

March 9, 2023

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Unorganized Territories Regular Meeting
Held March 9, 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
Jill C. Holes, Treasurer
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO
Susan Hatton, SCEC
Dean Preston, U.T. Supervisor
Michael Crabtree, WCSO
Joshua Rolfe, RCC
Dennis Dorsey, WCSO
Rich Rolfe, Jail Administrator
Curtis Robinson, Port City Architecture
Lita Semrau, Port City Architecture
John Turk, Port City Architecture
Lisa M. Hanscom, EMA**

The meeting was called to order at 2 p.m.

The first order of business was a presentation from Port City Architecture. Commissioner Gardner stated the purpose of this presentation was to discuss the cost comparisons for three different options for the location of the proposed Safety Building. Lita Semrau of Port City Architecture provided a building cost comparison (see attached). The total project costs for each option are:

- Original Design at RCC building \$5,306,500.
- RCC building with full basement with fitness and evidence space \$5,612,700
- District Attorney site with full basement and Fitness and evidence \$5,799,700

With a prior request by Commissioner Cassidy at the last Commissioners' meeting, Port City Architecture drew up floor plans with an estimated cost for construction at the current D.A. Office site. The floor plans were sent in advance of this meeting.

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Commissioner Gardner asked if the Sheriff was comfortable with the layout for the building at the D.A. Office site. Chief Deputy Crabtree stated it was the Building Committees' understanding the floor plans for the Safety Building would be the same for site 1 or site 2. Commissioner Gardner noted there is a \$500,000.00 additional cost to put the Safety Building at the D.A. Office site. The additional cost for the D.A. Office site is the cost of demo to the existing building and additional site work for 25 parking spaces. Josh Rolfe stated it would still be cheaper to build at the D.A. Office site because there was a plan to tear down the D.A. office as well as construct the building at Center Street. Commissioner Gardner acknowledged the Board of Commissioners had discussed keeping the property, disposing of the building and using the space for more parking. Chief Crabtree stated on behalf of the Building Committee it is their opinion the figures to build at the D.A. Office site are not accurate. Chief Crabtree noted that it would seem there was more of a chance of extra expenses to tear down the building attached to RCC on Center Street and build on, then it would to build a new construction on a separate site. Commissioner Cassidy pointed out there may be more possibilities of problems adding on to the existing building on Center Street such as issues with electricity and sewer. Commissioner Cassidy stated a new site would not have these types of challenges. Commissioner Gardner stated that Center Street is a better site considering the possibility of the need to expand at some point in the future. Commissioner Cassidy stated he has looked at both options and still feels that building a separate structure at the D.A. Office site is his choice. Commissioner Gardner repeated his opinion stating the best option is to build onto RCC on Center Street. Commissioner Gardner stated this option is the highest and best use of the property. Parking space concerns were also discussed. Commissioner Gardner concluded there is going to be an issue with parking no matter what. Paula Johnson-Rolfe noted having the building on Court Street is a good safety feature. It keeps both departments separate should an emergency occur; RCC could be set-up as the evacuation site and emergency operations.

Dennis Dorsey asked what the timeframe would be for Plan One vs Plan Two. Ms. Semrau responded that the timeframe would be approximately 16 months for either location.

Drainage issues were discussed for both locations. Ms. Semrau stated special drain catch basins will be in the plan but have not been addressed yet.

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Commissioner Gardner asked how much is still in the ARPA fund for this project. Treasurer Jill Holmes stated there is \$5,548,550.00 still available. Commissioner Gardner noted the two new designs would put the County overbudget. The original design at Center Street is the only design that fits within the available funds. Ms. Semrau pointed out the proposed costs are based on worst case scenarios. The relocation of office spaces was discussed. Josh Rolfe noted that there is no more space available at Center Street. Josh stated there is limited space for parking, and there will be more parking space lost when the Talbot building is utilized as office space.

