



## **County Corrections Professional Standards Council**

County Corrections Professional Standards Council  
August 8, 2024

Council members and staff present:

Commissioner Norm Fournier, MCCA  
Steve French, MDOC  
Chairman, Commissioner Steve Gorden, MCCA  
Rebecca Graham, MMA  
Sheriff Dale P. Lancaster, MSA  
Commissioner Randall Liberty, MDOC  
Sheriff Eric Samson, MSA  
Mary-Anne LaMarre, Clerk

Guests:

Sheriff Peter Johnson, Aroostook  
Scott Ferguson, Kennebec  
Commissioner Scott Adkins, Penobscot  
Jeff Chute, Androscoggin

Commissioner Gorden opened the meeting at 11:00. He noted that Commissioner Fournier was recently recognized for his volunteer contributions to Aroostook County by having a building named after him.

Commissioner Gorden noted that Scott Ferguson is only available for a short time and moved him to the top of the agenda. He noted concern about data to support the increase in our funding request from the state. He also presented the idea of presenting only MAT and medical shortfalls.

Scott Ferguson reminded the group that AFA supported unfunded mandates in the last budget. MAT and medical shortfalls amount to \$13.6m in 26 and \$14+ in 27. Sheriff Lancaster confirmed that these numbers are in addition to our county corrections funding in the legislature.

Commissioner Liberty asked for additional information pertaining to increase requests. Some counties, for example, have asked for much less than others. How are we supporting these requests. Scott explained that counties will explain what they're doing. Commissioner Fournier has concerns because we're missing one county, Washington, with MAT. Commissioner Liberty said that we're mandated to provide this MAT care, and Washington County has a significant opioid problem.

Commissioner Fournier moved to table the topic of funding until September 22, with the addition of researching the MAT status in Washington County prior to that meeting. Sheriff Lancaster seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Commissioner Fournier moved that Commissioner Gorden be selected as chair of the Council. Sheriff Lancaster seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Commissioner Gorden thanked Council members for their support.

Rebecca Graham moved that we accept the June 11, 2024, minutes as presented. Commissioner Fournier seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Commissioner Liberty asked that Steve French provide the updates. He also added that fines and surcharges could potentially be used to fund the Council. The Attorney General's office is reviewing.

Steve French reviewed counties that are currently overpopulated. There is a conflict that numbers submitted are not always in the correct categories which can impact reporting. Sheriff Samson told Council that Friday, including boarders, we had seven that were MDOC inmates, and fifteen were not Andro inmates. Commissioner Liberty noted that any time you have inmates sentenced to a state facility, call the MDOC, they will be accepted any time. Commissioner Gorden asked for clarification and Commissioner Liberty explained that there is a schedule to make intake run smoothly but any counties that need those state inmates moved to a state facility, they can deliver outside of the schedule.

Update on jail audits that are required in statute: Commissioner Fournier noted that his county administrator and there was an indication that Aroostook has issues finding a qualified CPA to produce reports requested. Jail audits are all done in Aroostook. Commissioner Gorden reported that the issue in Cumberland is what information is needed for this required audit. Commissioner Gorden questioned whether or not asking for a 'jail audit' is enough? Should it be broken into categories? What we will do, is review statute and it's up to MDOC to require these audits. Statute was provided to Council members to review and discuss.

Commissioner Gorden provided a summary, summarizing that the information is provided to MDOC for his report to MDOC. Commissioner Liberty asked that we add a timeline to the statute language. Commissioner Fournier noted that a specific date is helpful. October 15 is the date audit materials are due to the Commissioner of Corrections for his report to CJ, as noted by Commissioner Liberty. Commissioner Gorden asked if this goes into effect in 2024. Commissioner Liberty noted that this year will be more forgiving as it is newly implemented.

Steve French began a review of the proposed standards. Council members have had weeks to review these proposed changes. Commissioner Liberty noted that this Council won't make the decisions, this will go to public hearing for input, but this is your chance to discuss as Council before the public hearing. Sheriff Samson has concerns about the mandatory capacity changes. He went on to say that these would be very difficult to meet those mandates. Commissioner Liberty asked Sheriff Samson to draft language that would address the concerns he brought forward. Sheriff Samson agreed to this. Sheriff Lancaster added his concerns. Penalizing the counties financially, when the significant population in Maine jails are filled with pre-trial inmates. Counties cannot control pre-trial, and several other operating issues that would prohibit counties from meeting these proposed standards. Commissioner Liberty explained that currently, there are 35 inmates without beds and we need to address.

Sheriff Lancaster reminded people that the individuals incarcerated in our jails, are there as a response to the public safety issue for these inmates to remain in their communities. A myriad of issues were discussed in detail.

Sheriff Lancaster asked Commissioner Liberty to provide language that would address concerns brought forward. Commissioner Liberty noted that the Dept is going to host public hearings and listen to input to help develop language.

Commissioner Liberty mentioned that he has financial information from the Commissioner of DAFS. The counties' budgets within MDOC budget is due to him by September 1. Commissioner Fournier mentioned that the deadline only offers us a chance to discuss one more time.

Rebecca noted that we hold a special meeting to exclusively discuss proposed standards. Consensus agreed.

Council members also discussed meeting with the DAFS commissioner and agreed to a mid-October meeting with DAFS.

Sheriff Lancaster moved that Council shall contact Washington County and confirm their position that they do not need MAT funding, then we will submit what has been collected by Scott Ferguson for MAT. Commissioner Fournier seconded. Motion carried.

Motion to adjourn was made by Sheriff Lancaster at 12:23 and seconded by Commissioner Fournier. Motion carried.