

## County Corrections Professional Standards Council

August 24, 2023 – Virtual meeting

Members present:

Commissioner Steve Gorden, Chairman  
Commissioner Norm Fournier, MCCA  
Rebecca Graham, MMA  
Sheriff Dale P. Lancaster, MSA  
Commissioner Liberty, MDOC  
Sheriff Scott Nichols, MSA

Guests:

Sheriff Todd Brackett, Lincoln County  
Scott Ferguson, Kennebec County  
Mary-Anne LaMarre, MSA st

Commissioner Gorden opened the meeting at 11:02.

Commissioner Fournier moved that we accept the 9/10/23 minutes as presented. Sheriff Lancaster seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Commissioner Gorden turned the meeting over to Scott Ferguson by asking him what the top three cost drivers are from the data he's collected from counties. Scott noted that the number one item driving up county budgets is staffing (salaries, etc.), followed by medical costs. He noted that state data identifies that a comfortable living wage is between \$72,000 and \$78,000. This makes it difficult to fill positions such as corrections officers.

Sheriff Lancaster noted that he very much appreciated Scott's efforts to collect this data. Scott proceeded to report that the data he's collected, and circulated to Council members, is for supplemental for FY 2024.

Commissioner Gorden asked Commissioner Liberty if this report be sent to MDOC. Commissioner Liberty responded by updating group on plans to begin budget discussions in September and he will report back to Council at our next meeting. Commissioner Gorden asked Commissioner Liberty who the Council should be working with on the MDOC staff, as it pertains to budgets. Scott Ferguson noted that normally what happens is budget instructions are released.

MOTION: Commissioner Fournier moved that we submit this supplemental request now. Sheriff Lancaster seconded the motion. Discussion: Commissioner Liberty asked Scott Ferguson if he had the information to support this request. Scott noted he needs to collect backup data. Commissioner Liberty reminded members that significant vetting takes place on these requests. **Rebecca Graham asked if Commissioner Liberty would inquire about how the Council could be part of that process and help make the case for the funding request with Commissioner Figueroa. Commissioner Liberty offered to reach out to Commissioner Figueroa what the process looks like for counties.**

Sheriff Lancaster reviewed state county corrections funding in FY 2023, and the state's percentage was 18 – almost 19%. Commissioner Liberty offered to take numbers from Scott and deliver to DAFS as a placeholder while counties develop supporting documentation.

Commissioner Gorden noted that counties should not be held to the same standard as state departments. Commissioner Liberty reminded all that if an ask isn't in the Governor's budget, it goes to DAFS to be worked on and Governor makes final decision. He went on to say our best strategy is to work through legislature to put through.

Rebecca Graham added that cloture is scheduled for the end of next month, it would behoove us to find a sponsor to put in a bill in now so that we can have an emergency vehicle if we need to do that.

Commissioner Fournier called on the chair to take a vote on the motion that's on the floor. Motion carried with an abstention from Commissioner Liberty. Commissioner Liberty asked for clarification and Commissioner Gorden noted that we will submit amount based on Scott Ferguson's proposal. He added that Scott also identified top cost drivers. Commissioner urged all to remember to take great care offering guidance to carefully document expenses.

Commissioner Gorden asked Sheriff Brackett to discuss additional data requirements. The data collection sub-committee met yesterday. He will convene the group once every two weeks for the next six weeks.

Commissioner Fournier moved that we adjourn at 11:54. Rebecca Graham seconded. Motion carried.