

**WALDO COUNTY FY 2010 BUDGET COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING & FINAL BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
NOVEMBER 20, 2009**

PRESENT: Budget Committee Members Bill Sneed (Chairman), Richard Desmarais, Robert Plausse, James Bennett, Ronald Price, Evelyn Adams, Nakomis Nelson, Roger Lee and James Kenney. In attendance as observers were Waldo County Commissioners Donald Berry, Sr., William Shorey and Amy 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 HEARING – FY 2010 BUDGET:

Meeting started at 6:00 P.M.

B. Sneed: There seems to be nobody here but County employees, which is fine, but this is a three-part meeting in theory we are going to do a two part meeting. The first part is members of the public can ask the Budget Committee and or the Commissioners any questions they choose. At the end of a reasonable amount of time, we will stop and we will have a Budget Committee meeting in which case we will go through every one of the departments reasonably quickly, as we have done them all already. The third part is if this budget is over the L.D. 1 CAP; there would be a joint meeting between the Commissioners and the Budget Committee to vote to exceed or increase the CAP. We are so far below it that is not going to happen. Right now, you are all members of the public as well as county employees, so ask away.

E. Murphy: I would just like to make a comment that I think the Budget Committee has worked real hard on the budget and as a citizen I appreciate the time that you have put into it. On behalf of the Waldo County people, I thank you.

B. Sneed: On behalf of the Budget Committee I say thank you, as well, and this is not a sole effort this year. These Commissioners did a lot of heavy lifting as well. Let's press on. Well, so ends the first part of this meeting; now the second half.

FINAL BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING – FY 2010

B. Sneed: Karen [Trussell, Deputy Treasurer] is going to try and get all of this into a spreadsheet as we speak and she has asked if we could all speak up. I have a question; all of the budgets had a 7000 line for Capital Reserves that is all now 6000 for Debt Service. Is that a GASB thing? (There was brief discussion on the changes to the budget for the 7000 account.)

1010 – E.M.A.

****J. Bennett moved, R. Plausse seconded to fund the E.M.A. (1010) Budget at \$97,939.00. Unanimous.**

1015 – DISTRICT ATTORNEY

****R. Plausse moved, R. Price seconded to fund the District Attorney (1015) Budget at \$171,441.00. Unanimous.**

1020 – COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

****R. Plausse moved, J. Bennett seconded to fund the County Commissioners (1020) Budget at \$505,503.00. Unanimous.**

1025 – TREASURER

****R. Plausse moved, J. Bennett seconded to fund the Treasurer (1025) Budget at \$58,513.00. Unanimous.**

1030 – FACILITIES

****R. Plausse moved, R. Price seconded to fund the Facilities (1030) Budget at \$245,673.00. Unanimous.**

1065 – REGISTRY OF DEEDS

****R. Plausse moved, R. Price seconded to fund the Registry of Deeds (1065) Budget at \$226,262.00. Unanimous.**

1070 – PROBATE

****R. Plausse moved, E. Adams seconded to fund the Registry of Probate (1070) Budget at \$189,530.00. Unanimous.**

1075 – SHERIFF

****R. Plausse moved, N. Nelson seconded to fund the Sheriff's (1075) Budget at \$1,207,273.00.**

Discussion:

R. Desmarais: I have a question on the number of cruisers. I don't think they should buy three cruisers this year.

B. Sneed: When you throw in the warranties and etc., one cruiser is about \$27,000.00. I am inclined to agree for a couple of reasons. One is we got some Capital Reserve accounts that we could fund the cruisers. If the Sheriff and the deputies really believe they need this car, there is the Detail [reserve] which seems to be a "catch-all" or "draw-from" account. So, if you guys need \$27,000.00 for a car, you also have \$11,000.00 in Drug Forfeiture and you have \$38,500.00 in Community Corrections. It seems to me there are plenty of places to take it.

