolnville): I have to echo a little bit of what Don said. I have some concerns with the increase of the 3.8% vs. the 3.3% for social security. Federal is only going up 3.3% for retirees. I also have a concern with the health and medical premium paying 100% for the county employees. The federal government does not even pay 100% for their employees. They have a share that they pay in. I think there is some substantial savings if you look at what you can make the employees pay versus what they have had to pay in the past. I think it is time to belly up to the bar here and do the things like federal government and the state.

A woman asked why the EMA is not being used for the jail.

S. Story: It is not a secure area. Unless you want to go in and completely rebuild it, put in cells, toilets and showers, it is not built to be a jail. It never was. It was always built to be office space.

2040 – RECORDS PRESERVATION

B. Sneed: It started out \$3,300.00 and now it is at \$3,380.00. Does anyone have any thoughts on this?

R. Desmarais: I read in the paper and I think some good points were made. Why are we paying mileage and meals and all that for the records preservation? I think that should be eliminated. I think there is some trimming that could take place.

B. Arseneau: There is no longer a person doing this job, it is now my responsibility as County Clerk. These are to take microfilms to Augusta. I have to physically sit and check them and to physically look at each of the microfilm and make sure that it is correct. That may take a whole day or not. If I can do it in the morning and get back and skip a meal that is what I will do. That was for that purpose.

2035 – WALDO COUNTY SOIL & WATER

B. Sneed: They are asking for exactly what they have asked for the last three or four years.

2025 – EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

J. Pease: This issue always comes up year after year. A few years ago we did try to get better control of it. There is not much health insurance coverage in the State of Maine. That is why you cannot get decent deals on coverage. You have Anthem, AETNA, and a few others. The issue of 100% health insurance coverage; had I been around 20-30 years ago, I probably would not have done that. We tried to get a handle on that a few years ago in that any new employee coming into the county, the county does not pay 100% of their spouse or family; we cut it down to 2/3. That was a start. The only thing that I really caution you about is taking away what the employees already have. That is probably the most ridiculous thing to do. You finally have this county where you have some really good employees and your turn over is down and your deputies are out on the roads that are responding to the same calls that the state troopers respond to. One thing that I hear from people is no planning and more police coverage. There are normally 2-3 deputies out on the field every night and there are 26 towns. So that is 26 towns they need to respond to. The last thing I recommend is I would never take away what you have given.

B. Sneed: I looked at the sheet that Penobscot County put together. 15 to 14 counties and only 12 of them reported. I tried to find 9 job descriptions that were the same (same hours, same everything) except in two cases. Corrections officer, dispatcher, deeds clerk; each one was at or above the median for the salary in Maine. That means they are in the upper 50%. The only two that weren't were the EMA Director and the Judge of Probate. We have a lot of people in the county now that are getting good salaries in comparison to

their peers in other counties. So the tale of bringing them up to the top of the bottom third is long past.

Susan Crowe (Taxpayer of Lincolnville): I think that you may be looking at the wrong target. Certainly it is important to look at other entities and what they do on their benefits, that is part of your decision appropriately, it is also part of your decision when you consider the benefit level currently offered by the county which is quite high and look at the taxpayers who in many, many cases don't have nearly the kind of coverage that I would be likely to consider. If you look at the total market people are not getting that type of benefit coverage anymore and we should take that into consideration. Thank you.

Bob Hammer (From Lincolnville): The current annual expenditures for benefits are \$944,000.00. It has increased by 50 plus %. If you take that number it will soon be one million and then two million. The question is where are you going to cut that out of there?

Don Hewitt (From Lincolnville): If you look at benefits you have an unusual rate of cost. 100% for 68 of the full time employees with the only people coming on with the 2/3 coverage for dependents are like 4 employees. I think if you look at the world we are in today people are not offering these benefits. They are looking at benefit design changes; they have spent a number of years in the health insurance business. The issue that always comes up is people always say that we only have one provider in the state. That is not totally the issue. It is a problem and I understand it but if you are not looking at benefit design and constitution and rates and who is paying the premiums, you are not staying up with the current trend at all. On top of the premium increases you are also looking for a 3.8% increase for COLA. It seems to me quite clearly you cannot have it both ways. People will argue that you are going to be asking people to be taking a reduction in their salary but the bottom line is you are getting, between the increase and premiums, well beyond the rates and COLA which is above inflation, your employees costs are growing at a rate that doesn't make any sense in today's economy. Getting back to the point before, you are masking that by issues like cutting your Reserves. You are cutting the general health for the future of the county by covering up a problem that you are not addressing. I understand that you are being diligent but nobody is doing what you are doing. You have a small group of people that consider insurance concepts. I think that you have a problem that you are not willing to address because everybody says it is a "take away". Well, unfortunately, that is the real world that is happening everywhere. You can't expect the taxpayers in this county to pay those bills.

