

May 22, 2025

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Unorganized Territories Regular Meeting
Held May 22, 2025
in the Washington County Probate Courtroom
Machias, Maine**

Attending the meeting were:
Commissioner David C. Burns
Commissioner Courtney Hammond
Commissioner Billy Howard
Renée Gray, County Manager
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant
Rachel Worcester, D.A.'s Office
Robert Granger, District Attorney
Toff Toffolon, Assistant District Attorney
Paige Bebus, Assistant District Attorney
Paul Sylvain, MVNO, Machias
Susan Hatton, SCEC
Bayley Grant, Centerville Twp.
Tim Tabbutt, WCSO
Ralph Pineo, WCSO
Christopher Thornton, MDEA
Brandon Parker, WCSO
Chris Myers, MDEA
Ryan Allen, WCSO
Anna Strout, WCSO
Taylor LeBlanc, WCSO
Tyler Dunbar, WCSO
Tammy Gay, Deeds
Heather Green, Deeds
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO
Josuha, Rolfe, RCC/WCSO
Regina Grabrovac, Healthy Acadia
Jasmine J. Haines, Healthy Acadia
Chris Gardner, Edmunds
Eric McLaughlin, WCSO
Betsy Fitzgerald, Machiasport, CEO, LUPC
Darlene Perry, Probate
Susan Sullivan, D.A. Office

Commissioner Burns called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

Prior to the regular U.T. meeting, the Commissioners held two

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executive sessions beginning at 2:30 p.m.

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Executive Department Business (see Regular Commissioners' Meeting minutes)

AGENDA ITEM: Executive Sessions

- Pursuant to Title 1 MRSA § 405-A 6 A (3)
- Pursuant to Title 1 MRSA § 405 (6) (A)

AGENDA ITEM: MDEA Supervisory Agent - Christopher Thornton

The regular U.T. business meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. Commissioner Burns introduced the newest Commissioner appointed to the board, Courtney Hammond. Commissioner Hammond was appointed by Governor Mills on May 1, 2025 to complete the remainder of the term for District III ending December 31, 2026.

Approval of the U.T. regular meeting minutes of April 10, 2025
(Howard / Burns, 2-0-1)

AGENDA ITEM: Old Business - Update on Shadagee Road

U.T. Supervisor Heron Weston stated he continued investigation of the responsibility of repairs to the bridge on the Shadagee Road in T24. Heron reported at the April meeting of his findings in regards to the ownership and responsibility of repairs to the bridge. Based on institutional knowledge from the former U.T. Supervisor Dean Preston and what Heron could find by researching previous Commissioners' meeting minutes, Heron reported the road belongs to Cherryfield Foods, but the crossings are U.T. property and responsibility. During the May meeting it was decided, by consensus, the Board of Commissioners would need more information before authorizing funds for a temporary bridge and/or repair to the bridge. Heron stated after further investigation, he found all original documents that pertain to the crossing in question. Heron reported that in 1984 the land owners/lessees in T24 approached the County Commissioners for assistance in repairing or replacing culvers and bridges along Shadagee and Pretty Pond Roads. The land owners/lessees maintained that the roads were important to the area's economy and public safety access. The District Attorney found that public funds could not be spent on private roads and that the County would have to lay out (take on) these roads as County roads in order to authorize funds to be used for maintenance. In September 1985, the Washington County Commissioners

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passed a motion to take five small sections of Shaddagee and Pretty Pond Roads on as County Roads. Heron stated it is clear

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that it is our responsibility to maintain the crossings. Heron reported he has consulted with logging road construction companies. He stated installing a skidder bridge over the top of the culverts seems like a viable option for the short-term for the upcoming harvest season. Heron stated he does not have a solid price for the installation of a skidder bridge yet. He noted, however, it is much cheaper than originally thought. Commissioner Howard pondered how the County started out with wanting to help, but ended up owning the crossings. Heron stated he was unclear about the responsibility of the crossings. He noted through the investigation process it was made clear. Chris Gardner of Edmunds asked if there has been any maintenance in the last 30 years. He stated if there has not been maintenance done in 30 years, responsibility could revert back to the land owner. Chris noted it could be subject to discontinuance. However, Chris noted, if there is a declared road plan, the State may participate in a shared cost. Chris noted the decision is within the purview of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Burns asked Heron if there was any indication the landowner would be interested in a collaborative effort to work on repairs. Commissioner Hammond pointed out Cherryfield Foods is gracious enough to allow the public to use the roads. His concern is that if the County abandons the roads, the company may decide to control the access. Commissioner Burns noted there are four more crossings on this road. The Board of Commissioners would be looking for a collaborative effort. Heron stated the four other crossings are in good condition. After further discussion to determine the final conclusion, Heron stated the legal documents he found gave the jurisdictional facts. Heron quoted the language of the determination and order given. See the attached court documents in the matter of petition dated July 1, 1985. "The easements and rights of way requested in the aforesaid petition are of common convenience and necessity for forest fire control, law enforcement and serving the lumber and blueberry industries and telephone service and sporting camps in the area of Township 24 MD. Said easements and rights of way have been used by the public for all purposes for a long period of time." The document further states "we hereby take for the benefit of the public the easements and rights of way over lands in Township 24, Washington County, Maine described as follows:"