R. Desmarais: So, you are taking \$27,000.00 off line 7011?

B. Sneed: There is a motion made and seconded for \$1,207,273.00.

N. Nelson: I wasn't here at the meeting when Scott presented this budget but how did it change that night?

B. Sneed: It didn't.

R. Lee: From my book it has changed but it decreased.

B. Sneed: Scott recommended that we take \$3,000.00 off his Telephone line - 4315.

S. Story: Those accounts that you are referring to are restricted. (Someone started to interrupt.) No, hear me out. Asset Forfeiture cannot be used for anything that isn't directly used for drug enforcement. The Detail account is a money-in-money-out account. That is used for money that, when we have to put money out for details like the Common Ground Fair, and we get paid for that later that is also civil service money that is money-in-money-out.

B. Sneed: You have used that account to pay for overtime and part time for the Communications Center, you have used this money to pay for witness fees and, in fact, from the minutes of January 20th, I will quote the Sheriff, "...provided the County with an account that was sustainable and does not need the Budget Committee funds." This thing has grown over the years and just grown and grown and you guys draw against it when you feel like it. It was suggested that Special Plan 2C be taken out of it. So, if you look back over the previous year's minutes, this money is spent for - like you put it - "the commissioners' prerogative."

S. Story: I won't address that one. I will address Community Corrections; that also is restricted money and it can't be used for anything other than Corrections.

R. Lee: Can I just ask Scott to address whether he needs the cruisers?

S. Story: I would let my Chief [Deputy] speak to the fact that we are replacing cars that have 120 to 130,000 miles on them. We are rotating those out of fleet and, remember, last year we picked up another officer and didn't ask for a fourth car. So, it is going to get tighter over the next few years; it is not going to get better.

B. Sneed: But the money is there someplace.

N. Nelson: On the older cars what is the maintenance per car, per year?

S. Story: Oh gosh, I don't know. Obviously, when they start getting up over 100,000 miles, you are talking sometimes transmissions. Front-end parts are very common. It is expensive the longer you keep them - it is beyond a fiscal piece; it is a safety piece. As far as the accounts, I am not the Treasurer or the Commissioners; they can answer for that. I could ask them to take \$27,000.00 out of Technology, but that is not what they had planned those accounts for. That is not what they were designed for.

B. Sneed: The Detail account seems to be designed for whatever you want it for. Your own words in the County minutes back that up. I can bring them up and quote you.

S. Story: Yeah, I guess...

B. Sneed: I can bring them up and print them out because you are the one sitting there at the Commissioners meeting saying basically this is a “slush fund” that we can use as we see fit. It seems that any department can dip into it.

J. Bennett: When we had a meeting there we were told that one of the cruisers coming off the road was 85,000 miles and I think this day and age that it is no mileage for a vehicle. It might have been twenty years ago, so I don't think...

R. Keating: Perhaps you didn't hear all of what I said. I said that three cars that are slated to come off right now are car #17 which has 107,628 miles on it, car #1406 which has 98,068 miles and car #1415, which is the one you talk about, had 86,890 miles two or three weeks ago. I also said that you need to fully understand that these cars are on the road full time and the decision that you make today about our budget we are not allowed to do anything until the new budget year. So, in January we go out to bid and typically it takes about 30 days to get the bids back, they come to the County Commissioners. The County Commissioners review the bids and will usually authorize us to buy whatever for cruisers. As I explained, last year we found a left over 2008 and we saved \$3,000.00, which you will see is still available in Capital Outlay from this year. So, we bought that and didn't need a new 2009 cruiser. If the commissioners authorize us to accept the bid and go out and we order the cruiser, that cruiser sometimes - and the year before last we didn't get them until August - so the decision that you are making tonight about three cars - you are talking about the mileage that is on it currently - that car may not come off the road until August of next year. So, if you take a cruiser out and, say we are only going to buy two this year, that means one of these cars is going to stay on the road the potential of 18 months; maybe 20 months more. So, you are going to be pushing that cruiser well up over 130,000 miles. Now the three spares that we have that we would be replacing is Spare #19 has 149,000 miles on it, Spare #1428 has 137,000 and Spare #29 has 141,000. What we do is rotate them into a spare and try to get another year out of them. Two days last week a car broke down, and so on, we had two of those spares on the road so we have deputies out responding to emergencies in a cruiser with 150,000 miles, and that is not safe. If you decide not to purchase this cruiser today doesn't mean the sky is going to fall in, it just means that one of those cars is going to stay out on the road longer; we are going to be pushing the mileage higher. So, we are not asking you to replace a car with 89,000 miles on it, Mr. Bennett, what we are asking you to do is to allow us to next year go out to bid for a car which we may not enjoy the pleasure of until August or later. We are not asking you to take a car off the road at 89,000; realistically that car probably will be somewhere around 120,000 when it comes off to be rotated back to spare.

