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**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Unorganized Territories Regular Meeting
held April 13, 2017
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
Michael R. Brown, Machias Valley News Observer
Dean Preston, Unorganized Territories
Susan Hatton, SCEC
Rachel Bell, Edmunds
Lora Whelan, Quoddy Tides
Mike Hinerman, EMA
Joshua Rolfe, RCC
Michael Crabtree, Sheriff's Office
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, Sheriff's Office
Jill C. Holmes, Treasurer
Lance Wheaton, Guide, Forest City
Rick Jordan, Machiasport
Dr. Whalen, Machias**

The meeting for Unorganized Territories business was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

**Approval of the U.T. meeting minutes of March 9, 2017
(Crowley/Cassidy, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Monthly Report

Unorganized Territories Supervisor Dean Preston's monthly report was submitted. (See attached)

Dean reported he is continuing to work through the Project Management Professional course. Dean expects to have the course completed in sixty days.

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Dean stated he continues to research the feasibility of developing a Regional Animal Control Service for several communities including the U.T. Commissioner Gardner stated combining regional resources is a good idea.

Dean has submitted the Annual Shellfish report for 2016. The Annual Shellfish meeting has been scheduled for May 2, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. at the Edmunds School. New committee members will be elected at the meeting. Other business will be to discuss ordinance changes and development of a junior license.

Dean stated he has developed a construction list from winter damage assessments. Commissioner Gardner inquired if there are any big maintenance projects. Dean responded there are several capital projects needing to be done and the paving projects are fairly substantial.

Dean reported that Alan Seavey will not be renewing his snow removal contract with the U.T. Dean will be advertising for bids in June or July. Dean gave Alan accolades for doing a tremendous job. Dean stated "Alan has provided a great service to the citizens of the U.T. for many years."

Cemetery maintenance season will begin with the preparation of the cemeteries for Memorial Day.

Dean reported the license renewal packet for the septage spreading site has been received by DEP. The application fee is being processed. There was an adjustment to the fee schedule but the adjustment did not slow down the renewal process.

Dean stated he has had numerous citizens contact him in regards to the Forest City Dam. The Forest City Dam has been in place for decades. The Woodland Pulp LLC has maintained the operation of the dam for many years. Due to the recent Federal Energy Regulatory Commission regulations, Woodland Mill can no longer carry the burden of the cost to operate and maintain the dam. As an introduction to the discussion on the future of the Forest City Dam, Commissioner Gardner stated the Commissioners are aware of the situation. Commissioner Gardner pointed out the fact that Woodland Mill shares the concerns the citizens of Forest City have of the removal of the dam. The FERC regulations have made it too costly for Woodland Mill to maintain the

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dam. In an April press release Woodland Mill's Environmental Manager Scott Beal acknowledged the "natural beauty and benefits of the lake system behind the Forest City Dam." Mr. Beal also stated "the Woodland Mill is seeking a community-based solution that is fair and that, as much as possible, maintains what has been in place for decades." Commissioner Gardner explained that the Woodland Mill had requested assistance from Congressman Bruce Poliquin to introduce legislation that would exempt the Forest City Dam from FERC jurisdiction; keeping the dam active and in operation. When it was apparent the legislation would not pass, Woodland Pulp filed an application with FERC to surrender the dam license. Without the license, it would be necessary for the dam gates to be removed. The application was accepted for processing. The impact will be significant in many ways. Commissioner Gardner expressed the Commissioners' perspective to back any effort for the dam to remain intact. Commissioner Gardner acknowledged the many moving parts and stated the need to be adequately educated on the issues surrounding the dam. Dean introduced Lance Wheaton. Mr. Wheaton is a resident of Forest City and has been a Maine Guide for 56 years. Mr. Wheaton spoke of the impact the removal of the dam will have. He stated there are 500 plus camps on Grand Lake Stream beyond the dam. The immediate impact would be the water level decreasing by approximately six feet. The decrease in the water level would then have a major impact on the environment; causing a change in the living habitat for alewives and other wildlife. Besides the environmental impact, the changes in Grand Lake Stream will affect recreational opportunities and property values for those that own on or near the river. Commissioner Gardner agreed unequivocally the impact would be serious. His hope is that the dam be made exempt from the regulations and the mill continues to maintain and operate the dam. Commissioner Gardner stated he believes that is what the Woodland Mill wants as well. Commissioner Gardner concluded that a letter needs to be drafted and send it to every Senator and Representative of Maine. Commissioner Gardner noted Senator King sits on the Energy Committee. Senator King needs to hear from the citizens of Forest City. Rick Jordan of Machiasport was also present and wanted to speak as a concerned citizen. Mr. Jordan is retired and has regional knowledge of fishing resources. Mr. Jordan commented that if the dam is lost and the water level drops six feet or more there will be much-reduced habitat. Mr. Jordan pointed out Grand Lake Stream is known for its bass fishing. Mr. Jordan stated Senator King is a fly fisherman. He will understand the seriousness of losing the dam. Mr. Jordan recognized Senator King lobbied hard

