

February 20, 2025

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Unorganized Territories Regular Meeting
Held February 20, 2025
in the Washington County Probate Courtroom
Machias, Maine**

**Attending the meeting were:
Commissioner David C. Burns
Commissioner John B. Crowley, Sr.
Commissioner Billy Howard
Renée Gray, County Manager
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant
Susan Hatton, SCEC
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO
Susan Sullivan, D.A.'s Office
Rachel Worcester, D.A.'s Office
Tammy Gay, Deeds
Heather Green, Deeds
Regina Grabrovac, Healthy Acadia
Megan Huffman, Finance
Jill C. Holmes, Finance
Sondra Small, Finance
Barry Curtis, Sheriff
Charles Rudelitch, SCEC
Tim Tabbutt, WCSO
Paul Sylvain, MVNO
Lynn Dwelley, D.A.'s Office**

Commissioner Burns called the meeting to order at 3 p.m.

Executive Department Business (see Regular Commissioners' Meeting minutes)

AGENDA ITEM: Award TAN

AGENDA ITEM: Healthy Acadia Presentation

The regular U.T. business meeting was called to order at 3:11 p.m.

**Approval of the U.T. regular meeting minutes of January 9, 2025
(Crowley / Howard, 3-0)**

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AGENDA ITEM: Monthly Report

Unorganized Territories Supervisor Heron Weston's monthly report was submitted. (See attached)

Heron stated the annual report for the U.T.'s Septage Disposal and Storage Facility in Marion has been submitted to the Maine DEP. Heron noted the U.T. owns the property. He stated the site generates approximately \$7,500.00 of revenue per year. He noted this is not a great source of revenue but it is an important public service.

Heron stated the U.T. serves as the municipal agent for a trail improvement reimbursement program between local ATV clubs and the State's ATV program. The program is a way for the State to help clubs fix up trails. This year Dennysville ATV Club received \$45,000.00 to reimburse them for the work done this past summer on local trails.

Heron reported the U.T. Animal Control Officer Colleen Conrad has resigned. U.T. provides ACO coverage for U.T. and also has contracts with 10 towns in Washington County. Former ACO Jessica Lewis will be stepping into this regional position.

Heron stated he received notification the Rice Bridge on Route 191 in Trescott Twp. is scheduled to be replaced by Maine DOT. It is a state-owned bridge and the replacement cost will be paid entirely by the state. Heron noted the U.T. does plow this bridge, and reported the bridge will be made wider.

Heron reported the Nineteen Road in Berry has been included in a recent Project Share grant application to replace the Northern Inlet Road crossing. The purpose of the proposal is to improve fish passage and infrastructure resilience. These federal funds will replace the culverts that have begun to fail with a 24' bridge.

Heron stated the Marion Transfer Station has reinstated its 100 lb. flat fee policy. Heron noted this is a controversial issue. It is the solid waste station's way of discouraging small household waste drop offs. Heron informed the Commissioners to refer any complaints regarding this new policy to the Marion Transfer Station board. Heron noted there are currently several contract renewals being negotiated for the following communities: 1) Topsfield, 2) Cassella in Wesley, and 3) Cherryfield.

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Heron reported he was approached by Kevin Brodie regarding an aquaculture ordinance to restrict fishing in local harbors. Heron suggested Kevin talk with LUPC and local fisherman for support. He told him the U.T. would consider pursuing an ordinance if there is an interest. Commissioner Howard asked if there was a problem with fishing in local harbors. Heron responded that he has not heard any concerns at this time. Heron noted an ordinance can be done by individual Townships. He also suggested waiting to see if there is a proposal for an ordinance. He noted that if a proposal happens, a moratorium could be put in place until a decision is made.

