



Cumberland County

Board of Commissioners

Meeting Minutes - Draft

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: They said that for every county that operates the jail, which is all of them except Sagadahoc and Lincoln that operate the jail authority. They want to be able to take that information and extrapolate that. So they said for every county where it's blended in with the county they want a separate product for the jail that's just jail that will take into consideration all the different business as access of jail, your inmate benefit account being one of them, any other trust funds, any jail programs for the inmates in there. That was a statute that they passed this past year.

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: Are you here multiple days?

Ron Smith stated: We're here multiple days. We used to be here more days, but the emphasis on auditing now has been put into planning and risk assessments. Teresa and her staff, they listen, they're very good at uploading us information. So that will minimize the impact of how much time we're here.

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.

Courtney Kemp: We started the process for reviewing the CDBG applications back in November when we released the application. The municipal oversight committee that's made up of one representative from each town or city throughout the county meets to approve the applications and within that committee we have an application review team. We had nine volunteers from the MOC this year that took the time to review, score, hold an open mic session to answer any other questions and then give the recommendation to the municipal oversight committee for the funding. The municipal oversight committee met two weeks ago to review those recommendations made by the review team and did approve five infrastructure projects and three public service projects.

Chair Smith thanked Community Development Manager Kemp for all of her hard work. She stated that she knows the work makes a big difference 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: It actually is nice to see this item hit the agenda because we've had it in three or four different budgets and we've always had a more immediate emergency that we've needed to shift the money over to. We're bringing forth a bid to do the jail roof for just over \$2.1 million. We feel as though that was a great bid from what we thought we were getting into in terms of a cost associated with that improvement. Tecta America New England LLC out of Massachusetts is the low bidder with the addendums that we had asked for pricing on.

Facilities Director Bill Trufant stated: To kick this project off, we had 17 different vendors show up for our pre-bid meeting. We ended up having four vendor supply bids. The bids we broke 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. On the other hand, we did an alternate which would have given us 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 on the hip roofs and the parapits on the roofing. We actually had four bids that came in out of the 17 that attended, they ranged from \$2.1 million to \$2.9 million. We actually decided with the financial constraints to be able to do the alternate, which is the masonry repairs, the skylights, and go with the different route of a fully adhered roof mechanically fastened. So that way we won't have to necessarily have the rock weight, the rubber membrane down.

Commissioner Tyler asked, the number two bid. How far above was it? Facilities Director 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.

Chair Smith asked, is it a 30-year roof, 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 presented his request: This is actually kind of a follow-up request because the commissioners already voted on this as a package of items when you accepted the grant. And what this item specifically is, is it's actually two separate robotic systems to be used by the Sheriff's SWAT team.

Commissioner Gorden asked: The equipment only moves on the ground?

EMA Director Durkin confirmed that it only 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: This item is a request for authorization to submit a congressional direct spending request through Senator Collin's office. The request is for a couple of garage bays attached to the new Windham fire station that's to be built. They would be looking to a \$2 million congressional earmark to build these garage bays. Windham has been involved along the way and this item has been reviewed by the Grants Committee and has been brought forth from the Grants Committee to this body.

Deputy Chief Brian Pellerin stated: The new Windham fire station that's being built is a collaboration with the county and the Town of Windham and it's really an opportunity. We'll be moving some of our operations out into that location in Windham and Windham is really the crossroads for the areas that we serve. Portland as far as law enforcement purposes is kind of out of the way for the areas that we are routinely working in and working with those communities. And this will give us an opportunity while this project is under development and before construction has even been built to be able to add essentially two additional fire bays to this building where we would be able to relocate our command post vehicle our evidence crime scene vehicle our armor vehicle things like that 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 things like that. So, we're just really hoping that this is an opportunity where we're on the ground floor to move forward and make this request and really excited for this opportunity just to have the opportunity that we have so far with this collaboration with the Town of Windham.