S. Story: Although I could argue with Mr. Hewitt on his newspaper article on what the jail is or isn't doing I can't argue with what he just said. Everything that he said is absolutely right. Here is what I do have to offer up. This county did in fact try to address the insurance problem back under Commissioner McLaughlin. We put a committee together and took a look at different options and tried to find the least expensive. We tried to find the most economical without cutting the benefits from the employees of this county. That did work well for a few years but, as you so eloquently put, those costs are

sky rocketing. I agree with you, it is not fair to blame that simply on Anthem because I think that if we do the same thing in the upcoming year and take a look, we may find that there is other options available to us, like perhaps self insuring, definitely looking at some competitors. I think there are some other things that we can do to reduce this. I want to briefly tell you about the real world that the people behind me face everyday. I am going to read some excerpts and I apologize if anyone has a queasy stomach but this is the real world. "We are working in a housing area when an inmate with mental health issues removes his cloths smeared his feces all over his body then threatened to hurt himself with his toothbrush sharpened end he had in his cell. We had to enter the cell, restrain the inmate preventing him from harming himself. I have been exposed to almost every communicable disease. I have administered first aid to bleeding inmates with HIV. I have been in combative situations with inmates that have tuberculosis and hepatitis. I have assisted an inmate with a feeding tube, colostomy bag. I have had hospital duty and watched an inmate die. I have given inmate news of death of his child and recently we had to go tell an inmate that his girlfriend died and three days later his wife passed away from the same car accident. I have been spit on, puked on, urinated on, had feces thrown at me and even had a used tampon thrown at me by an intoxicated angry female. One intoxicated female in the visiting room banged on the door stating that they were going to be sick, I opened the door and they started have projectile vomit on me." I can go on and on. Would you people stand up that wrote these things? Would the police officers that dragged these people in please stand up. I agree not everyone out there has the level of benefits that these people do, but I would also contend that not everyone does the jobs that these people do. These people put their lives on the line. I have a police officer standing here that last year was attacked, and had he not been on top of his game, would have been killed that night and perhaps the officers coming to back him up would have been killed. These people work hard, they put their lives on the line for you every single day and they deal with the people that you do not want to deal with. They deal with the people that, when you make the telephone call, you expect them to deal with it. I ask you, do they not deserve to have benefits and fair salary? I will leave it at that.

Bryant White (Sheriffs Department): I am here to represent ALL employees. First of all we are talking about federal; I heard that comment to compare our guys to county salaries to federal salaries. Then take a look at the benefit package. 3.8% for my guys is about a thousand dollars. The insurance coverage that you are thinking about is \$4,500.00 decrease so I just want to point out that is not an increase in salary. Thank you.

Greg Stearns (Detective at Sheriff's Office): To echo what Jethro said, they did start working on increasing the benefit package a few years ago with new hires. Like Jethro said, to take away that is a hard thing. If you were to take away now and all of a sudden we are expected to pay 100% of our family's coverage, that is a \$4,500.00 pay cut that we will all have.

Edwin Greely (from the town of Morrill): I have a son that is employed with the county as well. I think that anybody that had read the newspapers these days has seen that the crime seems to be on the increase and it hasn't slowed down much. I taught school for some 32 years and my son has said that he couldn't do what I did and I know that I

couldn't do what he or some of these people here do tonight. I fully support their request for their insurance, taxes are increasing. I also realize having my eyes opened as to what the law enforcement people do along with corrections; I have heard some about it. I do know out there in the field when domestic violence takes place, these people don't know exactly what they will be facing. I fully support them and as far as the increase for the insurance, perhaps something could be done as to restructure the cost of that. I do not want to see a reduction of their benefits or a reduction in their pay. They do work for less and I stand my ground on that.

