

**WALDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION
MARCH 9, 2010**

PRESENT: Commissioners Amy R. Fowler, Donald P. Berry and William D. Shorey. Also present were Jail Administrator Robert Walker, Volunteers of America Program Director Michael Tausek and County Clerk Barbara L. Arseneau.

MID-COAST REGIONAL REENTRY CENTER UPDATE:

Present for this report were Sheriff Scott Story, Jail Administrator Robert Walker and VOA Program Director Michael Tausek. R. Walker informed the Commissioners that things were going well and introduced VOA Program Director Michael Tausek to speak in more detail.

M. Tausek informed the Commissioners of the makeup of inmates currently in the reentry facility. Two of the inmates are linked up with Restorative Justice. Out of the 32 beds, two are from Hancock, 3 from Waldo, Sagadahoc and some representation from Maine State Prison and Two-Bridges Jail. M. Tausek explained that he was in daily contact with a number of facilities, including Knox County. In terms of numbers, 10 beds are filled at present.

W. Shorey asked how long the inmates are staying. M. Tausek stated that the two longest are in until February /March of 2011. He explained that as the DOC had to “do a right turn with implementation,” they had to “cull through hundreds of names and whittle down to whom would represent the six counties. He noted that the County tries to stay in the hard and fast criteria of twelve to eighteen months’ stay. The Counties with six to twelve months sentences, the inmates are staying closer to six months.

W. Shorey asked if any were out doing jobs or trying to gain employment. M. Tausek explained that this is part of the “Comprehensive Reentry.” As inmates are moving through the system, the idea is to lay down a foundation for thinking. Currently they don’t have anyone working on putting them into the community but are “taking slow steps toward this.” He noted that one inmate had applied to work at the paper mill in Bucksport but the inmate did not qualify to work there as he had not been out of prison long enough. Inmates average sixteen hours per week in community service projects such as painting projects, etc. W. Shorey said that this was really important and wished that this information could be sent out to the public. M. Tausek said he could get a list together of completed projects and the locations and W. Shorey stated that the Commissioners would take care of getting the information out to the public.

W. Shorey inquired about the attitudes of the inmates in the reentry facility. M. Tausek responded that nobody has been turned back to custody since things started in January. He explained that he used to work in Boston and in that area, 60% of inmates re-offended. He expressed his amazement that this has not been a problem here. He noted that many inmates have behavioral disorders, many have become accustomed to prison life and are seasoned in that setting. “Now we’re taking them out of their box,” he explained. He informed the Commissioners that many inmates have expressed appreciation for the program. W. Shorey said he realized that they were not mainstreamed out yet, but wondered what was being done to help prepare them for the outside world. M. Tausek reported that two inmates are working in the reentry kitchen developing skills and some are working with an agent to try and develop skills to reenter the work force. M. Tausek said that the hope is to utilize the skills the inmates have in the future.

A. Fowler said she has visited the facility, has spoken with some of the inmates and has received positive feedback. D. Berry said he had recently listened to a speech by F. Lee Bailey at a function in Bangor on

getting people back into the community. He thought they should come visit Waldo County Reentry. "If we can get people not to return to jail, a big accomplishment," he stated.

D. Berry asked if M.T. knew what was occurring within the State of Maine. M. Tausek explained that the national trend is for those who have not committed substantial crimes to be entered back into the community. He noted that one inmate is working on his GED and another inmate has taken some community college courses. M. Tausek said he was trying to get community colleges to post courses online and to make some financial aid available to inmates. "Returning to the job market now is going to be difficult. We would rather see them in classes and programs in-house than working details and getting out without a job. Employment is a key part of their success, but is very difficult for these people who have been making \$2,000.00-to-\$3,000.00 a week selling drugs to go to a \$7.00 dollars-an-hour job," he explained.

W. Shorey asked if informational updates could be sent to the Commissioners once a month. M. Tausek informed the Commissioners that he does a monthly newsletter and will speak with Sheriff Story about forwarding it to the Commissioners. "These are not all bad guys," he explained. "Those who are, are tucked away where they should be. These are fathers, brothers, sons, spouses and citizens of Waldo County. We hope to be on top of something dynamite, here."

W. Shorey said he felt that this is the only Correctional facility in the entire state that is happy with its budget at this point.

S. Story explained that there is even a misconception among his own law enforcement peers. He had received a call from another Sheriff who expressed disappointment that an inmate was in the reentry facility instead of being in another jail. "This isn't day camp," S. Story stated. "It is a lot harder here. The twelve-to-sixteen-hour day these inmates put in here in the reentry facility is a lot harder than sitting around in a jail watching TV." M. Tausek confirmed this, noting that the inmates start out with breakfast followed by cleaning details, then immediately launch into the "Reflections" meeting, AA or something similar depending on their needs. He explained that case managers will take a topic on something outside the facility, such as a recent news event, and conduct a topical conversation on the matter to encourage inmates to think outside their own life. Another program, entitled "Earning to Learn" teaches inmates how to use and save money. There are substance abuse classes and whenever a new group of inmates have come to the reentry facility, they participate in a "Reentry Issues" course. M. Tausek likened this to "reality therapy." He explained that inmates are shown two example of inmates in which one inmate succeeds and one does not make it through obstacles. On Saturdays, many do details and there is time spent in "non-violent communication" with them. Arts and leisure projects are also offered to aid inmates in taking their minds off the other substantive training. Male awareness is offered as a way to teach men how to be a better fathers, etc. in society. Case workers do 30 to 40 hours of training each week with the inmates.

