

June 8, 2023

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Unorganized Territories Regular Meeting
held June 8, 2023
in the Washington County Probate Courtroom
Machias, Maine**

**Attending the meeting were:
Commissioner Christopher Gardner
Commissioner John Crowley, Sr.
Commissioner Vinton Cassidy
Betsy Fitzgerald, County Manager
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant
Susan Hatton, SCEC
Crystal Hallowell, Edmunds Twp.
Merrill Hallowell, Edmunds Twp.
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO
Rich Rolfe, WCSO, Jail Administrator
Barry Curtis, Sheriff
Michael Crabtree, Chief Deputy
Josh Rolfe, WCSO, RCC
Susan Sullivan, District Attorney's Office
Tammy C. Gay, Deeds
Heather Green, Deeds
Lynn Dwelley, District Attorney's Office
Nicole Nygren, Downeast Lakes Land Trust
Dean Preston, U.T. Supervisor
Jill C. Holmes, Finance
Megan Huffman, Finance
Christopher Simpson, F.O.P.
Renée Gray, Addison
Sonnie Shepherd, Star 97.7 News, Ellsworth
Darlene Perry, Probate**

The meeting was called to order at 4 p.m. Commissioner Gardner noted interviews were conducted for the County Manager position prior to the 4 p.m. business.

**Approval of the U.T. regular meeting minutes of May 11, 2023
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Monthly Report

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

June 8, 2023

50

Dean reported he met with the auditor to provide details on Budget Year 2018-2019.

Dean stated he has received an application for the ACO position. Interviews will be scheduled, and results from the interview will be available for the July Commissioners' Meeting.

Dean reported on the 2023 conservation program. He stated the U.T. had pre-ordered 100,000 seed clams, but due to a failed delivery to DEI only 50,000 seed clams will be received in June.

Dean listed on-going Summer Highway Maintenance projects:

- Roadway Improvements on the Marion Station Road in Marion Twp.
- Roadway Improvements on the 19 & T19 ED Roads in Berry Twp.
- Paving operations on Big Lake Road in Big Lake Twp.

Dean stated organizational meetings are to begin for the Mill Stream Bridge Project in Centerville Twp.

Dean reported that he met with Carrie Castonguay of MDOT to review and confirm the roadway mileage, status and ownership of local roads.

Dean stated he has requested assistance regarding an abandoned bridge on Hobart Road in Edmunds Twp. Dean is researching who is responsible for the deconstruction of the structure.

Dean stated he is actively working with Marion Transfer Station to determine a new rate for solid waste.

Dean reported U.T. partnered with the Dennysville Snowmobile & ATV Club to submit the "Municipal ATV Grant Application - Municipal/County Grant-in-Aid Program 2023". Their request was successful and they will be receiving \$70,000 for work on trails. Commissioner Gardner asked how the funds will be handled, noting his concern comes from a previous situation that happened with Healthy Acadia. Dean noted the U.T. is not the fiscal agent. Dean stated he and the Treasurer have checked on the process; funds will pass through the U.T. and the Treasurers' Office. Treasurer Jill Holmes stated this is not the same situation as it was for Healthy Acadia.

Commissioner Gardner stated he wanted Dean to be aware of the State Police coverage issue in rural Maine. Commissioner Gardner stated this issue will certainly impact U.T. rural areas. It was noted the

June 8, 2023

51

U.T. is the largest municipality in Washington County, and the largest taxpayer in the County, representing 1800 people. Commissioner Gardner encouraged Dean to start asking the State questions regarding this issue. Commissioner Gardner noted State Police Coverage for Washington County ends July 9th.

Dean presented a Fire Protection Agreement for the Commissioners approval. The agreement is to provide fire protection and emergency medical services for Kossuth Twp. by Springfield Volunteer Fire Department. The agreement is a three-year term with an annual compensation of \$4,600.00.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to approve the Fire Protection Agreement for fire protection and emergency medical services for Kossuth Twp. as presented. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0.)**

AGENDA ITEM: TIF Grant Committee Update

A report was submitted and is attached.