Dick Snyder: There is something at stake here that is far more important than just the figure and that has to do with the quality of life in this county. I have studied jails and prisons and law enforcement throughout the country and, to some extent, around the world. We have a rather distinctive reality here in Waldo County in that our sheriff deputies, sheriff, jail administrator and corrections officer are part of the community and have a connection to the people that are here. Many of them cannot afford to live in some of the places with the salary they get paid. They do a job like this gentleman and the Sheriff just illustrated beautifully; they do a job that is unusual. Most of the places do not have the quality of law enforcement and corrections that we have here. I have watched these men working and it is rather extraordinary what they are willing to put up with and to deal with in most cases as human beings. They are people they have known all their lives. To take away money from them now in the form of a take back of any kind, it strikes me, will hurt morale. One thing you don't want to do in a community is to destroy the morale of the community. I think that we need to take that into consideration beyond the dollars and cents.

Bob Hammer: We thank them for what they do 24 hours a day seven days a week. When you go from one million to two million in premiums there is going to be a big impact on the other budgets. The hard decision is now.

Judy Nealley (Probate Court): With the new insurance benefits package my gross increase with the 3.8% COLA will be \$520.00 a year and that is before taxes. I did some research and my personal taxes in Monroe are \$2,200.00 a year. The percentage of that which goes to the county is 11% and my proposed annual increase with the 3% is \$8.71 each year with the increase of my taxes.

R. McLaughlin: Under the Commissioners budget that figure a couple of meetings ago was \$1,404,550.00 and we asked the commissioners to go back and see what they can negotiate and being back another figure to us and we gave them a target of \$50,000.00. They came back with a \$54,400.00 cut. They did come up with a \$54,000.00 savings for us.

2005 – WALDO COUNTY EXTENSION

B. Sneed: They are down \$4,000.00 or so in previous years. There was no further discussion.

2000 – INTEREST

There was no discussion.

1095 – DEBT SERVICE

There was no discussion.

1090 – AUDITING

There was no discussion.

1080 – ADVERTISING & PROMOTION

B. Sneed: We have actually added a little bit of money to that this year. We gave some money to Eastern Maine Development Corporation and gave some money to Time & Tide because they promised to do something.

D. Parkman: I think that if you want to cut the budget and not hurt anybody, this is the perfect place to cut \$10,000.00 out.

B. Sneed: Some of this money is earmarked for people who swore up and down that they would do grant searching for the county. Whether they come through or not next year we will see.

D. Parkman: We have given money to the Eastern Maine Development before and I can't see where they have done anything for this county. We haven't given them any money in the last few years because of it. As far as the Waldo County Action Group and Time & Tide, we don't have a welfare department in county government. Cutting \$10,000.00 is not going to hurt anyone in this county; it is going to help the tax payers.

R. Desmarais: I look at Eastern Maine Development like Volunteers of America; I expect a return in excess of the \$5,000.00 they are asking for. We are growing along the coast here and it is moving into Waldo County and we need professional help to capture that growth. That growth means jobs and tax revenue.

J. Pease: We did cut that out in the past few years. The reason we did that is they had a history of not showing anything.

Jonathan Daniels, President CEO of Eastern Maine Development Corporation: Today is my third anniversary at EMDC. One week after I came on board Waldo County chose for the first time in a long time not to support EMDC. I took that personally. We are going to continue to work for you, I will tell you that right now. We are going to show you that there is a difference. We are going to show you the administration is changing and we are going to show you benefits for the dollars.

R. McLaughlin: As Dick suggested earlier, taking the \$5,000.00 grant money and not funding it, this is where we thought we would put it into EMDC, and we thought we would get the grant writing from them instead of sending it to someone that is not even in the State anymore.

R. Desmarais: The night that Chris from EMDC came down and spoke with us, he was pretty happy that day because he received over \$200,000.00 in grants. This man has been sought out for his ability to get grants. He knows what he is doing and he is willing to work with us on anything that we would like him to work on. I think that this is another “Volunteer of America” where we are going to put money into it and we expect to get a return for our investment.

1076 – COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

B. Sneed: There is one minor change to be made here which is line 4835 (Postage) The \$90.00 never got added into the bottom figure, so we need to add that amount in. Owen’s budget is up about \$6,000.00 from last year and down about \$9,000.00 from the year before that. So it has been holding pretty steady.