J. Bennett: I doubt if they are worn out at 120,000 miles this day and age. I drove school bus for thirty-two years and at 80 – 90,000 [miles] it was completely worn out and now they are over 200,000 before they take them off and they run perfect.

R. Keating: I think the other thing that you need to consider is these cruisers are working automobiles. It's not just what shows on the odometer; they sit at structure fires, traffic accidents, crime scenes or whatever. If the car is running and the blue lights are going, the car is running and you log in extra hours on it. So, I can tell you from experience - I have been in law enforcement for 40 years - you are not putting your officers in the most safe vehicles you can if you are asking an officer to be on the road in a cruiser responding to emergencies and code 3 calls with 150 or 160,000 miles. It is not good business.

R. Desmarais: You also have access to other monies to purchase that cruiser. That is the way I feel about it.

R. Keating: That may be true, but that is not a decision that I am allowed to make. I know, as the Sheriff has addressed - it he runs the operations - we can't touch County Corrections money for the Sheriff patrol; that is for the jail. I don't know about the Detail account; I know it is a money-in, money-out account where we bill for details and stuff. If money has been taken out of that, I have no idea. That is for somebody else to answer.

A. Fowler: I think, Mr. Chairman, I want to emphasize to you before you beat any more on Scott that it took a lot of thought and consideration of where we were going to find that money when we took it from Detail [account] in January with regards to other retirement accounts. I hadn't even considered that account that we use it, not so much as a "slush fund," but just like the Sheriff said, for any special details. Any of you that have been to the Common Ground fair, that doesn't come for free.

B. Sneed: Oh, come on Amy! You paid part time and over time to the Communications Center and none of those folks are standing duty at the Common Grounds Fair.

A. Fowler: Good thing.

R. Lee: What is the balance?

B. Sneed: \$47,000.00.

N. Nelson: I guess my only comment is the budget as it sits right now is basically flat from last year, which was down slightly from the year before that. It just seems that we have enjoyed two years of very little budget increase and I think that these cars we are talking about not purchasing this year, it's going to have to be purchased. I worry that we are going to table cost onto the future and then five years from now, or three or two years from now, all of the buildings are going to need to be painted, all of the furnaces are going to need to be replaced and all the police cars are going to need to be replaced.

B. Sneed: Interesting of you to bring that up. Personnel cost increases 2009 to 2010 \$108,000.00 in just Personnel for seven departments.

N. Nelson: So, what has been cut?

B. Sneed: Funding for Capital Outlay – zero for six departments. All I am saying is this budget is up over last year. The County employees have all enjoyed COLA. Social Security isn't getting one, employees of the State of Maine aren't getting one; this is a bare bones budget and the only thing that I could find was one car and there is money to pay for that car. If the Sheriff can twist the Commissioners' arms sufficiently, he will get his car.

R. Lee: The three cars that you are replacing, the mileage ranges from 89 to 107,000 miles.

N. Nelson: You are not really replacing the cars with 89,000 miles you are replacing those cars to spares and you are taking cars out that have 150,000 miles. So, you are not selling that car with 89,000 miles to the public.

R. Keating: Like right now, we are selling three from last years spares. The three that, if you budget today will replace the three spares, those three spares with the 145,000 to 150,000 miles will be sold.