The Commissioners thanked M. Tausek and R. Walker for a great report and commended them for the work they are doing.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Present for this report were Treasurer David Parkman and Deputy Treasurer Karen Trussell.

D. Parkman reported the following:

GENERAL FUND:

D. Parkman reported that, after this warrant, there will be close to \$500,000.00 remaining in the general fund, which will get the County “well into April” before having to borrow from the Tax Anticipation Note (T.A.N.).

W. Shorey asked when the County borrowed on the T.A.N last year. D. Parkman replied that he had been interested in knowing this himself and decided to look back even further. He reported the following years and dates that the County started borrowing from the T.A.N.:

2003 – January 3. D. Parkman noted that the County, at that time, owed a large sum of money to Maine State Retirement, close to \$300,000.00, which was stretched out into three payments, but the first payment early in the year was over \$200,000.00.

2004 – January 30

2005 – January 25

2006 – February 8

2007 – February 6

2008 – February 20

2009 - March 27

2010 – anticipated to be well into April

“We’re in the black and have a great cash flow, right now,” D. Parkman stated. The Commissioners expressed their commendation to the Treasurer for this progress.

CORRECTIONS FUND:

D. Parkman reported that \$150,000.00 had been borrowed from the T.A.N. so far.

REVENUE REPORT:

D. Parkman reported that the County has received 24% instead of the anticipated 20% for this point in the year. He commented that the County was “starting to get a little bit ahead in the revenue.”

APPROPRIATIONS:

D. Parkman noted that the County budget could be as much as 20% expended and every department but the Electrical Repairs line in the Facilities Management budget, which is 200% expended through no fault of the Facilities Manager, is under that. D. Parkman commented that the Communications Center budget line for part-time employees is looking good, now that the proper amount of money has been funded, referring to a budgeting error that occurred the previous year when the County Clerk sent out the budget to the Communications Director with an error in it. The Sheriff’s expenditures are higher because of capital expenditures early in the year and so is the Commissioners Liability insurance line, which is typical for this time of year. W. Shorey commented that there is “not much fat in the budgets” and did not anticipate much surplus in the future. D. Parkman clarified that there has been no fat in the budgets for the last decade and B. Arseneau agreed.

RESERVE ACCOUNT EXENDITURES:

D. Parkman read expenditures from the Reserve Accounts to the County Commissioners. D. Parkman noted that Interest earned is \$629.33 and \$662.74 for January and February. Deputy Treasurer Karen Trussell explained that in the Capital Reserve, the Commissioners have instructed that any interest earned be put in the Technology Reserve. K. Trussell said it is coded into County Planning and moved to the General Fund.

She wondered if the interest should be kept in County Planning rather than transferring it back into the General Fund this time, since that reserve will be used this year for building projects. The Commissioners agreed.

K. Trussell said the last time the Reserve Account Descriptions was updated was in 2007. On the first page, the new Sheriff's Reserve account needs a description. The next page, under the Active Reserve, there are two more reserves that were created which require descriptions: EMA Disaster Recovery and Grant Matching. She wondered if the Commissioners wanted to review all descriptions to be sure they still apply and are where they should be, and get back to her at another time with descriptions. D. Parkman said that for a number of years, the reserve accounts had been a "big problem." He explained that back when Jethro Pease was County Commissioner, J. Pease was the one who got the capital, active and restricted accounts organized. Before that, People's Bank had all of them. The County had the right amounts, but the bank had different numbers for the accounts and D. Parkman wondered why the bank had to be responsible for managing the accounts. The 3rd year J. Pease was Commissioner, the reserves were addressed. Checking accounts were set up. D. Parkman noted that it took a while but now it works really well.

S. Story asked for something to be considered. He referred to an email he recently sent to County Clerk Barbara Arseneau as a response for grant research in which he had explained a situation affecting both the Deputy Treasurer and himself. He stated that the Grant writer has done an exceptional job securing grant funds. However, once the County receives the grant funds, "the work really starts." He explained that finding the information for reporting is fairly simple: K. Trussell does financial part and he reports the activity. The issue is that in many cases, reports have to be sent to several entities and this is very time consuming for both the Deputy Treasurer and himself. S. Story asked that the Commissioners consider having the grant writer do the reporting part, as well. He explained that this would supply the data needed in terms of money, how spent, when, results, etc. As far as data entry to federal government web sites under the federal reporting act, there are certain timelines. He noted that it is also easy to forget to submit the reports. He explained that he was not looking for an answer from the Commissioners today, but for them to give this some thought. S. Story suggested that if there were not a lot of grants to apply for this year, perhaps part of grant research/writing contract could include DRG Specialty Services doing the reporting. He emphasized that this is "very cumbersome" for both Karen Trussell and him.

