

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2026

Legislative Document

No. 2158

H.P. 1447

House of Representatives, January 13, 2026

An Act to Address Vacancies on the Knox County Budget Committee

(AFTER DEADLINE)

(EMERGENCY)

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 205.

Reference to the Committee on State and Local Government suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT

Clerk

Presented by Representative PLUECKER of Warren.

Cosponsored by Representatives: DOUDERA of Camden, GEIGER of Rockland, MATLACK of St. George, RAY of Lincolnville, Senator: BEEBE-CENTER of Knox.

1 **Emergency preamble.** Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not
2 become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

3 **Whereas,** current law establishes the Knox County budget committee and requires
4 the membership, consisting of 9 members, to be elected to the budget committee in an even-
5 numbered year; and

6 **Whereas,** under the Knox County charter, business may not be conducted without the
7 presence of a quorum, which is at least 5 members; and

8 **Whereas,** due to vacancies on the budget committee and the failure to fill those
9 vacancies at the 2024 election, the budget committee no longer has a quorum; and

10 **Whereas,** this legislation provides for a temporary alternative method of appointment
11 of members to the budget committee; and

12 **Whereas,** this legislation must take effect as soon as possible to allow the budget
13 committee to complete its work on the Knox County budget for 2026; and

14 **Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within
15 the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as
16 immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now,
17 therefore,

18 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

19 **Sec. 1. Temporary appointment of members to Knox County budget**
20 **committee.** Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary in the Maine Revised
21 Statutes, Title 30-A, section 751 or in the Knox County charter regarding the election of
22 members to the Knox County budget committee and the filling of vacancies on the Knox
23 County budget committee, the following provisions apply.

24 **1. Definitions.** As used in this Act, unless the context otherwise indicates, the
25 following terms have the following meanings.

26 A. "Budget committee" means the Knox County budget committee established in Title
27 30-A, section 751.

28 B. "County commissioners" means the county commissioners of Knox County.

29 C. "District" means the budget committee districts established in Title 30-A, section
30 757, subsection 2.

31 D. "Eligible resident" means an individual registered to vote in Knox County who is a
32 resident of the district for which that individual is nominated and elected.

33 **2. Appointment of eligible residents.** The county commissioners may appoint an
34 eligible resident to fill a vacancy on the budget committee when there are fewer than 5
35 members of the budget committee who have been duly elected or who have been appointed
36 pursuant to this subsection and seated.

37 **3. Candidates recommended by municipalities.** Notwithstanding Title 30-A,
38 section 751, subsection 1, paragraph B, a municipality may submit a written
39 recommendation identifying an eligible resident to fill a vacancy on the budget committee.

1 The county commissioners shall give due regard to such a recommendation when making
2 an appointment to the budget committee pursuant to subsection 2.

3 **4. Term of appointed members.** A member of the budget committee appointed to
4 fill a vacancy pursuant to this section fills the vacant seat for the balance of the unexpired
5 term.

6 **5. Voting status of appointed members.** A member of the budget committee
7 appointed to fill a vacancy pursuant to this section is a full voting member of the budget
8 committee.

9 **6. Authority to fill vacant seats when quorum exists unaffected.** This section does
10 not affect the requirement in Title 30-A, section 751, subsection 1, paragraph D that the
11 budget committee fill a vacancy occurring on the budget committee when it has a quorum
12 to act.

13 **7. Termination of authority.** The authority granted in this Act expires April 1, 2029.

14 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation
15 takes effect when approved.

16 SUMMARY

17 Under current law and the Knox County charter, the Knox County budget committee
18 consists of 9 members who serve 4-year terms. If a vacancy in the membership occurs, the
19 budget committee is required to fill the vacancy, subject to confirmation by a majority of
20 the Knox County commissioners. Under the Knox County charter, business may not be
21 conducted unless there is a quorum of at least 5 members. Due to the inability to fill seats,
22 the budget committee has only 4 members, so it cannot conduct business, including filling
23 the vacant seats.

24 This bill provides temporary authority for the Knox County commissioners to appoint
25 eligible residents to the budget committee whenever, due to a vacancy, a quorum cannot
26 be attained. The bill establishes a process for recognizing recommendations of eligible
27 residents of Knox County put forward by municipalities located in the district for the seat
28 that is vacant. The bill does not affect the requirement of the budget committee to fill
29 vacancies once it has a quorum.

30 The authority granted by this bill expires April 1, 2029.