Ms. Hatton presented a County Match Grant request in the amount of \$50,000.00 from Downeast Lakes Land Trust. Ms. Hatton explained DLLT is seeking funds to acquire the 17.6-acre parcel of land at the southern end of Lower Sysladobsis Lake. Commissioner Gardner asked if public access will be maintained. Ms. Hatton responded public access to the property will continue. The long-term goal of this project will be to protect the beach, wetlands, and uplands from subdivision and private development. Ms. Hatton noted the DLLT pays taxes on all land. Commissioner Gardner asked if DLLT would continue to pay taxes on the land being acquired. Acting Executive Director Nicole Nygren stated, although DLLT is a non-profit organization and is not required to pay property taxes, DLLT still does. Commissioner Gardner stated he would like the assurance that DLLT pay property taxes in perpetuity. Commissioner Cassidy agreed that DLLT should continue paying property taxes. Ms. Hatton stated the continuation of paying property taxes will be included in the agreement.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to approve the Grant request, Grant # 2305-01-CM, for Downeast Lakes Land Trust in the amount of \$50,000.00 as presented. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0.)**

June 8, 2023

52

Ms. Hatton presented a Revolving Loan Fund request from Kevin Farmer and Lorene Garvin, D.B.A. Trescott Tractor Service, LLC. The loan request is for \$50,000.00 to purchase a 2003 Mack dump truck to expand their business. Collateral for the loan is 1st security interest in the dump truck with a valuation of \$40,875.00. Commissioner Gardner questioned the sufficiency of the collateral. Ms. Hatton explained the Loan Committee recommended the approval of the loan even though the valuation for the collateral is less than the loan because of extenuating circumstance. Ms. Hatton stated Mr. Farmer and Ms. Garvin have good credit. Ms. Hatton further explained both Mr. Farmer and Ms. Garvin have other sources of income should they need to pay payments without income from the business. Commissioner Gardner stated circumstance change; that is why sufficient collateral is normally needed. Commissioner Gardner noted this would set an unusual precedence. For that reason, Commissioner Gardner stated he would not approve the loan.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to approve the Loan request, Loan # TTS-TIF-05-22-23, for Kevin Farmer and Lorene Garvin, DBA Trescott Tractor Service LLC, in the amount of \$50,000.00 as presented. (Crowley / Cassidy, 2-1.)**

Ms. Hatton presented a Revolving Loan request in the amount of \$223,000.00 for Merrill and Crystal Hallowell, DBA Hallowell Construction. The purpose of the funds is to purchase real estate, a loader and screen. Ms. Hatton stated the Hallowells have a successful business. The land they would like to purchase is a 150-acre property located in Edmunds that has a large gravel deposit. The land is also heavily wooded with marketable wood. The collateral is 1st interest in an excavator, aggregate screen, caterpillar loader and the real estate in Edmunds with a total valuation of \$271,313.00. Commissioner Gardner noted there is plenty of value in the collateral.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to approve the revolving loan request, Loan # MH-TIF-05-19-23, for Merrill and Crystal Hallowell, DBA Hallowell Construction, in the amount of \$223,000.00 as presented. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0.)**

Ms. Hatton presented an initial rough cost estimate by Eastern Maine Electric Cooperative, Inc. to extend single phase power along Route 9 from approximately the Tug Mountain Site to the Downeast Maine's

June 8, 2023

Wilderness Lodge. The total estimate is for \$301,505.00 for this project that covers approximately three miles. Commissioner Gardner asked if Eastern Maine Electric Cooperative would be interested in bearing some of the cost of this project. Ms. Hatton responded she was not sure but would ask.

53

Commissioner Gardner stated the Board of Commissioners are interested in supporting this project. Commissioner Gardner noted it is of public interest to extend the power line. He also pointed out that there are private owners that may have some interest and would want to take ownership in this project. Commissioner Gardner asked Treasurer Jill Holmes what funds are available. Treasurer Jill Holmes responded there is a total \$1.4 million in the TIF account. Commissioner Gardner stated he would like to have further discussion on this project at the next Commissioners' meeting.

Ms. Hatton noted Grand Lake Snowmobile Club has paid off their loan early.

AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment

None.

ADJOURNMENT

4:26 p.m.

ATTEST:

Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.

June 8, 2023

54