

STATE OF MAINE

At a meeting of the County Commissioners, begun and holden in Wiscasset, within and for the County of Lincoln, on the seventeenth day of March 2026 by adjournment from the third day of March 2026.

Present: David Levesque, Chair  
William B. Blodgett  
Evan Goodkowsky

Meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by Commissioner Levesque, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Forum**

None present.

**Minutes**

**March 3, 2026** – Commissioner Blodgett moved to accept the minutes as written, seconded by Commissioner Goodkowsky; 3-0 vote approved.

**Finances**

**Warrants** – Finance Director, Michelle Kane presented Warrant #43 in the amount of \$543,625.44 for approval. Commissioner Blodgett moved to approve the warrant as presented, seconded by Commissioner Goodkowsky; 3-0 vote approved.

Director Kane presented Warrant #44 in the amount of \$306,367.47 for approval. Commissioner Goodkowsky moved to approve the warrant as presented, seconded by Commissioner Blodgett; 3-0 vote approved.

**Payroll Warrant** – Director Kane presented Payroll Warrant #2026-5 paid on March 6, 2026, in the amount of \$267,608.85 for approval. Commissioner Goodkowsky moved to approve the payroll warrant as presented, seconded by Commissioner Blodgett; 3-0 vote approved.

**Unorganized Territory Audit 2025** – Director Kane presented the 2025 Audit for the Unorganized Territories in Lincoln County which include Hibbert's Gore and Louds Island. The current fund balance will be used for capital projects related to Gore Road in Hibbert's Gore. The culvert is scheduled to be replaced this spring. Commissioner Blodgett moved to accept the 2025 Unorganized Territory Audit, seconded by Commissioner Goodkowsky; 3-0 vote approved.

**Sheriff's Office**

**Jail Count** – Chief Deputy Rand Maker presented the current jail count as follows: Lincoln 23, Sagadahoc 11, Knox 53, Penobscot 53, and Federal 2 for a total of 142.

**Purchase Authorization – MSA Spring Conference \$3,390 (10 attendees)** – Chief Deputy Maker presented a Purchase Authorization for the Maine Sheriff's Association's Spring

Conference in April in the amount of \$3,390. This will cover the meals and training for two days for the ten people attending. There will be additional costs once the conference happens for lodging. Commissioner Blodgett moved to approve the Purchase Authorization as presented, seconded by Commissioner Goodkowsky; 3-0 vote approved. The Commissioners have been invited to attend the banquet for the Conference on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026

### **Communications**

**Purchase Authorization – Supervisor Office Furniture \$4,514.91** – In the absence of Communications Director Tara Doe, Administrator Carrie Kipfer presented a Purchase Authorization in the amount of \$4,514.91 to Vernal for new office furniture for the Communications Supervisors' offices. The furniture they are currently using is old and not ergonomic. There will be three new L-shaped stand-sit desks, each with a drawer and filing cabinet, purchased. This project was planned for the 2025 budget, and the funds were set aside. Commissioner Goodkowsky moved to approve the Purchase Authorization of \$4,514.91 to Vernal for office furniture, seconded by Commissioner Blodgett; 3-0 vote approved.

### **LCRPC**

**Hiring Recommendation – Erin Quetell for Land Use and Transportation Planner Position** – Executive Director Emily Rabbe presented a Hiring Recommendation for Erin Quetell for the Land Use and Transportation Planner position starting April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Ms. Quetell has experience in County Government Planning in Michigan, which is also a home rule state. She worked in sustainability and land use planning as a municipal planner. Commissioner Blodgett moved to accept the Hiring Recommendation of Erin Quetell for Land Use and Transportation Planner, seconded by Commissioner Goodkowsky; 3-0 vote approved.

**Purchase Order Request – Disburse ARPA Award to the Town of Newcastle \$36,000** – Director Rabbe presented a Purchase Order Request to disburse ARPA funds to the Town of Newcastle in the amount of \$36,000 to continue advancing their municipal housing project. They will be using the funding to move a fire hydrant and for engineering of expanding utilities to the site. Commissioner Blodgett moved to approve the Purchase Order Request of \$36,000 in ARPA funds to the Town of Newcastle, seconded by Commissioner Goodkowsky; 3-0 vote approved.

**Purchase Order Request – Disburse ARPA Award to the Town of Waldoboro \$150,000** – Director Rabbe presented a Purchase Order Request to disburse ARPA funds to the Town of Waldoboro in the amount of \$150,000 to continue advancing their municipal housing project. They will be using the funding to continue advancing their booster station and water expansion project. Commissioner Goodkowsky moved to approve the Purchase Order Request of \$150,000 in ARPA funds to the Town of Waldoboro, seconded by Commissioner Blodgett; 3-0 vote approved.