W. Shorey inquired about the Jail report that the BOC was requesting counties do electronically each month. D. Parkman explained that he and K. Trussell attended the meeting about this matter. They learned that the State is going to set this up once a month and should only take 10-15 minutes a month for counties to do the reporting. "So we decided right now that we are going to send out our report to them and they can do whatever they want with it. Whatever else they request, they must get my approval before Karen will do the work. As far as I'm concerned, we will start doing the system July 1st, if it is even ready then, but will no longer send those other reports - just do this. I'm also going to have Karen time herself to see if really amounts to 10-15 minutes or not," he reported. When asked, K. Trussell replied that she thought the format looked really simple and if it is set up the way they have said it would be, it should be very easy to use. D. Parkman said that currently, they print off the report and mail it to Scott Ferguson. He half-jokingly reported relations between D.P. and State as being "a little rough." W. Shorey commented that everyone needs someone to answer to. D. Parkman said that what happened at the end of 2009 better not happen again, as K. Trussell has enough work to do for the County at the end of the year. W. Shorey estimated that tens of thousands of dollars have been spent by Counties in doing this work for the state, and the state has received that work for free. D. Parkman agreed and said he wished he had started calculating the time spent right from the beginning.

D. Parkman read expenditures from the Reserve Accounts.

WARRANTS:

****D. Berry moved, A. Fowler seconded to authorize payment of the February 26, 2010 Jail Accounts Payable warrant in the amount of \$28,068.68 and the February 18, 2010 Jail Payroll in the amount of \$22,403.36. Unanimous.**

****D. Berry moved, W. Shorey seconded to authorize payment of the February 26, 2010 General Fund Accounts Payable warrant in the amount of \$108,030.89 and the February 18 and 22, 2010 General Fund Payroll warrant in the amount of \$96,813.99. Unanimous.**

****D. Berry moved, A. Fowler seconded to authorize payment of the February 26, 2010 Active and Restricted Reserve warrant in the amount of \$21,642.12. Unanimous.**

****D. Berry moved, W. Shorey seconded to authorize payment of the March 9, 2010 Jail Accounts Payable warrant in the amount of \$69,070.42 and the March 4, 2010 Jail Payroll warrant in the amount of \$25,848.92. Unanimous.**

****D. Berry moved, A. Fowler seconded to authorize payment of the March 9, 2010 General Fund Accounts Payable warrant in the amount of \$44,961.26 and the March 4, 2010 General Fund Payroll in the amount of \$104,720.00. Unanimous.**

****D. Berry moved, W. Shorey seconded to authorize payment of the March 9, 2010 Active and Restricted Reserve warrant in the amount of \$71,126.73. Unanimous.**

****A. Fowler moved, D. Berry seconded to accept the Treasurer's Report. Unanimous.**

NEW EMA/SHERIFF'S OFFICE BUILDING PROJECT:

Present for this presentation was Treasurer David Parkman, Mr. Thierry Bonneville, who introduced himself as the Group Coordinator and then proceeded to introduce Seth Benz - Group Spokesperson from Miller Street side, Karen Rak representing the Congress Street side, Howard Sawyer - Real Estate Broker on Charles Street, and Megan Pinette - President of the Belfast Historical Society. T. Bonneville explained that another individual might be present later, but was not sure.

T. Bonneville started by stating that the last time the group met at the EMA Office on February 25, 2010, it became a "heated debate." He explained that in meeting with the Commissioners today, he didn't want to bring a lot of people, but rather a smaller group as a coordinated effort. He explained that the purpose in meeting with the Commissioners today was for the group to make recommendations and go over their viewpoints. He submitted a document to the Commissioners entitled "EMA Center & Sheriff's New Administrative Office: 21st Century (Alternate) Solutions." T. Bonneville explained that he ended up being the coordinator by defacto.

T. Bonneville stated that during the meeting on the 25th, he did not get to discuss possible relocation of this project and impact of the proposed project on local neighborhood. He noted that there is a big, empty field behind the current Jail property. As far as neighborhood perspective, he said that feedback would represent this project would be the biggest impact on the neighborhood since 1827 when first Sheriff/Jail structure was built. He stated that the old Jail keeper's house and current reentry structure is built on a residential

footprint. On one side, Doug Fortin bought property in 2006 for \$200,000.00 less than other properties and T. Bonneville stated that this lower price could be directly attributed to being adjacent to the Sheriff/Jail property.

T. Bonneville acknowledged that an evergreen wall was planted in 1973 on one side, so there would be no real impact to that side of the property. He stated again that this is a residential area and suggested that since nothing has been built since then, maybe the County recognized this as a residential area. He explained that most bedrooms, decks, doors, windows, etc., in the neighbors' homes are toward the back of the property to be away from the busy street. He described these as expensive homes inhabited by many people who have moved in from away. He noted that the owners have worked very hard to return these houses back to the way they were when they were built. He stated that he himself pays about \$6,000.00 in annual property taxes. He informed the Commissioners that when the abutters found out about the proposed construction being built "in their backyard," they were concerned that they were not told about this project. T. Bonneville referenced recent photos in the newspaper taken from different angles "with almost no representation of how close it is to the houses." He turned to the document he had submitted to the Commissioners and pointed to the photographs. "The bedrooms and life is toward the back of the property." He explained that these photos show how close this is to the houses, including his house on Franklin Street. He stated that there has been a lot of conversation on the phone and in meetings that had to do with Waldo County Taxpayers' perspective and the group understands that. They understand that when the EMA was able to procure a grant, this proved helpful to get a Sheriff's Office. He said that the group realizes that the referendum was voted down. He wondered if there is a master plan for the property that was purchased after the referendum failed. He stated again that he believed that this is the largest impact to this community in a long time.