Heron presented a Transfer Station Usage Agreement for the Commissioners consideration. The agreement is with Grand Lake Stream Plt. for residents of Greenlaw Chopping Twp. and T6 ND. The term is for three years beginning July 1, 2025 with an annual payment of \$15,000.00. Heron explained the cost is figured by population based on census and voting records. Commissioner Howard asked if the area had a seasonal population. Heron responded that the area does have a seasonal population. The fee calculation is based on year-round residents. U.T residents make up approximately 25% of the year-round residents in the area. The station's annual operating cost is \$60,000.00. Commissioner Howard asked if there is anything that must be done at the spread site. Heron responded that soil tests are done then the soil is treated appropriately. By consensus, the Board of Commissioners approved the solid waste agreement between U.T. and Grand Lake Stream Plantation for the residents of Greenlaw Chopping Twp and T6 ND as presented.

Commissioner Howard asked who maintains the cemeteries in the U.T. Heron responded the office of the U.T. takes care of the cemeteries. Heron noted the U.T. also pays some local associations to do this job.

AGENDA ITEM: TIF Grant Committee Update

A report was submitted and is attached.

Ms. Hatton presented the TIF Program Fund Allocation and Awards. The summary gave a historical view of the TIF fund allocations for 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024. The total funds received for the TIF program for 2025 is \$100,359.00. Susan noted the Stetson Wind Project

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property had depreciated. The allocation amounts recommended by the Grant Committee are as follows:

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- The annual County Match allocation of \$25,000.00
- The annual Administration allocation of \$69,000.00
- The remaining \$6,359.00 to be allocated to TIF-UTPI: UT Public Infrastructure

Commissioner Burns stated he would like to know more about the TIF Program. He asked what the restrictions are on the funds that can be used and who qualifies for the funds. Susan explained that only residents in the U.T. qualify for these funds. She also explained there are different categories. These categories are:

- TIF - EDP: Economic Development Planning
- TIF - NBT: Nature-Based Tourism
- TIF - Loan: Revolving Loan Program
- TIF - UTPI: UT Public Infrastructure
- County Match

Susan stated three of the categories are to be used as grants. Commissioner Burns asked about the kinds of businesses that apply for grants. Susan responded that the kinds of businesses that have received TIF grant funds are snowmobile clubs to maintain riding trails, Eastern Maine Electric for the First Net System and those businesses working on non-profit tourism within the U.T. Susan noted the Nature-Based Tourism line has a maximum of \$10,000.00 per grant recipient. Commissioner Burns stated more opportunities are needed for nature-based tourism.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to approve the Washington County U.T. TIF allocations as recommended by the TIF Grant Committee. (Crowley / Howard, 3-0)**

Commissioner Burns stated he would like the opportunity to learn more about the TIF Program.

Commissioner Howard asked if there were any outstanding debts at this time. Susan responded there is only one and the collection process is still on-going.

County Manager Renée Gray stated she invited Charles Rudelitch to the meeting to inform the Commissioners of the TIF Program. Charles is

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the Executive Director at SCEC. Renée stated Charles would like to have Treasurer Jill Holmes on the Grant Committee. Commissioner Crowley is in support of this. He stated any time finances are involved the Treasurer should be included. Charles informed the Commissioners the Downeast Wind Project is almost complete. He

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stated, with that, the TIF Funds will start coming in. Charles stated the Grant Committee will be doing a lot of work on this to be prepared for the TIF funds. There is also a Community Benefit Agreement as part of this TIF Program. Charles stated that TIF payments will be coming in six months after the windmills are fully connected to the grid, and then annually thereafter. Charles noted there is a lot of planning that will need to be done, and the Commissioners will need to make decisions on the allocation of these funds. Charles explained the Community Benefit Agreement funds can be spent anywhere in Washington County. The other TIF funds can only be spend within the U.T. Charles requested the Commissioners consider Treasurer Jill Holmes be appointed to the TIF Grant Committee Board. It was requested this appointment be discussed during their next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment

None.

ADJOURNMENT

3:50 p.m.

ATTEST:

Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.

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