

July 9, 2026

Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Regular Meeting
held July 9, 2026
in the Washington County Courthouse
Second Floor, Courtroom #3
Machias, Maine

Attending the meeting were:

Commissioner David Burns
Commissioner Billy Howard
Commissioner Courtney Hammond
Renée Gray, County Manager
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant
Tammy Gay, Deeds
Heather Green, Deeds
Susan Albee, East Machias
Keith Albee, East Machias
Leigh MacKeen, Whitneyville
Melody Gray, Addison
Henry, Jonesport
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO
Barry Curtis, Sherriff
Michael Crabtree, Chief Deputy
Rich Rolfe, WCSO/Jail Administrator
Tova Hold, Computer Guy
James Hampton, Computer Guy
Megan Huffman, Finance
Mike Roukas, East Machias
Will Tuell, East Machias
Paula Horvath, Eastport
Lisa M. Hanscom, EMA
Amy Barnard, Lubec
Josh Rolfe, RCC/WCSO
Darlene Perry, Probate
Charles Rudelitch, SCEC
Dan Morton, Cutler
David J. Brock, Lubec
David Lund, Pembroke
Candace Davidson, East Machias
Jessica Brockington, Beals
Bethanie Beal, Beals
Dan Daley, Lubec/BAC
Mark Kelley, Lubec
Skip Colson, Alexander

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Sonnie Shepheard, Sullivan
Brian Nadeau, Bangor
George Davis, Addison
Carol Davis, Addison
Judy Meyer, Maine Monitor
Diane Sarao, Lubec
Chris Sarao, Lubec
Paul Sylvain, Machias Valley News Observer
Sonny Beal, Columbia
Charlene Hammond, Columbia Falls
Ben Edwards, Machias
Jeff Davidson, East Machias
Susan Sullivan, D.A.'s Office
Rachel Worcester, D.A.'s Office
Crystal Cushing, D.A.'s Office
Paula Wilson, Addison
Penny Sprague, Lubec
Susan Beal, Columbia
Karen Redman, Marshfield
Robert Simpson, Whiting
Cecil E. Gray, Columbia
Aidan Hammond, Jonesport
Ellie Hammond, Jonesport
Marianne Moore, Calais
David Bibber, Charlotte
Keith Auld, East Machias
Louise Ciambra, Whiting
Heron Weston, U.T.

Executive Department business was called to order at 4:22 p.m.

Approval of the minutes for the Commissioners' Workshop of May 27,
2026 (Howard / Hammond, 3-0)

Approval of the minutes for the Commissioners' Workshop of June 5,
2026 (Hammond / Howard, 3-0)

Approval of the Regular Commissioners' meeting minutes of June 11,
2026 (Hammond / Howard, 3-0)

Approval of the Special Commissioners' meeting minutes of July 2, 2026
(Howard / Hammond, 3-0)

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AGENDA ITEM: Old Business

➤ **Final M.O.U. between the State and Washington County**

Commissioner Burns stated he has reviewed the revisions to the M.O.U. between the State and Washington County, and it looks good.

➤ **Sheriff's App Discussion**

Commissioner Burns stated the Board of Commissioners approved the request made by the Sheriff's Office to purchase the Sheriff's App. Commissioner Burns noted there are now questions as to whether the purchase can be made with Opioid Settlement funds as proposed. Commissioner Burns asked Chief Deputy Crabtree to elaborate on the value of the Sheriff's App. Chief Deputy Crabtree summarized the uses of the app, and stated it was decided it would fit the Opioid funding criteria. Chief Deputy Crabtree also shared a response received from the Maine Opioid Settlement Support Center (MOSS) in regards to an inquiry made by the Sheriff's Office to use the Opioid funds in this way. Chief Deputy Crabtree stated the response from MOSS as to whether the use of the Opioid funds is appropriate for the purchase of the Sheriff's App is a matter of opinion. Rich Rolfe stated the Sheriff's App would be very beneficial for the community. Finance Director Jenny Windsor stated the Finance Office does not disagree with the purchase of the App but disagrees with the use of the Opioid Funds. She noted the Finance Office feels the approval should be rescinded and sent back to the Opioid Committee. Discussion involving the deadline for the purchase, appropriate funds use, audit concerns, and Opioid Committee recommendation is to be continued.

MOTION Commissioner Hammond moved to table the final decision on the Sheriff's App purchase until a recommendation is given by the Opioid Committee. (Hammond / Burns, 3-0)

Commissioner Hammond stated action can be taken at the next Commissioners' meeting.

AGENDA ITEM: County Manager's Report

County Manager Renée Gray submitted a written report. (See Attached)

AGENDA ITEM: Finance Report

Provisional Treasurer Grace Falzarano stated new credit cards have been opened at Machias Savings Bank that have a benefit of Corporate Rewards to offset costs.

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➤ **Transfer and Adjustment Requests**

Grace presented two Transfer of Funds requests for the Commissioners' approval.

- Transfer funds from the Old General Fund Account XXXXXX0790 to the Opioid Statement Savings Account XXXXXX3189 in the amount of \$599,444.73 to move funds to their own savings account.

MOTION **Commissioner Burns moved to approve the Transfer of Funds from the Old General Fund Account to the Opioid Statement Savings Account as presented. (Burns / Hammond, 3-0)**

- Transfer funds from the General Fund Account XXXXXX0860 to the LEPC XXXXXX2430 in the amount of \$403.41 to correct a withdrawal of \$403.41 that was taken twice dated January 10, 2023.

MOTION **Commissioner Hammond moved to approve the Transfer of Funds from the General Fund to the LEPC Account as presented. (Hammond / Burns, 3-0)**

Grace asked if the Commissioners would like to meet to work on the 2027 proposed budget. Grace stated there have also been requests from third-parties for funding. Commissioner Burns proposed holding a Budget Work Session in July. By consensus, a Budget Workshop was scheduled for Wednesday, July 22, 2026 at 9 a.m.

Grace requested the Commissioners designate a contact person to work with Colleen Brown with grant opportunities that relate to building renovations on our historic buildings. By consensus, the Commissioners recommended the contact people be David Lund of Buildings and Grounds and Lyman Holmes. A summary of an email received by Colleen Brown regarding grant opportunities was provided and is attached.

AGENDA ITEM: Monthly and Quarterly Reports

The Commissioners were provided written reports from the Department Heads. (See attached)

EMA Director Lisa Hanscom noted the EMA Shelter Traveling Trailer has been inspected and is in need of repairs. No action was taken.

AGENDA ITEM: Payroll Change Notices

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- *MOTION*** Commissioner Hammond moved to approve a wage increase for Emmitt Gardner as part-time BLETP Patrol Deputy effective 06/07/26. (Hammond / Burns, 2-1)
- *MOTION*** Commissioner Hammond moved to approve a wage increase for Allen Corey II as part-time Reserve Patrol Deputy effective 06/07/26. (Hammond / Burns, 2-1)
- *MOTION*** Commissioner Hammond moved to discharge Kevin Yankosky as full-time Corrections Officer effective 05/31/26. (Hammond / Burns, 3-0)

Jail Administrator Rich Rolfe stated he is in the process of hiring someone to replace the position vacated by Mr. Yankosky.