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

Deputy Chief Pellerin explained: They're used regularly. Our command post vehicles the size of I would say a city bus and our armored vehicle would be the size of a dump truck, a triple dump truck. Our evidence crime scene vehicle is a repurposed ambulance about that size of a box truck. It's not repurposed. It's about the size of an ambulance with a box in the back. And then we have some other ancillary equipment too, boats and things like that that we would want for the dive team and things like that to relocate.

Commissioner Gorden asked about the use of the command post vehicle.

Chief Deputy Pellerin explained: Anytime we have an operation involving the ESU team or search and rescue. It basically brings those resources of cellular capability, radio, camera, we can operate out of that. It's also a piece of equipment that we loan throughout the county.

Chair Smith stated: I appreciate people are looking ahead and also recognizing the efficiencies it sounds like that we will have based on the central location and how we serve our wide swath of community members within the county. It seems like that specific location is really a huge win for us in terms of logistics, efficiency getting to and from all the different towns that we serve versus some of the sporadic places now where we have lots of different equipment kind of all over. It sounds like a fantastic move for us and I'm happy with congressional funds it won't really affect our budget necessarily. What would be some downsides?

Chief Deputy Pellerin explained: I'm not certain that there would be. Our plan at this point, we're still kind of exploring what our options would be, but I believe that we would be moving law enforcement services out to that facility. Right now, we have our vehicles stored in borrowed space. So, kind of the goodwill of the municipalities throughout the county that are allowing us to store the vehicles there.

Chair Smith explained: One of my pet peeves when I was a counselor in South Portland was like we buy these things, but are we going to be able to take care of them? Are we going to make sure we maintain them and have the building and the lifespan of whatever we're getting, whatever equipment it might be that we're going to try to maximize and optimize as much as we can in terms of taking care of that equipment, no matter the expense. It sounds like having its own garage and staying away from main winters is always a good thing, too. I'm in favor of this.

Commissioner Tyler commented, the third floor of this building is going to be the counties.

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 it's an ideal solution. Chief Pellerin added

that the building would be staffed with Windham personnel or county staff.

Commissioner Gorden asked if they would change the Jail operation center to that area for law enforcement services?

Chief Pellerin stated: Really the jail its location makes perfect sense for the population hub of Cumberland County where it's at. But we don't patrol really any areas in this area (Portland) other than the islands in Casco Bay.

Commissioner Gorden asked if that's where they refuel?

Chief Pellerin stated: Vehicle maintenance is done at the LEC now, but fueling is done remotely anyway. Through cards and gas stations and things like that, but this would be a place where we'll have a training room. We'll have 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 explained: The grant has been submitted because the deadline to submit fell between two meetings and I believe it was just last week we had to get this grant in or the Sheriff's Office had to get it in.

Cheif Pellerin stated: I'll introduce the folks who will know more about it than I do, but Haley Baruso is here from Preble Street and Lieutenant Estabrook is here 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. So, this 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, so to speak, to kind of analyze data, prosecutions, victims, resources, things like that.

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

Social Worker Haley Baruso stated: I'm a clinical social worker and the director of an anti-trafficking program at Preble Street. We 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. And so, when I'm talking about human trafficking, I'm describing both labor and sex trafficking. And what human trafficking is, any compelled activity through force, fraud, or coercion where a human being is used for somebody else's economic gain. Our program over the last 13 years has recognized that a holistic public health approach is how we best support survivors of human trafficking. And so our hope is that as we partner with the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office, as well as five other organizations throughout Maine, we're really able to continue to build out the response to survivors of human trafficking. have to answer more in-depth questions if that would be helpful.

