



Cumberland County

Board of Commissioners

Meeting Minutes - Final

27 Northport Dr
Portland, ME 04103

The Board meets on the third Monday of each month at 5:30pm in the Sebago Lake Room unless otherwise noted.

Monday, March 16, 2026

6:00 PM

**Sebago Meeting Room
27 Northport Dr
Portland, ME 04103**

In person with the option to view online: www.cumberlandcountyme.gov/live

Meeting will be streamed online: www.cumberlandcountyme.gov/live

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Commissioners met for their regularly scheduled meeting at 27 Northport Drive, Portland, in the Sebago Lake Conference Room, the meeting was called to Order by Chair Patti Smith at 6:09 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Present: 5 - Chair Patricia Smith, Commissioner Jean-Marie Caterina, Vice Chair Tom Tyler, Commissioner Stephen Gorden, and Commissioner James Cloutier

County Staff:

James Gailey, County Manager
Breana Gersen, Deputy County Manager
Katharine Cahoon, Admin and Special Projects
Theresa Grover, Director of Finance
Alyssa Johnson, Finance and Budget Manager

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

[CD 26-007](#) Approval of the minutes, February 17, 2026, meeting of the Board of Commissioners

Chair Smith requested that the time and action be corrected to show that public comment opened at 5:36 and closed at 6:35. Commissioner Gorden requested that the sentence, "If the contract is ended ICE inmates will lose access to Portland services," be struck. The Commissioners agreed to strike it from the minutes.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier, seconded by Vice Chair Tyler, that this Minutes Report be APPROVED AS AMENDED. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

INFORMATIONAL REPORT/PRESENTATIONS

[CD 26-008](#) Informational Report for Cumberland County Regional Communications Center, fourth quarter newsletter 2025.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier, seconded by Commissioner Gorden, that this Report be RECEIVED AND FILED. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

[CD 26-009](#) Informational Presentation of FY25 Audited Financials as presented by RHR Smith & Company.

The informational presentation for the fiscal year 2025 audited financials was presented by RHR Smith and company. Commissioner Gorden asked about the jail audit and there was quite a controversy between the counties about why the State wanted a specific audit of jails. Could Ron explain what specific data they're trying to focus on?

Ron Smith stated that he was not sure, but they were focused on the presentation of the data. He explained that counties presented jail information in various forms and it was often blended. Since they provide jail funding, the Department of Corrections wanted to have jail information to compare between counties. They want to be able to compare populations, beds, federal limits, etc. For every county that operates the jail, they want a separate product for the jail that takes into consideration the inmate benefit accounts, any other trust funds, and any jail programs. That was a statute that was passed this past year and a piece of the corrections budget is planning to fund the jail audit. The Board should expect to see a reimbursement from the Department of Corrections.

Chair Smith asked when the reimbursement would arrive.

Ron Smith stated: I don't want to speak for the Department of Corrections.

Chair Smith asked if they are onsite multiple days?

Ron Smith explained that they're there multiple days. They used to be there more days, but the emphasis on auditing is now on planning and risk assessments. He stated that Teresa and her staff are very responsive and provide requested information, minimizing the amount of time that they're onsite.

Chair Smith thanked Ron Smith for his presentation and audit overview.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gorden, seconded by Commissioner Cloutier, that this Presentation be ACCEPTED. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Board Chair will limit comments on unrelated agenda items to three (3) minutes per speaker. The public comment period is limited to one (1) hour.

At 6:32 p.m. Chair Smith opened the public comment period. Public comment was received regarding the impact of ICE on the community and the role of the Cumberland County jail: Shelby Leighton, South Portland; Jack Obrien, Brunswick; Reverend Alison Smith, Harpswell; Olivia Pennington, Portland; and Tophi, Portland. At 6:45 p.m. Chair Smith closed the public comment period.

CONSENT AGENDA**Approval of the Consent Agenda**

A motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier, seconded by Commissioner Caterina, to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Chair Smith, Commissioner Caterina, Vice Chair Tyler, Commissioner Gorden, and Commissioner Cloutier

No: 0

[26-018](#) Acceptance of \$2,631.00 from the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency as Asset Forfeiture pertaining to a 2023 traffic stop in the Town of Brunswick.

This Order was APPROVED.

[26-019](#) Authorization for the County Manager to Award the design services for the Fire Alarm Replacement at the courthouse to Jensen Hughes Inc. in the amount of \$91,500

This Order was APPROVED.

[26-020](#) Authorization of Cumberland County Manager Jim Gailey to execute documents in conjunction with the renewal of the City of Portland and Cumberland County HOME Consortium.