AGENDA ITEM: Signatures on Six-month Certificates

None.

AGENDA ITEM: Grants / Contracts / Agreements

➤ **Renewal of IT Contract 2027**

Commissioner Burns stated he has reviewed the 2027 Contract. County Manager Renée Gray stated it is a renewal of the existing contract for 2026. Commissioner Burns requested this matter be put on the agenda for the Commissioners' Workshop of July 22nd.

➤ **Possible Grant Opportunities - Colleen Brown**

No action necessary.

AGENDA ITEM: Approval of Sheriff's Bonds

As per the annual process as required by the provision of 30-A M.R.S.A. § 372 (2) the Sheriff's bonds are reviewed to determine sufficiency. District Attorney Granger provided the necessary documents to confirm that the member coverage of the Maine County Commissioners Association self-funded risk management pool provides sufficient coverage to the Sheriff, Chief Deputy and the Sheriff's deputies.

- *MOTION*** Commissioner Burns moved to approve the Sheriff's bond, the Chief Deputy's bond and the Sheriff's deputies' bonds as presented. (Burns / Hammond, 3-0)

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AGENDA ITEM: Consideration of Dates and Times to hold Caucuses for Budget Advisory Committee Members

The Commissioners are making arrangements for dates and times to hold caucuses for Budget Advisory Committee Members. Commissioner Burns has scheduled the District II Caucus to be held on August 13th at 3 p.m. in the Commissioners' Office in Machias. Commissioner Hammond has scheduled the District III Caucus to be held on August 6th at 6 p.m. at the Columbia Town Hall. Commissioner Howard is still finalizing arrangements for the District I Caucus. Once Commissioner Howard has set a date, time and place, the schedule will be advertised and provided to all municipal offices.

AGENDA ITEM: Commissioner Issues and Comments

Commissioner Howard stated the County should be looking for opportunities that fit the criteria to use the Opioid funds wherever possible.

Commissioner Howard reported he met with David Lund and inspected the RCC and EMA building. He noted a committee should be formed to evaluate the use and possible disposition of the building. It was suggested the following people should be on this committee: David Lund, Lisa Hanscom, Josh Rolfe, Matt Stanhope and Commissioner Howard.

AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment

Attorney Jeffrey Davidson stated he is representing Renée Gray in the matter of her termination that was approved at a Special Commissioners' Meeting on July 2, 2026. Attorney Davidson read a three-page letter reviewing the events leading up to the meeting of July 2nd. The letter included a demand for the Commissioners to rescind the termination and stated Renée Gray's intention to pursue legal rights in court if her demand was not acted on. After allowing other comments from the public, Commissioner Burns stated since Ms. Gray has chosen to not finish out the term of her office under her contract in a productive way and to allow the business of the County to not be further disrupted, he made a motion.

MOTION Commissioner Burns moved to require Ms. Gray not to work for the balance of the 20-day notice requirement, that the County pay her salary for the balance of the time, and to allow her to return to her office for the limited purpose of retrieving her personal belongings.
(Burns / Howard, 2-1)

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Following the regular meeting, the Commissioners entered into a Tax Abatement hearing at 5:51 p.m. for Sarao vs. Town of Lubec was held. A decision will be given at the August Commissioners' meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

6:45 p.m.

ATTEST:

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

County Manager Report

July 9, 2026

6/12/2026 Responded to emails for information

Responded to an email from TAN bond counsel Jim that is now in the hands of the Commissioners and Jenny. I await any further instruction.

Emailed the TIF Grant Committee about posting more TIF recipient information online. Asked to put on the next agenda for the TIF Grant Committee meeting. Also notified them the Commissioners appointed Jenny to the committee.

Notified Teamsters clerical union to proceed with sending the signed MOU regarding cellphones.

Downloaded Commissioner meeting video and posted link on website calendar

Downloaded tax abatement hearing video and saved on portable hard drive

Emailed Nick both IT Contracts, EMA and amendment to Sheriff, Jail and RCC IT services. Emailed Lisa EMA's.

Prepared 329 Bingo Rd, LLC denial after the Commissioners meeting last night and they signed it while they were still here.

We started off with finalizing the 2026 TAN allonge paperwork. Signatures, seal, emailed to bond counsel and originals overnight fedex'd.

6/15/2026

I met with Carla, again, trying to relieve her of some of her stressors. I have taken on all responsibility going forward for Tax Abatement hearings from start to finish. Previously, Carla has done that. I will be mailing the parties the information regarding the tax abatement hearing date for July 9th. There is a confirmation form both parties send back to the County confirming their attendance. Carla showed me the parties were emailed this on May 19th, but one party had not confirmed attendance. As we discovered.

I also am going to be scheduling making the arrangements with each Commissioners for the budget advisory committee caucus, times, dates, locations. Then I will proceed with the advertising and notifications. We'll have this on the July 9th Commissioners meeting.

I'll be drafting the minutes for the 2 Commissioners meetings from May 27th and June 5th, and also preparing the county bids process for Salt bids for municipalities, again, to relieve Carla from some stress.

I had an FOAA request for meeting materials for the Commissioners meetings in April, May, and June. I have fulfilled this request as much as I could at this time. I also had another request for information I have sent to Chief Deputy Crabtree to fulfill.

I had rescheduled the Washington County Development Authority meeting today at 1pm, to 3pm today due to the department head budget meetings. I didn't know that Probate had been rescheduled for the open slot at 3p but I have spoken with Darlene and will get an update from her after if I am unable to make any part of that meeting.

On Friday, we had a great county town manager luncheon in Calais. We were joined by Commissioner Howard for most of it. ACAP Jason Parent was the guest and the municipal officials were able to get first-hand information regarding issues. This service is especially important for the area population. Brian Schuth was able to talk about his recent knowledge on Revenue Sharing, some great conversation happened around this topic. The next luncheon will be held in September in Machias. Attendance: Ardis Brown- Danforth Town manager, Suzette Francis-Lubec Town Administrator, Lewis Pinkham-Milbridge Town Manager, Mike Ellis- Calais City manager, Heron Weston-UT supervisor, Brian Schuth-Eastport City Manager, Commissioner Dist 1 Billy Howard.

We received an email for a liquor license request for the Forest Twp. I replied to the person that sent the email and spoke with Heron about this going forward. Heron contacted Devn Cook and notified him that going forward, he should contact him directly for liquor license inquiries. I was a bit familiar, having dealt with such applications on the town level. It's more appropriate for Heron to handle these directly as UT supervisor. We'll educate as best we can with each applicant and I mention to Heron about posting something on the UT website.

I attend the budget department prep meetings with the Finance team and the District Attorney, and EMA. I was unable to attend the Probate meeting due to a schedule conflict with the WCDA monthly meeting, in which I chair.