T. Bonneville referenced recent articles that described water in basement in EMA and "golf ball rolling" in the Sheriff's Office. He said that the group has many questions and would like to know what is wrong with the current building. "Was this inspected by a certified inspector, was a report published that can be obtained by the taxpayer, is County sure the cost to retrofit the Sheriff's Office would be more than a \$1,000,000.00 new building?" he asked. He expressed that the neighbors were disappointed that they did not hear about this proposal earlier, but are willing to meet with the Commissioners now to discuss minimizing impact to the surrounding community. He said that the group has questions about the existing reentry center, as well including what the long-term plans for possible further expansion of this building might be, whether or not there was a study done to measure traffic increase, etc. He said that it is true that if the County builds on the current property with parking, it is only one piece being discussed. He stated that on that property, there are many other entities that are functioning, as well.

K. Rak said that what they were after was a cooperative effort to come to some happy conclusion. She stated that the group has not had time to do a proper study and felt that the Commissioners may not have had time either, and feel that this time and study are necessary.

T. Bonneville said he had questions about specifics of needing to keep these buildings close together on the same property, and asked that Real Estate Broker Howard Sawyer speak to this aspect.

H. Sawyer told the Commissioners that, from a real estate point of view, there is an existing building on Waldo Avenue – "a handsome building." He informed the Commissioners that the asking price is \$1.4 million and that it has sixty parking spaces already there. He noted that T. Bonneville did a nice job putting together photos and layout of that building for the Commissioners, so he would not need to elaborate, but

feels that this is all ready to go and could work well for the County. He offered to assist, donating 90% of his total time in doing so.

T. Bonneville said he felt that people were generally interested in a 21st century solution – it just seems that very little time has passed since the money was approved to give the Sheriff a new office. He explained that since not a lot of time has gone by, there is still time to make a decision about the future of the building. He stated that the group was not asking for an answer today and would like to have a tour of the Sheriff's current office. T. Bonneville said that the group would agree to the proposed EMA building and would be willing to speak with an architect tomorrow about landscaping and issues, but regarding the Sheriff's portion of the project, he wondered if Commissioners would be willing to study a deep retrofit that would result in a 21st century building. K. Rak asked T. Bonneville if this was essentially "gutting" the building. T. Bonneville replied that it was and apologized that he did not have with him two other documents that would elaborate more on a deep retrofit. He said he believed that there should be a thorough inspection and this would give a fairly accurate account of what the actual building condition is. Once that information is in hand and once there is feedback from the Historical Society about what needs to be preserved, then a design could be put together. He told the Commissioners that he has a very good friend that has worked for many years on historical design and architecture and is very experienced. T. Bonneville illustrated this by sharing a recent experience he had with not knowing what to do with one room in his home. In "two seconds" the architect came up with an idea and it worked very well. With feedback from the historical society, perhaps could the architect propose a plan that nobody had thought of. T. Bonneville expressed his hope to be happy neighbors and supportive of the County's plans.

H. Sawyer commented that there may be "a handy pool of people who would like to work for free" – referring to inmates. The Commissioners explained that the inmates cannot do this and K. Rak noted that there were not thirty inmates at the facility right now, anyway.

T. Bonneville explained that, thirdly, they were concerned about the 100 acres that is possibly being considered for sale and asked Seth Benz to speak to this.

S. Benz spoke about the 100 acres off of Little River Drive, and explained that through the research the group has obtained, they believed it was purchased for about \$500,000.00 including the study and the \$350,000.00 for the property itself. He noted that he has not had the opportunity to ask questions about this and has received a number of questions about the money trail, and not just from Belfast residents. It had been reported that the Commissioners believed this would be over \$1,000,000.00 just to get started on that property, but S. Benz wondered if the Commissioners had ever received a cost estimate on this. D. Berry stated that the County's consultant had estimated that it would cost over \$1,300,000.00. and this would be just to get onto that property – road, sewer and water, gas, power telephone, utilities - but not for the original entire campus, just for the Sheriff's Office and EMA. S. Benz asked if there was a true cost estimate of the EMA building and would leave the questions with the Commissioners. He said it just seems that there is a lack of understanding on his part and on the part of the larger population regarding how the County we got from a long-term plan to this new plan. He stated that they didn't even know about the efficacy of the Jail Mission program. A. Fowler said that it is hoped that it will be. D. Berry explained that this reentry facility is controlled by the State of Maine, not the County. S. Benz stated that everyone understands that the State is not in the best of shape, and so they wondered if this was the best time to be actually doing new construction, when everywhere else you turn, so many other places are saying that this is not the time to build. W. Shorey wondered who would say that today. "This is the cheapest time to build that it has been in years."

T. Bonneville informed the Commissioner that his wife and he have been attending school board meetings where they are discussing cutting many positions; therefore, many people are having difficulty with putting a building up that will benefit 18 employees. D. Berry said that it should be clarified that the County has no authority over the schools and that this is a completely different topic altogether.