This Order was APPROVED.

[26-021](#) Authorization for the County Manager to submit a proposal to the State of Maine Department of Public Safety in response to the FY 27 Substance Use Disorder Assistance Program Request for Applications

This Order was APPROVED.

[26-022](#) Authorization for the County Manager to enter into a contract between Cumberland County and Cumberland County Friends of Restorative Justice for restorative justice services for an annual renewable contract up to three years.

This Order was APPROVED.

NEW BUSINESS

[26-023](#) Approval of the Community Development 2026 Annual Action Plan including the allocation of CDBG and HOME partnership funds and contingency plans. Two public hearings required, final hearing on April 21, 2026.

Community Development Manager Courtney Kemp explained that the project review of the CDBG applications started in November when the application was released. The Municipal Oversight Committee (MOC) is made up of one representative from each town or city throughout the county. They meet to approve the final applications and within that committee they have an application review team. Nine volunteers took the time to review, score, hold a Q and A session and present their recommendations to the MOC for the funding approval. The MOC met two weeks ago and reviewed the recommendations from the review team and approved five infrastructure projects and three public service projects.

Chair Smith thanked Community Development Manager Kemp for all of her hard work. Chair Smith stated that the work makes a big difference that is reflected in a variety of communities. At 6:54 p.m. Chair Smith opened the public hearing. There were no comments from the public. At 6:54 p.m. Chair Smith closed the public hearing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier, seconded by Commissioner Gorden, that the Order Requiring a Public Hearing be INTRODUCED ON FIRST READING to the Board of Commissioners, due back on 4/21/2026. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Chair Smith, Commissioner Caterina, Vice Chair Tyler, Commissioner Gorden, and Commissioner Cloutier

No: 0

[26-024](#)

Authorization for the County Manager to Award a Bid Cumberland County Jail Roof Replacement and Enter into a Contract between Cumberland County and Tecta America New England LLC for the roof replacement services in the amount of \$2,164,100

County Manager Gailey stated that the agenda item has been on three or four different budgets but has had to be delayed due to funding needed for a more immediate emergency. He explained that the jail roof project is for just over \$2.1 million. They felt that was a great bid in terms of the costs associated with the improvements. Tecta America New England LLC out of Massachusetts is the low bidder which includes the addendums that they had asked for pricing.

Facilities Director Bill Trufant stated that they had 17 different vendors show up for the pre-bid meeting and four vendors submitted bids. The bids were broken down into two styles of roofs. One was to replace what was existing which is a balanced roof. It's a rock covering. It's because the weight of the rubber membrane is held down by the weight of the rocks. He explained they did an alternate which would have given the repairs to the skylights that are in the jail roof which gives the natural lighting that meets certain ACA requirements for natural light for the pods and also some masonry repairs on the hip roofs and the parapits on the roofing. They had four bids that came in out of the 17 that attended, they ranged from \$2.1 million to \$2.9 million. They decided that with the financial constraints they would be able to do the alternate, the masonry repairs, the skylights, and go with the different route of a fully adhered roof mechanically fastened. Then they won't necessarily have the rock weight and the rubber membrane down.

Commissioner Tyler asked, the number two bid, how far above (Tecta) was it? Facilities Director Trufant explained, it's \$27,000 more to do the fully adhered roof.

Commissioner Tyler asked, what the next bid amount above it was? Facilities Director Trufant, it's \$271,000.

Commissioner Gorden asked, what kind of a performance bond do we have? Facilities Director Trufant explained 15%.

Chair Smith asked, is it a 30-year roof or a 50-year roof? Facilities Director Trufant explained, it's a 30-year roof.

A motion was made by Commissioner Caterina, seconded by Vice Chair Tyler, that the Order be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Chair Smith, Commissioner Caterina, Vice Chair Tyler, Commissioner Gorden, and Commissioner Cloutier

No: 0

[26-025](#)

Authorization for CCEMA to use grant funds totaling \$239,971.04 for the purchase of a multi-mission robotic system from Teledyne FLIR.

EMA Director Michael Durkin clarified that his request was a follow-up request because the commissioners already voted on the item when they accepted the grant. He noted that the award amount is over \$75,000 per county policy and needs to be approved again prior to the purchase. Two separate robotic systems are going to be purchased and used by the Sheriff's SWAT team. He described the functionality of the robots and explained that the period of performance federally is three years while the state period of performance is two years.

