

January 8, 2015

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Unorganized Territories Regular Meeting
held January 8, 2015
in the Commissioners' Conference Room
Machias, Maine**

**Attending the meeting were:
Commissioner Christopher Gardner
Commissioner John Crowley, Sr.
Commissioner Vinton Cassidy
Betsy Fitzgerald, County Manager
Carla Manchester, Administration
Cat Cannon, Machias
Brent Griffin, Edmunds Twp.
Sara Griffin, Edmunds Twp.
Susan Hatton, SCEC
Lora Whelan, Quoddy Tides, Eastport
Rich Rolfe, Jail Administrator
Dennis Perry, RCC/WCSO
Charles Rudelitch, SCEC, Harrington
Barry Curtis, Sheriff
Michael Crabtree, Chief Deputy
Joshua Rolfe, RCC
Jill Holmes, Treasurer
Judith Alexander, Treasurer's Office
Crystal Hitchings, WCCOG
Sharon D. Strout, Deeds
Judy East, WCCOG
Darlene Wallace, Deeds
Tora Johnson, University of Maine, Machias**

County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m. and requested that the Commissioners elect a Chairman for 2015.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to elect Christopher Gardner as the chair for 2015. Commissioner Cassidy seconded the motion which passed 2-0-1.**

Commissioner Gardner abstained.

The meeting for Unorganized Territories business was called to order at 4:09 p.m.

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Approval of the Public Hearing for the U.T. Budget meeting minutes of December 11, 2014 (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)

Approval of the December U.T. meeting minutes of December 11, 2014 (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)

AGENDA ITEM: Monthly Report

Unorganized Territories Supervisor Dean Preston provided his monthly written report. (See attached) County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald stated that Dean was unable to attend the Commissioner's meeting. Dean had a meeting with MDOT regarding highway maintenance on site on Rt. 169.

County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald highlighted several areas of Dean Preston's report.

Betsy pointed out that several ROW cutting and clearing projects are still ongoing.

All winter contractors have been contacted for feedback on their roads.

In the area of Fire Protection/Ambulance Service, Medicare has notified all medical providers that they will suspend payments for 2 weeks in January 2015. This will cause a negative impact. Commissioner Gardner asked if there was a reason for the suspended payments. County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald responded that there was no known reason.

A certified copy of the UT shellfish ordinance to the DMR has been submitted for this calendar year.

The Permit packet for the dry hydrant in Cathance Twp. has been sent to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife for a signature before it can be forwarded to the LUPC for review and action. Commissioner Gardner expressed his frustration in that it has taken six months to be able to install a pipe into the lake for the dry hydrant. He stated that it is well beyond local government control.

County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald stated that the Dean Preston has made an investment in a plotter/printer for the UT office. She stated that it will give Dean the capability to build and print maps in a

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graphical format. Betsy displayed a map that Dean had created to show an example of what the plotter/printer can produce. Betsy stated that Dean intends to post the maps on the website for use by the public.

Commissioner Gardner addressed concerns that arose after a fatal accident that occurred just prior to the holiday season. The accident was on stretch of road on Rte 189 in Trescott. There were no guard rails to prevent the vehicle from entering a swampy area. This portion of the road once had guard rails, but they were not reinstalled after the road underwent reconstruction. Many people from the Lubec and Trescott area have concerns that guard rails have not been reinstalled. Lubec Town Manager John Southard has pursued the issue but has been told that it does not meet the guard rail requirements. Since this road is not under County jurisdiction, but State owned, Commissioner Gardner would like the County to support the effort to urge D.O.T. to take a second look at the request and install guard rails. Commissioner Crowley agreed that the Commissioners should find a way to make their wishes known. By consensus, the Commissioners tasked County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald to work with UT Supervisor Dean Preston and Town Manager John Southard to correspond with M.D.O.T. urging them to review their decision and install guard rails.

AGENDA ITEM: Community Guided Planning and Zoning Proposal

Washington County Council of Governments Executive Director Judy East was present to request a grant from the U.T. TIF funds for \$80,000. At the November 13, 2014 Commissioner's Meeting, Judy presented the proposal for the grant request for TIF funds to assist a Community Guided Planning and Zoning project for Washington County Unorganized Territories. With Commissioner Gardner's absence, it was decided to table the proposal until all three Commissioners could be present. Judy presented the proposal again in its entirety highlighting the vision for the planning initiative. She discussed the issues that the project would address and the steps to develop a "process document" guide. The following regional plan components were outlined:

- Economic Development
- Workforce Development
- Renewable Energy and Related Training
- Brownfields and Economic Renewal
- Transportation Infrastructure for Economic Development

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- Transportation and Housing
- Modernizing Communications/ Electric Utility Infrastructure
- Sustainable Housing
- Climate Change and Infrastructure Resilience
- Healthy Communities
- Water Infrastructure Investment
- Growth Management Law Change