O. Smith: I have been blessed along with other agencies in the County in the past four or five years. We need to stop this revolving door. I have been associated with the City of Belfast before coming to Dispatch. We don’t have to have that rotating door happen. It cost a lot of money to retrain a deputy and it costs a lot of money when I lose a dispatcher. It takes 1 ½ years to 2 years before you get a dispatcher that can handle everything. We have been pretty stable due to the fact that we have good wages and benefits. I can tell you, in all honesty, that experienced people are not knocking on my door when I am looking for help. I would hate to think what will happen if we get back into the revolving door that the county and city experienced four or five years ago.

1075 – SHERIFF

B. Sneed: It is a tad over one million dollars. Scott has taken his fair share of hits in this particular department. He just guesses at this best he can, with the cost of vehicle maintenance and gasoline.

S. Story: That is the hard part, when we put this budget together in July/August the price of gas is one thing and then when it is reviewed in September it is another thing and here we are today and it is back up 20¢. It is a roll of the dice. It is what it is. I think that we do a pretty good job of guessing.

J. Bennett: (To S. Story) How many cruisers do you have on the road?

S. Story: There is two to three on the road at any given time. I have a complete fleet of 16 units. Each car puts on about 30,000 miles per year. We rotate cars out after around 100,000 miles. Bob Keating can fill you in better on the program if you want more details. One thing, just so you will know, too, is our calls for service over the last five to six years have continually gone up. I haven’t been back to you for several years for more officers or more cars. I have tried everything to maximize our resources. The last year and a half we have engaged in a call share agreement with Maine State Police. We work close with them on scheduling and zone coverage, so we can reduce the number of deputies that I have to hire to go out and respond to those calls. Again, I want you to know that we are doing everything we can to keep these numbers down. I haven’t been

back to you for a new employee for three years and there was a time when the calls for service were really dictating that we add one or two persons every year there for several years in a row. We are not doing that, we are making do with what we got.

R. Desmarais: Wednesday morning I was over to Kallis Ford, you had three sheriff cars and a correction car. You had 20% of your fleet sitting in their lot waiting for service. How bad off are we?

S. Story: Some of the older cars can be a pain but I can tell you right now that we do all right and we have a couple of old spares kicking around to get us through.

B. White: The cruisers you saw up there, one was a cruiser that just stopped. We have three spare cars which we use all the time.

J. Pease: Just a little history, four or five years ago cruisers were being traded out at 250,000 miles. What we were seeing with this with cost was we were spending ridiculous amounts on maintenance. The plan we put together is that cruisers would be turned out at about 100 – 150,000 miles.

S. Story: When I told you they rotate at 100,000 that is usually when they come off the full time status and go to part time status and again run them for another two years.

T. Biggs: If an officer gets hurt on a call, does he get workman's comp for that?

S. Story: Yes.

1070 – PROBATE COURT

B. Sneed: We made some cuts here and reduced by \$3,500.00.

D. Parkman: Under Probate a couple of years ago court appointments on that line was over. Susan Longley, Judge of Probate came in with the same numbers as last year. Court appointments are like a guessing game as far as you really don't know what you are going to do as far as expenses. She wanted \$8,000.00 for court appointments and already this year they have spent \$11,000.00 and that shows up in the minus. What I would like to do is to increase the budget by \$4,000.00. As a treasurer I take a look at some problem areas that I might think may be going over and this has been one of them. I would like to see the Budget Committee put \$4,000.00 to that line. Susan, this year, has instituted a new program which is restitution. Every revenue goes into the county's general account and it doesn't show up in the individual account. So far this year they have collected \$7,444.00. It is not good for these accounts to be constantly in the red every year without making certain adjustments.

R. Desmarais: Dave, when we were going line by line and looking at percentage used, I ran a total of up to \$6,000.00. Because of you speaking earlier when we were discussing this budget, I took \$4,000.00 off and recommended a \$2,000.00 decrease on the bottom line. Because of you the \$4,000.00 went into the \$8,000.00, so it is there, Dave.

B. Sneed: Plus if I am not mistaken, this is one of those rare things that can run in the red as far as we have to spend the money regardless of how much it is. Dave is unhappy because it has a minus sign and he wants them all pluses.