Commissioner Gorden asked if the equipment only moves on the ground? EMA Director Durkin confirmed that the equipment moves on the ground and does not fly.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier, seconded by Commissioner Caterina, that the Order be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Chair Smith, Commissioner Caterina, Vice Chair Tyler, Commissioner Gorden, and Commissioner Cloutier

No: 0

[26-026](#)

Authorization to apply for Congressionally Directed Spending for special operation vehicle storage in the Windham Fire Department and Sheriff's Office joint facility

County Manager Gailey explained that the item is a request for authorization to submit a congressional direct spending request through Senator Collin's office. The request is for garage bays attached to the new Windham fire station that is being constructed. There would be a \$2 million congressional earmark to build the garage bays. Windham has been involved along the way and the item has been reviewed and approved by the Grants Committee.

Deputy Chief Brian Pellerin explained that the new Windham fire station that's being built is a collaboration with the county and the Town of Windham. The Sheriff's Department will be using the opportunity to move some of their operations into the Windham location. Windham is considered the crossroads for the areas that they serve. For law enforcement purposes, Portland is out of the way for the communities that they are routinely working in. While the project is under development, they have been able to add two additional fire bays to this building to relocate and store their command post vehicle, their evidence crime scene vehicle, and their armor vehicle. Many vehicles are currently being housed on borrowed space and borrowed locations throughout the county either in the City of Westbrook, Windham Fire Department, Grey Fire Department. They view this as a great opportunity for collaboration with the Town of

Windham.

Commissioner Gorden asked, what are the larger pieces of equipment that are going to be stored and how often are they used?

Deputy Chief Pellerin explained that all are used regularly. The command post vehicle is the size of a city bus. The armored vehicle is the size of a triple dump truck. The evidence crime scene vehicle is the size of an ambulance with a box truck in the back. They have other ancillary equipment such as boats and things that are

Commissioner Gorden asked about the use of the command post vehicle. Chief Deputy Pellerin explained that anytime they have an operation involving the ESU team, or search and rescue, it enables those resources of cellular capability, radio, camera, to support operations. It's a piece of equipment that can be loaned throughout the county.

Chair Smith stated that she appreciates how staff are planning ahead. It sounds like staff has identified a central location that will serve our wide swath of community members within the county. In terms of logistics, it's efficient and allows staff to travel with equipment to and from all the different towns that are served versus storing different equipment in sporadic locations. She stated that it's a fantastic move for the county and is happy with congressional funds. She asked if there are any downsides?

Chief Deputy Pellerin explained he did not know of any. While they're still exploring their options, they are planning on moving law enforcement services out to that facility. Their vehicles are stored in borrowed space. And it's the goodwill of the municipalities throughout the county that are allowing us to store the vehicles there.

Chair Smith shared that one of her concerns when she was a Councilor in South Portland was the storage plan for equipment purchases. She had been concerned that without planning for maintenance and storage, the lifespan of the equipment was not optimized. She stated that a garage to shield equipment from Maine winters is positive and she is in favor of passage.

Commissioner Tyler commented that the third floor of the building would belong to the county. Chief Deputy Pellerin confirmed it is and would be unfinished. Commissioner Tyler commented that Sheriff's department staff would be able to check on equipment and long term the arrangement is an ideal solution. Chief Pellerin added that the building would be secure and staffed with Windham personnel or county staff.

Commissioner Gorden asked if the Sheriff's Department would change the Jail operation center to that area for law enforcement services?

Chief Pellerin explained that the jail's location makes perfect sense for the population hub of Cumberland County. However, they do not patrol the Portland area other than the islands in Casco Bay.

Commissioner Gorden asked if they refuel in Portland?

Chief Pellerin explained that vehicle maintenance is done at the LEC in Portland, but fueling is done remotely through gas cards and gas stations. The Windham

location will have a training room and facilities for offices or interviews.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier, seconded by Vice Chair Tyler, that the Order be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Chair Smith, Commissioner Caterina, Vice Chair Tyler, Commissioner Gorden, and Commissioner Cloutier

No: 0

[26-027](#)

Authorization to accept the Howard G. Buffet Foundation grant funding for a civilian Criminal Analyst position for five years.

County Manager Gailey explained that the grant was submitted because of the submission deadline of last week and fell in between two meetings.

Chief Pellerin introduced Haley Baruso from Preble Street and Lieutenant Estabrook from the Sheriff's Office. Jim is our detective lieutenant and this is a collaboration through Haley's group that met with us and through the Howard Buffett foundation to fund a position to analyze human trafficking for all agencies throughout Cumberland County. The position would be a Sheriff's Office position, but this person would be working with Brunswick PD, Portland PD, South Portland PD, Scarborough PD, just as that center spoke in the wheel, to kind of analyze data, prosecutions, victims, resources.

Commissioner Gorden asked, if the position was to address trafficking drugs and people? Chief Pellerin explained it is about trafficking people.