6/16/2026

Worked on B+G budget details
Responded to information request from Bob Berta
Met with Brian Knox and David Lund about fmla
WCCOG Meeting
Received the Teamsters MOU regarding cellphones. Signed and sent back

	Worked on Admin budget detail for prep meeting tomorrow. Met up with Commissioner Hammond to sign Tan transfer document for payroll
6/17/2026	Budget meetings all day with Finance and Department heads
6/18/2026	Met with Carla on HR conference findings Gathered phoneline information to begin reviewing and identifying phone lines and purpose. Josh also assisting. Budget meeting with Sheriff and Jail
6/22/2026	Met with Lisa at EMA Processed B+G vouchers Complaint about Probate FOAA request response Worked on minutes for 5/27/2026
6/23/2026	Met with David Lund re: buildings and grounds. Leak over room 300, approved tar purchase for repair. Met with Carla Met with Lisa, EMA Wrote minutes from May 27th Commissioner's meeting Wrote minutes from June 5th Commissioner meeting
6/24/2026	Met with Commissioner Burns Resent letters to Sarao and Town of Lubec informing of time change of tax abatement hearing after the Commissioners meeting on July 9th. Typed minutes for Commissioner's meeting 6-5-2026 Finance budget meeting
6/25/2026	Emails, responded to attorney Dennis Mahar Collected FOAA response to Leigh Mackeen Worked on bid information for oil, no need for propane, sand/salt parking lots Provided a letter of support for Healthy Acadia for a grant they are applying for Phone call with Jane Bell concerning poor fire tone service for the Whiting area Worked on making 2025 County report books
6/26/2026	Worked on more county report books Worked on sending bid invitations and RFP's for oil, trash, plowing

Met with Nick, Lisa, Dave Brock, and Grace about IT and microsoft

Worked on RFP for services

6/29/2026 Vacation day

6/30/2026 Vacation day

7/1/2026 Met with Carla about admin and HR related updates and issues
Met with Lisa about EMA funding requirements, new bios for Commissioners and Manager for EMPG and HSGP funding
Wrote bios for funding EMA, sent to Commissioners.
EMA trailer: has Matt to go with Lisa to inspect EMA trailer for maintenance issues. Tires okay, but roof vents deteriorated, need replacement. Asked Lisa to purchase a tarp to cover trailer for protection from weather.
Matt reported a sewer gas odor and water backed up in drains for Sheriff's building. Called Machias sewer to inspect, they reported not their issue. Gatcombs plumbing called to investigate.

Showed Jen how to process County reports while Sheriff building sewer odor being cleared from clogged sewer drain.

7/6/2026 Sent ad for RFP for oil, trash removal, and sand/salt parking lots
Reviewed final MOU for Courthouse

Met with Carla
Processed vouchers
Handled a inquiry for Probate, Teresa Jones matter
Prepared County manager's report for Commissioner's meeting
July 9th

Sincerely,
Renée Gray
County Manager
July 6, 2026

Summary of email received from Colleen Brown dated July 2, 2026

Grants Opportunities are:

Maine Historic Community Buildings – due early November

Save America's Treasures – anticipated to open this fall

- Verifying or establishing required grant registrations such as SAM.gov, Grants.gov, JustGrants, and other applicable grant portals (these likely already exist).
- Identifying the County's authorized representatives for grant applications and award administration.
- Gathering building information, including ownership, age, historical significance, current condition, photographs, maintenance history, and previous improvements.
- Obtaining engineering reports, architectural assessments, inspections, or other professional evaluations where required.
- Securing contractor estimates and project cost proposals.
- Compiling financial documentation, budgets, audits, and matching fund information, if applicable.
- Organizing supporting documentation such as resolutions, letters of support, maps, photographs, and project timelines.

Part of successful grant writing is developing a comprehensive **Case for Support**. This is a document that clearly outlines the County's needs, priorities, existing assets, long-term vision, and why our projects deserve investment.



**Washington County
Emergency Management Agency**
28 Center Street
P.O. Box 297
Machias, Maine 04654
(207) 255-3931



**Washington County Emergency Management Report to the Commission
July 2026**

Washington County Emergency Management is currently working with the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to complete new federal requirements associated with the FY2025 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) and Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP). These requirements include submitting biographies and resumes for leadership, oversight, and grant-funded personnel, as well as completing certifications regarding the employment. MEMA has established a secure SharePoint portal for the submission of this personally identifiable information (PII), and Washington County Emergency Management is actively compiling and uploading the required documentation. Completion of these requirements is required before FEMA will release FY2025 grant funding, and staff are working to ensure all materials are submitted in a timely manner to maintain access to these critical federal funds.

Upcoming meetings and activities include:

- **July 13:** Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Meeting.
- **July 14:** State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) Meeting and LEPC/EMA Presentation to the Board.
- **July 14:** Downeast Sunrise Trail Relay Planning Meeting with first responders, state partners, race directors, and Hancock County representatives.
- **July 14:** Maine Healthcare Coalition (ME-HCC) Downeast Chapter Quarterly Meeting.
- **July 15:** Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) Directors' Monthly Meeting.
- **July 24–25:** Downeast Sunrise Trail Relay. Washington County Emergency Management will support this long-distance team relay event, which follows the Downeast Sunrise Trail and concludes in Eastport on the morning of July 25. Emergency Management is coordinating with local fire departments, EMS, law enforcement, race organizers, and regional partners to assist with communications, situational awareness, and emergency coordination to help ensure a safe event for participants, volunteers, and the public.

Washington County Emergency Management remains committed to strengthening emergency preparedness, maintaining strong partnerships with local, regional, and state agencies, and supporting the safety and resilience of our communities. We appreciate the continued support of the Washington County Commissioners and will provide updates on these initiatives and upcoming activities in future reports.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa M. Hanscom, Director
Washington County Emergency Management Agency (EMA)

MONTHLY ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT FOR June 12, 2026 – July 9, 2026

TASKS COMPLETED

- **Prepare Commissioners' meeting minutes for:**
 - June 11, 2026
 - May 27, 2026 Workshop minutes completed by Renée
 - June 5, 2026 Workshop minutes completed by Renée
 - July 2, 2026
- **Prepare Agenda for July 9th Meeting**
 - Distribute and publicize
- **Human Resources**
 - Met with new employees
 - Part-time Patrol Deputies (2)
 - U.T. Summer Maintenance Worker
 - Process paperwork for employee status changes:
 - Wage increases for part-time Patrol Deputies
 - Continue to Track time used for FMLA
 - Continue to prepare for Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML)
 - Processing Employer Verifications for claims submitted.
- **Prepare weekly vouchers for payment**
 - Reconcile Health Trust insurance billing
 - Reconcile NCEU Health and Welfare billing
 - Review Consolidated phone bill and distribute Routing Slip for Department Heads
 - Review First Net cellphone bills and distribute Routing Slip for Department Heads
- **Prepare monthly postage report for June usage**
- **Tax Abatement**
 - Hearing has been rescheduled for Sarao vs Town of Lubec for July 9, 2026
 - Notice sent out to Taxpayer and Town by Renée
 - Decision for 329 Bingo vs Town of Waite.
 - Both parties were notified of the decision
- **Worker's Comp**
 - Check with W/C on update for continued comp claim
- **Website updates**
 - Continue to send Meeting Minutes for posting
- **Annual Report**
 - Assembly of Annual Reports has been completed
- **Reviewed upcoming winter bids with Renée**
 - Heating Oil and Propane
 - Snowplowing
 - Solid Waste Removal
 - Bulk Salt for Roads

**COUNTY OF WASHINGTON
REGISTRY OF DEEDS
TAMMY C. GAY, REGISTRAR
MONTHLY UPDATE
COMMISSIONERS MEETING
July 9, 2026**

June 2026 in Review:

1. Tammy met with the finance department to discuss the deeds budget for the 2027 fiscal year.
2. Tammy attended via zoom the Maine Registry of Deeds Association monthly meeting with guest speakers from the Governor's and Secretary of State office regarding **the LD 2231 "An Act to Support Owners of Manufactured Housing, Mobile Homes and Tiny Homes."** Which goes into effect on July 29, 2026. This bill transfers manufactured homes into "real property" by cancellation of the title by the Secretary of State Office.
3. **6-month comparison of Recording Amounts:**

Recording	January to June 2025	January to June 2026
Documents	5,235	4,924
Plans	28	141
State portion Transfer Tax	\$ 422,031.06	\$ 373,941.55
County portion Transfer Tax	\$ 46,892.34	\$ 37,888.35
Recording Fees	\$ 124,676.04	\$ 159,380.05
Deeds Surcharge	\$ 7,719.00	\$ 13,565.00

Respectfully Submitted,



Tammy C. Gay, Registrar of Deeds



Economic Development Services Report

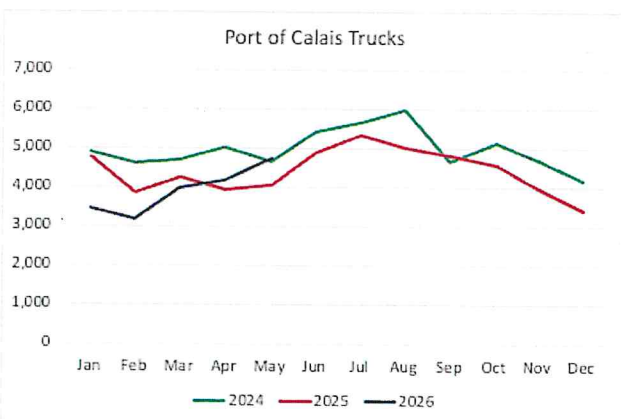
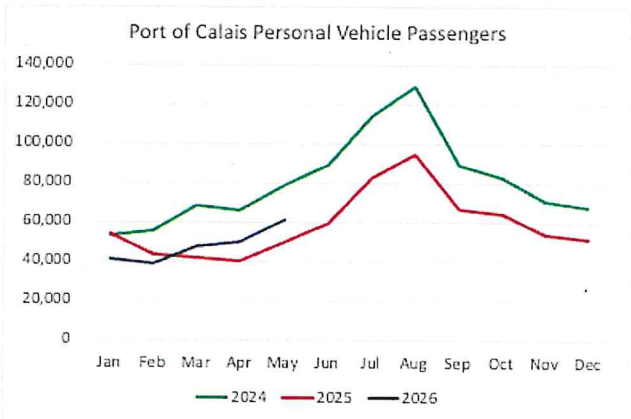
2ND QUARTER 2026: APRIL 1, 2026 TO JUNE 30, 2026



Prepared on July 7, 2026 for Washington County Government
Submitted by Sunrise County Economic Council
Main Office: 7 Ames Way, Machias, ME 04654 | (207) 255-0983

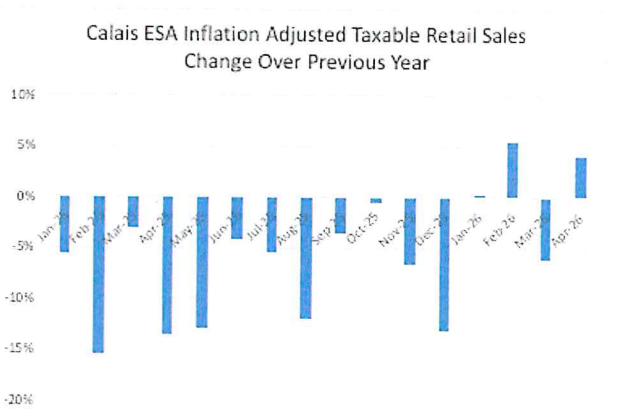
INTRODUCTION

So far this year, the number of border crossings from Canada through Calais appear to have stabilized with year-over-year increases since March. The border crossing entry data from the U.S. Department of Transportation show that just over 61,000 people crossed into Calais from New Brunswick in May. This represents a 23% increase over May 2025, although still over 20% less than the 79,000 who crossed into Calais in May 2024. The number of trucks crossing into Calais showed a stronger rebound, with just over 4,700 in May 2026 representing a 17% gain over the 4,064 that entered in May 2025. Just under 4,700 trucks entered into Calais in May 2024.



The impact on the restaurants, hotels, gas stations, and stores in greater Calais is less clear, but improved from the significant decreases in taxable sales seen last year. There were just over \$10.5 million in taxable retail sales in April 2026 in the greater Calais area. When adjusted for inflation, this represented a 4% gain over the same month in 2025. Although year-over-year results in January were essentially flat, February 2026 showed a roughly 6% gain year-over-year, while March 2026 showed a 6% loss relative to March 2025. These mixed results are a significant improvement over last year when double-digit decreases in inflation-adjusted taxable retail sales in greater Calais were common. Hopefully, this indicates a stabilization of cross-border traffic and sales.

SCEC is working with federal, state, and Canadian partners to convene a summit in the fall to discuss border and trade issues and their impact on Washington County's economy. With the transition to annual review of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement and the recent shifts in cross-border crossings and trade, it will be helpful to focus discussion on the local economic impacts of these larger trends. We expect to send out a save-the-date in early August.



WORKFORCE

Working Communities Challenge (WCC)

The Working Communities Challenge (WCC) is in the final stages of its fourth year. The end of July marks the final month of support from the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston.

In April, the WCC Partnership Director traveled to Buffalo, New York, to participate in the Rural Impact Summit. During the lunch plenary session, the Partnership Director participated in a one-on-one on-stage interview alongside representatives from several organizations leading youth-focused initiatives in rural communities across the country.

The WCC partnership held its quarterly meeting in May at the MaineStreet Business Building, focusing on strategies for the work of the core group as it transitions beyond Federal Reserve Bank funding. In June, planning began for a July celebration recognizing the work accomplished over the past four years with support from the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, while also identifying next steps for the partnership moving forward.

Family Futures Downeast (FFD) / Start Up Downeast

Many current participants and alumni of Family Futures Downeast (FFD) and Start Up Downeast (SUDE) were among the May graduates at Washington County Community College (WCCC) and the University of Maine at Machias (UMM). Four student-parents completed bachelor's degrees at UMM in Psychology, Community Studies, and Education. Two students earned associate degrees from WCCC in Human Services/Substance Use Disorder and from UMM in Liberal Studies. Seven parents also completed the Certificate in Family Studies at UMM, and all are continuing their education toward a degree. One FFD participant also completed a bachelor's degree in Education through Western Governors University.

FFD's goals extend beyond college persistence and completion and positively impact the Washington County workforce. As FFD celebrates its 10th year, program alumni are now employed in education, healthcare, nonprofit organizations, tribal government, manufacturing, retail, and the seafood industry throughout the county.