J. Kenney: I believe I heard that the Budget Committee is not instructing the Sheriff to not buy three cars. They are saying that the budget for the Sheriff's Department, if we modify it, we will pay for two cars and recommend finding the funds for the third car. The Sheriff's department still gets three cars. That is what I heard, but they have to find the money for the third one elsewhere. That is the discussion; that the Sheriff's department can still order three cars if they convince the Commissioners to authorize funding from different sources within the existing four sources of funds. They are not instructing to buy only two cars, it is to find monies elsewhere. Is that what I am understanding?

B. Sneed: Personally speaking, that would be my preference.

N. Nelson: And there is a motion on the table.

B. Sneed: Yes, there is and we should probably say "yea" or "nay" to the original motion and that was to fund the Sheriff's department at \$1,207,273.00.

R. Lee: Do we need a motion to amend that or take a vote on that whole thing?

Motion amended.

****R. Plausse moved, N. Nelson seconded to fund the Sheriff's (1075) Budget at \$1,180,273.00.**

Discussion:

B. Sneed: Now, if we did the arithmetic right it is \$27,000.00 per car. Is that right?

R. Plausse: Mr. Chairman, I want them to have three vehicles. They need three vehicles.

R. Price: I would like to hear a County Commissioner tell us how they are going to respond to taking money out of that account and how that account works.

B. Sneed: Maybe Dave Parkman can tell us.

D. Parkman: The Detail account first of all is not a “slush fund,” it is a restricted fund that is restricted to - it is not tax money in there - it comes from people that have hired the Sheriffs to be there. That money is paid by private people and then we pay the officers out of that account. It is restricted and is not a “slush fund” that you can get in and get. I would recommend that you lower...years ago the Sheriff use to have a reserve account for new vehicles. Years ago they didn't have any account and the Budget Committee would bring them a reserve account for new vehicles, then the Budget Committee said, “This is an annual thing, so why don't we just put it in the budget?” and it has been in the budget ever since. It is either two vehicles one year or then three vehicles the next. They keep retiring and before that we were running cars that were 10 years old, but that is a little bit of the history. I just fear that if you don't get this third car you are going to go backwards and not forwards. This is what we have been doing right along and we don't have a “slush fund” in that Detail [account] because that is restricted funds.

B. Sneed: David, that is just not right and I am going to sit here and I am going to read the minutes! I am going to read the whole bloody minutes from the 20th of January! Oh no, you bought anything you wanted out of that Detail account! You have bought everything you wanted out of that Detail account! Do you want me to read them to you?

D. Parkman: Yes, I would like to hear that.

B. Sneed: O.K., we are going to get there. We are going to start in a minute. I knew there was a reason that I brought this computer. It only goes so far. Do you want to start with witness fees of August 11th when it was suggested that witness fees be taken out of the Detail account?

K. Trussell: District Court has turned over witness fees from the State over to us and until we can get reimbursed, I made the suggestion that we take it out of that account; then the money can get put back in that account.

B. Sneed: But the fact remains you can dip into it whenever you want for whatever you want. The fact remains that this is there for whatever you almost choose to do with it.

R. Plausse: We should ask the Commissioners. What are your thoughts on this?

D. Berry: My thought is I do not like what you are doing. I see you tapping reserves and continuing to tap reserves that have another place to go. Just because there happens to be a pool of money sitting there does not make that pool of money available for something that, very honestly, the citizens should be paying for. We are talking about \$27,000.00.

B. Sneed: We are talking about \$102,000.00 in payroll increase.

D. Berry: I don't care what we are talking about there! What I care about is what you are talking about right now! What you are talking about right now is Public Safety.

B. Sneed: No, don't cloud that up.

D. Berry: This isn't clouding up.

B. Sneed: Everyone on this board is going to give the Sheriff the car but it's up to you to find the money to do it. This budget is up over last year, and now it's only up a little bit, but there are a lot of people in this County who are down a lot.

D. Berry: We understand that. We fully understand that and that's why we are at that level, and we took it down to the level that we took it too.