Social Worker Haley Baruso explained that she is a clinical social worker and the director of an anti-trafficking program at Preble Street. They have been working with the Howard Buffett Foundation for three and a half years to continue to build out means of response to human trafficking. She explained that when she talks about human trafficking, she is describing both labor and sex trafficking. Human trafficking is any compelled activity through force, fraud, or coercion where a human being is used for somebody else's economic gain. She explained that their program over the last 13 years has recognized that a holistic public health approach is the best support for survivors of human trafficking. Their hope is to partner with the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office, and five other organizations throughout Maine. They will be able to continue to build out the response to survivors of human trafficking.

Chair Smith explained that she is on the grant committee, and that there were some conversations. She feels that the work is valuable. There's no doubt about it. There is human trafficking that's happening all around our country and our county. She emphasized that it's important that groups like Preble Street and others are working on this together. While the position would be funded in the Sheriff's Office, after that fifth year, there may not be enough resources to support the position in the sixth year. The county will need to set aside funds to support the salary in year six. She understands that the amount is \$125,000 but over five years it might be \$175,000. She explained that the grant committee was little concerned with the financial hold it would have on future commissions. She highlighted the challenges of the current budget and the effect of the new position. She pointed out that there are still vacant positions at the jail and they are struggling to find corrections officers. The addition of a new position was something the grants committee did not feel was their place to make the

decision and forwarded it to the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Cloutier commented that it would be difficult to project what might be perceived as an adverse consequence five years out from here and does not give him much pause to worry. He clarified that the Howard Buffett Foundation, the legendary Buffett family? It was confirmed that it's Howard Buffett who is Warren Buffett's son. He explained that he was in favor of the item.

Commissioner Caterina echoed Commissioner Cloutier, she used to work with individuals who had been trafficked. She explained that she can't think of a better opportunity to invest in and explained that the more that can be done to prevent or deal with human trafficking. She considers it an investment and not an expense.

Commissioner Gorden observed that this is an opportunity for the county to not only provide a service but also provide a police service for outlying communities that contract with the county. This is an opportunity to offer a resource and entice others to do the same thing. He explained that while consolidation is not a good word, consolidation of services is going to take place and they are too expensive not to take place. He stated that he supports the item and thinks that it's a great idea.

Commissioner Tyler echoed Commissioner Gorden. He supports the item with the Buffett Foundation financing for five years. However, after five years, county funds should not be used and more grant funding should be explored. But for the county to take on the expense of setting money aside now, he does not think it's the road they need to go down, but supports the item with foundation financing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier, seconded by Commissioner Caterina, that the Order be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Chair Smith, Commissioner Caterina, Vice Chair Tyler, Commissioner Gorden, and Commissioner Cloutier

No: 0

[26-028](#)

Approve the 2026/2027 Final General Fund, Jail and Cross Insurance Arena budgets.

County Manager Gailey stated: It has been a long budget season which started back in September in working with departments on their budgets bringing it to the commissioners for the first time in November and then going through four different meetings with the finance committee from December through the end of or the beginning of February. The finance committee brought forth a recommendation as their advisory on the budget to the commissioners that they recommend the FY27 budget as presented, but they made a request that the commissioners and staff look at additional unassigned fund balance to reduce the tax rate impact. That was a budget that they were looking at was 13.77% at that time.

These are some of the budget impacts that we have seen. You have heard numerous times that the solving of four union contracts over the last year had significantly provided impacts on this budget. Those contracts not only brought

in salaries, some significant but some unions also had changes in their retirement as is noted here from the jail going to two thirds retirement through Maine PERs. We also saw a 12% health insurance increase. We're a few months away from the Maine Paid Family Medical Leave. Our insurances for workers comp and property and casualty have gone up. We are seeing significant increases in software licensing year-over-year and then our fixed costs continue to rise. This budget addresses a few items but it also doesn't address items. It addresses competitive wages and benefits for union and non-union employees. uh the use of technology for better efficiencies. It no longer has a reliance on federal inmate revenue to support the jail operations and funding expenditures to appropriate levels based on history and projections. What it doesn't address is new initiatives in support of towns and the taxpayers of Cumberland County. Capital expenditures to the level of need. Future contributions to the jail unassigned fund balance and additional staff in certain areas that we need getting through the budget overview. Many of these I've just made mention I will highlight that only a half a full-time position is in this budget for new that is because the current year budget has the other half in it. We split that position over two budget years. And so this is the second half. We have just over 317,000 in non-debt capital. We have no general obligation bonding in this year's budget and there is the insertion of \$500,000 in unassigned fund balance that will be funneled through the tax stabilization reserve which there's an item later on in this agenda to capitalize that reserve.

