



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, January 5, 2026

5:30 PM

Sebago Meeting Room, 27 Northport Dr, Portland ME 04103

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

Join by Zoom is Also an Option.

Instructions to Participate are on the Agenda.

Send public comments to gailey@cumberlandcounty.org

Meeting will be streamed online: www.cumberlandcounty.org/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 Stephen Gorden at 5:36 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

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

County Staff:

James Gailey, County Manager
Breana Gersen, Deputy County Manager
Theresa Grover, Director of Finance
Amy Jennings, Director of Human Resources
Katharine Cahoon, Admin and Special Projects
Kevin Joyce, County Sheriff

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

[26-001](#) 2026 County Commissioners Nomination and Approval of Chair and Vice Chair

A motion was made by Commissioner Cloutier, seconded by Commissioner Caterina, that the Order nominating Commissioner Patti Smith as Chair of the Board be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

No: 0

A motion was made by Chair Smith, seconded by Commissioner Cloutier, that the Order nominating Commissioner Tom Tyler as Vice Chair of the Board be

APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

- Yes:** 5 - Commissioner Gorden, Chair Smith, Commissioner Caterina, Vice Chair Tyler, and Commissioner Cloutier
- No:** 0

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

[CD 26-001](#) Approval of the minutes, December 15, 2025, meeting of the Board of Commissioners

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

- Yes:** 5 - Commissioner Gorden, Chair Smith, Commissioner Caterina, Vice Chair Tyler, and Commissioner Cloutier
- No:** 0

INFORMATIONAL REPORT/PRESENTATIONS

[CD 26-003](#) Informational Presentation - District Attorney Discussion of Restorative Justice in Cumberland County

District Attorney Jacqueline Sartoris (DA Sartoris) gave some background on Restorative Justice (RJ). Under former District Attorney Jonathan Sarbeck, they made the decision to move misdemeanor cases toward RJ to address case backlogs. The initial RJ approach involved contracts with two restorative justice practitioners for a three-year period. Upon taking office, current District Attorney Sartoris continued the contracts for the first year but noted that one of the two contracts was not performing well. The office sought to continue and grow the RJ work, continuing the contract with Fred Van Liew of Van Liew Associates, a former prosecutor from Iowa. A pilot project was conducted over the last year. A maximum of 144 cases, average of 12 a month, were handled through RJ. To make the program self-sustaining and expand it beyond the \$40,000 annual county expenditure, a defendant fee was introduced at \$150 per session and \$30 for those who qualify for court-appointed attorneys. Based on the pilot, DA Sartoris projected 80% of defendants to pay the full price, and the county will subsidize the remaining 20%. DA Sartoris explained that her office worked to generate interest for community surrogates. They held 14 -16 meetings, resulting in an interest from over 50 people to undergo training. The program has also been handling serious cases, including manslaughter, with the assistance of Fred Van Liew. DA Sartoris stated that a Request for Proposals (RFP) for restorative justice practitioners is expected to be released this week and will be posted on the county's website. The RFP will seek to formalize the program as a continuous service to meet the need of an estimated 1,000 cases a year for Cumberland County. It will also establish a succession plan to reduce dependence on a single practitioner. The RFP will be responsive to the need for both misdemeanor and serious cases.

Commissioner Smith asked about the timing of the RFP. DA Sartoris explained that she expects to return in March. She added that in the consent agenda tonight, there is a continuing contract for the serious cases until the RFP is awarded.

This Presentation was PRESENTED.

[CD 26-002](#) Maine Pretrial Information Presentation

Jail Major Tim Kortez introduced their partnering agency, Maine Pre-Trial Services and its Executive Director, Elizabeth Simone. Director Simone introduced herself and her colleagues, Katherine Wakefield, Finance Director; Elizabeth Howell, Director of Pre-Trial Services for the organization across the state of Maine; and Matthew Taggart who operates domestic violence and electronic monitoring work. Director Simone explained the history and mission, the program was established in the 1970s in Portland as the Cumberland County Bail Project. That changed in 1984 under its current 501c3 structure as Maine Pre-Trial Services. Its mission is committed to providing case management, supportive services, and resource connections to people involved in civil and criminal legal systems in Maine. She noted that civil work does not happen in Cumberland County, only the county-paid services were the focus.