After further discussion with differing opinions of the right location for the building, Commissioner Gardner asked that a motion be made.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to approve the proposal to build the Safety Building on Court Street at the current D.A. Office location with a total project cost of \$5,799,700.00. (Cassidy / Crowley, 2-1.)**

Commissioner Cassidy stated he appreciated all the hard work that has gone into this project. Commissioner Crowley acknowledged that building the Safety Building on Court Street makes more sense. Commissioner Gardner stated he disagrees. Commissioner Gardner made it clear he believes the decision to build on Court Street is a vast mistake.

Commissioner Cassidy stated the County will now need to have some concrete figures. Ms. Semrau stated Port City Architecture will need some more guidance. Ms. Semrau suggested square footage will have to be cut on the building design for Center Street in order to stay within the available funding. Josh Rolfe stated the square footage should not be changed. Josh suggested leaving the basement unfinished to save on cost. Ms. Semrau stated the County will not stay within the budget without cutting square footage. Commissioner Gardner asked the Board to decide to go forward with the project as stated, request the RFP's and then find places to cut costs; or go with the recommendation of Port City Architecture to cut the square footage of the overall building. Commissioner Cassidy stated his decision is to move forward with the project as proposed. It was suggested costs could be decreased by cutting mechanical and the furnishings. Ms. Semrau stated there will not be enough savings in cutting mechanical and furnishings; square footage will need to be cut. Ms. Semrau noted that if the project goes out to bid as is then square footage is

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needing to be cut, a new design will be needed. With the recommendation of Ms. Semrau,

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to cut the square footage of the approved proposed Safety Building to bring cost back in line. (Crowley / Cassidy, 2-0-1.)**

Ms. Semrau stated that anytime changes are needed it costs money. Ms. Semrau acknowledged that PCA will proceed with the footprint that meets the budget. Commissioner Gardner asked Ms. Semrau if there was sufficient direction for PCA to move forward. Ms. Semrau replied she has the information needed for PCA to move forward.

The business of the Unorganized Territories proceeded at 3:15 p.m.

Approval of the U.T. regular meeting minutes of February 16, 2023 (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0-1)

AGENDA ITEM: Monthly Report

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

Dean highlighted several items from his report.

- Dean reported that U.T. is partnering with DOE to build an outdoor learning classroom at Edmunds Consolidated School. One of the challenges for DOE has been with funding. DOE needs to link with the Treasurer for the State of Maine to accomplish encumbering \$58,000.00 that will come from the state by 6/30/23.
- Dean gave an update on the Mill Stream Bridge Project in Centerville Twp. Dean stated Chester Kolota of Maine DOT has informed him that the cost share bridge replacement project is in the Work Plan. The agreement between MDOT and the Washington County Territories has been signed, and Dean has started working with project managers to design, advertise, schedule and build.
- Dean stated the assessment and evaluation of the conditions of County roads in all townships and territories has been completed. A priorities list has been completed and will be published in May.

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Commissioner Gardner asked Dean about information he has seen in a newspaper article that the Town of Dennysville is considering de-organizing. Dean responded that the Town of Dennysville has spoken with him about de-organizing. Dean stated Lisa Whynot will need to be involved, but he has not been in contact with her yet. There are some road concerns that will need to be brought to a certain standard before the U.T. will accept their roads. Codyville had a population of 8 people and not enough interest in running the town when they de-organized. Dean reported Dennysville has a population of 380 people. However, Dennysville is in the same situation as Codyville was at the time of de-organization. Dennysville has no interest in running their town.

AGENDA ITEM: TIF Grant Committee Update

A report was submitted and is attached.

Ms. Hatton stated there are no action items.

Ms. Hatton gave an updated on Eastern Maine Electric Co-op project. Ms. Hatton stated Scott Hallowell of EMEC will have figures by the April meeting regarding the possibility of running additional electrical lines along Route 9. Commissioner Gardner stated it was a good decision by the Board of Commissioners to support this project, and stated he will be interested to know what a couple more miles of build will cost. Ms. Hatton reported on an additional update from Wireless Partners. Overall, the project encompassed adding 14 new sites to the ATT/FirstNet network in Washington County. To date there are six sites on air, four to go live by mid-March, and the remaining four sites to be finalized in May.

AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment

None.

ADJOURNMENT

3:25 p.m.

ATTEST:

Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.