Jail expenses and revenue. We're recognizing just over \$460,000 in state funding. There's the reduction of \$2.29 million in federal border funding. No county border revenue is being recognized. Other revenues are down. And then we've inserted a tax stabilization reserve out of the unassigned fund balance for the jail of \$200,000. That with jail expenses equals the needs from taxes of just over \$4.3 million. But the one item here is to recognize that this budget is up 25.05%.

The Cross Insurance Arena is down just under \$440,000 or a negative 13.9%.

We fund a number of outside agencies, some of them per state statute much like the extension service and soil and water as others like the United Way, Portland Public Library and Tedford House are more regional entities that provide a service. and that's \$273,000 in totality this year.

Our debt capital. I could probably take TAN off because we haven't been pulling TANS anymore because of our new fiscal year. That is down just over \$85,000.

And so here's the important slide of the night. Total needs from taxes. County General Fund budget is up to just over \$2.1 million. The jail is up over \$4.5 million. as I just said that the cross insurance arena is down, \$440,000. And then we have inserted \$500,000 of tax stabilization reserve, which is an increase of \$300,000 over what the current year budget has in it. For a totality of \$5.4 million dollar change resulting in a total needs from taxes at 12.93%. Just for some comparison before we put that additional investment income in on Friday afternoon that percent was 13.53%. Lastly, just a historical perspective on our recent tax rates over the years. Typically, we hover in the four percent or five percent range. Last year, we were at 7.74% largely because we brought back a

couple of the correction officers that we unfunded.

Chair Smith read the first motion to adopt the county budget:

County Expenditure \$31,968,285

Jail Expenditure \$25,737,660

Cross Insurance Arena \$2,714,557

Revenue -\$12,353,575

Designated Fund Balance -\$300,000

Jail Tax Stabilization -\$200,000

Tax Assessment \$47,566,927

Enterprise Funds \$16,605,624

Grants \$4,206,217

Summary Budget from all Sources-Gross \$81,232,343

A motion was made by Chair Smith, seconded by Commissioner Cloutier, that the Order be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Chair Smith, Commissioner Caterina, Vice Chair Tyler, Commissioner Gorden, and Commissioner Cloutier

No: 0

Chair Smith observed that no county group has worked harder than this county group on this particular budget. There were some challenging things that happened this year in and outside of our control. She thanked the finance department, the director, Breana and Jim for all their hard work and working hard to put together the very best budget they could in the challenging times that we have. She was very happy to hear from the auditor about the previous year's audit that the county has a very strong financial department. She is grateful for the tax stabilization account. Many towns don't know how to do that properly and people see things spike up high and down. She recognized Jim and the entire department and the financial department for being forward thinking. Staff does a good job preparing for the future so that we can manage budget challenges to the best of their ability and to pass on a responsible tax. She noted that this isn't done alone. The county budget is reviewed by the very dedicated Finance Committee that are folks who are serving as town or city councilors. They are nominated by the commission and also have terms. She recognized the Finance Committee members and their hard work for the county on top of what they do for their towns and cities. She thanked Jonathan Anderson in the town of Scarborough who served this year, Connie Justice from New Gloucester, Bob Vale from the Town of Cumberland, Karen Orenstein from the Town of Yarmouth, Timothy Thompson from the Town of Cape Elizabeth, Ben Grant from the City of Portland, and Sarah Michniewicz of Portland. They put in a lot of hours, and gave the county some great feedback and helped get the county to where we are tonight.

Chair Smith read the second budget motion: Approving the five-year Capital Improvement Plan, including expenditures of \$317,600 in Non-Debt CIP, the amount of \$317,600.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier, seconded by Commissioner Caterina, that the Order be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Chair Smith, Commissioner Caterina, Vice Chair Tyler, Commissioner Gorden, and Commissioner Cloutier

No: 0

[26-029](#)

Approve the 2026/2027 Jail Budget to Exceed the 4% grown limitation factor.

County Manager Gailey explained: As the commissioners are aware that their state statute requires counties to not raise more than 4% of new money per year in support of jail operations. This 4% kind of dates back to the board of corrections and still lives within state statute. There are some criteria that a county can meet to get past that 4%. Largely it's an emergency provision within state statute that allows a county not year-over-year but in particular years of strain on the jail budget to call an emergency provision of the state statute. And for that to happen, it needs to go to a vote of the elected body.

