

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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April 28, 1948

To the County Commissioners of Waldo County

Your letter of April 21st relating to the demand to provide more vault and work space for the office of the Registry of Deeds duly received. . . You ask my opinion as to your authority as County Commissioners to make such changes and to allocate such space to the Clerk of Courts, Registry of Deeds and Registry of Probate as in the judgment of the County Commissioners seems for the best interests of the county.

Under Chapter 79, R.S., especially Section 16 of said chapter, the County Commissioners are required by law to provide and keep in repair a Court House with suitable rooms for the several county offices, especially fire-proof buildings of brick or stone for the safe keeping of records and papers belonging to the offices of the Registers of Deeds and Probate, and the Clerk of Courts.

Therefore, in my opinion, you have full authority to make such changes as you vote to do in your discretion.

Our Supreme Court has decided that the County Commissioners are under duty to determine in advance, so far as practicable, the financial requirements of the county and to provide necessary funds and to control expenditures. The Board of County Commissioners exercise the corporate powers of the county and in an enlarged sense they are the representative and guardian of the county, having the management and control of its property and financial interests and having original and exclusive jurisdiction over all matters pertaining to county affairs.

Under Section 131 of Chapter 79, the County Commissioners may employ counsel outside of the county attorney, if in their judgment the public interest so requires, when the official acts and doings of the County Commissioners may be called in question.

Ralph W. Farris  
Attorney General