The final goal is to have a completed regional plan for the Unorganized Territories of Washington County. (See attached handouts). This is a proactive initiative supported by businesses, landowners and community leaders and brings decision making from the State to the community level. Beyond the requested funds of \$80,000 for Planning and Zoning, an additional \$40,000 is requested for Hydrological Assessment and \$100,000 for leverage funds for LiDAR mapping. Commissioner Gardner stated that he was not interested in the LiDAR piece of the proposal because of concerns that technology changes quickly. Judy pointed out that LiDAR technology should remain useful over a long period of time. Commissioner Gardner stated that the LiDAR mapping component would have to be discussed further at another time. Judy stated that a grant of \$80,000 would allow the County to participate in the regional planning. She pointed out that the Grant Committee does recommend the approval of the grant. The Grant Committee recommends the funds come from the Economic Development Planning account. Commissioner Crowley asked if the Guided Planning and Zoning information would be available to the public. Judy East responded that all information will be posted on the website.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to approve the grant request for \$80,000 by Washington County Council of Government for planning work related to LUPC. Commissioner Cassidy seconded the motion which passed 3-0.**

Commissioner Gardner stated that this is a good starting point to what is trying to be accomplished. The Community Planning and Zoning framework has a lot of good pieces that will fit for the U.T. Judy stated that she will be seeking suggestions and recommendations for advisory and planning committees. Commissioner Gardner reaffirmed that this presentation brought into perspective his earlier comment on the need for local action. On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, Commissioner Gardner thanked Judy for all her work and stated that the

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Board looked forward to working with her. Commissioner Gardner requested that the records reflect that this action is considered a TIF item.

AGENDA ITEM: TIF Grant Committee Update

A report was submitted and is attached.

Executive Director Charles Rudelitch introduced the new TIF Administrator, Susan Hatton. Susan will be filling the position vacated by Ken Daye.

Mr. Rudelitch introduced Brent Griffin. Mr. Griffin recently lost his fishing boat that was tied at the Eastport breakwater when it collapsed in December 2014. Mr. Griffin is requesting a TIF Grant of \$15,000 and TIF Loan request of \$90,000 for the purpose of purchasing a new fishing boat. The Grant and Loan Committee recommended approval of both based on Mr. Griffin's strong credit history, strength of the collateral and previous business history. Commissioner Crowley asked what type of boat Mr. Griffin is purchasing. Mr. Griffin replied that it is a 48' Lobster and Dragger Boat. It will be constructed by Millennium Marine, Inc. pending the bank loan approval. The bank will hold the first position for collateral and Washington County will be second position. Commissioner Cassidy stated that this seemed to be a good investment.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to approve the grant request of \$15,000.00, Grant # 1501-01-CP for Brent Griffin. Commissioner Crowley seconded the motion which passed 2-0-1.**

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to approve the loan request of \$90,000.00, Loan # BG-TIF-01-05-15, for Brent Griffin. Commissioner Crowley seconded the motion which passed 2-0-1.**

Commissioner Gardner abstained from both motions.

Charles Rudelitch presented a request for approval of Cobscook Bay Company asset sale. The CBC has ceased operation. Craig's All Natural has offered \$10,000.00 for CBC's production equipment, inventory, and intellectual property. Commissioner Gardner questioned the seemingly low offer for these assets. He posed the question of how the value of the line of product is ascertained. Commissioner Gardner asked if the Bar Harbor Banking and Trust has agreed to this. BHBT has first

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position on collateral. Charles agreed that the offer amount was concerning but the Loan Committee does have confidence that Bar Harbor Banking and Trust is a good judge as to whether the offer is reasonable and has approved the sale of assets. Washington County has second position. Commissioner Gardner asked how the figure of \$10,000.00 was calculated. Charles was unsure. Charles did clarify that CBC is asking the Commissioners for approval to move forward with the sale. Charles stated that if the Commissioners wish to object, they may. Commissioner Gardner stated that this step would start the liquidation process. If the Commissioners approved, this would not release Washington County's interest. Commissioner Crowley pointed out that Craig's All Natural was once a potential customer for CBC's product line. Commissioner Gardner stated that it would be prudent to refrain from a decision until the Commissioners were provided a better explanation for the low offer. Commissioner Cassidy agreed that the Commissioners should be given more of an explanation. Commissioner Crowley also agreed.

MOTION Commissioner Crowley moved to table the decision to approve the sale of assets of Cobscook Bay Company until further documentation of the value of assets is ascertained.
Commissioner Cassidy seconded the motion which passed 3-0.

Commissioner Gardner stated that there is no ill will and applauds the efforts of Alan Furth and the Cobscook Bay Company Board of Directors.

Commissioner Gardner also stated that it does cause concern with other TIF loans, past and present. This situation gives good reason to take a careful look at Washington County's loan position, loan securities and collateral offered for future TIF loans.

AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment

None.

ADJOURNMENT

5:02 p.m.

ATTEST:

Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.