Commissioner Caterina stated: As you folks are aware, I'm the one of the chairs of the legislative policy committee and we've been trying to get money out of the state for jail funding. Not sure where it's going to go. We don't have a clear path right now. I will say we've done a lot to awaken the awareness of a number of legislators. I would ask each of you to call your favorite legislators and say, you guys keep putting mandates on us, telling us, we all have to do this. We've got this archaic 4% growth limitation factor. Give us money. So, that's just my ask for tonight.

Commissioner Cloutier stated: Commissioner the fact that this is a 4% ceiling tells you something about the thoughtful planning that occurs at the state level. And in addition there are counties where the county commission does not have authority over its budget. The finance committee, which is an outside committee, has the authority to enact the budget. And in those counties where they have been operating a jail for at least 50 years that they call a jail and have assiduously adhered to the 4% cap. You read in the latest newspapers that they find themselves functionally bankrupt and quite distressed and they're making our 25% increase look like child's play. 25% is a lot of money. It has special reasons that we know about and considerations that we've taken into account that may or may not come to pass. But the fact is that this is a situation that I don't share with Commissioner Caterina's good feeling about possibilities from state funding.

Commissioner Gorden stated: To go along with what Jim was indicating, if you look at the other counties, there are some of them there are multiples of what we're going to and with good reason for just the reasons that Commissioner Cloutier has mentioned. The other thing that's interesting is if you look at this 4% tax, one of the things that the state has put into their issue is that outside of the 4% that we don't have to consider the increase is the mandates that they don't cover.

Chair Smith stated: Clearly, we're all doing the best we can with what we have. And I'll just say I appreciate all those who are still fighting the fight. And I think it is important to again you know be clear, be vocal and you know push for what we know is our experience and our lived in reality here of what it cost to run a jail. And I think many more people understand that and they also know what implications impact the jail and for that I think we just need to keep on fighting

the fight and again appreciate that we're hopefully on okay ground here in the county.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier, seconded by Commissioner Caterina, that the Order be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Chair Smith, Commissioner Caterina, Vice Chair Tyler, Commissioner Gorden, and Commissioner Cloutier

No: 0

[26-030](#)

Authorize the issuance of the 2026/2027 Cost of Living Adjustment of 3% to all County non-union and County Commissioner appointed employees.

County Manager Gailey explained that County Commissioner appointed employees include Teresa as Treasurer, the Register of Deeds, and himself. Chair Smith asked how long the 3% number has been adopted, County Manager explained that it has consistently been 3% except for the pandemic when it was 4%. He explained that it matches what other Towns also adopt.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier, seconded by Commissioner Caterina, that the Order be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Chair Smith, Commissioner Caterina, Vice Chair Tyler, Commissioner Gorden, and Commissioner Cloutier

No: 0

[26-031](#)

Authorize the issuance of the 2026/2027 Cost of Living Adjustment of 3% to the Elected Officials & the Sheriff Appointment.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier, seconded by Vice Chair Tyler, that the Order be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Chair Smith, Commissioner Caterina, Vice Chair Tyler, Commissioner Gorden, and Commissioner Cloutier

No: 0

[26-032](#)

Transfer \$1,500,000 from the County's Unassigned Fund Balance to the Budget Stabilization and Uncompensated Absences reserve accounts.

County Manager Gailey explained that as part of the insertion of \$500,000 into the FY20 27 budget, it created a schedule of step down over the next four years to wean the budget off from that \$500,000 reliance. There is some balance within the tax stabilization reserve and there is some additional funding needed, all at once and not annually of \$1 million to cover the step down schedule. There is \$500,000 will also cover uncompensated absences account as a result of retirements of long term county employees.

Commissioner Gorden asked if there is anything in the County Charter about unassigned fund balance policy. County Manager Gailey confirmed that it was and there was an additional unassigned fund balance policy that was adopted in November or December in accordance with State Statute. Commissioner Gorden commented that if the Charter was modified it would need to go public. County Manager Gailey explained that the Charter was not changed. There

were four or five eligible uses. Capital, tax stabilization. We are below the 20% maximum and our fund balance now was 19.7% and the minimum is 16.7%. Commissioner Cloutier commented that it's a great idea to be sure there is enough the retirement funds. It's often an unrecognized liability that sneaks up if you're not paying attention to it. There has been undoing of a lot of public operations in the in the past. Stabilizing is a smart term financial move.

A motion was made by Commissioner Caterina, seconded by Commissioner Cloutier, that the Order be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Chair Smith, Commissioner Caterina, Vice Chair Tyler, Commissioner Gorden, and Commissioner Cloutier

No: 0

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

[26-016](#)

Approve the Jail Medical Services Agreement between CFG Medical and Cumberland County for medical services provided at the Jail.

