



County Corrections Professional Standards Council

In attendance:

Commissioner Steve Gorden, MCCA
Commissioner Fournier, MCCA
Sheriff Lancaster, MSA
Commissioner Liberty, MDOC
M. LaMarre, Clerk

Guests:

Mitchell Boynton, MDOC
Scott Ferguson, Kennebec County

The Council meeting began at 11:04. Commissioner Gorden asked members if there were any requested changes to the agenda. Commissioner Gorden corrected agenda to include biennium budget dates.

Commissioner Fournier noted that he and Commissioner Gorden missed the previous meeting and asked the clerk to circulate recording to both.

Commissioner Gorden, at the clerk's request, moved an agenda item pertaining to the budget submission to be discussed first. Mitch noted that September 1 is the MDOC deadline, and they will need council figures way before that date. The statute was written without designating fiscal or calendar year, according to Scott Ferguson, and the counties should have budgets entered into the CRAS system by July 31, 2024.

The Council discussion regarding MAT that was funded through supplemental was initiated and Commissioner Liberty asked how that funding will be distributed to counties. Counties must develop a distribution plan. Scott Ferguson clarified supplemental 24-25 – it will get to controller's office and align with payments. Distribution depends on the controller's office.

Commissioner Liberty reminded attendees that the counties need to develop the distribution plan. The \$4 million will be going into the county jails operation fund. Some Council members insisted that the \$4 million be distributed per shortfall MAT expenses that were reported. Three counties did not submit MAT shortfalls. Commissioner Liberty suggested MCCA and MSA discuss with their memberships before deciding.

Budgets from Council to MDOC **must** be submitted by July 31, 2024.

Motion to distribute the supplemental \$4 million (\$3,905,062 for MAT with \$94,938 additional) per the MAT submissions from the participating Counties; moved by Commissioner Fournier, seconded by Sheriff Lancaster. Motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Liberty abstaining. The additional \$94,938 to be distributed based upon the recommendations of the DOC along with discussions of the Council. Minutes to reflect this motion was a decision of Council.

Commissioner Liberty has brought the issue of overcrowding to the Council. He noted that currently overcrowding is not addressed as a mandatory jail standards and that he will be introducing a rule-making process shortly to develop MANDATORY overcrowding standards There will be several factors that will be taken into consideration.

Scott Ferguson noted that data into BARS could be utilized to ascertain overcrowding. Commissioner Liberty reminded Council members that part of the rulemaking process will include public hearings, etc. Commissioner Gorden added that we need to begin conversations to identify what is the real cost for housing an inmate per diem. He also said we need to discuss capital needs, perhaps not in the per diem discussion.

Sheriff Lancaster agreed that it is a problem, but we must ensure we're not compromising the authority of sheriffs and commissioners.

Commissioner Gorden asked for information about the "Adequate Contact with Counsel subcommittee." The subcommittee will resume work on May 9 to review standing jail policies and develop a standard for all jails. All work will be brought back to the Council for the next four meetings as the subcommittee will meet on the morning of the next four council meetings.

Commissioner Gorden asked Scott Ferguson to speak about the pending process of submitting budgets. Scott said the starting point would be to move this \$4 million into standing county jail funding permanently. He asked Commissioner Liberty about budget lines that would be acceptable such as personnel costs. What budget lines will the Governor be looking for? Commissioner Liberty responded by reiterating that developing relationships with legislators was essential. Commissioner Gorden asked Commissioner Liberty to provide a list to Council members that identifies budget areas of concern and why for the Governor.

Scott Ferguson will develop a plan for collecting budget information from counties. Sheriff Lancaster noted there are ongoing conversations about how counties can collaborate to cut expenses. Sheriffs would not be opposed to discussing as a group. Commissioner Gorden asked if the MSA would be amenable to facilitate a meeting to specifically have that in place. Commissioner Liberty brought up the CARA program which accepts any inmates to receive advanced programming, as an example of collaboration among counties (i.e. Veteran's Program at Kennebec County)

Commissioner Gorden asked for more information on how counties can work together to find funding beyond the state (i.e. grants, community program funding, etc.) Are there groups that we could work with to arrange to pursue funding? Could MDOC work with us to find grants? Commissioner Liberty suggested the Council work with Gordon Smith. He noted that Gordon Smith is working with Somerset on their MAT work.

Sheriff Lancaster suggested that the Maine Sheriffs Association be paid with the surplus funding, as the Council previously voted to fund the Council work for \$25,000 annually. Sheriff Lancaster moved that we use \$25,000 surplus to fund the Council. Scott Ferguson noted that the county jails operation fund may not be used for this but there is a special fund. He doesn't know if part of the \$20 Million can be reappropriated for Council. Mitchell noted we would have to bill counties. Commissioner Fournier moved that we use a portion of the supplemental. Sheriff Lancaster will second if that's the motion. MDOC special revenue account, according to Scott Ferguson, could potentially fund the Council. Motion died on the floor.

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Liberty and seconded by Commissioner Fournier at 12:40.