She explained that the programming provides objective, comprehensive information to the court, prosecution, and defense for each in-custody person. They offer monitoring people in the community, staff are not law enforcement; they partner for bail checks. They focus on trying to reduce recidivism and promote appearance, the two main factors in the bail code, by connecting people to resources. The Maine Pre-Trial Services is the only accredited pre-trial service provider in the state, and one of 11 organizations in the country. She gave an overview of specializations that are offered which include re-entry services, substance use disorder and mental health, the mental health docket, residential treatment coordination, court presentations, and domestic violence/electronic monitoring. She gave an overview of what a day for staff looks like, it starts at the jail every morning, performing independent verification (not self-report), going to court, executing contracts, and providing community support from their Elm Street office in the Bayside area. Their business practice is rooted in the law, constitutional guarantees, and evidence-based practices. The two main components in the Maine Bail Code that align with national standards are reducing rearrests while out on bail and ensuring people show up for court. The number of people served for Pre-Trial Release included 711 people in 2024. The number of Bed Days saved in the county jail were almost 89,000 days in 2024, which is the number of days pre-trial defendants were out on their program. She noted that approximately 90% of people released show up for court and are not rearrested for any crime. The agency reports all minor violations to the court. For their Bail Follow-up Protocol, 2,619 people were followed up on when they were unable to meet their bail. The protocol for following up with people in jail is at 48 hours, 72 hours, one week, two weeks, and one month. They offer a resource hub in their lobby, providing items like Narcan, wound care, and masks.

Matthew Taggart, Domestic Violence Specialist, gave an overview of the development and creation of his position. The DV Specialist position was created in 1999 via the Violence Intervention Partnership Grant, funded by the Office of Violence Against Women (OBVW). Cumberland County began funding 50% of the position, with the remaining funding from the Violence Prevention Partnership. The electronic monitoring program began in 2015. In 2019, pre-trial and partnering community advocates Through These Doors received a

MacArthur Foundation grant to create Project Safe Release. This collaboration identifies justice-system-involved survivors in the Cumberland County Jail and navigates them toward needed services upon release. The program involves bail supervision for defendants charged with domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, violation of protection orders, and other violent-related crimes, focusing on victim safety and offender accountability. The ODARA assessment is used for determining pre-trial supervision. Matthew explained that he partners with the DA's office Domestic Violence Unit, and regularly participates in the Violence Intervention Partnership High-Risk Response Team, Preble Street Anti-Trafficking Multidisciplinary Team Meetings, SARSM and "through these doors" workgroups and the LEAD Program Steering Committee at Scarborough Police Department. Matthew attends court proceedings like judicial monitoring and DV case coordination meetings. He explained that he supervises 90 to 100 cases per year, with 50 to 60 cases active at any given time. Electronic monitoring supervision is limited to five active high-risk cases and is offered upon request by the Cumberland County Jail for needs like hospitalization to save staffing costs. Mathew explained that he also conducts training for ODARA and for pre-trial best practices for DV and intimate partner violence cases, and facilitates case supervision as directed.

CFO Wakefield gave an overview of the budget that was also presented to the sheriff back in October 2025. The organization has been "flat funded" since July 1, 2024 and did not receive an increase for the last fiscal year, despite rising expenses. CFO Wakefield explained that the work with defendants must be cost-effective and a good steward of taxpayers' money. She shared that based on a review of the jail's 26-27 budget, the cost to house an average of 240 inmates per day is \$204.76 per defendant per day. The cost per day to have a defendant out in Maine Pre-Trial's programs is \$3.35 per day, she highlighted the cost of savings cost for incarceration versus community services. CFO Wakefield also compared the cost of Maine Pre-Trial service to the US Marshals at a cost of \$150 a day to the county to house a federal defendant and the Maine 126th Legislature estimated cost of \$118.18 a day. CFO Wakefield emphasized that the main takeaway is that the agency does incredible work at the lowest cost possible and is still trying to find ways to cut that cost. She listed other cost savings that they're considering which is getting rid of office space.