1065 – REGISTRY OF DEEDS

J. Bennett: I would like to get rid of 3104 – the part time clerk.

B. Sneed: This is a summer replacement type thing.

D. Page: I would like to ask for half of it instead of getting rid of the whole line. I have found out that a couple of my girls may be going into surgery at the same time and they have a lot of vacation time that needs to be covered. I would like to have a little cushion.

1050 – JAIL

B. Sneed discussed previous reductions that were made by the Budget Committee.

D. Hewitt: After the previous proposal for a new jail, I understand that there was a citizen's committee across the county that was put together to study the jail. They submitted a report and presented it to the Waldo County Commissioners around 2005. The committee had made several recommendations and in talking with some people no one has ever heard of what came of those recommendations. The person that brought it to my attention said it seems to have gone underground.

S. Story: They did come out with recommendations. I am sorry that Kathy left earlier because I would have liked her to address that. The bottom line is that we made recommendations that we take a look and examine some different options because it was very obvious that the taxpayers were not interested in spending 18 million dollars for a new jail. We respected that and the committee realized that we needed to go back and look at other feasible options. Some of those recommendations came out about doing some of the infrastructure first. The other thought process was to take a look at building a jail first and then a sheriff's office. We wanted to take a look at what could we do with our existing facility once we were to go ahead and do something different. There are a lot of options on the board that require some professional answers. That recommendation is still sitting with the Commissioners. The commissioner's place now is to get funding so we can move forward with that. They do have some funding so we can move forward with that. As a matter of fact, we have some people from SMRT and a couple of people that build these types of structures and look at this type of planning that are supposed to be getting together along with some selectmen from the community. We are trying to coordinate these efforts so that at the end of the day we might be able to come up with an alternative that will fit the needs. That is where it is at right now. It isn't forgotten. On this board you look at the \$700,000.00 I hope people don't think we threw a fat number out there so we would give the Budget Committee and the public \$150,000.00 to just cut. That \$700,000.00 was a projection on our year to date experience. So, when we make this budget, we do it based on our experience year to date. We have been very fortunate. We have managed to get the numbers down. We are looking good.

R. Desmarais: As I remember when the \$700,000.00 was presented to us when we started on that page, I believe you immediately said that you feel you do not need that full amount. You took the first step to reduce that.

1030 – FACILITIES

B. Sneed: There is a lot of stuff here. It's an attempt to bring under one umbrella all of the costs that were scattered throughout the various departments over the years.

J. Hyk: There are two reasons for that. When I came into office six years ago with Jethro Pease the buildings were in terrible shape here in the county. Part of the reason was because the individual people that occupied them were sort of in charge of the maintenance of the buildings whether they did anything about it or not. The other problem was when they looked at their budget and they needed to cut money, they cut it out of the building first. So the buildings were going down hill fast. There was no one who was accountable. Some of the money for the building could be from three different departments. It was crazy, so we said how we are going to deal with this problem is to take all the buildings and put one guy in charge and then put all the money in one budget. Now you are seeing it and it looks big! It was always there and it was hidden. Now you can track each item from month to month and year to year. Thank you.

B. Sneed: (To K. Overlock and O. Smith) Under Repairs/Maintenance under Communications Center there is \$9,500.00. Did you have repairs and maintenance for the Aborn Tower as well?

O. Smith: All tower sites costs are in 4620 with the exception of pedestals that hold the tower at Aborn.

B. Sneed: Under your budget the \$26,900.00 for tower Maintenance, that does not include the repairs to Aborn Hill?

O. Smith: That is under Facility Budget.

(J. Bennett and O. Smith discussed the previous conversations at the budget meetings regarding the tower sites and what money goes where. O. Smith gave the history of Aborn Hill. There was confusion between money in O. Smith's budget and then money in the Facilities budget.)

R. McLaughlin: I was under the impression that we took the \$11,000.00 out of the budget for the air conditioner for the mechanical room and they were suppose to come back and prove to us why we need to put it back in.

J. Hyk: I can't really hear what you are talking about.

R. McLaughlin: The \$11,000.00 for the air conditioner in the mechanical/computer room and we had taken it out of the budget before. It appears to still be in there.

