

September 3, 2015

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Unorganized Territories Meeting
held September 3, 2015
in the Commissioners' Conference Room
Machias, Maine**

**Attending the meeting were:
Commissioner Christopher M. Gardner
Commissioner John B. Crowley, Sr.
Commissioner Vinton E. Cassidy
Betsy Fitzgerald, County Manager
Carla Manchester, Administration
Lorraine Robbins, Trescott
Joanna S. Billings, Bangor Daily News
Susan Hatton, SCEC
Melanie Small, Buildings & Grounds
M.F. Hinerman, EMA
Josh Rolfe, RCC
Barry Curtis, Sheriff
Michael Crabtree, Chief Deputy
Sharon Strout, Deeds
Judith A. Alexander, Treasurer's Office
Bill Kitchen, MVNO**

The meeting for Unorganized Territories business was called to order at 4:25 p.m.

**Approval of the August U.T. meeting minutes of August 6, 2015
(Crowley / Cassidy, 2-0-1)**

AGENDA ITEM: Monthly Report

Interim Unorganized Territories Supervisor Heron Weston submitted his monthly report. (See attached).

U.T. Supervisor Heron Weston had one snow removal contract to present for the Commissioners approval and signatures. Snow Removal Contract #9 is with the Town of Princeton to cover 2.9 miles in Big Lake Twp. The cost is \$12,995.48 and will expire in May of 2018. The agreement is based on the number of county owned roads. Thirteen percent are county owned.

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***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to approve the Snow Removal Contract #9 between the Town of Princeton and Big Lake Twp. for a cost of \$12,995.48 per year through May 2018. Commissioner Cassidy seconded the motion which passed 3-0.**

U.T. Supervisor Heron Weston reported that all other snow removal contracts expire next year and expressed concern that there may be a major impact on the contracts if we experience snowfall like we had last year.

The road reconstruction at the end of the Mitten Mountain Road in Centerville is complete and is a big improvement.

In hopes of extending the life of the county roads in Edmunds, those that were not paved earlier this year have been crack sealed.

The E-911 summer crew has completed their work with a successful season. They installed or replaced approximately 75 sign posts, GPSed roughly 100 miles of new roads for the E-911 network and found numerous hidden camps and entered them in the E-911 system.

U.T. Supervisor Heron Weston recently attended a Downeast EMS meeting. The finances are looking positive. An increased number of runs, a slowly building capital fund and professional accountant on staff have made a big difference. U.T. Supervisor Weston also attended the NWSARAS (ambulance service in Danforth) meeting. He reports that the NWSARAS is in rough financial shape as they approach the 2016-17 budget year.

U.T. Supervisor Heron Weston reported that third-party requests have been awarded to WHCA, The Downeast Institute, and the Lubec Memorial Library.

The Cathance Boat Launch dry hydrant project is still in process. CES has completed a design and it has been approved by all parties. The study concerning Northern Long-eared Bats has been completed; none were found on the property. The next step will be to have a Memorandum of Agreement in place between the County and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. U.T. Supervisor Weston hopes to have the agreement ready for the Commissioners for the October meeting.

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The U.T., in collaboration with SCEC, is pursuing a Water bond to replace failing culverts at the Northern Stream inlet. The replacement should be done before the winter/spring thaw. A recent Nature Conservancy survey showed that the culverts' replacement would restore the greatest amount of fish habitat. The grant will be submitted no later than November. The Salmon Federation is in support of this project. An update will be available at the October meeting.

Commissioner Gardner requested that Heron Weston reach out to the Town of Dennysville to check the status of the tennis court located in that town. The tennis court, which has provided recreation for the community, is deteriorating and may be demolished. This would be a lost asset if it is demolished.

Commissioner Gardner also stated his concerns for the use of the Boat Ramp in Edmunds. The State of Maine Department of Conservation has been tightening up on the use of the boat ramp and parking lot for commercial fishing uses. The boat ramp and parking lot is used for many commercial fishing industry activities and should be of benefit to the commercial fisherman. Commissioner Gardner suggested that the County explore acquisition options to have control of the ramps uses.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to empower County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald to explore ownership options for the Town of Edmunds Boat Ramp. Commissioner Cassidy seconded the motion which passed 3-0.**

AGENDA ITEM: TIF Grant Committee Update

Program Manager Susan Hatton submitted a report. (See attached)

Ms. Hatton stated that there were no action items to present.

Several updates were included in the written report.

Ms. Robbins of Trescott was present to give an update on the cash flow for her fishing boat business, *F/V Lois Marie*. Her request for TIF funds for \$20,000.00 to equip the fishing vessel was tabled at the July meeting. The Commissioners required three months of actual cash flow before a decision could be made to approve funds. Ms. Robbins reported that the business has been doing well. She has saved \$5,000.00 and has decreased her request to \$15,000.00. She plans to

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increase her traps to 700 and her employees are on the waiting list for a fishing license. The Loan Committee recommended denial of this loan request. The Loan Committee would like to see more than three months of cash flow numbers that are verifiable. The Commissioners expressed concern that the cash flow numbers were not verifiable. It was also brought to the Commissioners' attention that Ms. Robbins had received a grant from the Town of Lubec for the business. This grant from Lubec was given based on the fact that the business is located in Lubec. TIF funds are exclusively available to those businesses that are in an Unorganized Territory. Ms. Robbins stated that her boat operates out of Lubec but she lives in an Unorganized Territory. Program Manager Susan Hatton stated that her understanding was that the business resides in Trescott which is an Unorganized Territory. Commissioner Crowley voiced his apprehension of the overall operation of the business (i.e. who holds the license, who is the owner of the vessel, where the business resides). Commissioner Crowley stated that the way the business is being run may be violating the Maine State Constitution. Ms. Robbins insisted that the Department of Maine Resources is fully aware of the way the business is being run. Commissioner Gardner stated that the issue has become too complicated with too many moving parts for the Board. In light of these concerns, Commissioner Gardner stated that the grant already given to Ms. Robbins may need to be examined. The Commissioners are in a tight spot and may have to take ownership for not picking up on the owner/operator discrepancy before approving the grant. The Commissioners unanimously concluded that there will be no further action on the request for a TIF loan for Ms. Robbins until there has been clarification in the location and ownership of the business.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to table the TIF loan request made by Ms. Robbins, F/V Lois Marie. Commissioner Cassidy seconded the motion which passed 3-0.**

County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald will follow-up on the process of clarification in relation to the previous TIF grant received by Ms. Robbins.

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AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment

None.

ADJOURNMENT

5:00 p.m.

ATTEST:

Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.