County Manager Gailey explained that the Jail had transitioned Medical Service Providers and CFG had been onsite since February 1st without a contract. The contract was originally anticipated to be approved last month, however the term were not agreeable. Breana and corporation council Paige worked with CFG to come to an amenable solution. Chair Smith thanked staff for their work on completing the contracts. She expressed appreciation for the level of professionalism and the timeliness and urgency that they took on to locate a provider in a niche type of operation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Caterina, seconded by Vice Chair Tyler, that the Order be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Chair Smith, Commissioner Caterina, Vice Chair Tyler, Commissioner Gorden, and Commissioner Cloutier

No: 0

COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE STAFF

Finance and Budget Manager Alyssa Johnson thanked the Board for their help on the budget. It's been great and she is looking forward to the audit and working on the next budget.

Admin and Special Projects Katharine Cahoon stated that she would make the changes on the previous meeting's minutes.

Finance Director Theresa Grover stated: We appreciate RHR Smith coming in today. They spend extra time with us really diving in deep and helping me make some templates to make the auditing process a little smoother, cleaner. It is really a year round process that we're going through. They have different requirements that you heard and they're putting them on us which we're really embracing because it really cleans up a lot of the accounts. We're able to see that better and help me prepare as well as you heard the three audits now. So that's really in depth. I've brought the departments along with us. I think public health Sadie in particular is one of the finance pieces in the public health department. She did amazing and I think it was great teaching her how she can really keep the accounts clean and the same with Sandy. It's really been a great collaborative effort that I think is paying off on these and then just everything else that's happening within the finance department. But the audit, budget and bond has really been taking a bulk of our efforts lately. So, never slow anymore.

Always busy.

Deputy Manager Breana stated: I don't have much to add, I just want to thank everybody who's worked here. I feel like I've gotten a lot of undue credit. I'm really new to this process as well. So, I really appreciate the structure that has been formed and the support from other departments as we go through the budget process. Jim printed out or brought down extra "What Cumberland County Does for You" handouts and they're behind you on the table here. Feel free to take them. They're also available in the office anytime.

COMMENTS FROM THE COUNTY MANAGER

County Manager Gailey stated: First, hot off the press, we have our 2024 2025 annual report. I want to thank Katharine and Paige from the office. They tackled it in combination with one another and came out great. Of course, it will be posted up to the website and we can email it out to everyone else. Like Teresa said, we're lining ourselves up for a bond sale here pretty soon. that the jail roof was, one of those items that is in that bond. And one thing I'm happy to say is that our bond rating remained unchanged. Staff met with Moody's and Standard and Poors in two different rating calls. In our AA plus standard and poor rating held and our AA2 Moody's rating held. So all good. We are initiating another leadership academy this year teaming up with Southern Maine Community College. I have been trying to get town managers to nominate their rock stars on their staff. And we have upwards of I believe 25 or 26 county and towns city participants starting next month to the leadership academy. It's a 7 week, 1 day a week class that goes from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.. Those who have gone through the leadership academy speak very highly of it and so we continue to offer it and what's great over the last couple years and again this year is the Alfond foundation is totally covering all expenses. And then lastly, just want to let you know that I have been invited up to Augusta on Wednesday afternoon to meet with Senate and House leadership concerning jail funding. And so there's a small number of us that will be meeting with them Wednesday afternoon and crossing our fingers from there.

COMMENTS FROM THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Cloutier commented: I just feel like we've done a lot of work tonight. It was a substantial agenda and switching various issues back and forth. That was a lot. And my compliments to the people who were lavished with great praise from our auditor who I've run into in various situations and very well respected operations that he has and he had nothing but great things to say about both the outcome of our finances and the way that our finance people took care of it. Theresa, hats off to you and of course to all the people that work with you that they feel that way. They don't feel that way about everybody. And the reports you get, sometimes you don't see them as clean as that by any means. I kind of feel bad for Katharine tonight, so I'll shut up. You know, she's probably going to have some cramps by the time she's done for the day. I have to say, I'm very glad that spring has sprung. This has been a really bad winter tonight by my estimation.

Commissioner Caterina commented: Thank you to all the staff and the County Manager for all the work you've done on budgeting. I have never sat on a finance committee. I never want to sit on a finance committee, because that would drive me crazy. You guys do excellent work. Thank you for doing that. A couple things, I'm glad you brought up these flyers. They are very well received. I brought them around to various Democratic and Republican caucuses on caucus day. People looked at it and read it, I've gotten lots of comments. I'm going to take some to each of the towns that I represent. Some of you are lucky. You don't have a million towns like I do. But I would just ask that you if you get a chance, drop them off at the town offices or city offices just so people can read them. Breana, you did an excellent job with that. I just can't say enough good about it. I think people are waking up to what counties do. Part of it is because the situation around the jail and with ICE. I think that we can jump on that and see what we can do. And Jim, I'm not totally optimistic about the jail funding, but I am somewhat optimistic about getting some more money, but we'll see.

