

Penobscot County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes August 17, 2021 2347
9:00 AM Commissioners Peter Baldacci, Andre Cushing & Laura Sanborn 66°

Roll Call -

Commissioner Baldacci opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. from the Commissioners Chambers with all Commissioners present.

Approval of Minutes –

Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve August 10, 2021 meeting minutes. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

Public Comment –

Donna Gagne – Citizen of Greenfield Township since 2002

Participant requested assistance with the following:

- Greenfield Township budget – if there is a spreadsheet available for landowners to have access to in order to see where the monies are being spent on projects. Donna asked if the budget is available to the public. Commissioner Baldacci explained the budget process for the UT – there is an opportunity for the public to comment during the budget process. Commissioner Baldacci said as a landowner you have a right to the know what is being spent. Director Shaw Weeks should be able to answer any questions or at least direct you to the appropriate information. Director Weeks will provide her with a copy of the UT budget.
- Junkyard Issue - Participant's property abuts the junkyard that Director Weeks reported on last week. Participant states that she has been working with Director Weeks since February 22, 2021. Director Weeks sent a letter to the owner of the illegal junkyard property; at that time there were 50+ cars on that property. Director Weeks advised the participant to go to BMV and fill out a complaint form to be reviewed. Detective Ron McGowan from BMV had issued citations to the landowner. The landowner has cleaned up a lot of the property; however, it is not cleaned up to the specification required. Director Shaw Weeks stated that he has reached out to our attorney at Rudman and Winchell for legal guidance and what recourse can be taken. Commissioners want Director Weeks to organize all information for our attorney so that this can be expedited before the snow falls. Participant gave permission to go on her property to take pictures to provide documentation of the junkyard.
- Broadband discussion – There will be a question-and-answer period after this discussion

Administration Update –

Administrator Honey reported on the following:

- **Communication:**
 - A list of email addresses for our municipalities was created and information was sent out for our broadband discussion that will take place this morning.
 - There is correspondence in your folders regarding the hydroelectric projects for Ripogenus and Penobscot Mills intent to file license applications and the project scoping documents.
- **Employment within the County:**
 - Assistant Finance Director position closed yesterday with 16 applicants with interviews starting tomorrow
 - Two patrol positions close Friday
 - Our Public Safety Career Fair was held last Wednesday with ten participants
- **This week's meetings:**
 - Finished up on budget reviews with department heads; the first final drafts will be presented starting the first week in September
 - There is another Medical Services RFP pre-bid conference being held this afternoon
 - AFSCME negotiations were held yesterday and more information will be discussed during our executive session
 - We are having our monthly department head meeting this Thursday
 - We will be holding a COVID vaccine clinic this Thursday – open to both public and employees
- **Last week's meetings:**
 - Commissioner Baldacci and Administrator Honey participated in the MCCA meeting last Wednesday with several legislative updates discussed.
 - Increased fees for Probate
 - Civil fee increases were not funded by the Appropriations Committee
 - Increase of the Sheriff's furlough has been changed from 3-7 days; inmates are now able to earn good time from when they're admitted, not when sentenced
 - There have been meetings regarding the space needs at the jail to include immediate actions, long-term renovations, and looking at different space options for other departments. Administrator Honey is communicating with brokers to set up tours of different possible spaces in the Bangor area.

Administration Update – Continued:

- Sheriff shared his numbers on corrections side: In-house jail population is 196, 56 boarded out to other facilities, no federal inmates, no county swaps and there **210** inmates in Pre-trial Services.
- Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve that we conduct a Public Hearing on our remote meeting policy. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- Next week's meeting:
 - A plan for response to the COVID pandemic.
- Facilities Director Brian MacDonald presented a quote on the paving proposal for the jail parking lot and Y parking lot.
 - Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to approve Eaton Paving and Excavation to repair two sinkholes. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve the warrants as presented. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- Payroll Change Notices signed for: NONE
- Payroll Warrant to be approved for 08.13.2021: \$263,546.66
- A/P Warrant to be approved for 08.17.2021: \$138,564.41
- Unorganized Territory Warrant to be approved 08.17.2021: \$221,699.95
- Unorganized Territory TIF Warrant to be approved: NONE

Executive Session---Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:40 a.m., under 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (A) Personnel Matter. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approved passed 3-0. Present were: Commissioners and Administrator Erika Honey. Session ended at 10:00 a.m.

Executive Session---Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 10:01 a.m., under 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (D) Contract Matter. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approved passed 3-0. Present were: Commissioners and Administrator Erika Honey. Session ended at 10:20 a.m.

Action Item – None taken

Penobscot County Broadband Discussion –

Andrew Butcher, Director of Maine Broadband Coalition started today's discussion that this Coalition is a diverse advisory committee of policy, technical and community development experts which provides information, policy support and capacity building around broadband/high speed internet in Maine. The Coalition's goal is to enable a future of reliable, accessible and affordable high-speed internet for everyone.

Stephenie MacLagan, Assistant Director of ConnectMaine hopes that with today's presentation they will be able to share information and support Penobscot County's efforts to move forward. Part of broadband planning is a way of sharing information about the challenges of broadband, and understanding how that affects a community or an entire County's vision of the future. In the planning process, communities will have significant decisions to make and our goal is to guide them along the way.

Tanya Emery – City of Bangor Director of Community and Economic Development reported that back in 2018 Bangor City Council made clear fiber an essential infrastructure priority for the city. For further information all the broadband resources that were used are on their website at: www.bangormaine.gov/broadband

John Dougherty – Mission Broadband looks at three things when looking at broadband. If it's available? If available, is it adequate? Is it affordable?

Jeff Letourneau – Executive Director of Networkmaine and has worked at the University of Maine System for 30+ years. There were struggles for both students and teachers during the COVID remote learning period. Old Town and Orono received a small grant to do a small pilot program building about six miles of infrastructure through OTELCO.

Kyle Leathers – President of the Katahdin Region Broadband Utility Board shared that this board covers Millinocket, East Millinocket and Medway. Each town has two representing members and Lucy Van Hook – Administrator for Our Katahdin is a non-voting member. Since this board originated, we have done branding of Our Katahdin broadband. At this time there are over 700 people signed up for broadband service. Our goal is that all three communities are covered with higher speeds, affordable and community owned.

Commissioner Baldacci states that the role of the Commissioners is to help fill in gaps from other funding to benefit our residents to make it accessible and affordable. It's going to be balancing priorities, and wanting to make sure we get the most from our investment.

For most up-to-date information, sign up at: <https://www.mainebroadbandcoalition.org>

Penobscot County Broadband Discussion – continued:

Donna Gagne, resident of Greenfield Township stated that her area uses Consolidated Communications as their provider. There is less bandwidth and with residents working from home and students having remote learning, it is important that they are included.

This entire broadband discussion can be found:
www.facebook.com/PenobscotCountyGovernment

Meeting Adjourned-

Commissioner Sanborn moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:38 a.m. with no further business on the agenda. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

Certified By:

Administrator, Erika Honey

Peter K. Baldacci, Chairman

Laura J. Sanborn, Commissioner

Andre E. Cushing, III, Commissioner