Director Simone expanded on the potential reduction of agency expenses. They established an office to prioritize confidentiality but are looking at having an office with two shared spaces instead of individual offices to reduce expenses of renting in the Bayside area. Director Simone explained that they are partnering on a technology presentation and exploring a staff-created computer interface to potentially get rid of landlines. Landlines are needed because cell phones cannot accommodate the volume of check-in calls from defendants. A computer interface could allow check-ins via smartphones, which most people have or can be helped to acquire. Director Simone concluded that Maine Pre-Trial wants to be nimble and effective, she thanked the board for their time.

Commissioner Cloutier commented that he recalled the bail project, as an attorney in a small office, half of whom still have Maine Pre-Trial on speed dial. The day they opened for business 30 years ago or 40 was a huge change in what life was like for a lot of people and it was a great benefit and still is.

Chair Smith thanked the group for their presentation. She observed that the data speaks for itself, the staff are highly qualified, and they're making a difference in individuals lives.

This Presentation was PRESENTED.

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 6:19 p.m., Chair Smith opened the period for public comment.

The following members of the public spoke: Ella Tobasi, Brunswick, Willow Cunningham, Portland; Ava Tiyazha, Portland; Chandler, Lewiston; Jennifer Jockberg, Scarborough; Kaycee Greely, Portland; Enid Morris, Portland; Madeliene Jones, Falmouth; Steve Carrol, Portland; Sue Anderson, Portland; Marpheen Chan, Portland; Olivia Pennington, Portland; Dana Callahan, Portland; Mace Remillian, Portland; Eli McDonald, Portland; Josh Coblou, Portland; Hannah Tanhouser, South Portland; Julia Piezcak, South Portland; Hallie Hers, Portland; Shelby Leighton, South Portland; Ann Knudsen, Portland; Josh Vozella, Gray; Amelia Kelleher, Portland; Nori, Portland; Cat Dewa, Portland; and Johan Baldecki, Portland.

At 7:11 p.m., Chair Smith closed the period for public comment.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of the Consent Agenda

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

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

No: 0

[26-002](#) Authorize the County Manager to process the 2024-2025 Oak View Group Cross Insurance Arena management financial incentive.

This Order was APPROVED.

[26-003](#) Authorize the Sheriff's Department to submit a Department of Justice Bullet-Proof Vest Partnership Grant for funding in support of bullet-proof vests. A fifty percent match is required.

This Order was APPROVED.

[26-004](#) Authorization for the County Manager to Accept the Grant Award to Cumberland County Emergency Management Agency from the Maine Emergency Management Agency for FY25-26 LEPC Grant in the amount of \$75,323.38.

This Order was APPROVED.

[26-005](#) Authorization for the County Manager to enter into a contract between Cumberland County and Frederick Van Liew for the Facilitation of Restorative Dialogues for the District Attorney.

This Order was APPROVED.

NEW BUSINESS26-006

Establishment of a Cross Insurance Arena Task Force to explore future opportunities and feasibilities of the arena.

County Manager Gailey explained that the agenda item would create a Cross Insurance Arena Task Force to explore future opportunities and feasibility of the cross insurance arena. It would be a multi-phased approach. The initial phase of the Task Force would review past studies to learn what has been accomplished in the past and whether they can provide any direction for the future. The results from phase one would dictate what subsequent phases would look like.

Commissioner Tyler, CIA Trustee Chair Steve Woods and himself have met with representatives of the Maine Mariners about future opportunities for an arena, including a potential location. The committee would report back to the commissioners and provide information as well as any RFPs or expenditure of money in any direction.