D. Berry said that he has been hearing from many other taxpayers who are saying that this is the best thing that could be done. "We're not going out to bond, not raising taxes, not incurring interest. I don't know how we can make this any clearer- we are building on that site. We agreed to work with you on protecting the properties. We are not buying another property. That property fits the ordinances of the City of Belfast. That's what we're going to do."

T. Bonneville asked about the ideas the group had proposed and said, "We know very well that the decision is ultimately yours. But we know that the Sheriff's portion of the building started right after the EMA grant was obtained."

W. Shorey stated to T. Bonneville, "You need to give up that conversation – this started way before. We've been discussing the need for a Sheriff's Office for a long time." D. Berry and A. Fowler confirmed that discussion on the need to address the Sheriff's Office building had been going on for years. T. Bonneville stated that they looked at this as a compromise situation. D. Berry declared that there is no compromise. T. Bonneville asked why there could not be a retrofit. D. Berry said he did understand what was involved. He explained that there have been long-time electrical problems, and at one point there was so much water in the basement that they could not get an electrician to work on the problems. He informed the group that the first trip he and Representative David Lindahl took to look at that building, that is exactly how bad it was. T. Bonneville insisted that they had all had to do the same things in their homes and it did not cost \$1,000,000.00. D. Berry said that the County had to be ADA and public-access compatible, whereas private homes did not. T. Bonneville acknowledged that it might not be \$40,000.00 but contested that it wouldn't be \$1,000,000.00, either. D. Berry argued again that private homes were different than public buildings.

A. Fowler described the costs of moving just the technology components and that this would have to be done twice in a retro-fit setting, because the Sheriff's Office would have to be set up somewhere while the retro-fit was being done and then moving them back to a retro-fitted building would cost, as well. "We *have* looked at all the angles. This was not a rash or last-minute decision. It just isn't as easy as you might think to move the law enforcement officers," she stated.

S. Benz commented that the price tag \$1.3 million may not really do the job. He noted that the Sheriff's building has a lot of partitions. Referring to the Commissioners Court Session on February 24th, S. Benz noted that the Commissioner stated their intention to fix the historical house and take down the brick and wondered if there was a cost to that, or if that was in the cost that has been factored. W. Shorey remarked that he felt the group was starting pull pieces out and tossing them into the mix. "This component was not part of building the Sheriff's Office. It would be separate," he explained. W. Shorey went back to the question of whether building was wise at this time and shared that, the other day, he saw a respectable contractor who bid \$900,000.00 and it went for \$600,000.00 instead. "When we say \$1 million, we don't know if it will come in less at more like \$800,000.00," he said. Regarding brick, he had heard some suggesting that the proposed EMA/Sheriff's Office building be white, or steel that would imitate a white building. "This would be substantially less than brick," he noted. He said that he could detect a significant amount of talent in this room and felt that if they worked together to make this as neighborhood friendly as possible, it would work well.

S. Benz said that he felt that if they had not explored the options and asked the questions, but that they knew the endgame would likely be building it in this area and thought they had reached that point and would be working together. He said he felt that the original plan was being abandoned. He noted that in recent Commissioners minutes he had read that in ten to fifteen years, the County may have to do something with courthouses. In the short term, by putting the buildings on the current property, “out the window goes the one-campus possibility.”

D. Berry stated, regarding courthouses, that recently he had seen on TV that in Caribou the State built a new courthouse. The next article showed the new court building in Knox County, also built by the State of Maine. “The Commissioners do not anticipate building a courthouse – that will be the State’s doing,” he said. When that property was purchased, the thought process, he believed, was that the issues were still going to be there and there would have to be another referendum for a campus arrangement. The jail mission change and State Corrections takeover has changed that. The property is now just sitting as property. In May the Commissioners will be discussing their intentions for that property. If the State wants to build on that property, they can pay for the property and for the building. He explained that Commissioner Fowler serves on the judicial courthouse board.

A. Fowler said it was very unlikely that any courthouses would be built in this area in the near future. K. Rak asked if the courthouse had been part of the original plan for the 100 acre property and was told yes. D. Berry reiterated that the Commissioners at the time were trying to plan ahead based on the conditions at the time.

S. Benz stated that that he did not want to be adversarial, he just wanted to understand. W. Shorey said that he did not want to criticize people, but explained that the referendum was voted down and the Commissioners were just thinking that they were going to have to revisit it again almost immediately, and that is why the property was purchased. He said it was the greatest thing that the referendum failed in retrospect because of the State taking over the jails and the subsequent jail mission change. A. Fowler stated that current Commissioners could not be held accountable for what predecessors have done. The predecessors envisioned one thing, but the Commissioners now have had to change course and try to envision what needs to be done now. Her thought had been to try to see all the angles and viewpoints of the neighbors and she had met with some of the neighbors at the Co-op recently and listened to their thoughts. It was her thought, and she emphasized that it was her thought, alone, that this Sheriff’s Office was going to be sold. T. Bonneville informed the Commissioners that there was interest in the Sheriff’s House and one of their group members was interested in buying it and the property behind it and that is why the group is so upset that they were not spoken with before the decision was made to build a new EMA and Sheriff’s property on that land. A. Fowler responded that the Commissioners have had to take course, and this is the course they have chosen.