Chair Smith stated: I'm on the grant committee, I'll give you a little of the inside conversations or questions that came up with this grant. And of my personal where I sit on the grant committee, I had concerns that first of all, the work is valuable. There's no doubt about it. There is human trafficking that's happening all around our country and our county. So it's important that we have groups like Preble Street and others who are working on this together. The fact that this came up through the Sheriff's Office, it's great to have this for the next five years, but the concern was after that fifth year, you move into year six, to have these resources there and then potentially fall off the cliff because financially we may not have the money. We have to be doing set aides now to come up with that kind of a salary for someone to continue in year six. What I understand it's \$125,000 about but of course in five years that might be \$175,000 you know how that goes so I think the grant committee was a little concerned with the financial hold it would have on future commissions and where we are with our budget and I know I think we all know this budget was challenging that we weren't hiring any new positions per se we weren't really we were just holding our own trying to get through the budget system so I think I was coming from a very fiscally prudent spot in not hiring new positions. This would be a brand new position. And to that, you know, we have lots of positions at the jail and the corrections officers and I know we're still trying to find people. So, we still have a lot of need in those hiring efforts versus bringing on a brand new position. I think that's why the committee was feeling a little not as robust of an approval on this. That they didn't feel like it was in their position to make that decision. So, that's the comment I can give you from the grant committee and the conversations that were had. I'm happy to hear from others since it's kind of put back to the commission.

Commissioner Cloutier stated: My comment would be I don't think trying to project some adverse consequence or what might be perceived as an adverse consequence five years out from here really gives me much pause to worry. I'm wondering the Howard Buffett Foundation. Are we talking about the legendary Buffett family or is that somebody else? That's right. Howard Buffett is Warren Buffett's son. That's what I thought. So, no, I think this is fine.

Commissioner Caterina stated: And I would echo what Jim has said. I back in ancient times, I worked with human trafficking or women, young women who had been trafficked. and I can't think of a better thing to invest in because, it's happened, probably will always happen, but the more that we can do to prevent or deal with it, I think it's not an expense, it's an investment. So, I will approve this.

Commissioner Gorden stated: What it seems to me is that this is an opportunity for us not only to provide a service but we are providing police service for some of our outlying communities that contract with us. This offers the opportunity to show them that we are really trying to take those services that it doesn't make sense for each one of them to have and provide it. which should entice others to do the same thing and maybe bring some of that work to us so that the consolidation of those and I realize that's not a good word but to many people but the consolidation of that is going to take place. has got to take place because people just can't afford the way we're running. So, I totally support it. I think it's a great idea.

Commissioner Tyler stated: My comment would echo some of your thoughts a little bit. I have no problem supporting this based on the fact of the Buffett Foundation financing it for five years. But I don't think we should even look at any set aside program five years out. To get to 5 years and they'll have to figure it out again and maybe they can get another grant. But for the county to take on the expense of setting money aside now, I don't think it's the road we need to get down, but I will support this to get the foundation going.

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 stated: I don't think any county group has worked harder than this county group on this particular budget. Some challenging things happened this year in and outside of our control and I just want to thank the finance department, the director, Breana and Jim for all their hard work and really working hard to put together the very best budget they could in the challenging times that we have. And I feel completely comfortable and I was happy to hear from our auditing of the previous year that we run a very strong financial department here in the county and something that we can trust in and count on. I'm also grateful for our tax stabilization account. Many towns don't know how to do that properly and people see things spike up high and down. I really want to take my hat off to Jim and the entire department and the financial department to say that they're forward thinking and yes you know obviously money doesn't grow on trees but we do a nice job of preparing for the future preparing for unknowns so that we can manage difficult times like these to the best of our ability and try to pass on a responsible tax. With that said I also want to have a couple other thanks because we don't do this alone. A lot of folks think the county budget just does what they want and the commissioners kind of just do what they want. We have a Finance Committee that is very dedicated. So all those folks who are serving as town counselors or city counselors, they're actually nominated by this commission to help us as a financial committee. They have a term as we do. And those Finance Committee members, I want to recognize them tonight because they put in a lot of long hard hours on top of what they do for their towns and cities. They decided to come here to the county to understand how our budget is put together and what impacts our budget. So, I want to say thank you to 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. I want to say thank you to all of those members of the Finance Committee. They put in a lot of hours, gave us some great feedback, and allowed us to get 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 terms 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 Smith 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 got to remember that we just came off a transition from a calendar year to a fiscal year. That it took a lot to have this rule in my hats off to you. I don't know of many people 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 as I've been out and I know that you know my time is starting to fade here which is probably a good thing. 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. And there nobody's stopping and saying, "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. Wow. 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.