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for State of Maine when he was Governor and agreed that it was a great suggestion to contact Senator King on this issue. Commissioner Gardner stated he appreciated all the comments and reiterated that Forest City has the Board of Commissioners' support in this.

AGENDA ITEM: TIF Grant Committee Update

A report was submitted and is attached.

Program Manager Susan Hatton had two program related action items for the Commissioners' consideration.

Ms. Hatton presented a request for approval of an extension on a TIF loan. Ms. Hatton explained that James Robinson was approved for a TIF loan for the purpose of purchasing a new tractor and mower in May of 2016. Mr. Robinson purchased a mower but was unable to find a suitable tractor. Per policy the loan funds expired in December before he was able to purchase a tractor. The Loan Committee unanimously recommends the Commissioners approve an extension of the commitment for funds.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to approve the TIF loan funds extension for James Robinson by way of a new commitment letter. Commissioner Cassidy seconded the motion which passed 3-0.**

Ms. Hatton stated she had an update on the request for a TIF loan modification for Tide Mill Creamery LLC. Ms. Hatton explained that Tide Mill Creamery made application in February for a TIF loan modification. The request for \$140,000.00 would result in \$105,000.00 of new money and would pay off the original loan of \$35,000.00. The purpose of the loan was to consolidate the debt of Tide Mill Creamery and purchase equipment. The loan modification was presented at the March Commissioners' meeting. The loan modification request was tabled during the March meeting due to the collateral value assessment was that of broker's opinion only. The Commissioners' felt it important to have a formal commercial appraisal before making a decision. Ms. Hatton explained that she and Tide Mill Creamery owner Rachel Bell have looked into having a formal commercial appraisal done. They have encountered some problems with this request. Ms. Hatton stated they were unable to get an appraiser to come to this area, and a commercial appraisal is expensive. Ms. Hatton stated

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her concern that the application for the loan is time sensitive. Ms. Hatton noted that Tide Mill Creamery is poised at a good point to grow this season. There has been a lot of positive recognition for TMC's "Little Bloom" and TMC's goat milk yogurt products. The recognition for these products has stirred interest from new markets for the creamery's products. Both products cannot be sold out-of-state without a vat pasteurizer. TMC must have the loan in order to move sales out-of-state. Ms. Hatton stated a detailed list of collateral has been provided for the Commissioners' review. Only a portion of collateral had been given in March. Commissioner Gardner stated he was willing to move on a decision. Commissioner Gardner stated the applicant does offer considerable collateral and has a good broker's opinion. Approving the loan will offer progress and good opportunities for TMC's business. Commissioner Gardner suggested approving the original loan modification. Commissioner Cassidy agreed.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to approve the loan modification request from Tide Mill Creamery LLC for \$140,000.00. Commissioner Crowley seconded the motion which passed 3-0.**

Commissioner Gardner apologized for the delay in the loan modification approval but stated the Commissioners must cover all bases.

AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment

ADJOURNMENT

4:45 p.m.

ATTEST:

**_____
Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.**