B. Sneed: We did, indeed, reduce that to \$7,000.00.

J. Hyk: So you are saying it was not changed in the budget?

B. Sneed: Both of those bottom lines are wrong. For those of you who might wonder how we could get this wrong again, these things happen fast and furious. Veronica, Amy and the rest of them do the best they can to keep up.

1025 – TREASURER

There was no discussion.

1020 – COMMISSIONERS

There was no discussion.

1015 – DISTRICT ATTORNEY

G. Rushlau: Part of what the Sheriff and Leane Zainea have been working on over and over again is to try and make sure the only people in jail are the people that have invited themselves back there time and again. They have tried the VOA contract; they have failed and failed before that. The people that are there are people that have failed absolutely every effort we have made to keep them out of jail.

B. Sneed: When you guys did the first jail study, what was it, fifteen days for the average length of stay at the county jail? Now we are up to 25?

S. Story: Keep in mind it depends if they are sentenced or pre-trial. Everything that you are saying is absolutely correct. Here a little over a year ago we had an aggressive judge that came in and cracked the whip. All of a sudden my jail population went from a large number of pre-trial down to a large number of sentenced. Pre-trial people stay an average of 24 days. Sentenced people stay an average of 15. It is very important that we get them convicted. We are the ones that are stuck with it at the end of the day and we are doing everything that we can on our end and, again, we work closely with the D.A.'s office. We have the new program that you just funded this year.

B. Sneed: The study that Scott was talking about is pretty interesting and it is 160 pages. It is worth reading. There are 22 recommendations and over half of them related to the bail system and the court system. The remaining report spoke of the county sheriff and the local police department.

1010 – E.M.A.

There was no discussion.

FINAL BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING FY 2007

1010 – E.M.A.

B. Sneed: We discovered the county is allowing too much for travel for mileage. We have reduced some of the budgets but did not reduce them all so I would like to make a motion on the contractual side.

****B. Sneed moved, R. Desmarais seconded to reduce line 4100 (Travel) by \$500.00. Unanimous.**

****J. Bennett moved, T. Biggs seconded to accept the E.M.A. Budget at \$89,543.00. Unanimous.**

1015 – DISTRICT ATTORNEY

****B. Sneed moved, R. Desmarais seconded to reduce line 410 (Travel) by \$240.00. Unanimous.**

****R. McLaughlin moved, J. Bennett seconded to accept the District Attorney Budget at \$149,355.00. Unanimous.**

1020 – COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

****J. Bennett moved, T. Biggs seconded to reduce line 4722 (Liability Insurance) by \$70,000.00.**

Discussion:

B. Sneed: The logic is you have not spent anywhere near that. You have 90% of the year gone and you haven't spent anywhere near it.

B. Arseneau: We have to get this figure from the Maine County Commissioners Association Risk Pool. They tell us their best estimate. I confirmed it again on Monday because I wondered if it had changed. Last year, the reason why we didn't spend it so much is they were not sure what was going to be assessed due to the Knox County situation. They assured me that we really should not be going too far below the 30% for this year.

J. Bennett explained how he came up with the \$70,000.00 figure.

B. Arseneau: I want to make sure that I understood what you were saying. You were basing it on what was expended this year and adding 30% to that plus a \$6,000.00 cushion. I know it is a guessing game.

B. Sneed: I don't have the latest one but as of the 16th it hasn't changed a bit.

There was more discussion on liability insurance.

MOTION FAILED.

****B. Sneed moved, T. Biggs seconded to fund line 4722 at \$130,000.00, which is a reduction of \$44,198.00. Unanimous.**

B. Sneed: The budget right now stands at \$510,085.00. Why are we paying for HR/Payroll and \$8,000.00 for payroll?

B. Arseneau: You are inquiring about why payroll is being out sourced. We are not the only county doing this. There are five other counties that do the same thing. Those that do it in house have hired people to take care of it. Even if it is done in the Treasurer's department, I found out they have a person that is hired to take care of this. It is a full time job. Currently as you know, Waldo County pays under \$8,000.00 for payroll services. It is interesting that this Human Resources position, its not new it is two years old, actually grew from the Personal/Payroll Clerk which started out part time and former Commissioner Pease and the other commissioners had recognized that it had become a full time job. The person that was hired at that time was not interested in increasing the hours and the Commissioners expanded the personnel part to encompass human resource functions which include personnel matters, legal benefits, pay step increases and delicate personnel matters and that is along with gathering and submitting the entire payroll. I would like to note that Waldo County has the lowest paid HR related position by nearly \$8,000.00 from the next lowest. So it is the reasonable way to go.