- Grass Pond
- Big Mopang Stream

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- Barren Pond Brook
- Little Mopang Stream
- Allen Brook

Taking into consideration their purview to discontinue the road

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maintenance, the Board of Commissioners unanimously agreed they would not want to jeopardize public access to this road. By consensus, the Board of Commissioners directed U.T. Supervisor Heron Weston to inquire about interest to collaborate on repair expenses with the land owner. Chris Gardner suggested the Commissioners consider a road plan that would be formalized by a vote to initiate Maine Department of Transportation shared cost.

AGENDA ITEM: Monthly Report

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

Heron reported the Richardson Brook Bridge deck replacement is scheduled for the first week of June. Notification of the road closure during the construction period has been given to year-round residents and RCC.

Heron gave an update on the Mill Stream Bridge replacement in Centerville Twp. Heron stated a competitive bidding process was used to select Bucklin Appraisal to perform the appraisal review as required on a project that includes federal funds. He noted these appraisals should be completed no later than mid-August. Heron also noted the bridge replacement most likely will not be done until next year.

Heron stated the NWSARA EMS (Danforth Ambulance) held a budget meeting. He noted the board passed a 2025-26 budget which included a 5% increase in stipends; bringing the U.T.'s portion to \$26,820.20. Heron stated the meeting included a discussion that Calais no longer wants to manage this EMS.

Heron reported the summer maintenance crew focused on mowing and placing flags on all U.T. cemeteries in preparation of Memorial Day.

Heron presented two Shellfish Warden Coverage agreements for approval. The agreement is to provide Municipal Shellfish Warden Services to the Towns of Perry and Pembroke on behalf of the Shellfish Committee in

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accordance with the Perry and Pembroke Regional Shellfish Conservation Ordinance. The agreements are exactly the same; one for a coverage period of July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025, and one to cover the period of July 1, 2025 to June 30 2026. The Shellfish Committee agrees to pay the U.T. the sum of \$12,480 per year.

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***MOTION* Commissioner Howard moved to approve two Shellfish Warden Coverage Agreements between Washington County U.T. and Perry & Pembroke Municipal Shellfish Committee as presented.
(Howard / Hammond, 3-0)**

Heron presented a Solid Waste Services Agreement between Town of Cherryfield and Unorganized Territories. The Town of Cherryfield agrees to accept household waste at the Cherryfield Transfer Station from residents in Devereaux Twp and T24 MD. The term of the agreement is for one year beginning on July 1, 2025 and ending on June 30, 2026. The payment for this service is \$5,693.40 per year for fifteen (15) Cherryfield Transfer Station permits.

***MOTION* Commissioner Howard moved to approve the Solid Waste Services Agreement between Washington County U.T. and the Town of Cherryfield as presented.
(Howard / Hammond, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: TIF Grant Committee Update

A report was submitted and is attached.

Ms. Hatton presented a request for a TIF Revolving Loan modification. The modification request is for additional funds of \$15,000.00 for Dale and Brent Griffin, DBA Griffin Lumber, Inc. Ms. Hatton stated the original loan was in the amount of \$135,000.00 to build a sawmill. She stated the sawmill has been completed but the last bill that came in for the project is \$15,000.00 more than what is left to draw down on the loan. Commissioner Burns asked if there is still plenty of collateral to cover the additional requested amount. Ms. Hatton confirmed there is plenty of collateral. Commissioner Howard asked when the sawmill would be up and running. Ms. Hatton stated the sawmill is already in operation.

***MOTION* Commissioner Hammond moved to approve the request by Griffin Lumber, Inc. for additional funds in the amount of**

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**\$15,000.00 on TIF Loan #GL-TIF-07-22-24.
(Hammond / Howard, 3-0)**

Ms. Hatton reported the loan for Michael Griffin has been paid off. Commissioner Burns noted the Board of Commissioners should make a motion to rescind the previous decision to take legal action to proceed with foreclosure on the loan. Ms. Hatton suggested it is a moot point as the loan is now paid.

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AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment

Betsy Fitzgerald gave a brief update on the Land Use Planning Commission meeting she recently attended. Betsy stated the LUPC is monitoring legislation relating to the U.T.'s. Betsy reported the LUPC has hired a new person for the downeast area, Savannah Phillips, and has two new commissioners that represent the counties of Piscataquis and Aroostook. Betsy stated Consent agreements were considered for two properties with violations in Tomhegan Township. LUPC members were updated on the de-organization process and the land use document, the CLUP. Commissioner Burns asked for an update on the legislation to increase the number of members on the LUPC board. Betsy stated there was an amendment to increase the number of seats by two.

ADJOURNMENT

4:50 p.m.

ATTEST:

Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.

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