Commissioner Gorden commented: Everybody's passing out kudos and I really want to say thank you for the budgeting and add one more thing to it. We need to remember that we just came off a transition from a calendar year to a fiscal year. It took a lot and my hats off to you. I don't know of many people who could do that. Good work. The other thing is that one of the strengths that I don't think that we appreciate and take advantage of is the planning that goes along with this group. And I can't encourage it enough. The planning is really respected and I encourage us and especially the management, to look forward to that with the communities to show them that the things that we can do for them not in a demand way but in an offer way that will serve them and really help pull us all together. The costs of things, if you talk to anybody out there in a community, are just astronomical and it's because everybody has thought that they needed to do everything and have one of everything. They're not taking advantage of the bad word, which is consolidation. And we're the ideal group to do that or the ideal government especially. There is movement afoot. You'll see it in some of the legislation that's being put out to create people or organizations to do that. No one is stopping to say, "Wait a minute. Have we got something that handles it already?" And we've got to be aware of that because this group here certainly shows and demonstrates what's going on in the future and is reaching out to do it. I can't encourage the manager more to continue his community meetings with the county managers in all the communities that get together. What's going on with fire is having real repercussions that people are beginning to talk about, things that they never talked about before. I encourage that look at the leadership academy you just mentioned. That starts to build up this realm of people that are available just like when Alex left we brought in a superstar. So, again, I can't encourage that more. There is one thing that I'm going to really miss, and I think it's coming up probably next year or at least a year after, is a sit down and a five-year planning session because this next one's going to be just great. There's so much going on and with what's coming out with the technologies of AI and so forth. It's going to be exciting. So with that, my hats off to the staff and again to this board. To me, this board is entrepreneurial and I congratulate you for that.

Commissioner Tyler commented: Obviously and Jean-Marie will probably agree with me when you start this as a county commissioner, it's a new learning curve. I did two terms of legislature. She's done town council and this government entity operates differently. I've been fortunate in talking with my town's people, Windham, and with all my towns. I've dragged this group up tremendously as to what we can do and what we do for the county, the auditors, the leadership academy, and all the things Commissioner Gorden mentioned. My bragging has been well founded. I keep telling them, we've got a group in there that knows what they're doing. They got this down pat. So when you sit down and intelligently talk about the budget, which we're getting beat on a little bit, they don't push back very hard. I've had one meeting with the chairman, vice chair, and the Windham Town Manager, Jim and I are meeting with him in late April, to explain things. We've met with Greg. I'm going to Harrison next week. It's pretty easy to explain when you know the numbers and when the numbers have been handed to you, you can justify them. I'm looking forward to this year and hopefully we can keep this ball rolling. And Steve was absolutely right, I said to the Windham people 20 years ago, I was so much home rule New England let's not you know we got our own little fight. You know I hate to say it and I said it to the Windham Town Manager, the south has got it right, County government is where it's at. It's got to be or we're going to lose dollars. It's going to do so much more on economy of scale. Congratulations to all departments in this building. This game is running pretty well and I hope we can keep it going.

Chair Smith commented: I won't go long on my comments except to say I agree my first term which is coming to a close shortly here, has been a learning curve too and as Chair I found it to be super rewarding to be with all of you despite even if we disagree from time to time. We still have things on our plate to accomplish. It's a very robust group. I love and appreciate all your dedication that you all show as commissioners and Augusta and to the towns and taking the time to really care and communicate what we're trying to do here as a community government, as a county government. I

appreciate that effort by all of you. It's really great and really fun to be part of an organization that is very good in planning, but also very good in executing because you can find these pie in the sky dreamers out there, but they just can't seem to execute. We found that magic potion where we are able to make some great plans, look ahead, see where the danger lies and try our best to navigate around those tough spots, but also do it with a lot of commitment. Still smiling, but that's amazing. I know the week you had. And I just think again, it just really hats off to creating a culture where it's a good place to work here at Cumberland County and I can't say enough about the staff and a long meeting tonight but it just shows you the breadth and the depth of what we do and the work that still needs to be done here in the county. I hope everyone has a good evening.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 21, 2026

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:18 p.m. a motion was made by Tom Tyler, seconded by Stephen Gorden, to ADJOURN the meeting . The motion carried by a unanimous vote.