

April 6, 2023

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'  
Unorganized Territories Regular Meeting  
held April 6, 2023  
in the Washington County Courtroom, Courtroom 3  
Machias, Maine**

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**Attending the meeting were:  
Commissioner Christopher Gardner  
Commissioner John Crowley, Sr.  
Commissioner Vinton Cassidy  
Betsy Fitzgerald, County Manager  
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant  
Sarah Dedmon, Machiasport  
Will Tuell, East Machias  
E. Harrison, Lubec  
Nancy Harrison, Lubec  
Sam Whitney, Machias Savings Bank  
Faye Allen, Machias Savings Bank  
Lora Whelan, Quoddy Tides  
Tammy C. Gay, Deeds  
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO  
Christine Day, EMA  
Jill Holmes, Finance  
Dean Preston, UT Supervisor  
Susan Hatton, SCEC  
Rich Rolfe, Jail Administrator  
Lisa M. Hanscom, EMA  
Josh Rolfe, RCC  
Barry Curtis, Sheriff  
Michael Crabtree, Chief Deputy**

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The meeting was called to order at 2 p.m.

A presentation from Port City Architecture was the first order of business. Commissioner Gardner stated the purpose of this presentation was to continue the conversation of the new proposed safety building. During the March meeting, the Board of Commissioners approved with a 2-0-1 vote to locate the safety building at the district attorney's present site on Court Street. Commissioner Gardner yielded the floor to Andy Hyland of Port City Architecture.

April 6, 2023

34

Mr. Hyland explained that, in an effort to keep the County on budget, the floor plan was revised by cutting a few hundred square feet out of the original floor plan and moving some of the office spaces around (see attached floor plans and cost comparison). Mr. Hyland gave a recommendation to leave approximately \$500,000.00 in funds for contingency. Mr. Hyland also recommended using the Construction Management method. With this method, the County would solicit for a Construction Manager. The Construction Manager would be responsible for overseeing the complete project; helping PCA with pre-construction, developing a design, bidding out for the contractors for each stage of the construction and work within the given budget. Commissioner Cassidy asked about the process of selecting a Construction Manager. Mr. Hyland stated there would be a bid process. Mr. Hyland noted he has an example of an RFP that the County could use as an example. Mr. Hyland stated this will be the best path forward.

Mr. Hyland stated there have been some discussions about the starting budget for this project. It has been questioned if the costs projected for this area are accurate. PCA has quoted a total project cost of \$550.00 per square foot. Mr. Hyland stated he invited Justin King of King Construction to discuss construction costs for this area. Commissioner Gardner thanked Justin King for coming to the meeting and being available to answer questions. Mr. King stated he had limited knowledge of the project but was willing to offer his expertise on the subject of cost. Mr. King stated one of his recent projects in Northeast Harbor was within the cost range that PCA has quoted. Commissioner Gardner asked Mr. King what he sees as far as volatility on pricing for construction material. Mr. King stated the prices have definitely risen but they are now leveling out. Mr. King agreed with Mr. Hyland's recommendation to employ a Construction Manager for the project. Mr. King stated that is the safest way for transparency. Commissioner Gardner concluded that having a Construction Manager was the only way to go. Mr. Hyland stated a Construction Manager would normally be paid a percentage of the overall budget for managing the project. Commissioner Gardner asked for an idea of what percentage a Construction Manager might receive. Mr. Hyland stated the percentage would be approximately 3 to 4% of the total cost. Commissioner Gardner thanked Justin King for his input.

Commissioner Gardner stated, for the record the total project budget is \$5.5 million. Commissioner Gardner asked Treasurer Jill Holmes for the amount of ARPA funds available at this time. Treasurer Jill Holmes responded there is just over \$5.6 million with all expenses considered. It was noted that this leaves \$507,000.00 for contingency

April 6, 2023

35

funds. Commissioner Gardner stated there are still basic needs for other buildings owned by the County that must be kept in mind.

Commissioner Gardner asked if the Unorganized Territories Office and the Emergency Management Office has been included in the safety building. Mr. Hyland responded that neither U.T. or EMA office space has been included in the safety building floor plans. Mr. Hyland noted the floor plans presented today do not have to be the final floor plans. Commissioner Gardner expressed his appreciation to Mr. Hyland and PCA for their effort to work within the budget of the ARPA funds available. Sheriff Curtis voiced his frustration in loosing space that the Sheriff's Office had originally requested to fit their needs. Sheriff Curtis stated he understood the idea was to be able to grow as the needs of the Sheriff's Office grows. Sheriff Curtis, again, questioned the cost per square foot, stating materials will be cheaper here than in Portland. Commissioner Gardner reminded Sheriff Curtis that Justin King had agreed with the project costs that Mr. Hyland quoted.

Sheriff Curtis expressed his frustration in the floor plan size being decreased while his department may need to grow due to the cut-backs for State Police coverage. Sheriff Curtis also expressed his frustration in not being consulted regarding the floor plans that have been presented. Commissioner Cassidy noted that it was clearly stated in previous meetings that the Sheriff's Office staff should participate in the floor plans as they will be the ones using the space. Sheriff Curtis stated his staff has not been included in the final floor plans.

