

Briefing to the Cumberland County Commission

What Worked & Didn't Work

Positive Themes:

- ❖ Video Meetings
- ❖ Continue Teleworking – allow for those who are efficient and set-up to do it
- ❖ Explore equipping employees with laptops, cameras and scanning capabilities
- ❖ Continue Drop Box at the Door and On-line recordings in Deeds
- ❖ Payroll done digitally (first time)
- ❖ All paychecks are direct deposit now
- ❖ Headway on Departments entering their own Accounts Payable
- ❖ Establishment of a list for department emails (goes to all employees)
- ❖ Built additional capacity into work environment (CCRCC – add'l workstations)
- ❖ Created barriers between public and employees through plexiglass screens – provides health barrier and safety barrier
- ❖ Created a balanced work and home life for some employees – with kids
- ❖ Greater percentage of on-line submissions in Deeds and Probate
- ❖ Video arraignments between Jail and Courthouse
- ❖ Video Probate hearings
- ❖ Providing BCORE training in-house
- ❖ Move training recorders from old site key to CCJ site key
- ❖ Providing twice weekly “Drug Take-Back”
- ❖ Deputies issues summons over arrests
- ❖ Encourage detectives to spend more time in field vs in office
- ❖ Limitations on outside visitors in jail
- ❖ Use of electronic tablets for inmates (education and emailing)

Negative Themes:

- ❖ Day to Day interactions with employees
- ❖ Not every employee has the technology to pull off working from home – outfitting employees would change current practice and cost significantly more on an annual basis
- ❖ More work and resource uses for DA's office (juggling work little more difficult)
- ❖ Remembering to keep up on passwords away from the office

Better Preparation for the Next Event (or continuation of this one):

- ❖ Laptops, cameras and scanners
- ❖ Ample supply of masks, gloves, sanitizer and wipes/cleaning solution
- ❖ Modernized office environment incorporating pandemic protocols in workplace

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Changes incorporated after COVID – considering...

- ❖ Video Meetings between departments
- ❖ Continue Teleworking – allow for those who are efficient and set-up to do it
- ❖ Continue to explore equipping employees with laptops, cameras and scanning capabilities
- ❖ Payroll done digitally across all departments (first time)
- ❖ All employee paychecks are direct deposit now
- ❖ Headway on Departments entering their own Accounts Payable
- ❖ Built additional capacity into work environment (CCRCC – add'l workstations)
- ❖ Created barriers between public and employees through plexiglass screens – provides health barrier and safety barrier
- ❖ Created a balanced work and home life for some employees – with kids or elderly parents
- ❖ Greater percentage of on-line submissions in Deeds and Probate
- ❖ Video arraignments between Jail and Courthouse
- ❖ Video Probate hearings
- ❖ Providing BCORE training in-house
- ❖ Move training recorders from old site key to CCJ site key
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Executive:

Telecommuting for the majority of the department went very well.

Pandemic made employees work in different ways, figuring out how they were going to do the work remotely.

Learn by fire approach to video conferencing

Hard to know if employees are putting in full day or not.

Need to explore how mail can be handled differently (I was scanning and emailing)

Training on website modification, social media posting, postage machine maintenance

Finance:

For years now, Finance has been trying to slowly but surely nudge the various County departments in the direction of performing more of their payroll, AP and revenue collection processes digitally. With the sudden arrival of Covid-19, that nudge turned into a hard push. As a result, the following changes have occurred.

- **ALL payroll is approved and entered digitally at this point.** Departments vary in the extent to which they are fully utilizing the Access on Demand timekeeping software to set weekly

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payroll, but they are all using it somewhat. This is a major change, and an enormous improvement over the old paper based systems.

- Paychecks are now Direct Deposit only. This cuts down on a number of problems posed by paper checks.
- Accounts Payable is entered and approved by more remote departments. However, this is an area that still needs improvement. A few major departments still send paper copies to Finance to be entered instead. If Departments can enter their AP themselves, it actually gives them better access to their own information, and does not in any way decrease the ability of Finance to do proper approvals.
- We already had a few departments using check scanners instead of sending us piles of checks every day, and that has been a godsend.
- We have encouraged all correspondence to go to the "Finance Dept" group list rather than individuals. This has worked extremely well, and will not be removed.

One thing that this crisis has certainly proved is that Finance can transition to work from home for many functions without missing a beat. They should all be very proud of how they performed during this crisis. It also shows that the department has the technical capabilities and the personal professionalism to make the switch to home and keep right on going, which is impressive. As older computers expire within the department, I will be requesting that Finance move to laptops attached to docking stations for everyone in the department so that we can be that much more prepared in the future.

Domestic Violence Intervention:

As you know, as part of the Executive Department, I have primarily been working from my home office. The monthly "Coordinated Community Response" meetings, and our High Risk Team meetings, have been taking place through Zoom, with appreciation for the County account. The statewide meetings, such as the Commission on Domestic and Sexual Abuse, to which I am an appointed member, and others with the Judiciary to participate in their progress on e-filing, have also been shifted to remote platforms. With the help of the VPN loaded onto my laptop - and your help in forwarding hard copy mail, I have been able to keep up with grant management and approval of invoices. The DV training that I provide, such as for the Maine Guardian ad litem Institute, has also been shifted to virtual. I have also been participating in a number of problem-solving virtual roundtable discussions and webinars, on how best to help DV victims file protection orders remotely, and how to shift the model of in-person group Batterer Intervention Programs to individual crisis management calls with offenders with the goal of enhancing victim safety.