B. Sneed: We are just trying to take it a little bit farther, or at least one or two of us are.

D. Berry: I understand, but I have a real concern that we are taking \$27,000.00. Could we find it? Yes, of course, but there is the other side of that coin; should we find it? Or should it be funded as it should be funded by the Budget Committee and us?

B. Sneed: You are right.

D. Berry: To me that really is the meat of this whole question. Should you really be funding this vehicle? Because they need, and they are going to need it!

R. Lee: For me, it would turn on whether you have \$27,000.00 more in reserves in one form or another than you really need. I have no way of answering that. I just don't know. What is your opinion?

D. Berry: Yes, if we were forced, we would be able to do that, but should we do it is the other end of that coin, Roger!

R. Lee: Reserves are normally there for a purpose; you use them for this, that and the other. And we may have more than we need, and if that is the case, I would be very attracted to this motion.

D. Berry: It would have to come out of reserves somewhere, and I do not like to see us tapping into reserves.

R. Lee: There is nothing wrong, in my book, with tapping into reserves if the reserve total is more than the County really needs year to year to operate. If you've got extra money in there, why not spend it and ask the taxpayers in a given year to pay it? For me, do you just have enough in reserves, or do you have an extra several thousand so you could handle the \$27,000.00?

D. Berry: Could we handle the \$27,000.00? The answer is yes.

B. Sneed: I will play Devil's advocate against myself, as well. There was a time when so much of the daily operating costs of the county were taken from reserves in order for them to not have them show up as legitimate operating expenses. There are a number of heads that are shaking. I don't think that anyone would agree that was the right way to do things. This group of Commissioners and their predecessors has gone a long way in moving away from that "not-a-good-way" of doing things. It hides the true costs of the County Government by putting stuff into the reserves.

N. Nelson: I guess that I would just say again, sort of trying to read between some of the lines; I understand that this budget is up and it is not up a lot. I think that some of those reserve accounts that I feel really strongly are there for rainy days, and I am not confident that this is the rainiest day that we are going to see in the next five years. I think that this budget, as it sits before us with a basically a 1% increase, I think that is a fundable budget by the towns. I know that it is not going to be an easy year for everybody. Sure, it would be nice if the budget is down but that is not the reality of life. I mean the budget is down by less than the increase of the cost of living. If you deduct inflation from the budget the buying power of this budget is less than it was last year, and I really think to try and cut that \$27,000.00 - I don't go with that.

B. Sneed: The buying power has decreased and one of the reasons is the Social Security Administration chose not to give COLA's for the coming year is it had decreased. This is probably not the cost of living as seen by the County Government.

S. Story: The only thing that I want to say is you can read the minutes if you want; I was there that day I know what was said. I am quite comfortable because I don't even think I have ever used the word "slush fund".

B. Sneed: You didn't, I did. I take that back.

S. Story: I guess the only thing that I want to say is it makes it sound dirty and I know for a fact that at least one expenditure, and that was to help fund Special Plan 2C, which is part of union negotiations. Here is what I will tell you, we didn't go buy a Cadillac with it or a Mercedes or go out to eat on it. We used it to offset some costs that otherwise would have been taken somewhere else or budgeted for. So "slush fund" makes it sound dirty or cheap and that is not at all what the situation was. I can't answer for witness fees or other things, I wasn't there that day, but I can answer for the other one. It was used for legitimate expenses to this county and it was used prudently. As far if you cut the car or not, if you do, it will force me to have a conversation with the Commissioners and I won't use "twist their arm." We will have the conversation and we will see what happens at the end of it. Rest assured I need that third car, whether it is here tonight or whether it is later at a meeting with the Commissioners. Thank you.

B. Sneed: So, it is a legitimate expense.

S. Story: I would not have submitted it in my budget if it was not a legitimate expense.

B. Sneed: So, you have drawn against this account for legitimate expenses in the past. This is a legitimate expense and this might not be a bad year to draw against it again. Nakomis might be right. Next year it could be worse than this one. It is a fluctuating account.