****B. Sneed moved, R. Crossman seconded to fund the Commissioners Budget at \$510,085.00. Unanimous.**

1025 – TREASURER

****B. Sneed moved, R. McLaughlin seconded to reduce line 4100 (Travel/Meals) by \$100.00. Unanimous.**

****B. Sneed moved, J. Bennett seconded to fund the Treasurers Budget at \$52,702.67. Unanimous.**

1030 – FACILITIES

****B. Sneed moved, J. Bennett seconded to reduce line 4105 by \$500.00. Unanimous.**

****B. Sneed moved, J. Bennett seconded to fund the Facilities Budget at \$299,500.00. Unanimous.**

1050 – JAIL

****R. McLaughlin moved, T. Biggs seconded to fund the Jail Budget at \$1,988,311.00. Unanimous.**

1065 – REGISTRTY OF DEEDS

****J. Bennett moved, B. Sneed seconded to fund \$2,500.00 for the part time clerk. Unanimous.**

****B. Sneed moved, R. Desmarais seconded to reduce line 4105 by \$150.00. Unanimous.**

****B. Sneed moved, R. Crossman seconded to fund Registry of Deeds at \$229,338.00. Unanimous.**

1070 – PROBATE

****B. Sneed moved, T. Biggs seconded to reduce line 4105 by \$140.00. Unanimous.**

****T. Biggs moved, J. Bennett seconded to fund the Probate Budget at \$173,348.00. Unanimous.**

1075 – SHERIFF

****R. Desmarais moved, J. Bennett seconded to reduce line 4315 (Telephone) to \$21,000.00. Unanimous.**

****R. Desmarais moved, B. Sneed seconded to reduce line 5335 by \$2,000.00.**

Discussion:

R. McLaughlin: I would hate to set a precedent here that would create the departments to use up their money just so they wouldn't lose it. I would rather have them have a little initiative to save money.

S. Story: We were over on our full time, overtime and part time this year. Often times departments like myself, we skimp on some things when we get to the end of the year so we can provide you with a balance budget at the end of the year. I concur whole heartedly with what Mr. McLaughlin just said. Analyzing my budget that way literally does encourage myself as a department head, not that I would do this, but it encourages us to go and spend everything we got so we don't have anything left over at the end of the year.

R. Desmarais withdrew his motion.

****B. Sneed moved, R. McLaughlin seconded to fund the Sheriff Budget at \$997,333.00. Unanimous.**

1076 – COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

****B. Sneed moved, J. Bennett seconded to reduce line 4100 by \$600.00. Unanimous.**

****R. Crossman moved, J. Bennett seconded to fund the Communications Center Budget at \$649,926.00. Unanimous.**

1080 – ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

****J. Bennett moved, B. Sneed seconded to not fund Time & Tide in the amount of \$1,500.00. Unanimous.**

****R. Desmarais moved, J. Bennett seconded to not fund Waldo Community Action Partners in the amount of \$3,500.00.**

There was discussion of how Waldo CAP goes to the towns for money and then goes to the County. The Committee felt that it was not fair to be “double dipping.”

Vote passed with 4 in favor and 3 opposed (D. Pendleton, R. Crossman and B. Sneed).

****J. Bennett moved, R. Desmarais seconded to fund Eastern Maine Development Corp. in the amount of \$5,000.00. Vote passed with 6 in favor and 1 opposed (B. Sneed).**

1090 – AUDIT

****R. McLaughlin moved, T. Biggs seconded to fund the Audit Budget at \$5,500.00. Unanimous.**

1095 – DEBT SERVICE

****B. Sneed moved, J. Bennett seconded to fund the Debt Service Budget at \$73,500.00. Unanimous.**

2000 – INTEREST

****R. Crossman moved, B. Sneed seconded to fund the Interest Budget at \$50,000.00. Unanimous.**

2005 – WALDO COUNTY EXTENSION

****B. Sneed moved, J. Bennett seconded to fund the Waldo County Extension Budget at \$50,525.00. Unanimous.**

2025 – EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

****T. Biggs moved, J. Bennett seconded to fund the employee benefits at the 2006 rate in the amount of \$1,249,272.00. Motion failed with 2 in favor and 5 opposed.**