Commissioner Cloutier voiced his support, and noted that 28 studies had been completed. He hoped that there would be an opportunity for the commission to have input on the membership of this committee because the 28 past studies recommend new construction in another place. He recalled that on the Portland City Council, the last study recommended a new complex that would have cost in excess of \$200 million. He noted that there is a tendency to want to build pyramids which are testaments to the wisdom of whoever was involved in putting the transaction together. He wanted to know if there is a study on the usefulness and practicalness to maintain the current facility. One consideration is where people park, parking could create an opportunity for thousands of parking spaces someplace else and a considerable diversion of economic capacity. He pointed out that the new ownership team for the hockey franchise was discussing this before final negotiations were completed for their current lease, he explained that he is not opposed to the consideration but there are many priorities to address.

Commissioner Caterina asked, when was the last study done? County Manager Gailey stated that it was not that long ago. It was a multi-phase feasibility study circa 2009 or 2010 in anticipation of the 2012-13 renovations. Commissioner Caterina thanked him and noted that reception was not very enthusiastic about arena development when she was on the Scarborough Town Council.

Commissioner Gordon stated that as a government organization, they have regional responsibilities for more than just the civic center. They have responsibilities as a recreational district, are there discussions of competing areas of civic recreation versus the facility.

County Manager Gailey stated that the focus has been around the facility.

Commissioner Gordon explained that they have a facility that people take advantage of versus recreational areas that people would take advantage of. He stated that if that discussion doesn't get opened up at some time, it never will.

Commissioner Cloutier stated that the question has come up several times in the last number of years. The resources that get devoted to the minor league

sports would crowd out anything else. He added that he would ask that the commission members have some input as to the membership of this committee because frankly the good people of Bridgton don't travel to Free Street very often to participate in this and clearly they have an interest that's just as legitimate as the people living in the West End or Bayside of Portland. There hasn't been an organized discussion of the county in relation to recreation development, so random that the county almost bought a beach off Sebago Lake.

Commissioner Tyler shared that as a member of the feasibility committee, he is also the Cross Insurance Arena liaison to the board of trustees and clarified the new team owner brought the initial discussions outside of the current contract. Commissioner Tyler noted that he supports the study because Portland is growing. Southern Maine is growing by leaps and bounds. He commented that the arena building is getting old and it's also going to be outsized. He pointed out the lack of a convention space in greater Portland. The state fair association meeting has moved to Bangor this year due to the lack of facilities that can accommodate their large group. Southern Maine is an area that is very attractive. The committee will also include representatives from towns and some from the general public. The goal is to look at future solutions and decisions that won't be made for 5 to 10 years. The group is interested in what the studies show, should there be another study, and is the population growing enough to support a larger facility? Nationwide, other cities are building facilities that are outside of their current cities to accommodate space and parking. This committee would be the beginning of these types of discussions.

Chair Smith stated that she hoped that the board was making good notes of the comments in terms of the task force composition as it develops. The board is a well-informed group of commissioners who want to understand the larger piece about recreation within our county to make sure that we don't miss anything during this process.

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

- Yes:** 5 - Commissioner Gorden, Chair Smith, Commissioner Caterina, Vice Chair Tyler, and Commissioner Cloutier
- No:** 0

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

[25-129](#)

Approval of the 2026 Board of Commissioners Committee Assignments

County Manager Gailey presented the 2026 board of commissioners committee assignments. He noted that Deputy County Manager Gersen would replace Travis Kennedy as the liaison to the United Way Emergency Food and Shelter.

Chair Smith thanked the commissioners for their work on their committees and for reporting back to the board.

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

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

No: 0

COMMENTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE STAFF

Human Resources Director Jennings reported that the correction officers voted to accept the collective bargaining agreement that they have been negotiating for the past year and a half. They will start dispatch negotiations next month as the current contract ends in June. Her department is preparing information for the paid family medical leave that is going to be implemented in April which includes putting together packets and informational postings regarding the requirements to obtain paid family medical leave. There are currently about 35 openings of which the majority are correction officer positions, patrol and other departments.