T. Bonneville said he still was not sure if the County had looked at having an inspection done on retrofitting the building and if the County had a possibility of saving \$3-to-400,000.00 dollars, he had seen many buildings retrofitted and felt that it was too bad the architect had not been available today. He told the Commissioners that unless they could say that they had already had a building inspector go through, the group would offer to pay to have an inspector and an architect look at it in the next week or so, if the Commissioners were willing, as this would not really delay their plans. He emphasized that the group would really like to see that done. They feel that this should really be looked at.

D. Berry interrupted. "Stop right now. We've said it, we've heard from our constituents, too, who are saying, 'Do it.' When I moderate town meetings, if I asked the question, I know we would get the support. People do not want their taxes going up and do not want to see money wasted on the Sheriff's Office. It was never an office and never will be. We are not going to do it. We have told you we are willing to work with the neighbors on trying to make the impact of these buildings very acceptable, and are still in that mode." He brought up the matter of the suggestion to use siding other than brick and stated that, while that would save money, it would not fit with the other buildings on the site. He asked the group if that wouldn't have an impact, when they would look at a building that looked different than the other brick buildings on the same property. He said he fully believed that when this building was completed, it will have very little impact on any of the neighbors. From the street, it is not close to the road. T. Bonneville argued that this was his point - it will be close to the backs of the houses and will impact that. D. Berry asked T. Bonneville if he knew, when he bought the property, that he was purchasing next to a Jail/Sheriff's Office. T. Bonneville replied that he had been aware, but realtors had told him and other neighbors that the jail would be phasing out and leaving. D. Berry responded that this was unfortunate that they had been told this when it had not been definite at all.

D. Berry stated that the Commissioners want to keep a friendly relationship with the neighbors.

T. Bonneville said he was deeply saddened by the demeanor of Commissioner Berry. D. Berry responded that the Commissioners had been plain and clear at the meeting on February 25th. "We listened to you on the 25th and told you are plans and you continue to come back with "what about this and what about that?"

W. Shorey stated that the Commissioners never intended to retrofit the Sheriff's Office. T. Bonneville, to the Commissioners, said, "Then you are thinking in the old way by not addressing this old building."

S. Benz said he believed all understood that the current Sheriff's Office will be for sale, the County reaps the benefit and whoever buys it will renovate it. He mentioned also that there will possibly be a sale of the 100 acres and asked that, for now, was this \$500,000.00 of lost money? W. Shorey said he believed the County will recoup most of that money. The group inquired if the County paid taxes on that property and was told no.

W. Shorey stated that EMA Director Dale Rowley has received a call from the architect wanting to know when they can get moving because time is passing. T. Bonneville complained that the group had just received the plans, that they were supposed to get the plans after the meeting on the 25th of February and since they never heard from anybody, they had to contact the architect themselves. A. Fowler apologized for this.

S. Benz and K. Rak inquired as to when the architect will start working and if real plans would be available by then. W. Shorey encouraged that input be given to the architect. K. Rak asked if the County would be detaching the Sheriff's Office and was told that this was the plan, when selling, although it was still undetermined at this time.

S. Benz thanked the Commissioners for their time. W. Shorey told T. Bonneville that he did a nice job on his presentation. H. Sawyer said his offer for a discounted rate for the County still held.

DISCUSSION OF WAGE INCREASE FOR P/T VICTIM/WITNESS ADVOCATE:

Present for this discussion was Deputy District Attorney Eric Walker. D. Berry explained that the Commissioners wished to speak with E. Walker about the request for a wage increase for the Part-time Victim/Witness Advocate from \$11.00 to \$12.50 per hour he submitted to them during their February Court Session. E. Walker said that the plan had been to leave the original request in the budget, but at some point it was reduced to the salary that the person was allowed to earn at that time. E. Walker explained that he had been instructed by District Attorney Geoffrey Rushlau to point out that if that person left tomorrow, someone else would have to be hired at the higher rate as it stands on the pay scale. E. Walker noted that the District Attorney's Office will budget accordingly next year. K. Trussell confirmed that the original budget request for that line was \$13,000.00 but the Commissioners reduced it based on what the person was currently earning. E. Walker said he did not know if there were any other lines in the D.A.'s budget that could support the requested wage increase. K. Trussell said she had a suggestion. There is grant money provided for this position quarterly. Currently it goes into the General Fund as revenue, but the next check could be put in a designated reserve and used to pay the salary. This will cover the wage increase, as the grant funding received is about \$1,000.00 quarterly. This would offset for the remainder of the year and not go over budget for the wage increase to \$12.50 per hour. E. Walker agreed that this would work.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to increase hourly wage from \$11.00 to \$12.50 per hour, utilizing grant funding for this position. Unanimous.**

K. Trussell said she would recommend a reserve account to the Commissioners at a later date.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT REPORT:

Present for this report was Facilities Manager Keith Nealley who reported the following:

1. The handicap ramp in front of the District Courthouse is finally completed to the satisfaction of Architect Robert Fenney and K. Nealley. K. Nealley also reported that he has received authorization from State Court Facilities Manager Jeffrey Henthorne to start the next ADA projects, which will include a handicap counter and widening several doorways.
2. The Superior Courthouse still needs to be brought up to ADA code. K. Nealley recommended installing a "store-front-style" door, which is wider and only the single door would open. He explained that it would look similar to City Hall and would be a bronze-type finish. It would have to be approved by the City of Belfast Planning Commission. The State will fund this 100%. K. Nealley noted that this will accomplish ADA accessibility as well as increase energy efficiency.
3. The chair lift at Superior Courthouse, is "frightening and tricky." K. Nealley explained that it could be repaired or replaced with a small elevator. If it is feasible to install an elevator, he would recommend doing so right near the front door. "The good news is we have until June 30th to fund this project. The elevator company is based out of Portland (Pine State Elevator Company) and they would come perform a site review to see what solution can be found," he stated. K. Nealley said he will inform the Commissioners of progress in this regard. W. Shorey asked about how much this likely cost altogether, including the handicap ramp, and K. Nealley estimated that it would total about \$50,000.00. "The State is working with us hand-in-hand and we really appreciate it," he said. The work upstairs will go out to bid likely next week. The Commissioners commended K. Nealley for his initiative in contacting and working with the State on these improvements.

DISCUSSION OF DEEDS FEE STRUCTURE:

Present for this discussion was Register of Deeds Deloris Page. D. Page asked what the Commissioners wanted to hear first. The Commissioners opted to first discuss the status of proposed L.D. 1554 Bill. D. Page reported changed from what they started out with. The State and Local Committee took out the \$2.00 increase on the 2nd page, did not support transfer definition and watermark, increasing fees retroactive was removed, but did approve language for each category – transfers – criteria – so ultimately, the Commissioners can still, at this point, set copying fees. These sections will be moved to Title 33, which are statutes pertaining to the Registry of Deeds. D. Page said he had received a telephone call from Kennebec County Register of Deeds Beverly Bustin-Hatheway informing her that the State and Local Government will be discussing it more. There was some concern that Commissioners would “take advantage.” It still hasn’t really been settled yet and will continue to be discussed tomorrow. D. Page said that she believed that if the Commissioners set a copy fee, which could be backed up with details, she thought it would be all set. She felt that a \$1.00 per page was reasonable, and reviewed briefly the figures she had quoted to the Commissioners during a previous court session. She explained that the Internet fees are reasonable, but they will need to add bulk sales. Before, when she was calculating a price comparison, she came up with 13 cents. Some counties arrived at 25 cents or so. During one of the Registers meetings, this was discussed and it was thought that 20 cents per image and 20 cents per document (index) would be the average of all the registries. D. Page is recommending for Waldo County 20 cents per image and 20 cents per document, using ACS’ terminology, and all bulk copying would require prepayment.

W. Shorey asked if D. Page had any idea how the County would be sitting financially if this all was settled. She replied that she didn’t know; particularly if MacImage won and got the Internet She explained that the State and Local Committee has sort of set up INFOME and they thought that this perhaps should be done for Deeds – a “stockholder” rate, with a criteria - and by January 2011, this would be presented to State and Local Government. John Simpson is interested in that, and may want to be involved in setting that up. The Commissioners wondered if there was still a lawsuit in place. They further noted that, so far, no proposal from MacImage has come before them to review, as promised by Mr. Simpson. The Commissioners had read in some article that he claimed he had it on his desk, but, as yet, they have not seen it. There was concern that the legal part of a different web site other than the Registry of Deeds web site would not be official or legal for attorneys who are putting their name on a document indicating that these are “true” Deeds copies.

W. Shorey said he was concerned about a small business operating a large web site. “What if the individual is in the hospital with pneumonia? Will the web site run itself?” D. Page stated that she had the same concern. She recalled a recent remark made by Mr. Simpson that Brown Tech is a one-man operation, and while this may be true, Brown Tech has contracted with Norton Lamb and Company as their hardware vendor.

D. Page showed the Commissioners an article MaineBiz published about Mr. Simpson. D. Page noted that Mr. Simpson has been going to the newspapers.

D. Page stated that Registry of Deeds documents, from day one, have always been public access. “Anyone can walk in and look at these for free,” she stated.

The Register and Commissioners would move forward with things after the legislation has finally passed.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Reporting correspondence to the Commissioners was County Clerk Barbara L. Arseneau, with Veronica Stover taking the minutes as follows:

1. The Maine Municipal Workers Comp 2009 Fund audit has been completed and Waldo County has received a premium adjustment refund in the amount of \$2,833.00.
2. The Department of Administrative and Financial Services has announced that for the period from January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010, the annual rate of interest is 7% compounded monthly.
3. Ron Desrosiers of Time and Tide sent an invitation for the Commissioners to join them in discussing certifying dry hydrants, improving fire safety concerns and the prospect of reducing current ISSO ratings, which will result in decreased insurance costs on March 18, 2010, 7:00 p.m. at the Unity Fire Station. The Commissioners regretted that none could attend, but wished to thank Mr. Desrosiers for including them.
4. Jennifer Brooks of Eastern Maine Development Corporation sent a document to the County Commissioners listing services available to Waldo County businesses with membership and services available without membership. In particular, it was noted that Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is not available without membership.
5. Eric Galant of the Mid-Coast Regional Planning Commission sent a packet of information to the Commissioners along with an email explaining that the Maine DOT has asked for Mid-Coast's assistance in collecting municipal transportation project requests for 2010. He asked if the Commissioners had any transportation project requests that they please fill out the attached form and return it to his office by March 22, 2010. The Commissioners felt that the municipalities know best what is needed and had no requests at this time.
6. B. Arseneau submitted the most recent NACo report on Waldo County's use of the Prescription Discount RX cards. Berry stated that he had attended a health meeting yesterday, discussing what are some of the goals are and would very much like to have the link to these monthly reports. B. Arseneau was instructed to supply the link.
7. Sheriff Scott Story sent a request for Patrol Deputy Kevin Littlefield to carry 36 hours of unused 2009 vacation leave until June 15, 2010. K. Littlefield had not been eligible to use it because he entered the Maine Criminal Justice Academy in January for 18 weeks of training.
****A. Fowler moved, W. Shorey seconded to allow Patrol Officer Kevin Littlefield to carry over 36 hours of unused 2009 vacation leave until June 15, 2010. Unanimous.**
8. Communications Director Owen Smith requested confirmation of promoting part-time Dispatcher Linda Wry to Full-time Dispatcher effective March 28, 2010 to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Dispatch Supervisor Randy Stevenson. Because of the years of service, experience and certifications, she will be placed at the one-year step of \$15.99 per hour.
****A. Fowler moved, W. Shorey seconded approving the full-time hire of Dispatcher Linda Wry at \$15.99 per hour. Unanimous.**
9. The Commissioners noted pay step increases for the following employees:

- Corrections Officer Michael Hopkins reached the five-year step effective March 8, 2010 with a pay increase from \$1601 to \$16.60 per hour.
 - Deputy James Greeley will reach the five-year pay step with an increase from \$18.26 to \$18.95 per hour, effective March 13, 2010.
 - Victim/Witness Advocate Deborah McAllian reached the five-year pay step with an increase from \$18.107 to \$18.44 per hour effective March 7, 2010.
10. Deputy Treasurer Karen Trussell has sent a request that all 2009 Annual Reports be submitted to her by May 1, 2010.
11. The United States Department of Commerce has sent a request to the County Commissioners for their assistance in encouraging County citizens to participated in the 2010 Census. The Commissioners agreed to put out a press release to that effect and be placed on the County web site, as well.
12. Deputy County Clerk Veronica Stover inquired about planning for the County’s participation in National County Government Week at the Hall of Flags. Commissioner Fowler explained that the date for this event has still not been confirmed due to timing of the Legislature, and, in fact, it may not be held at all. Planning really cannot be done at this point.

MINUTES APPROVED:

****A. Fowler moved, W. Shorey seconded to approve the following Commissioners Session Minutes: November 6, 2007, December 18, 2007, January 27, 2009, February 10, 2009 (with correction of date – 2090 to 2009), March 10, 2009, April 13, 2009, February 5, 2010, February 16, 2010 and February 24, 2010. Unanimous.**

COMMUNICATIONS CENTER REPORT:

Present for this report was Communications Director Owen Smith.

SUPERVISOR POSITION: O. Smith thanked the Commissioners for seeing him on short notice, and said that he felt he should meet with them briefly to discuss hiring a supervisor. He felt that this position did, in fact, need to be filled. He informed the Commissioners that he would be posting the position internally first, and if he cannot fill it, then he will advertise externally. He noted that there will need to be a change in the SOP Chain of Command to reflect that this would be a Shift Supervisor position rather than a Dispatch Supervisor position, eliminating one link in the chain. He told the Commissioners he has already spoken with the Board of Directors and reported that the Board had no trouble with that. He said he has decided that there is a need for this position to be filled and may come back to the Commissioners to fill a fourth Shift Supervisor position in order to cover all the shifts, if there is enough money in the budget.

He reported that he has heard that he may receive another resignation tomorrow, but was not sure.

ABORN HILL TOWER INSTALLATION: O. Smith reported that the moved into the new building at the Aborn Hill Tower site was completed yesterday and went very well. “Everything has been moved and is working properly,” he stated, and described the move as going “almost flawlessly.” He told the Commissioners that a woman from the company that provided the tower to the contractor called and noted that the invoice for the tower has not been paid.

COMMISSIONERS' BUSINESS:

1. W. Shorey said he felt that one of the Commissioners should call EMA Director Dale Rowley to tell him that the Commissioners are moving forward with the EMA/Sheriff's Office project as planned. He explained that D. Rowley had received a telephone call from the architect wondering what to do with the project since the community group were coming in to meet with the Commissioners to present options. D. Berry said he would call D. Rowley.

2. W. Shorey told the Commissioners that he had a brief conversation with Mr. Benz during a break in the court session this morning and said that Mr. Benz was mostly looking for history and explanation. The Commissioners briefly discussion on continuing to work with the neighbors on the look of the buildings, and they needed to notify D. Rowley that some of the individuals will be contacting him to serve on a committee to help with the plan design. There was some discussion on green energy approaches to buildings and ideas that were shared with Commissioner Fowler when she met with some of the neighbors at the Co-op recently to hear their ideas.

NEXT COURT SESSION:

The next Commissioners Court Session will be April 13, 2010, unless any special sessions need to be called prior to that date.

****A. Fowler moved, W. Shorey seconded adjourning the Commissioners Court Session at 12:09 p.m. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted by *Barbara L. Arseneau*
Waldo County Clerk