

October 12, 2023

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Unorganized Territories Regular Meeting
Held October 12, 2023
in the Washington County Probate Courtroom
Machias, Maine**

**Attending the meeting were:
Commissioner Christopher Gardner
Commissioner Vinton Cassidy
Commissioner John Crowley, Sr.
Renée Gray, County Manager
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant
Jill C. Holmes, Treasurer
Saydee Plaster, Jonesport - EMDC
Galan Williamson, NWDB
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO
Joshua Rolfe, RCC / WCSO
Michael Crabtree, Chief Deputy
Susan Hatton, SCEC
Reid Albee, County Wide
Tammy Gay, Deeds
Regina Grabrovac, Heathy Acadia
Susan Sullivan, D.A.'s Office
Heather Green, Deeds
Lisa M. Hanscom, EMA
Darlene Perry, Probate
Jill Holmes, Finance**

Commissioner Gardner called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

The meeting began with a presentation by Galan Williamson. Mr. Williamson introduced himself as the Executive Director of Northeastern Workforce Development Board. Mr. Williamson explained funding is through WIOA Title 1B. The NWDB was established to administer and oversee these funds. Mr. Williamson stated the budget for the NWDB was flat-funded this year. Commissioner Cassidy asked how many counties are part of the NWDB. Mr. Williamson reported there are five counties in the Northeastern Region; Aroostook, Hancock, Penobscot, Piscataquis, and Washington Counties. Mr. Williamson stated programs have been contracted out to Eastern Maine Development

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Corporation. Mr. Williamson introduced Saydee Plaster of EMDC. Mr. Williamson stated Ms. Plaster is available at the Machias Career Center. Ms. Plaster offers individualized services and training to people and employers; helping them identify goals and create a plan for their future. Working with employers to create training specific to Maine's growing industries helps keep the workforce in Maine and helps local businesses build a skilled workforce.

Mr. Williamson stated on the local level the board is doing well with a majority of representation of local businesses in the area. Commissioner Gardner noted Washington County is not unique; rural counties are struggling to find people to work in its public sector. Mr. Williamson stated Penobscot County is having the same issues. Many of the program participants have records, therefore; disqualifying them to be eligible to work in the public law enforcement sector.

Mr. Williamson summarized programs offered such as an Apprenticeship program, a Youth program and the QUEST program. The QUEST grant is now underway. It is a two-year grant for dislocated workers in response to disaster relief. The program helps the marginalized population get education and training to obtain quality jobs with livable wages with opportunity for advancement. It was stated that there is a low enrollment in the Youth Program. Commissioner Gardner noted there are fewer youth in the area. Commissioner Crowley asked if NWDB has considered engaging with the local trade schools. Mr. Williamson confirmed NWDB has linked with the trade schools. Commissioner Cassidy asked if NWDB works with JMG (Jobs for Maine's Graduates) in the school. Mr. Williamson replied that NWDB does work with JMG. He stated JMG is a solid program. He reported a worker's fund grant has just become available. The "Earn While You Learn" stipend will give training in a trades or occupation for the youth. Commissioner Cassidy asked about involvement in the Community Colleges. Mr. Williamson stated working with Community Colleges is one of the requirements of the grant. He hopes to see the apprenticeship programs spread to the educational fields of electrical, mechanical and fabrication/welders. Commissioner Gardner agreed we need to find ways to educate youth while they work. Mr. Williamson stated NWDB would like to implement the Quest Grant in the county jails.

Mr. Williamson gave the floor to Ms. Plaster to summarize her work

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with Eastern Maine Development Corporation. Ms. Plaster gave a brief bio; she was born and raised in Washington County, graduated from

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Washington Academy in 2008 and studied Business Administration in College. Ms. Plaster stated EMDC is partnering with NWDB and works with all populations. She works with the youth teaching life skills such as opening personal bank accounts, writing resumes and learning interview skills. Ms. Plaster stated the QUEST Grant has allowed her to worked with training and recruitment of nurses in the area. She has had success in other counties and hopes to have the same success in Washington County. Commissioner Gardner asked how connections for the implementation of these programs can be made in Washington County. Commissioner Gardner noted specific needs in the area of Veterans care givers and law enforcement. He also stated training and education in the nursing field locally would be great as there are no schools with a nursing program in Down East Maine. Ms. Plaster concluded the presentation by stating she is available at the Career Center 5 days a week.

The regular meeting of the Unorganized Territories proceeded at 4:31 p.m.

**Approval of the U.T. regular meeting minutes of September 7, 2023
(Crowley / Cassidy, 2-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Monthly Report

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

In Dean's absence, County Manager Renée Gray reported there are no action items.

AGENDA ITEM: TIF Grant Committee Update

A report was submitted and is attached.

Ms. Hatton stated there were no action items.

Ms. Hatton reported on Michael Griffin's payment plan. Due to some financial difficulties, Mr. Griffin was approved for interest only payments. Mr. Griffin made three payments before becoming delinquent. The TIF Committee recommends giving Mr. Griffin until the end November

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to pay all arrears. If he does not make payment by the end of November, the TIF Committee is recommending foreclosure.

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***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to approve foreclosure proceedings per recommendation of the TIF Committee on the loan with Michael Griffin as presented.
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0.)**

Ms. Hatton stated she connected with Dean Preston to researched the request by the Commissioners to develop an agreement with Downeast Lakes Land Trust for in lieu of payments for property taxes. It was determined the "in lieu of payments" carries no weight in the process of approval for the grant. The information provided by Dean stated DLLT will communicate with the Maine Revenue Service and develop an agreement for in lieu of payments based on the calculated property taxes on the parcel. This agreement is with the MRS. Payments are made to MRS and passed onto the County.

AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment

None.

ADJOURNMENT

4:40 p.m.

ATTEST:

Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.

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