In terms of my participation in managing the Jail Re-entry grants, and grant applications, I have been able to continue that via Zoom meetings, email and phone conferences.

I miss the connections provided by face-to-face meetings and standing by the copier conversations, but do appreciate being able to work from my home office effectively. I would like to continue to have this option on days when I don't have in-person meetings, since I also get back two hours a day of commuting time!

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Communications:

As a result of the declared National and State of Emergencies due to the COVID 19 Pandemic, the CCRCC has:

1) Closed our doors to visitors (including public safety agencies) and vendors. We hope to be able to return to normal operations over time which will allow visitors back into the building. We have slowly started to allow vendors in with a number of required precautions.

2) Worked with the State of Maine to add **four new 9-1-1 stations in our conference room.**

3) The addition of the 4 new 9-1-1 stations has allowed us to:

a) Use the conference room to assign staff for social distancing

b) Offer the use of the conference room to each of the other PSAP's in Cumberland County should they need to close their center for deep cleaning.

The **CCRCC plans to keep two of the four 9-1-1 stations active beyond "return to normal" for both training and staffing purposes.** We will eventually have all four workstations put away on roll carts, labeled and stored in our 9-1-1 room in the event that we or any of our partners need to evacuate or social distance in the future.

4) We borrowed the **CCEMA van and CCSO ESU van to use during the declared emergency.**

The vans were used for social distancing. In an attempt to return to somewhat normal operations, We have returned the vans to the EMA and CCSO this week.

* The EMA van, the ESU van and the conference room proved invaluable about one week after we put them into service. The CCRCC was potentially exposed to the COVID 19 which required that we evacuate and conduct a deep cleaning. Because we had the vans and conference room available, we were able to have the CCRCC deep cleaned without actually evacuating the building. The cleaning company cleaned 1/2 of the building one day while we operated out of the vans and conference room and cleaned the vans and conference room the next day.

We continue to pursue the purchase of a CCRCC Emergency Response Van (ERV) for use in these types of emergencies. Should the EMA or ESU have needed their vans during this time, we would have had to evacuate to Westbrook.

5) The CCRCC has **partnered with the Town of Gorham to use their Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for declared emergencies which would require the CCRCC to evacuate. This agreement worked out so well that we are planning to incorporate it into our permanent evacuation plan.** We are working to secure grant funding to support this arrangement.

6) The CCRCC restricted / limited staff working secondary jobs. This is still in effect and will continue until the emergency is over.

7) **The CCRCC requires all staff members to take their temperature upon arrival to work.** This will likely continue for a while until we are more comfortable with the COVID 19 situation.

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8) We have participated in **weekly conference calls** with the following agencies / committees:

- a) Maine EMD / EMS committee
- b) Maine 9-1-1 Bureau
- c) Cumberland County 9-1-1 group
- d) CCRCC Supervisory staff

We have recently reduced the conference calls from weekly to either bi-weekly or as needed. The reduction is not due to the seriousness of the crisis, but as a result of all agencies sharing critical operational information early on and continuing to engage in best practices.

9) Purchased many items to combat / prevent the virus and to support staff:

- a) Masks
- b) Hand sanitizer
- c) Thermometer
- d) Groceries for staff

10) **Work from home**. Deputy Director Deb Plummer has been assigned to work from home 1 or 2 days per week for a short time. Starting next week, she will return to working the full week at the CCRCC.

* As it relates to other departments whom the CCRCC relies on, working from home for them has not been an issue for the CCRCC. During this entire period, staff from EMA, Facilities, IT, HR and Finance have been readily available when needed and very responsive to our questions / issues.

In general, call volume since the start of the pandemic has been down. EMS (medical calls) down 25% Statewide. Law calls down 20% at the CCRCC. However, since we started to open up some businesses and relax some rules, call volume has begun to return to normal.

Sadly, over the past several days, we have seen a substantial increase in the amount of calls we receive for fraudulent unemployment claims using the callers personal data.

To their credit, the CCRCC staff has done an outstanding job keeping themselves healthy, balancing work / family life with adjustments in child care, working through personal issues related to the pandemic etc... and adjusting to frequency policy / process changes as we learned more about the virus and its impact on our citizens and our operations.

Deeds:

For Deeds the **drop box has worked great**, and I will keep that for the foreseeable future. **E filing has increased to 70 percent, an increase of 20 percent**, which I think will continue. Not having the usual abstractors camped out for the day, has been great as far as interruptions to our daily work. Again with us having appointments scheduled, will again allow us to control the interruptions and workflow. This will be a benefit during the lien season for the municipalities.

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EMA:

I think the biggest thing that has changed for us is **virtual operations**. The ability to have staff working at home and using county technology (computers and VOIP phones). I would like to continue incorporating a combined schedule of remote work and office work in the future. Once this event is over and we get to the "normal", I would like to continue remote work which allows us to practice remote activations.

Please see attached memos from:

- ❖ District Attorney
- ❖ Sheriff
- ❖ Human Resources
- ❖ Community Development