FFD and Start Up Downeast participants and alumni have also launched small businesses throughout Washington County and neighboring Hancock County, including Divine Ink & Beauty, Downtown Attire, iOK Film Productions, Mis Primeros Posos, Branded by Brittany Ink, Theater of Dice, and Cupcake Momma.

Start Up Downeast is currently developing new programming for fathers in Washington County that will support their entrepreneurial goals while also offering programming for their children. This expansion of the FFD two-generation (2Gen) model is supported through the Jobs for the Future "Rising Futures Maine" initiative and the John T. Gorman Foundation.

Scholarships

No Sunrise Scholarships were awarded during the second quarter.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

MaineStreet Business Building (MSBB) / Small Business & Entrepreneurship (SB/E)

During the second quarter of 2026, the Small Business & Entrepreneurship (SB/E) team served more than 30 active clients across Washington County and delivered 78 hours of direct business support to businesses spanning marine industries, farming, hospitality, skilled trades, outdoor recreation, retail, wellness, pet services, and product development.

Beyond one-on-one advising, the SB/E team advanced regional partnerships, entrepreneurial ecosystem development, and event support throughout the county.

In April, the SB/E team supported the Maine International Trade Center (MITC) three-day Washington County Sector Spotlight focused on Maine's blue economy and working waterfront by coordinating local business tours and event logistics. The tour connected economic development, trade, port, research, manufacturing, and finance stakeholders with local businesses and marine assets. Highlights included a Machias-area business meet-and-greet near MSBB, site visits to Cooke Aquaculture, Eastport waterfront businesses, a Lubec-area salmon farm, and Downeast Institute, as well as community networking at West Branch Farms Public House.

The SB/E team continued partnering with Machias Savings Bank and Jobs for Maine's Graduates (JMG) on the Money Maker Showdown, a high school entrepreneurship competition. Staff mentored students on business planning, financial modeling, and pitch development, culminating in nine student business pitches for cash prizes.

The SB/E team also partnered with the Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center to support the Fintastic Shell-ebration, a community event highlighting marine innovation, safety, aquaculture awareness, and local industry collaboration. Activities included Fishermen Yoga with FishAbility, water safety innovation presentations by Green & White Hope, tours of Downeast Institute and Three Islands Oyster Farm, and marine-focused educational presentations.

The SB/E team's advising and outreach extended into Machias, Lubec, Eastport, and Trescott Township. Team members also participated in the Washington Academy Career Fair alongside representatives from colleges, local organizations, and businesses. The team provided strategic and logistical support for the SCEC 2026 Housing Summit and the Destination DownEast Tourism Conference, including planning, setup coordination, panel facilitation, and breakout session management. Team members also participated in community outreach events, trainings, and resource-sharing opportunities throughout the county. MSBB continued to maintain office and coworking memberships and welcomed drop-in use of its facilities.

Partners in Entrepreneurial Pathways

Partners in Entrepreneurial Pathways is an accredited entrepreneurship education and business development initiative delivered by SCEC in partnership with Washington County Community College (WCCC).

The program is currently between sessions. The most recent cohort, Pathways 2.0: Beyond the Business Plan, ran from February 12 through April 23, 2026, offering 21 live-streamed workshops on topics ranging from branding and

e-commerce to financial health and business transitions. Outreach for the next cohort, Pathways 1.0: Venture Exploration, begins in August.

Since Fall 2020, Partners in Entrepreneurial Pathways has delivered 12 accredited cohorts and served 616 participants, including entrepreneurs, business owners, students, and business support professionals. The program has provided 378 hours of entrepreneurship instruction and developed an ecosystem of more than 30 public, private, nonprofit, and educational partners. Participants have joined from across the state, with 48% residing in Washington County and 52% from elsewhere in Maine and beyond. The program has also served 106 justice-involved participants, expanding access to entrepreneurship for populations historically underrepresented in business ownership.

Washington County Recovery Friendly Workplace Network

The Washington County Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW) Network supports workplaces in creating healthy, supportive workplace cultures while strengthening workforce participation and retention. The network currently includes 28 designated workplaces representing more than 1,500 employees across Washington County.

In June, the Network partnered with Downeast Restorative Justice to host a Restorative Practices training that brought together representatives from 12 employer and community partner organizations to learn practical strategies for strengthening workplace relationships, improving communication, and responding constructively to conflict.

APEX Accelerator

The APEX Counselor works with businesses in Washington County to sell their goods and services to local, state, and federal government agencies through government contracts. Government contracting can seem daunting, and the APEX Counselor helps businesses navigate the government purchasing process. Assistance is also available to help municipalities register on SAM.gov in order to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier.

The APEX Counselor and the SB/E team have participated in various outreach events throughout Washington County to meet businesses where they are located. Services include assistance with local contracting opportunities, marketing, understanding solicitations, one-on-one counseling, certifications and registrations, bid match services, bid and proposal assistance, and more.

In April, Maine APEX wrapped up its Fiscal Program Year 2025. During the year, Maine APEX clients located in Washington County were awarded more than \$19 million in federal contract opportunities.

In June, Maine APEX hosted the Northeast Regional Council Training and Matchmaker event in Portland, Maine. The event brought together representatives from government agencies, prime contractors, and small businesses from across New England and New York, with more than 250 attendees participating over the two-day event.

DownEast Acadia Regional Tourism (DART)

This spring, DownEast Acadia Regional Tourism (DART) secured renewal of its annual Maine Tourism Marketing Partnership Program (MTMPP) grant through the Maine Office of Tourism for Fiscal Year 2027, beginning July 1, 2026. The grant will support content development, four-season promotion, website optimization, inclusive marketing, and enhanced community outreach through in-field stakeholder engagement by the DART Grant Manager.

A major highlight of the quarter was the inaugural Destination DownEast Tourism Conference, hosted by DART on June 12, 2026, at the University of Maine at Machias (UMM). The event welcomed more than 100 attendees, received 102 pre-registrations, and received positive feedback from state, regional, and local participants.

The conference featured four panel discussions focused on seasonal hospitality in Downeast Maine, outdoor experiences that draw visitors, telling the Downeast story online, and leveraging economic resources for destination development. The day also included a keynote address by the DART Grant Manager, 15 panelists representing organizations from Maine and New Hampshire, four moderators, and support from six Washington County vendors.

First-year sponsorship was provided by the Greater East Grand Economic Council, The Crocker House Country Inn, and Down East Magazine. The conference was organized and supported by the SB/E team and DART's social media manager.

Early survey results indicate strong momentum for future conferences, with 97% of attendees planning to return for next year's conference, scheduled for June 10, 2027, at Woodlawn in Ellsworth.

Attendee feedback included:

"For the first year, I have to say that the organizers knocked it out of the park."

"Thank you for hosting the conference! It was very informative, and the networking opportunities were very beneficial."

Downeast Maine National Heritage Area

The Downeast Maine National Heritage Area steering committee attended a team retreat in Eastport in April. During the retreat, the planning team drafted a five-year work plan for implementation as part of the required Management Plan, based on the outcomes of the subcommittee planning process. The three subcommittees have continued meeting monthly with the National Park Service technical support team to develop action steps for three focus areas: interpretation, recreation, and engagement. New outreach materials were developed and distributed across the region, and National Heritage Area branding is also being developed.