Mr. Hyland stated he has contacted the Sheriff's Office by email, and felt his floor plans were based on the proposals given by the Sheriff's Office. Paula Johnson-Rolfe agreed Mr. Hyland had been in touch by email, but was given very short notice to review the floor plans. Chief Deputy Crabtree reiterated the frustration felt by the Sheriff's Office staff for not having input and discussions before plans were made. Commissioner Gardner stated he was not sure where the break-down of communication has happened. Commissioner Gardner noted there should never be a plan put before the Commissioners again unless the Sheriff's Office has had a chance to give unput.

Commissioner Gardner directed PCA to consult with the Sheriff's Office with the redesign of the floor plans. Commissioner Gardner stated the process must get started. Commissioner Cassidy agreed with Commissioner Gardner that the Sheriff's Office must have input and the

April 6, 2023

process needs to move along. Mr. Hyland stated he would also like to

**36**

get the process moving. Mr. Hyland noted that the floor plans presented today is not considered the "final draft". Mr. Hyland agreed to work more closely with the Sheriff's Office and to be sure their needs are met. The Sheriff requested the floor plans be redesigned to the original size proposed for Center Street.

Josh Rolfe noted that using a Construction Manager may save enough money to be able to build the original size that was proposed for Center Street. Commissioner Gardner stated he would yield to the other Commissioners. Chief Deputy Crabtree asked the Board of Commissioners to vote to approve the original floor plan to be built on Court Street. The next steps to bid out for the Construction Manager was discussed. Mr. Hyland recommended to begin the process of Phase II by bidding out the Construction Manager contract. Mr. Hyland stated this phase of the project would cost less than \$100,000.00. Commissioner Cassidy recommended the County go with the original square feet at the Court Street location.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to authorize proceeding with Phase II of the project to acquire more concrete numbers on construction and do so with the final floor plan as presented for Center Street with the Court Street location, not to exceed \$100,000.00 for that effort.  
(Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0.)**

Commissioner Gardner stated he still considers Center Street to be the better location for the safety building but is willing to go along with Commissioner Cassidy and Commissioner Crowley in the interest of moving the project along. Commissioner Gardner noted the project must stay within the funds available so as not to affect the taxpayers of Washington County.

The business of the Unorganized Territories proceeded at 3:15 p.m.

**Approval of the U.T. regular meeting minutes of March 9, 2023  
(Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

**AGENDA ITEM: Monthly Report**

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

Dean highlighted several items from his report.

April 6, 2023

37

- Dean reported that he has been meeting with all ACO's to discuss training opportunities, coverage area, equipment and supplies and billing. Dean stated he will be looking for a replacement for one of the ACO's who just gave notice. Dean anticipates hiring the new ACO at the May meeting.
- Dean reported the Shellfish Warden has begun his standard 30 hours per week seasonal hours effective April 5<sup>th</sup>.
- Dean stated the 2023 Conservation program will begin in May. The U.T. will be placing 12 recruitment boxes in three locations for a total of 36 recruitment boxes. The conservation program date, which is typically done one day in May to place seed clams, will be published in April and presented during the annual shellfish Committee meeting on April 26<sup>th</sup> at the Edmunds School at 6 p.m.
- Dean reported that the U.T. office has scheduled a meeting with the Maine Local Roads Center to review the roadway system inventory. Dean noted this has not been done in 10 years. Commissioner Cassidy asked about work needing to be done in Big Lake Twp. Dean stated it had been on the schedule last year but was suspended due to contractor availability. It is on the top of the list for highway maintenance.
- Dean stated the Mill Stream Bridge Project in Centerville Twp. is currently on the MDOT 2024 work plan. A kick-off meeting with the project managers is the next step.
- Dean reported the necessary roadways have been posted for weight limits during the spring season. The posting is expected to remain in effect from March 15<sup>th</sup> through May 15, but Dean noted that sometimes the posting signs can come down as early as May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Dean stated the Edmunds Consolidated School Project is in its infancy phase. Dean is working with Department of Education to determine the process to include the remaining \$58,000.00 ARPA funds that has been earmarked for this project.
- The U.T. office has extended the current permit program for solid waste to a two-year program. Dean stated the permit program works well, but moving to a two-year permit will cut down on the leg work.

April 6, 2023

- Dean reported that the Town of Dennysville has expressed interest in the process to de-organize. This is still in the initial stages and is in the hands of the Fiscal Administrator of the

38

Unorganized Territories. Dean stated the situation is unique in that the town is one of the larger towns to start the de-organization process. The population in Dennysville is 344. The issue is that there is no one to fill the positions to run the town due to a propensity to not serve. The Board of Commissioners expressed their concern that efforts by the Town of Dennysville to de-organize would "open the floodgates" of similarly sized towns.

**AGENDA ITEM: TIF Grant Committee Update**

A report was submitted and is attached.

Ms. Hatton stated there are no action items.

Ms. Hatton reported that Scott Hallowell of Eastern Maine Electric Co-op is still working on a proposal for additional electrification along Route 9. Commissioner Gardner noted this project will help the overall growth and development in the Unorganized Territories of Washington County.

**AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

3:35 p.m.

**ATTEST:**

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Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.

April 6, 2023