R. McLaughlin: I think that it is prudent that we keep the employee benefits where they are right now, in my opinion.

****R. McLaughlin moved, R. Crossman seconded to fund the Employee Benefits Budget at \$1,353,150.00.**

Discussion:

B. Sneed: In terms of discussion I think Dick is right. You are on notice, “The party’s over.”

T. Biggs: Every year it goes up and up. Every employee in this county has an average benefit package of \$14, 226.00. That is what it averages. How long can we keep doing this? Nobody has dealt with it up until now. What if we whack the Commissioners insurance packages, they are part time people. We can recommend that we drop the three commissioners and the treasurer.

R. Desmarais: We are working on the town budget now and they are not going to be happy with their insurance. It is still up in limbo.

S. Story: I am convinced that if we tackle this next year, take a look at self insurance. I like what I have heard. Let's get it together next year and get on it but let's not drop the ball on these people.

J. Bennett: I feel like Tim says, next year we will hear the same story. I think that we have to take a little bit to start it this year to send the message.

R. Desmarais: (To B. Arseneau) is there anybody working part time that gets insurance other than the commissioners.

B. Arseneau: They are considered full time, I believe, by statute. It is no different than any other elected position.

H. Potter: I think they can hear us talking. I don't think we need to cut anything to send a message. I think that everyone in this room has got the message.

R. Desmarais: We offer no incentive, if a spouse is employed getting insurance somewhere else to step out of our insurance and go on their insurance.

M. Wadsworth: You can't legally do that. You have to offer them insurance. I wanted to make the point that thought you had cut \$50,000.00 by dropping the three commissioners and the treasurer; they are only on a single plan which is only \$598.00 a month. So that is roughly \$6,000.00 per person.

R. Desmarais: You can't tell them to do that but it is being done. You go with the best insurance plan.

J. Hyk: It is not in the personnel policy and plus there is the union thing. Maybe that is something that we look at when we look at this whole problem. In all fairness to everybody I have to tell you, I understand how upset you are this year. Last year no one seemed too upset over anything. It is not like you said last year that you have to do something about this problem. That did not happen.

R. Desmarais: Do you get the message this year?

J. Hyk: I get the message. I think that if we work together we can do something. Here is one thing that we can't do, we can't do it the way we are doing this because by the 10th of December we have to sign a contract with somebody or we don't have any insurance. That is ten days from now. I am an optimist, we can change this and make it better, and we work it out together. We cannot wait until November or December to do it. We need to start doing it almost right away or it won't happen. We need to get some experts together, we have to get together with the employees, figure out something that works for everyone and I think we can do that. I am excited about it. It is an opportunity.

Motion passed with 6 in favor and 2 opposed.

2035 – WALDO COUNTY SOIL AND WATER

****B. Sneed moved, J. Bennett seconded to fund the Waldo County Soil and Water Budget at \$19,675.00. Unanimous.**

2040 – RECORDS PRESERVATION

****R. McLaughlin moved, D. Pendleton seconded to fund the Records Preservation Budget at \$3,380.00. Unanimous.**

2045 – RESERVES

****B. Sneed moved, R. McLaughlin seconded to fund the Reserves at \$93,000.00. Vote passed with 6 in favor and 1 opposed (H. Potter).**

2050 – GRANT WRITING

****J. Bennett moved, R. Desmarais seconded to not fund the Grant Writing Budget. Unanimous.**

R. McLaughlin: I don't think that we have anything to be ashamed of; I think we have done a pretty good job. I think we have saved to have an increase in the budget less than 3% over last year, with a directive to do something about employee benefits next year. I think we should feel that we have done O.K.

B. Sneed: The total budget for FY 2007 is \$6,793,171.67

****B. Sneed moved, R. McLaughlin seconded to adjourn the meeting. Unanimous.**

**WALDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND BUDGET
COMMITTEE MEETING**

****B. Sneed moved, A. Fowler seconded to open the joint meeting. Unanimous.**

(No action regarding LD 1 tax cap was required, as the County budget was under the Cap.)

****J. Bennett moved, A. Fowler seconded to adjourn the meeting. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted by Veronica Stover
Veronica Stover, Deputy County Clerk