

August 10, 2023

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Unorganized Territories Regular Meeting
Held August 10, 2023
in the Washington County Probate Courtroom
Machias, Maine**

**Attending the meeting were:
Commissioner Christopher Gardner
Commissioner Vinton Cassidy
Commissioner John Crowley, Sr.
Renée Gray, County Manager
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant
Dean A. Preston, Unorganized Territories
Paul Sylvain, Machias Valley News Observer
Reid Albee, County Wide
Josh Rolfe, S.O./ RCC
Susan Hatton, Sunrise County Economic Council
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO
Barry Curtis, Sheriff
Michael Crabtree, Chief Deputy
Rich Rolfe, WCSO
Susan Sullivan, D.A.'s Office
Paige Bebus, D.A.'s Office
Lynn Dwelley, D.A.'s Office
Megan Huffman, Finance
Jill C. Holmes, Finance
Tammy Gay, Deeds
Heather Green, Deeds
Lisa M. Hanscom, EMA**

Commissioner Gardner called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Commissioner Gardner stated that prior to the 4 p.m. meeting the District II Caucus to elect one member for a three-year term for the Budget Advisory Committee was held. Commissioner Gardner asked the record reflect there were no interested parties in attendance. Commissioner Gardner noted the caucuses traditionally have minimal attendance. County Manager Renée Gray stated Interim City Manager of Eastport George Finch was unable to attend due to a conflict in his schedule, but relayed his interest in filling the seat on the Budget Advisory Committee for District II in his capacity as interim

August 10, 2023

77

municipal official. By consensus, George Finch will fill the seat on the BAC for District II.

The regular meeting of the Unorganized Territories proceeded at 4:01 p.m.

**Approval of the U.T. regular meeting minutes of July 13, 2023
(Cassidy / Gardner, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Monthly Report

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

Dean reported the U.T. Office is working with Schoodic Media LLC to develop a web site for the Washington County Territories. The web site will be used to post such things as meeting notices, dog adoptions and losses, bid packets and maps. The maps will graphically display: solid waste transfer stations, fire protection, EMS coverage, election information, post office information and Town Office support. Dean noted the development of the web site is in the infancy stage at this point.

Dean stated his office received the Local Roads Assistance Program (LRAP) for review and action. Dean noted this is an annual action. This year the procedure is done through a new DocuSign format. Dean stated he has been unable to process the document due to the link not functioning properly. Dean has reached out for assistance and will resend the document.

Dean reported on Animal Control activities that included a dog-on-dog bite requiring contact of the out-of-state owner, response needed for a goat struck by a vehicle in Cooper and a dog at large in Machiasport.

Dean stated the shellfish conservation program is moving into its final quarter. Dean noted that DEI, whom the U.T. has partnered with, will be removing the recruitment boxes. Recruitment boxes were placed on the clam flats and are used to gather information that can be used to improve shellfish resources.

Dean reported on highway maintenance projects. He stated ROW grinding

August 10, 2023

and clearing projects are on-going on Baskahegan Road in Brookton Twp., Big Lake Road in Big Lake Twp. and all roads in Centerville Twp.

78

Dean also listed the paving operations on-going on Big Lake Road in Big Lake Twp., West Street in Big Lake Twp., Commissary Point Road in Trescott Twp., Baskahagen Road in Brookton Twp., Gould Road in Greenlaw Chopping Twp., Belieu Road in Edmunds Twp. and South Edmunds Road in Edmunds Twp.

Dean gave the Commissioners an update on the Mill Stream Bridge Project in Centerville Twp. He reported a Zoom meeting is being scheduled with Senior Project Manager Aurele Gorneau.

Dean reported the rain has had an impact on roads due to beaver dams.

Dean stated there is a conservative effort to bring broadband to areas in the U.T. He stated this is the number one infrastructure improvement that is needed. Dean has partnered with several different groups in this effort.

Dean presented a solid waste agreement for the Commissioners consideration. The agreement is with Town of Danforth to provide a place to accept household waste from the Unorganized Territories of Brookton Twp., Forest City Twp., Forest Twp., and Kossuth Twp. The agreement is a three-year term beginning July 1, 2023 with an annual compensation of \$20,100.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to ratify the Solid Waste Transfer Station Agreement with the Town of Danforth as presented. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0.)**

Dean stated he has created a new section in his reports to the Commissioners for issues that Commissioners contact him directly with concerns. This section of the report labeled "Due Outs" will be a place to formally address and follow-up on such concerns.

Dean stated Commissioner Gardner had contacted him regarding a land dispute in Trescott Twp. on the Jones Road. This dispute involves a traditional snow plow turn-around. Dean reported he will need to do a site-visit to determine the impact of the dispute, and he may have to negotiate or build a new snow plow turn-around before the winter season.

August 10, 2023

On a final note, Commissioner Gardner commented that Dean's engineering expertise may be useful with the many projects involving the new Safety Building; the renovations on 24 Center Street and the old Sheriff's Office space.

79

AGENDA ITEM: TIF Grant Committee Update

A report was submitted and is attached.

Ms. Hatton stated there were no action items. She had three updates for the Commissioners' consideration.

Ms. Hatton reported Big Lake RV Park & Campground hosted their Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on July 14th.

Ms. Hatton provided an "Agreement for Public Access and for Payment in Lieu of Taxes" for the Commissioners' review and approval as requested. Ms. Hatton stated the agreement was quite lengthy and suggested the Commissioners may want the County Attorney to review it. It was noted the agreement stated Downeast Lakes Land Trust would be expecting the County to provide a tax bill. Commissioner Gardner stated the County does not assess land and bill for taxes. Commissioner Gardner asked that Dean Preston review the agreement and advise the Commissioners on the next steps to be taken.

Ms. Hatton reported that Scott Hallowell of Eastern Maine Electric Cooperative has provided a link to the MPUC regulations for electric utilities. Ms. Hatton stated that, on a side note, the MOOSE Net middle mile project has received \$30 million in funding. She stated this could have a significant impact on the EMEC project. Commissioner Gardner asked what the timeline is for the MOOSE Net project. Ms. Hatton stated the timeline has not been determined yet. Commissioner Gardner directed Ms. Hatton to keep U.T. Supervisor Dean Preston informed of any developments in the MOOSE Net project.

AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment

None.

ADJOURNMENT

4:21 p.m.

August 10, 2023

ATTEST: _____
Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.