J. Kenney: I have taken myself to the long sheet that summarizes the grand total of the reserve funds. So, in this conversation, if the motion on the floor with \$1,180,273.00, we are not zeroing any account we are reducing it. Am I losing myself in these numbers?

B. Sneed: In a sense you are a little bit because, at this point, in doing that you put the cart well before the horse.

J. Kenney: Thank you for indulging me.

B. Sneed: There is a motion made. Any more discussion?

N. Nelson: I guess I will make my pitch one last time that you don't always save money by not spending it in one year. I mean, if it is a car that is going to get bought, it is going to get bought and the money is going to come from somewhere. You just need to be comfortable with where that money comes from because it sounds like there is going to be a third car and to me it seems like the most prudent way to do this is in a year where the budget increase is one percent and to have the Sheriff's line stay at \$1.2, and there will be money next year in one of those accounts. It is a fluid account.

B. Sneed: I am not sure how often these reserve account sheets come out.

S. Story: I've got to say, why we aren't just addressing my salary with this? Why don't we say, "Well, you know we need to pay the Sheriff but we are not going to budget for it?" Why are we picking on a cruiser when we are sitting here, when you say you recognize the need for the car? I understand your contention on the budget. I took great offense to the term "slush fund." I will get over that in a few minutes.

B. Sneed: I will take it back. I apologize.

S. Story: I do have to say, why are we just grabbing a cruiser? If you don't feel I need the cruiser and you don't feel I have made that argument, why are we associating that to the Detail account? I will not throw any other department head under the bus, I will stay under there, but why don't we grab a couple of police officers and say we don't think we should pay for those out of the budget? This is a budget item. That is why I provided you with a budget, to tell you what I need and what those items cost. If you don't agree with that then you have the right to cut those items out of there and I have lived with that over the years. It just seems funny that we are attributing this to that Detail account. It is a revenue source. It is a money-in, money-out that over the years we are making a fair amount of money with it and sometimes we have to adjust it as we are losing money out of it, but we have attached it to a cruiser. I guess I am having a hard time understanding that attachment.

B. Sneed: I just want to take \$27,000.00 off the back of the tax payers of this county for the next year. I think you need another cruiser. I think there is money here to find it. As far as cutting your salary, fine with me, but we are not allowed to cut salaries. I am being facetious.

S. Story: I understand.

B. Sneed: That is not our job and we know that.

S. Story: I understand your argument. I guess my point would be, though, if you feel we have too much money in the reserves then maybe we should be addressing the reserve line rather than diving into my budget and saying we'll let's attach it to a cruiser somewhere.

R. Desmarais: We are giving you two cruisers and you have several options. You have three reserve cruisers and you have an open door to get the third cruiser if you feel you need it.

S. Story: I understand.

(Multiple conversations going on at the same time.)

N. Nelson: I guess when you look at \$27,000.00 as a percent of \$7.5 million, we are splitting hairs. I think we are splitting hairs to the degree that we could really jeopardize our position in future years or even in this operating year. If the cruiser is an item that needs to be budgeted for and it is an item that we need, it is in the budget and it is in the budget for a reason. We are trying to take it out of the fund that pays officers on detail. I am only listening to you, the Commissioners and the Sheriff.

B. Sneed: As far as splitting hairs, Don started off the night by saying this should go pretty quickly. At the very most, we will split some hairs. Sadly the one hair that I could find to split happened to be in Scott's department. It was not done on purpose.

N. Nelson: What would happen if we fund half the cruiser?

B. Sneed: All in favor of the motion? **Motion failed as it was a tie vote.**

****R. Plausse moved, E. Adams seconded to fund the Sheriff's (1075) Budget at \$1,207,273.00. Motion passed with two opposed (R. Desmarais and J. Bennett).**