In June, four public community conversations were held to provide residents and partners across the region with opportunities to learn more about the National Heritage Area program, Downeast Maine's designation, and management planning and program development to date. Participants also had the opportunity to comment on the proposed action items and share additional ideas. These conversations focused on community priorities for heritage preservation, and the input received will help guide implementation of the Downeast Maine National Heritage Area program.

The meetings were held in Sullivan, Calais, Ellsworth, and Machias. A total of 40 people attended, representing 30 organizations, including several businesses. Of those attending, at least 15 participated in a Downeast Maine National Heritage Area conversation for the first time.

More detailed information from these conversations will be posted to the website in July at DowneastMaineNHA.org. A comprehensive collection of information about the Downeast Maine National Heritage Area and the planning process is currently available on the website. Draft chapters of the Management Plan will begin to be posted in late July.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Upper Machias Bay Master Plan

The Upper Machias Bay Master Plan was completed this quarter following 18 months of collaborative work. The final report, available on the project website and in print upon request, includes summaries of the Leadership Committee's deliberations, public input, 39 consensus recommendations, and one non-consensus recommendation.

The recommendations address:

- Community engagement
- Stormwater infrastructure and management
- Wastewater infrastructure and management
- Support for individual property and business owners
- Large-scale solutions to tidewater flooding
- Emergency management and planning
- The capped Machias landfill
- The dike replacement project

On May 4, an event was held at the University of Maine at Machias to present and discuss the plan with area leaders, legislators, and state and federal officials. The next phase of the project will focus on supporting communities as they plan for and seek resources to implement the recommendations.

Working Waterfront

This quarter, SCEC conducted a statewide survey of working waterfront owners, users (e.g., harvesters, aquaculturists, and others), and fisheries cooperatives to better understand concerns, needs, and priorities for the future of Maine's working waterfront.

Approximately half of the respondents expressed concern or uncertainty about the future of the working waterfront access and infrastructure they depend on. The survey found that private wharves and piers are critical to the Downeast region's seafood economy, but many private operators are struggling to remain viable because of rising costs, declining numbers of lobster harvesters, and challenges associated with repairing and maintaining infrastructure, particularly following the 2024 storms.

Survey respondents also identified a variety of ways SCEC and its partners can help secure long-term access to working waterfronts and sustain critical infrastructure. The survey results are already helping guide future efforts to support working waterfronts across the region.

The Future of Our Fishing Communities

Washington County's fishing industry and fishing-dependent communities continue to face a wide range of challenges, and a new round of rulemaking will begin this fall to consider additional regulations to protect the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale.

This quarter, the Sustainable Prosperity team began conducting community conversations with fishing-dependent communities in Washington County with support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Discussions focused on the challenges these communities and businesses are facing, their hopes and concerns regarding proposed whale regulations, and the support they need as they navigate change. During the quarter, conversations were held in Steuben, Machias, and Jonesport, with additional sessions planned in Milbridge, Eastport, and Sipayik.

Participants generally understood the need for whale conservation but expressed concern about how regulations are developed and implemented. They viewed proposed whale regulations not as an isolated issue, but as an additional burden layered onto existing challenges, including profitability, workforce recruitment, housing, waterfront access, infrastructure, community resilience, and the long-term sustainability of coastal economies.

Participants also expressed skepticism about ropeless, or on-demand, lobster gear. Across all three conversations, recurring themes included economic viability, practicality, trust in the regulatory process, and the need for better science. Participants consistently favored management approaches based on current data, targeted protections, and meaningful consideration of community and economic impacts alongside conservation objectives.

Downeast Fisheries Partnership (DFP)

Partners met in person for the quarterly Downeast Fisheries Partnership (DFP) meeting to review collaborative progress and identify additional opportunities to support sea-run fish restoration, fisheries diversification, and workforce development.

The Partnership continues to make progress on the Downeast Trail Revitalization Project. With Phase I trail sign evaluations complete, partners are now focused on Phase II, collecting updated content and images to redesign signs along the trail.

Energy Technology Innovation Partnership Project (ETIPP)

SCEC staff partnered with the College of the Atlantic last quarter to develop fact sheets for the Energy Technology Innovation Partnership Project (ETIPP), which SCEC coordinates. ETIPP focuses on the community impacts of energy issues and, in partnership with Versant Power, is helping empower residents and municipal leaders to better understand and participate in efforts to reduce the number and duration of power outages while increasing public safety and disaster preparedness.

SCEC worked with College of the Atlantic students to develop fact sheets that communicate safety and preparedness information to three audiences: youth, adult community members, and municipal leaders. During May and June, the fact sheets were professionally finalized and prepared for print. They will be distributed throughout Washington County at public and municipal buildings and community events.

SCEC staff will also share the information with municipal officials and public works crews to help communities identify actions they can take to increase electrical system reliability and safety. This outreach complements Versant Power's stakeholder engagement efforts by providing educational materials and creating opportunities for two-way communication about local energy priorities. Additional meetings with public works departments, road commissioners, and other agencies are also planned.

Loans & Grants

The second quarter reflected continued momentum within SCEC's loan program, with strong borrower interest and a growing pipeline of financing opportunities across Washington County. During the quarter, the program closed a \$10,000 loan to support inventory purchases for a new marine supply business, strengthening access to essential goods and services for the local working waterfront. Staff also worked closely with an existing fisherman borrower to modify loan terms, establishing a more sustainable repayment structure that supports the long-term success of both the borrower and the loan portfolio.

The Loan Committee approved three additional loans totaling \$417,439 during the quarter, all of which are scheduled to close in the third quarter. These investments include financing to support commercial fishing vessel ownership for a local sternman, equipment purchases to enhance hatchery operations, and, through the Washington County UTTIF Loan Program, a solar energy project for a nonprofit organization in Trescott.

Interest in small business financing remained strong throughout the quarter, with prospective borrowers seeking capital for business start-ups, expansions, equipment purchases, and working capital needs. Program staff continued to provide individualized technical assistance, helping applicants evaluate financing options and partner with other lending agencies to make projects financially feasible.

Beyond direct lending activities, staff continued strengthening internal loan program operations through portfolio management and preparation for an active third quarter of loan closings. With several significant projects advancing toward funding and continued demand for flexible capital, the loan program remains well positioned to support economic opportunity and business resilience throughout the region, only limited by the availability of funds for parts of the county outside the UT.

Broadband

Contracts for broadband infrastructure upgrades have been finalized under the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. As implementation begins, Washington County will see increased roadside activity as internet service providers install new fiber and related infrastructure to expand high-speed broadband access across the region.

Housing

On May 21, Sunrise County Economic Council (SCEC) hosted Washington County's inaugural Regional Housing Summit at the University of Maine at Machias (UMM). The event brought together attendees from across the state to discuss critical housing challenges. Topics included workforce housing, hidden homelessness, barriers to housing turnover, village center development, the impact of short-term rentals, supportive housing, and developer financing strategies.

Through the Maine Housing Opportunities Program, SCEC researched potential housing development opportunities in nine communities: Milbridge, Machias, Jonesport, Lubec, East Machias, Baileyville, Danforth, Calais, and Eastport. The initiative gathered critical data on local infrastructure and properties, including water and wastewater lines, vacant or dilapidated housing near public services, probate-encumbered properties, tax-acquired properties, and known short-term rentals. To support future housing development, SCEC designed a developer dashboard that will launch on its website (sunrisecounty.org/housing) in the third quarter.

