

August 8, 2024

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'  
Unorganized Territories Regular Meeting  
held August 8, 2024  
in the Washington County Probate Courtroom  
Machias, Maine**

---

**Attending the meeting were:  
Commissioner Christopher Gardner  
Commissioner John Crowley, Sr.  
Commissioner Vinton Cassidy  
Renée Gray, County Manager  
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant  
Josh Rolfe, RCC/WCSO  
Reid Albee, Roque Bluffs  
Paul Sylvain, MVNO  
Susan Hatton, SCEC  
Jill C. Holmes, Finance  
Tammy C. Gay, Deeds  
Susan Sullivan, D.A.'s Office  
Bob Granger, District Attorney / Ellsworth  
Lynn Dwelley, D.A.'s Office  
Megan Huffman, Finance  
Dean Preston, UT Supervisor  
Heather Green, Deeds  
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO  
Barry Curtis, Sheriff  
Michael Crabtree, Chief Deputy  
Darlene Perry, Probate  
Brent Griffin, Edmunds  
Dale Griffin, Edmunds  
Mary Ellen Day, Machiasport  
E. Harrison, Lubec  
Nancy Harrison, Lubec  
Brian Schuth, Eastport  
Trudy Newcomb  
Nancy Curtis, Dennysville**

---

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. Nancy Harrison was re-elected.

August 8, 2024

62

**AGENDA ITEM: Discussion on District Attorney's Expense Cost Sharing  
-D.A. Granger**

District Attorney Granger was present to discuss some cost sharing issues and questions. District Attorney Granger represents District 7 which covers both Washington and Hancock County. Treasurer Jill Holmes stated there has been a long-standing practice of sharing expenses between Hancock and Washington County. Recently, D.A. Granger requested reimbursement for cell phone expense and travel expense. The issue arose due to D.A. Granger requesting 100% travel reimbursement when traveling to Washington County; he is currently reimbursed 50% per the usual arrangement. Commissioner Gardner stated this is one of the problems with sharing a District Attorney for two counties. Commissioner Gardner noted there was a bill presented in the Senate for both Washington and Hancock Counties to have their own District Attorney. The bill did not pass so the two counties are still sharing one District Attorney. After some discussion on what costs are shared between the two counties and what has been reimbursed traditionally, Commissioner Gardner suggested implementing the most logical solution. Commissioner Gardner stated the solution may not be based on what has always been done. Commissioner Gardner made a motion for D.A. Granger to approach Hancock County to pay 100% mileage reimbursement based on which county is being represented. Commissioner Gardner stated the decision should be reviewed annually during the budget process. Commissioner Cassidy stated he would like more discussion on the subject before passing the motion. Upon further discussion, it was discovered the reason for the 50/50 sharing is due to the fact that the District Attorney is elected to represent both counties. Administrative Assistant Susan Sullivan pointed out that the Assistant District Attorney's always get reimbursed 100% but the District Attorney is reimbursed at 50%. Commissioner Cassidy recommended leaving the cost sharing as it is currently. The motion to find a new cost sharing solution was withdrawn. Commissioner Gardner agreed with Commissioner Cassidy; as the only elected official covering District 7, District Attorney Granger is responsible for covering both counties. Commissioner Gardner concluded election results should not cause more financial burden on one county.

The regular meeting of the Unorganized Territories proceeded at 4:32 p.m.

August 8, 2024

**Approval of the U.T. regular meeting minutes of July 11, 2024  
(Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

63

**AGENDA ITEM: Monthly Report**

Unorganized Territories Supervisor Dean Preston's monthly reports for July and August were submitted. (See attached)

**AGENDA ITEM: TIF Grant Committee Update**

A report was submitted and is attached.

Ms. Hatton presented a TIF loan request. The loan request from Brent and Dale Griffin, d.b.a. Griffin Lumber Inc., is for the purpose of expanding their lumber mill business in Edmunds. The loan request is for \$135,000.00 and will come from the Revolving Loan Fund. Existing business equipment, a Wood Mizer Edger and a Top-load Wood Boiler valuing \$211,444.00 will be the collateral to secure the loan. Commissioner Gardner asked Treasurer Jill Holmes if there is enough funds available in the Revolving Loan Fund line. Treasurer Jill Holmes replied there is plenty. As so recommended by the Loan Committee,

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to approve the loan request, Loan #GL-TIF-07-22-24, for Brent and Dale Griffin, d.b.a. Griffin Lumber Inc., in the amount of \$135,000.00 as presented.  
(Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0.)**

**AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment**

Commissioner Gardner stated he wanted to take the opportunity to discuss a situation that has evolved regarding the Edmunds Consolidated School (ECS). Commissioner Gardner noted ECS is an Education in Unorganized Territory (EUT) school and governed by state policy. Residents of Dennysville, Pembroke and Edmunds are all facing a considerable increase in taxes due to a rise in school costs. In an attempt to lower costs, AOS 77 was asked for options that may help lower the costs. An option was presented at a Dennysville town meeting to enter a two-year contract to send all students to Pembroke for a cost savings. Currently there are 25 elementary students in Dennysville, with 15 attending the Edmunds Consolidated School and 10 already going to Pembroke. This option would ultimately lower the

August 8, 2024

enrollment at Edmunds Consolidated School, thus causing fear of the school to close. Commissioner Gardner noted this would also affect school choice. Commissioner Gardner stated several concerns. He

64

noted this agreement may cause children to have to make several moves between schools, and he noted his concern to ensure longer term viability of ECS. Commissioner Gardner noted ultimately the Town of Dennysville made their decision during a July 23<sup>rd</sup> School Committee Meeting. AOS 77 Superintendent Mary Ellen Day emphasized that the agreement between Dennysville and Pembroke is the only way to save the town money on taxes and the voters have agreed. Commissioner Gardner asked U.T. Supervisor Dean Preston if there could be any possible intervention by the State to help preserve ECS. Lubec Selectperson Nancy Harrison pointed out that the closing of schools in our small rural communities is not a unique problem, and asked Commissioner Gardner if he planned recruit help for other communities like Lubec. Commissioner Gardner continued that, as agents of the U.T. Board of Commissioners, action should be taken to help Edmunds Consolidated. Commissioner Gardner suggested a motion be made to empower Dean Preston to work with the U.T. Financial Administrator and the State Financial Administrator and research the ability for Edmunds to make a counter offer for students to stay at Edmunds Consolidated School.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Crowley moved to authorize Dean Preston to investigate an alternative source of funding to allow Edmund's student to stay in Edmunds Consolidated School. (Gardner / Crowley, 3-0.)**

Mary Ellen Day stated school starts in two and a half weeks. Again, Commissioner Gardner stated it was worth investigating so as not to cause kids to have to be moved to different schools. Commissioner Gardner noted people were not informed. Mary Ellen Day noted these discussions have been going on for three months. All present noted the urgency of the situation as the school year is soon to begin. Commissioner Gardner stated time is of the essence.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to go into Executive Session. Commissioner Crowley seconded the motion which passed 3-0. It was 5:24 p.m. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

**\*MOTION\* The Commissioners declared themselves to have closed**

August 8, 2024

the Executive Session. It was 5:39 p.m.  
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)

65

\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to accept the resignation of Unorganized Territories Supervisor Dean Preston effective September 15, 2024 with the understanding an immediate hiring process will be initiated.  
(Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0.)

ADJOURNMENT

5:40 p.m.

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.

August 8, 2024

66