### **Administrator**

**Opioid Settlement Notice of Settlement Proposal – Six Remnant Defendants** – Administrator Kipfer informed the Commissioners of a new Notice of Settlement Proposal with six regional distributors/dispensers as the defendants – Associated Pharmacies, JM Smith

Corporation, Louisiana Wholesale Drug Company, Morris and Dixon Company, North Carolina Mutual Wholesale Drug Company and United Natural Foods. The law firm which represents us is recommending that we sign on as a participant. The amount of this settlement will be decided as the legal process goes forward. Commissioner Goodkowsky moved to accept the notice of settlement and authorize the County Administrator to sign on the Commissioners' behalf, seconded by Commissioner Blodgett; 3-0 vote approved.

#### **District Attorney**

**Payment Authorization – Witness Fees \$5,926.20** - District Attorney Natasha Irving presented a Payment Authorization for payment of Witness Fees submitted by the Maine Attorney General's Office in the amount of \$5,926.20 for an expert witness for a homicide case that originated in Lincoln County but was prosecuted by the Maine AG's office. The District Attorney explained that this is the first time in eight years such a bill has been submitted to a county and attributes it to the Maine AG's witness-fee fund being low. Statutes in Title 15 were discussed, particularly the extradition fund, which can be used for extraditions and certain prosecution expenses, including witness fees. However, both the County District Attorneys' regular witness-fee budget and the extradition fund currently lack sufficient funds to cover the invoice.

The Commissioners raised concerns about fairness and authority—specifically why county taxpayers should pay for expenses over which the county and the local DA had no control, and whether the statutes truly require counties to cover state prosecution costs. There is uncertainty about reimbursement timing and whether funds will become available later in the year. Because the situation is unprecedented and legally unclear, the Commissioners tabled the vote on the payment. The DA was asked to contact the Maine State Attorney General directly to request a legal explanation or memo on the statutory basis and historical practice, or to see if the AG's office can resolve the payment internally before the next commissioners' meeting.

**Out of State Travel Request – DDA Kent Murdock – Rise Conference, Nashville, TN –** District Attorney Irving presented an Out of State Travel Request for DDA Kent Murdock to attend the Rise Conference in Nashville, TN for a budget amount of \$2,024.48 with the assumption that it will be reimbursed from a grant after the conference. Any unreimbursed expenses will be divided amount the four District Counties. Commissioner Goodkowsky moved to approve the Out of State Travel Request for DDA Kent Murdock to attend the Rise Conference in the amount of \$2,024.48, seconded by Commissioner Blodgett; 3-0 vote approved.

**Other District Attorney Updates:** The District Attorney reports that the DA's office has been understaffed but is close to being fully staffed, with a new employee performing well and a strong candidate expected to receive an offer soon. Staff have been working hard to manage heavy workloads, and the DA highlighted a recent serious domestic violence case that was successfully resolved through close collaboration with the Lincoln County Sheriff's Department, resulting in a significant prison sentence and probation. Overall, the DA expresses pride in the staff and law enforcement teamwork.

Regarding Two Bridges Regional Jail operations and inter-county collaboration, the DA says the arrangement with Knox County has not caused problems, with court appearances and attorney communications largely handled remotely. The main challenge has been Waldo County inmates housed in Somerset County, which creates logistical difficulties for families and attorneys, though jail operations themselves are functioning well. No major complaints have been reported from defense attorneys, and while coordination across counties remains complex, the system is generally working as intended.

**Administrator (continued)**

**Change of Venue July 7, 2026, Commissioners Meeting – Pownalborough Courthouse –** Administrator Kipfer informed the Commissioners of a recent meeting with the Lincoln County Historical Association (LCHA) where she raised the possibility of having the July 7, 2026, Commissioners Meeting at the historic Pownalborough Courthouse in Dresden as part of the US Semiquincentennial celebrations in Lincoln County. The LCHA was very interested in hosting, and the Courthouse is available that day. It will hold up to 60 people in the Courtroom. Commissioner Goodkowsky moved to change the venue for July 7, 2026, Commissioners Meeting to the Courtroom at the Pownalborough Courthouse, Dresden, seconded by Commissioner Blodgett; 3-0 vote approved.

**DOL SHAPE Consultation March 11-12, 2026 –** Administrator Kipfer let the Commissioners know about the recent visit by the Department of Labor for a consultation on our SHAPE status. The County has previously been awarded the DOL Safety and Health Award for Public Employers (SHAPE) award, and they do a consultation every two years to determine that there are not any new safety issues. Mr. Bob King from the DOL came out on March 11-12 to review our facilities. He looked at all records and was very impressed by the work that our retired HR Coordinator, Carol Thibeault, did in making sure all the records were present. He visited all the facilities and did find several things which needed to be addressed but all were minor and will be or have been addressed already. The SHAPE award means that we do not have random OSHA inspections and it also allows us to be eligible for a discount on our Workers Comp coverage. Administrator Kipfer will let the Commissioners know when the final report is received.

