

September 9, 2021

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'  
Unorganized Territories Regular Meeting  
Held September 9, 2021  
in the Washington County 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  
Jill C. Holmes, Treasurer  
Lewis Pinkham, Milbridge  
Nancy Oden, Jonesboro  
Carlene Holmes, probate  
Jen Lobley, UMaine Cooperative Extension  
Kyle Winslow, Washington County Extension Association  
Susan Hatton, Sunrise County Economic Council  
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, Sheriff's Office  
Rich Rolfe, Sheriff's Office  
Tammy Gay, Registry of Deeds  
Dean Preston, Unorganized Territories  
Barry Curtis, Sheriff  
Mike Crabtree, Sheriff's Office  
Sarah Strickland, East Grand  
Lisa M. Hanscom, Emergency Management Agency  
Nancy Harrison, Lubec  
E. Harrison, Lubec**

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Prior to the regular meeting of the Unorganized Territories, Sarah Strickland presented an update on the East Grand Region Broadband Task Force.

Ms. Strickland stated the Greater East Grand Region (GEGEC) is a citizen-designated economic development area that represents 12 communities across three counties. Brookton, Forest and Forest City are communities involved that are within Washington County. The Greater East Grand Economic Council completed an economic plan in 2020. Ms. Strickland noted the importance of high-speed broadband

infrastructure is part of the Greater East Grand Region economic planning initiative.

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The Greater East Grand Economic Broadband Task Force has completed the first phase of planning to increase the availability of high-speed internet services across the region. Ms. Strickland stated funding for the first planning phase came from Maine Community Foundation, ConnectMaine Authority and Washington County TIF funding.

GEGEC Task Force is beginning Phase 2 feasibility planning. This phase includes engineering studies and cost analysis to determine the best approach for building improved infrastructure that can deliver high-speed internet service across the region. Request for Proposals will be sent out in early October.

Ms. Strickland stated she has come before the Commissioners today to solicit and invite support and participation. Ms. Strickland anticipates coming back to report updates. Ms. Strickland noted the Commissioners' input and support is crucial as GEGEC plans to pursue TIF funding on Phase 2. Commissioner Gardner stated, on behalf of the Board of Commissioners, a willingness to hear from GEGEC as they proceed with the project. Commissioner Gardner recommended Ms. Strickland work with TIF Loan Program Manager Susan Hatton. Commissioner Gardner also asked Unorganized Supervisor Dean Preston to be available to work with Ms. Strickland.

Letters were received by community members of Brookton, Forest and Forest City asking for the Commissioners' support for this phase of the economic development plan. A list of citizens that sent letters is attached.

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

**Approval of the U.T. meeting minutes of August 12, 2021.  
(Crowley / Cassidy, 2-0-1)**

**AGENDA ITEM: Monthly Report**

Unorganized Territories Supervisor Dean Preston's monthly report was submitted and is attached.

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Dean stated he is requesting approval to move the budget line of "UT Extra-Curricular Facility Improvement Program" from Community Projects to a stand-alone Reserve Account with the same name of "UT Extra-Curricular Facility Improvement Program. Dean stated the

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Commissioners have all authority on such matters. By consensus, the Board of Commissioners support moving the line item from Community Projects to a stand-alone reserve account.

Dean reported that highway maintenance projects that will be ongoing into the 2022 season are paving operations in Edmunds Twp., Centerville Twp., and Big Lake Twp.

Dean reported that the original rehabilitation project of Mill Stream Bridge may become a replacement project. Dean stated that after consultation with the Engineers and MDOT, the rehabilitation will only buy 10 years. To do the rehabilitation project of drainage improvements would cost \$145,000.00; a bridge replacement would cost \$740,000. Dean stated the question then is if the cost to do the rehabilitation of \$145,000.00 is worth 10 years of use. Commissioner Gardner asked if there was any funding available in the State Infrastructure Bank. Dean stated he has checked and there are no funds available. Commissioner Gardner wondered if this project would be eligible for the use of TIF funds. Dean stated matching TIF funds is a possibility but it is not an easy answer. Commissioner Gardner inquired about ARP funds as the project could be categorized as infrastructure. Dean stated he checked on the use of ARP funds. The project does not meet the criteria for the use of ARP funds. By consensus, the Board of Commissioners fully authorized Dean to explore all funding options.

Dean presented an Animal Control Agreement for the Commissioners' approval. The agreement is for animal control officer services to cover the municipality of Machiasport. The contract term is July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2024. The annual compensation is \$200.00, \$20.50 per hour per incident plus mileage reimbursement of \$0.44 per mile.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to approve the Animal Control Agreement as presented.  
(Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

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Dean noted there are now eight communities that have contracts with the U.T. for animal control services.

Commissioner Gardner stated he still has concerns with the condition of the bridge in Edmunds. Commissioner Gardner stated he will contact the Commissioner of Transportation for Maine DOT, Bruce Van Note.

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**AGENDA ITEM: TIF Committee Update**

Ms. Hatton's monthly report was submitted and is attached.

Ms. Hatton stated there are no action items.

Ms. Hatton noted that she met with Rachel Bell of Tide Mill Creamery, and can report that there has been a big demand for Tide Mill's products.

**AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment**

Nancy Oden requested the Commissioners consider some ideas she has for the American Rescue Plan funds. Commissioner Gardner stated the county is still in the process of gathering ideas and will take the recommendations under advisement.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**4:42 p.m.**

**ATTEST:**

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**Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.**