BREAK

1076 – COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

****B. Sneed moved, R. Plausse seconded to fund the Communication Centers (1076) Budget at \$761,204.00. Unanimous.**

1080 – ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

****R. Plausse moved, R. Price seconded to fund the Advertising and Promotion (1080) Budget at \$5,000.00. Unanimous.**

1090 – AUDIT

****R. Plausse moved, J. Bennett seconded to fund the Audit (1090) Budget at \$8,000.00. Unanimous.**

1095 – DEBT SERVICE

****R. Plausse moved, B. Sneed seconded to fund the Debt Service (1095) Budget at \$63,600.00. Unanimous.**

2000 – INTEREST

****R. Plausse moved, J. Bennett seconded to fund the Interest (2000) Budget at \$20,000.00. Unanimous.**

2005 – UNIVERSITY OF MAINE EXTENSION

****J. Bennett moved, E. Adams seconded to fund the University of Maine Extension (2005) Budget at \$42,702.00. Unanimous.**

2025 – EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

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

2035 – WALDO COUNTY WATER AND SOIL

****J. Bennett moved, R. Plausse seconded to fund the Waldo County Soil & Water (2035) Budget at \$20,475.00. Unanimous.**

2045 – RESERVES

****N. Nelson moved, B. Sneed seconded to fund the Reserves (2045) Budget at \$87,500.00.**

Discussion:

B. Sneed: Why is there \$61,000.00 in Capital Reserves under Grant Matching?

A. Fowler: We have put it in there. The reason why the \$61,000.00 is sitting in there is currently your E.M.A. Director has secured a grant to build a new E.M.A. office. We needed to match it with \$60,000.00. The Federal Government sent us too much money. They had sent us more money than we allocated and we could either send it back or match it. We need the \$60,000.00 to match the remainder of that grant and the other thousand that is in there is a grant that Michelle Wadsworth [Human Resources/Payroll Director] has applied for some office furniture for the Sheriff's office. They look like they are fourth grade high school teacher's desks. We need the \$60,000.00.

B. Sneed: Employment Security is a no-brainer; that has to be in there. Why the \$5,000.00 for Emergency Vehicle Replacement? Don't you guys have insurance for those things?

A. Fowler: You can see that, thankfully, we had that emergency replacement because that is how we were able to buy the van when our truck died. I mean, you are assuming that it is for a cruiser or what have you.

D. Berry: When Maintenance [Facilities Management] needed a new vehicle because theirs died out here in the yard, we were able to obtain one. The reserve we see there is for those types of things and it may apply to a cruiser, or it may apply to some other vehicle here.

B. Sneed: At the break someone had asked what the total Capital Reserve is and you can see from this sheet right here it is going to be close to \$1,206,008.00. In 2003, Capital Reserves were \$429,000.00 total reserves. In 2006 it was up \$892,000.00; 2007 - \$839,000.00; 2008 - \$1,206,000.00.

A. Fowler: You will see in the minutes that we initially cut \$60,000.00 from the Reserves. I think we were originally asking for \$110,000.00 and we made cuts from there and went down to the minimum.

Motion passed unanimously.

2050 – GRANT WRITING

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

B. Sneed: The Chief [Deputy] came and reminded me that I owed the Sheriff an apology again for attributing words to him that were not used. I do apologize for doing so.

S. Story: Thank you.

****B. Sneed moved, R. Plausse seconded to fund the total FY 2010 Budget at \$7,457,316.00. Unanimous.**

D. Berry: I would like to thank all of you for being here but more importantly, as you know, we have entered into discussions with respect to creating a new Sheriff's office. This week Commissioner Shorey has really taken a lead on this, but I was called in to sign some documents which relate to actually the possibility of obtaining a grant or reality of loan, and this entire process is under way. You will hear more about this as we go along and hold meetings, with all of the select people in the towns and the Sheriff, where we are headed with this. The number we are looking at is, approximately, in the vicinity of probably between \$800,000.00 to \$1,000,000.00 at a loan percent of 4.25%. This is Federal grant and loan money. There are several things that have to happen here and part of that would involve you people. Part of that involvement is the fact - I don't think there is anything that anyone knows about the Sheriff's office that is really positive except maybe the value of the building, maybe. So, we are investigating and working towards development here and we will seek support, and one of the groups that the Commissioners would like support from is this group. We aren't talking about selling land, we aren't talking about any of these things