Municipal Assistance & Outreach

SCEC continued comprehensive planning work with Cutler as the town moves toward state review, and continued assisting three additional communities with comprehensive plan updates, including chapter development, data collection, mapping, and committee support.

During the quarter, SCEC distributed seven editions of *Municipal Matters* (formerly *News for Communities*) to every municipal office and other subscribers throughout Washington County. The publication shares training opportunities, grant announcements, technical assistance, and other resources to support local governments. Anyone is welcome to sign up to receive these emails.

SCEC continues to provide staffing and fiscal services to the Washington County Council of Governments Board. The Maine Planning Assistance Program (MPAP) subcontract through the Hancock County Planning Commission continues with funding from both the general MPAP program and coastal funding through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Staff continued participating in regional and statewide organizations that support municipalities, including the Moving Maine Network, Calais Branch Rail Use Advisory Council, Maine Community Development Association, Maine Association of Regional Councils, Municipal Planning Assistance Program, Maine Association of Planners, and Maine Municipal Association.

With assistance from its Brownfields Committee, SCEC continues working with its Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) to update the inventory of potential brownfield sites in Washington County. During the quarter, SCEC submitted the Site-Specific Quality Assurance Project Plan (SSQAPP) for the Princeton Recreation Center, completed Phase II site visits and Hazardous Building Material Surveys for Jonesport and Princeton, and completed Phase I and II assessments for three municipally owned sites in Danforth. A Cherryfield site has advanced to reuse planning, beginning with a septic evaluation to determine needed improvements. SCEC's Brownfields Assessment Program will also assist with a dredge project in Eastport in collaboration with the Eastport Port Authority, the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT), and MDOT's contractor, Stantec.

SCEC also continues assisting municipalities in securing funding and implementing projects supported through a variety of grant programs. Current projects include the Whiting Mill Pond Dam and Fish Passage Project, Jonesport Working Waterfront, Beals Town Landing, Machias recreation area and trails, Calais trails and riverfront walkway, Pembroke Fire Department, and the Dennysville recreation area.

Rural Energy for America Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) remains on hold while the agency awaits updated program guidance.

Community Resilience Partnership

CRP Regional Coordinator

The Community Resilience Partnership (CRP) Regional Coordinator continues to support the 21 Washington County communities enrolled in the Community Resilience Partnership. Grant requests submitted through the program this quarter totaled more than \$1.1 million. These projects focus on expanding and protecting working waterfronts from

stronger storm events and sea level rise, improving stormwater management, financing municipal solar projects, and protecting bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

The coordinator is also developing an Erosion Control Workshop, a Live Staking Workshop, and Nature-based Bluff Management training in partnership with state agencies and nonprofit organizations for delivery this autumn.

In addition, the coordinator is working with private and nonprofit partners to develop a cold storage and aggregation node to support local food producers.

CRP Service Provider

SCEC completed its Fall 2024 Track One Service Provider grant by submitting a Community Action Grant (CAG) for East Machias and assisting with an Assistance to Firefighters Grant application for Pembroke.

SCEC continues work on the 2024 Track Two Service Provider grant, supporting community vulnerability assessments for five communities: Machias, Machiasport, Roque Bluffs, Cutler, and East Machias. The assessments are complete, and staff will assist each community with submitting a Community Action Grant (CAG) to support resilience projects.

CDBG/NBRC Technical Assistance

Staff assisted with the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) Catalyst spring application for the City of Calais, which was awarded \$590,580 for the *Calais Waterfront Walkway – Community Recreation Hub* project.

SCEC continues to provide Local Development District (LDD) services, including Catalyst program technical assistance, to Beth Wright Cancer Center, Cherryfield Town Square, GrowSmart Maine, Island Institute, the Town of Beals, Danforth Water District, and the Town of Jonesport.

Maine DOT Regional Planning Services

During April, May, and June 2026, SCEC staff provided regional planning services to Washington County communities. Staff assisted the Eastport Port Authority with a Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) application and continued supporting the City of Calais with a Village Partnership Improvement project and planning for the extension of the Downeast Sunrise Trail.

SCEC also continued assisting the City of Calais with development of the Calais Waterfront Walkway as a gateway to the Bold Coast National Scenic Byway. Staff also continued assisting the Town of Cherryfield with development of the Cherryfield Riverwalk as a gateway to the Bold Coast National Scenic Byway and Blackwoods Scenic Byway. The project received a \$10,000 grant from the Maine Community Foundation to complete Phase II.

Planning also began with the towns of Roque Bluffs and Cherryfield, in partnership with the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), to develop demonstration projects through MaineDOT's Village Improvement Partnership and Active Transportation Partnership programs. Staff also continued comprehensive planning work with the towns of Roque Bluffs and Machias.

ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVES

SCEC undertakes its work in collaboration with the following active partners: Aroostook Mental Health Center, Coastal Enterprises Inc, College of the Atlantic, Community Action in Aroostook, Washington and Hancock Counties, Cooperative Development Institute, Community Caring Collaborative, C.O.R.E, DownEast Acadia Regional Tourism, Downeast Institute, Downeast Public Health Council, Downeast Salmon Federation, Eastern Maine Development Corporation, Eastern Maine Electric Cooperative, Greater East Grand Economic Council, GrowSmart Maine, Healthy Acadia, Hancock County Planning Commission, Island Institute, Machias Savings Bank, Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Maine Community Foundation, Maine Development Foundation, Maine Office of Community Development, Maine APEX, Maine Seacoast Mission, Maine Sea Grant, Maine Small Business Development Center, Mano en Mano, Manomet, National Digital Equity Center, Northeastern Workforce Development Board, Northern Border Regional Commission, Northern Maine Development Commission, Northern Forest Center, State of Maine, University of Maine at Machias, Wabanaki Aspirations, Washington County Adult and Community Education, Washington County Community College, Washington County Development Authority, and Washington County Government.

The activities in this report are a broad representation of economic development services provided by SCEC on the County's behalf over the past quarter. It is not representative of all ongoing projects, programs, and initiatives previously reported on. This report does not include confidential and/or proprietary information related to work with specific businesses or development projects. SCEC is available to discuss specifics in Executive Session at the discretion of the County Commissioners.

Respectfully submitted by:



Charles J. Rudelitch, Esq.
Executive Director

Davidson Law Office, L.L.C.

JEFFREY W. DAVIDSON
Admitted in LA and ME

Attorneys at Law
86 Court Street
Machias, Maine 04654
(207) 259-3411

CYNTHIA DAVIDSON
Admitted in LA, of counsel

July 9, 2026

County of Washington
ATTN: Washington County Commissioners
85 Court Street
Machias, Maine 04654

Re: Termination of Renee Gray

Dear Sirs:

Please be advised that my office is representing Renee Gray in the above captioned matter. I have reviewed the Termination Notice you gave to Ms. Gray after the July 2, 2026 public meeting, along with her contract and personnel file. It appears that the County of Washington has violated Ms. Gray's legal rights in numerous ways. I write to ask you to correct these errors by Friday, July 10, 2026. If you do not do so, Renee has instructed me to file suit against the County of Washington and against Commissioner Burns and Commissioner Howard in their individual and public capacities. I am still reviewing whether or not Dennis Mahar will also be named in any suit which will be filed if we do not get a timely response.