**Jail Authority term renewals –** Administrator Kipfer has been reviewing the Jail Authority terms for members from Lincoln County. The current full members are Sheriff Todd Brackett, Administrator Carrie Kipfer, Chief Deputy Rand Maker, former Commissioner Hamilton Meserve, Commissioner Evan Goodkowsky and Judy Tunkle. Alternates are Commissioner William Blodgett and Joan Schwartz. The County is allowed to have six full members and as many alternate members as needed. The Sheriff/Commissioner terms run concurrently with their positions, and the terms of the public members are three years. Commissioner Goodkowsky moved to make former Commissioner Hamilton Meserve an alternate member for a term of three years effective today, seconded by Commissioner Blodgett; 3-0 vote approved. Commissioner Goodkowsky moved to promote Commissioner William Blodgett from alternate to full Jail Authority member effective immediately with his term ending December 31, 2026, seconded by Commissioner Blodgett; 3-0 vote approved. Commissioner Goodkowsky moved to

have Administrator Kipfer work out the terms for the members, seconded by Commissioner Blodgett; 3-0 vote approved.

### **Old Business**

**Public Safety Building** – Administrator Kipfer asked to move this item to the Executive Sessions.

**Opioid Settlement Funding Grand application – 501 (c) 3 status update** – Administrator Kipfer has been in touch with Sallie Albert of the New Leash on Life Recovery and Rescue organization in Edgecomb and their federal non-profit status as a 501 (c) 3 has been granted. The organization is a combined facility with a recovery center and a kennel/grooming center. The residents of the recovery center will have the opportunity to be trained to work at the kennel/grooming center to gain income and skills for future positions. The original \$20,000 grant request was for assistance with repairs on the facility and furniture/household goods. Commissioner Goodkowsky moved to approve the \$20,000 grant to New Leash on Life Recovery and Rescue, seconded by Commissioner Blodgett; 3-0 vote approved.

### **Commissioners' Updates**

**LCRPC** – Commissioner Goodkowsky let the Commissioners know the Executive Committee meeting on March 24<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM on Zoom. He and Executive Director Emily Rabbe attended a meeting in Southport to recruit some new members for the board as Southport, along with Jefferson and South Bristol, are not represented on the Commission and can have two members. The Annual LCRPC meeting will be on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026, and he hopes the other Commissioners can attend.

**CCWI** – Commissioner Goodkowsky let the Commissioners know that the next meeting is May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

**MCCA** – Commissioner Levesque let the Commissioners know that he attended the Risk Pool meeting last Wednesday. There was discussion around the fact that the largest expense category is vehicle accidents. Fortunately, Lincoln County has won awards for safe driving so it is not an issue for us. Of the 10 new claims this year, most were vehicle accidents. They will be reviewing the status of accidents to see if any special training is needed. They are also increasing the awards for good driving from \$10,000 to \$15,000. Commissioner Levesque also mentioned that April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026, will be County Day from 8:30-1 PM at the State House in Augusta. MCCA would like to encourage the County department participants to come to the event.

**Legislative Updates** – Administrator Kipfer discussed a newly introduced legislative proposal by Representative Hasenfus to create a study group on county jail funding and operations. The proposed study would include representatives from the Department of Corrections, the Two Bridges Jail Authority, MCCA, county sheriffs, the Maine Municipal Association, and others. The purpose is to review the history of jail funding, operations, and past governance structures, and to explore potential cost savings through collaboration.

However, the speaker is skeptical of the effort, noting that there is no funding attached and no clear goal, and that similar efforts—such as the former Board of Corrections—failed in the past and are unlikely to produce different results now. The core issue is being avoided: county jails rely on only two revenue sources, state funding and property taxes. As state support declines, costs are increasingly shifted to local property taxpayers, which is inequitable.

**Executive Session**

**Discussion of Real Property – 1 MRSA 405 (6) (C)** - Commissioner Goodkowsky moved to enter Executive Session for Discussion of Real Property per 1 MSRA 405 (6) (C); seconded by Commissioner Blodgett; 3-0 vote approved.

Commissioner Goodkowsky moved to come out of Executive Session, seconded by Commissioner Blodgett; 3-0 vote approved. Commissioner Goodkowsky moved to have Administrator Kipfer contact the County's legal representative to draft an option agreement for property of interest, seconded by Commissioner Blodgett; 3-0 vote approved.

**Discussion of Legal – 1 MRSA 405 (6) (E)** – Not needed.

Commissioner Goodkowsky moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Blodgett; 3-0 vote approved.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM to the seventh day of April 2026 A.D.

ATTEST:

  
Executive Assistant