DA Sartoris thanked the commissioners for inviting her to speak. She added that her Department is doing other work on some other diversion plans and is collaborating with the Portland Recovery and Community Center. She will return to the Commissioners when they have more. She added that the folks who go to restorative justice cannot have a substance use issue. They are looking at ways to move people more rapidly over to PRCC early on in the criminal legal system. She is optimistic to have that program underway within the next couple of months.

COMMENTS FROM THE COUNTY MANAGER

County Manager Gailey thanked Commissioner Gorden for his hard work as Chair in 2025. He noted it was a pleasure to work with him and appreciated all of the guidance and support. He thanked Chair Gorden for making himself available whenever he needed via phone or video.

County Manager Gailey stated that the finance committee will hold their second meeting tomorrow evening in Northport starting at five o'clock. The departments presenting tomorrow night include emergency management, district attorney, communications, registry of deeds and the Cumberland County Cooperative Extension.

COMMENTS FROM THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Cloutier thanked Chair Steve Gordon and mentioned that he and himself are on their final term. He noted that he made tentative plans to organize a public meeting sometime in the next couple of weeks for a full discussion of the ICE and allow the public to participate. He thanked the board and wished everyone a happy new year.

Chair Gorden thanked everyone for the kudos. He observed that he felt like the board acted as a team last year and they will continue to support Commissioner Smith in the same way. Listening to the public tonight, he recognizes that ICE is just not performing any kind of a public service. It bothers him. He stated that there are two issues that are bifurcated; they are not together. If you stop one, it does not affect the other. Stopping the contract will cause problems for the people that are on the low end of the economic scale. On a positive note, he has been observing what is going on with the county, offering services that the state has mandated such as tax assessment, general assistance, etc. He believes that these programs are going to grow. There is interest from communities because they see that as something the county can provide to their constituents and yet it levels off the costs. That's something that he would encourage the board to continue to develop. He noted that the new Fire/EMS services for the communities are developing and the Sheriff offers communities policing services. He noted that it's been a pleasure to serve and he hopes that they have a good and thriving year. He observed that last year was the first time that he saw people reach out and come forth with what was really bothering them. He encouraged the public to continue to reach out about other ideas that they

would like us to do in the future.

Commissioner Caterina thanked Commissioner Gorden for his service. She stated that it was her first year as a Commissioner and has learned a lot as co-chair of, the legislative policy committee for the Maine county commissioners. She thanked Commissioner Gorden for all of his help last year and is glad that she has another year to work with him. She thanked members of the people who testified and emphasized the power of testimony. She encouraged the public to advocate at the state for more jail funding. She is looking forward to the public meeting that will be hosted by Commissioner Cloutier.

Commissioner Tyler thanked Commissioner Gorden for his role as chair. He explained that Commissioner Gorden helped bring him into the fold and kept me going and got him enthusiastic about being a commissioner. He is looking forward to 2026. He noted that he was on the Board of Trustees of the Civic Center, after three years it was his turn to be chairman. However, he served as chair for almost eight years because nobody on the board was interested. He has no problem being the vice chair or chair with a multi-year contract.

Chair Smith thanked Commissioner Gorden for being a chairperson. She stated that it's not an easy job and he has always been totally engaged, open, and receptive. She thanked him for all of the years that he served and noted that he has given a lot of his life to the commission. She addressed the board that she is excited for a new year ahead. She thanked the public and for everyone who spoke. She appreciated the engagement and the comments. She agreed that the ICE issue is something that's not just not going to go away. There needs to be a resolution to understand where we are today. She doesn't know what tomorrow may bring or if the ICE would stop arriving if they stop the contract. We don't know these things. They are thoughts and ideas. And honestly, the best way to go forward is to ground ourselves in data, ground ourselves in what we can do today based on what we know. She continued that the county has a lot going on and she thanked the entire staff for last year and what was accomplished and is looking forward to a thriving 2026.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 17, 2026

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Stephen Gorden, seconded by Jean-Marie Caterina, to ADJOURN the meeting. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.