My understanding is that on June 24, 2026 Commissioner Burns asked Administrative Assistant Carla Manchester to schedule a Special Commissioner's meeting for an executive session to discuss personnel matters with a possible vote afterwards for July 2, 2026. At that Special Commissioner's meeting the only persons who attended were the three Commissioners, Ms. Gray and three members of the public, one of which was attorney Dennis Mahar. It appears from his public comments to the Machias Valley News that Commissioner Hammond had no idea why the meeting had been called or what was to be discussed in the executive session. It also appears from his public comments that Commissioner Hammond had no idea why attorney Dennis Mahar was attending the meeting. I have verified that at no time prior to the meeting did the Commissioners vote on the public record to retain attorney Mahar, nor was there ever a vote to expend public funds on retaining counsel for this meeting. Without such a vote, attorney Mahar could not have legally served as counsel for the County of Washington.

Since there is no public record of a vote to retain or consult with attorney Mahar, it is clear that one or more of the Commissioners spoke to him about Ms. Gray's employment status and contract in violation of public meetings laws. There is also no publically available record of the discussion held between either Commissioner Burns and attorney Mahar and/or Commissioner Howard and attorney Mahar outside of the confines of a public meeting as required by law. The public meeting laws exist to provide full transparency about how governmental officials act on behalf of the their constituents and it is apparent that the secret meeting or meetings with attorney

Mahar prior to the date of the public meeting on July 2, 2026 were designed to conceal the events that Commissioners Burns and Howard had orchestrated to terminate Ms. Gray. These acts may constitute civil or criminal offenses and I have advised MS. Gray to forward complaints to the appropriate agency for a full investigation.

I understand that Commissioner Burns moved for the executive session, which was seconded by Commissioner Howard. All persons were then asked to leave the room with the exception of the three Commissioners and attorney Mahar. It is clear that attorney Mahar was given access to Ms. Gray's private employee files, which he knew or should have known was done in violation of the law as there had been no public vote to consult or retain him as counsel for Washington County. Since the County Commissioners intended to discuss Ms. Gray's employment status, it is also clear that Title 13, Section 405 was violated, which requires that any person charged or investigated must be permitted to be present at an executive session if that person so desires and that any person charged or investigated may request in writing that the investigation or hearing of charges or complaints against that person be conducted in open session. At that point in time, Ms Gray still did not know she was the subject of the executive session.

After the Commissioners had conducted unlawful discussions with attorney Mahar about Ms. Gray's employment, he went to her office and invited her to join the meeting. In the executive session she was asked to resign, but given no reason for the request. She demanded to know the cause for the request and demanded to know why she had never received a performance review before being asked to resign. As you are aware, Ms. Gray's contract states that the County Commissioners are required to conduct annual performance reviews for the purpose of defining goals and performance objectives for the proper operation of the County government. Washington County has never complied with this provision of the employment contract and no performance evaluations exists in her personnel file. In fact, her personnel file has no negative performance evaluation, negative records or complaints in it at all. Every document contained therein pertains to her income (which has been increased yearly), her training certificates and the exceptional work she has performed for the County of Washington. No Commissioner gave Ms. Gray any reason which would amount to a legal cause for her termination in the executive session.

After the executive session, Commissioner Burns and Commissioner Howard voted to terminate Ms. Gray's employment and she was provided with a one sentence Termination Letter, which also did not state any legal cause for her termination, and which provided for her termination after a 20 day period. Nothing in Ms. Gray's employment contract states that existing state and federal laws do not apply to her employment. As you must be aware since you illegally sought the advice of counsel, Title 30-A, section 82 states that "The county commissioners may, for cause, remove or suspend the county administrator in accordance with the procedure for removing or suspending a town manager under section 2633." (Emphasis added.) You should also be aware that United States District Court in Maine has a reported case where they addressed Title 30-A, section 2633 and held that the need for cause, notice and public hearing cannot be waived by contract because that would allow Commissioners to proceed with impunity in its relationship with the County Manager, not having to reckon with controversy and public attention that may come to light under the cause, notice and hearing provisions. That court concluded that "the statutes and ordinance requiring cause, notice and hearing for termination reflect an important public policy in the

transparent administration and management of town affairs, and that it is not outweighed by the parties interest in freedom of contract.” To date, no cause has been given for the pending termination of Ms. Gray, proper notice has not been given and the opportunity for conducting a hearing have been denied, thus her pending termination is not legal.

You must also be aware that the procedure outlined for termination in Title 30-A, section 2633 states clearly that Ms. Gray could only be terminated for cause after the Commissioners first prepare and file a preliminary resolution with the County Clerk “stating the specific reasons for the proposed removal.” That notice must also be served upon Ms. Gray within 10 days of its filing. Thereafter, within 20 days of receiving the resolution, Ms. Gray must be afforded the opportunity to request a public hearing, which she intends to do if the County of Washington ever does comply with state law. That public hearing must be held no sooner than 10 days and no longer than 30 days after it is demanded. Commissioner Burns and Commissioner Howard both violated state law by attempting to terminate Ms. Gray without providing her with the process she must be afforded. They did so in an attempt to prevent her from having a public hearing, as the purported termination was not based on cause, and because they are aware that at such public hearing Ms. Gray will be afforded an opportunity to explain to the public the reasons why these two Commissioners are attempting to silence her.

Those reasons include her knowledge of the utter mismanagement of county government, including several civil and/or criminal violations which have occurred over the past 16 months by Commissioner Burns and Commissioner Howard. Those acts include numerous public hearing and records violations, financial mismanagement, sexually discriminatory and derogatory language directed towards her and other females in county government, such as being called the “girls” numerous times on the public record and being told that she should “not put away her waitressing skills,” and being threatened by Commissioner Burns on May 28, 2026, who told her while pointing his finger at her that she would do what he told her to do or that he would find someone else who would. She believes that this threat was made to intimidate, harass and silence her and that the attempt by two Commissioners to deny her right to a public hearing by violating state law in the termination process verifies that Commissioner Burns carried through on his threat. Ms. Gray also believes that the County of Washington is attempting to silence her because of her ongoing cooperation with the Attorney General’s Office to investigate the numerous potential financial crimes which have been the subject of so much of the current Commissioners tenure. As such she claims whistle-blower status and asserts that the issuance of her termination notice is retaliatory and not for cause.

The County of Washington has demonstrably violated Ms. Gray’s substantive and procedural due process rights under both the State and Federal Constitutions. She has already suffered reputational damage and severe emotional distress due to the illegal and intentional actions of Commissioner Burns and Commissioner Howard acting in both their personal and official capacities. She demands that the County of Washington, through its Commissioners, rescind the illegal Termination Notice issued on July 2, 2026 and that they follow state law if they intend to further pursue her termination. If no written response to this demand is received by July 10, 2026, I have been instructed by Ms. Gray to pursue any and all of her legal rights in court. Thanking you in advance for your courtesies, I am,

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey W. Davidson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jeffrey W. Davidson