at the present time; we are talking about getting this process underway so that we can develop a new office for the Sheriff. I echo what the Chair said a short time ago, if you have not visited that office, please go because you would find it an appalling situation. It, very honestly, is an embarrassment when you walk into other sheriff's offices all over the State of Maine. We will be seeking your support. I have this entire folder of materials that we have to deal with and identifying that actually this comes out of a Rural Development grant and loan system with USDA. We aren't sure if we are going to get a grant or not. We are looking at what it will cost us and estimating just for right now a rough estimate of what it would be, the cost over thirty years would amount to about half of what we are paying right now for Communications [Center]. Is that a break for citizens? Yes, it is. If we can obtain that building at half of what we are spending now - and this is our last payment coming this coming year for the Communications Center. So, we have been running in the \$60,000.00 bracket for that.

N. Nelson: We wouldn't want to do it over thirty years, would we?

D. Berry: No, but we have the right not to do that. We could consider the piece of land [one-hundred acre lot], we can consider selling the entire block, and we could consider keeping thirty acres of the hundred and all of these are options that are in the plan.

R. Lee: Where are you finding to build this building?

D. Berry: Right on the sight we are at right now.

R. Lee: Tear one down and build something there?

D. Berry: No, we won't even tear that building down. We have room enough to build the new building that Dale [EMA Director] has got the grant money for, plus a Sheriff's office right on that same site. This means we have a public safety sight. We have access to the Jail by the Sheriff's Department, which I believe is a critical thing to have that. If something happens there I don't want them coming from someplace else to get there, I want them there.

I just wanted to share that with all of you and get that process started and you're thinking as well. I want to meet with the entire Council when we have more information because I want their blessing if that's what it is. I would like to have some of you involved as part as the Building Planning Committee. As I said, this is moving quite fast. I was surprised; they had a meeting on Monday and I get called into the office to sign documents on Wednesday. They have had some increase that have been given to them and so I can't answer much more than that, as far as exactness of questions, but I intend to make the rounds, and I know the other Commissioners do, of all of the other select boards and meet with them and talk about this process and what we can do in the County to be able to do that at a really feasible level for our citizens. So, any questions?

R. Plausse: I have two questions and not that you can answer either one at the moment but what would happen to the present Sheriff's office if we build a new one?

D. Berry: There are a couple of options that could be there, and we have talked about this. One of those options is it could be torn down and the other option is maybe someone wants to buy it. A few years ago when the piece of property right beside the Jail went up for sale, people came in and purchased it. It was a surprise to people - not sure how much they paid for it, but it was a substantial amount and then basically gutted it out and rebuilt the home.

R. Plausse: That is what they would have to do with this thing. Second question was the land that we own; you would be selling some of that land off to help the cost?

D. Berry: See, that would be some of the things that would have to be decided, whether we sell the entire piece, whether we sell part of the piece and that is where the input from everyone comes into play here - reserve some of it for the future or watch it all disappear.

N. Nelson: You will never get it back once it's gone.

D. Berry: That is correct. So, those are questions that have to be answered and the other side of that coin is, do we need one-hundred acres? That is a good-size chunk of land.

R. Desmarais: For the last two or three years we have gone from worrying about how we are going to build a Jail, the idea of the Sheriff being moved here there has been kicked around, and the Jail is now out of our hands. That has been resolved and I am sure the tax payers were glad to see it disappear. We are moving in the right direction.

D. Berry: Thank you. We just have to do something here. You cannot stress how an appalling situation it is in that building. Go visit it. I just wanted to share that with everyone.

N. Nelson: I just wanted to thank the Commissioners for the budget that was presented to us this year.

R. Lee: I will second that.

D. Berry: Thank you, and I would like to thank the Department Heads that sit out there, too. They also realized the economy is in a tough situation. Thank you.

****R. Plausse moved, J. Kenney seconded to adjourn the Budget Committee meeting.**

**Respectfully submitted by _____
Veronica Spear, Deputy County Clerk**