

September 12, 2019

**Minutes of the Washington County  
Public Hearing on the  
Proposed Budget for FY 2020  
held September 12, 2019  
in the Probate Courtroom  
Machias, Maine**

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**Attending the meeting were:**  
**Commissioner Christopher Gardner**  
**Commissioner John B. Crowley, Sr.**  
**Commissioner Vinton E. Cassidy**  
**Betsy Fitzgerald, County Manager**  
**Carla Manchester, Administration**  
**Nathan Pennell, Washington County Soil and Water, DERC&D**  
**Dean Preston, UT**  
**Lewis Pinkham, Milbridge**  
**Jean Savard, Firefighter's Association**  
**Crystal Cushing, Next Step DV Project**  
**Paula Johnson-Rolfe, Sheriff's Office**  
**Lynn Dwelley, Emergency Management Agency**  
**Chris Loughlin, Baileyville**  
**Renee Gray, Lubec**  
**Mike Crabtree, Chief Deputy**  
**Jen Loble, Cooperative Extension**  
**Kyle Winslow, Cooperative Extension**  
**Meghan Dennison, Machias**  
**Josh Rolfe, Regional Communications Center**  
**Jill Holmes, Treasurer**  
**Carlene M. Holmes, Probate**  
**Lynn Alley, Downeast Institute**

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Commissioner Gardner called the Public Hearing to order at 1:04 p.m. on the proposed County Budget for FY 2020.

Commissioner Gardner turned the floor over to County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald. County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald reviewed the summary of the proposed budget. The 2020 proposed budget is \$6,469,505.92; the variance is \$266,062.92 representing an increase of 4.2890%.

County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald stated representatives were present for those organizations requesting third-party funds.

September 12, 2019

Jean Savard was present to represent the Washington County Firefighters Association. Jean stated the Washington County Firefighters Association has requested \$6500.00 in funding. The funding from the County is used for training and equipment purchases by town fire departments. Commissioner Gardner stated the WC firefighters have his full support. Commissioner Crowley stated he was in full agreement of the Commissioners' support for the WC firefighters.

Lynn Alley, Board of Directors Chair for the Downeast Institute of Applied Marine Research and Education, stated DEI is requesting funds of \$5,000.00. Ms. Alley listed services provided to the citizens of Washington County. DEI is proud of their partnership with the fishing community; researching commercially important shellfish in order to help sustain the livelihoods of fishing families in Washington County and beyond. DEI assists with educational programming for students in Washington County by providing free hands-on lessons to students, professional development for teachers, and research opportunities for college students and faculty for the University of Maine at Machias. DEI also offers summer day camps and educational opportunities through Coastal Science Academy. Ms. Alley thanked the Commissioners' for their continued support. On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, Commissioner Gardner expressed the boards' continued support for the fund request of \$5000.00. Commissioner Gardner noted the relationship and collaborative work between DEI and the University of Maine at Machias gives strength to the UMM's biology program. Commissioner Gardner acknowledged that \$5,000 is a small amount for the benefit it reaps.

Crystal Cushing was present to represent Next Step Violence Project on behalf of Dorathy Martel, Executive Director. Ms. Cushing stated that Next Step's fund request is for \$900.00. This is an increase of \$50.00 for previous years' requests due to the need for helping with travel expenses. Ms. Cushing explained that Next Step provides a full-range of services from advocacy to educational and technical assistance for people affected by or interested in ending domestic violence. Ms. Cushing stated Next Step has a total operating budget

71

Of \$1,250,000.00. Commissioner Gardner noted \$850.00 is a small amount of funds requested of Washington County for the services provided by Next Step and that Next Step is an invaluable service that assists law enforcement.

Kyle Winslow, President of the Washington County Extension

September 12, 2019

Association, presented a request for third-party funds for \$40,000.00. Mr. Winslow stated the Extension partners with federal, state and county governments. Mr. Winslow explained the financial support provided by the county allows the Extension to leverage additional funds from Extension's university base budget. Mr. Winslow provided the Commissioners with the annual report for 2018 – 2019 that highlights the many outreach and educational services the Extension provides such as food and nutrition education, youth development and programs on agriculture (see attached). Mr. Winslow stated the fund request is the same as last year but last years' request was cut in half. Mr. Winslow stated the Extension made it through the year with fewer funds but the Extension Program would be unsustainable for a long period of time with such a decrease in funds. Commissioner Gardner stated the funding for the Cooperative Extension was a source of great discussion last year during the budget process. Commissioner Gardner suggested the Extension work on spreading information about the programs provided and the impact decreased funds will have on them. Commissioner Gardner also encouraged the Extension to contact the BAC members and explain the benefits of the Extension and how it effects the community. Commissioner Gardner stated outreach will go a long way. Commissioner Crowley emphasized the fact that the BAC and the public must have a better understanding of what the Extension provides to the community.

Nathan Pennell, District Manager for the Washington County Soil and Water District, was present. Mr. Pennell stated the WCS&WD partners with federal, state and county government to obtain funds for voluntary conservation projects and assist land owners in Washington County. The funds requested this year is \$12,000.00. Last years' request was also for \$12,000.00 but was cut in half. Mr. Pennell listed several projects that involve the WCS&WD that serve Washington County such as the airport expansion, the ten-million-dollar Veteran's Cemetery project, and the St. Croix watershed project. Mr. Pennell stated all the funds received are spent in Washington County.

72

Nathan Pennell also spoke as a representative for Down East Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc. (RC&D). Mr. Pennell is the RC&D Council President. Mr. Pennell stated RC&D partners with WCS&WD as well as other agencies. The Down East RC&D Council's mission is "Resource conservation through systematic use of soil, water, plants, wildlife, human and recreational resources while maintaining quality in the natural resource base and improving the economy through properly managed development". The funds being requested in the amount of \$4,000.00 are matched with other funds and are used to

September 12, 2019

support the operational budget of the Council.

The Commissioner thanked all third-party representatives for their presentations.

Commissioner Gardner outlined the make-up of the Budget Advisory Committee stating there are three BAC members for each of the three Commissioners' districts and one legislative delegate. The list of the BAC members is attached. Commissioner Gardner noted the legislative delegate has been changed to a non-voting member.

Commissioner Gardner stated the proposed budget is presented to the BAC as a starting point. It is now up to the BAC to refine the budget. Commissioner Gardner noted the BAC and the Board of Commissioners have always worked well together.

Following the presentations, County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald and the members of the BAC adjourned to select a chairman and set the dates for the BAC meetings.

**ADJOURNMENT**  
**1:30 p.m.**

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.**