

Penobscot County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes March 4, 2026
9:00 AM Commissioners Daniel Tremble, Andre Cushing and David Marshall

#2530

Roll Call -

Commissioner Cushing opened the meeting at 9:00 AM with Commissioner Tremble, Commissioner Marshall, Administrator Tinkham, and Treasurer Mower present in the Probate Courtroom.

Pledge of Allegiance – Administrator Tinkham led the Pledge.

Approval of Meeting Minutes - Commissioner Marshall moved to approve the February 27th, 2026 meeting minutes. Commissioner Tremble seconded the motion. A vote to approve passed 3-0.

Public Comment –

Larry Dansinger, resident of Bangor is requesting cost comparison details regarding the proposed new jail project in Penobscot County. He has asked the Commissioners whether renovation of the existing jail has been fully considered as an alternative to constructing a new facility. Mr. Dansinger would like detailed cost figures comparing the renovation of the old jail vs construction of a new jail. Mr. Dansinger is concerned that the Commissioners may not have exercised proper due diligence if renovation has not been thoroughly evaluated. He is asking that this comparison be provided to him and the voters of Penobscot County.

Peter Velanzon, resident of Argyle requested clarification on how to be placed on the agenda. He emailed a request to be placed on the agenda to discuss three items. He received an email back stating he needed legal counsel to be placed on the agenda which he brought with him and offered to read it to the Commission.

Mr. Velanzon requested to be placed on a future agenda for a 15-minute segment to address three items of grievance. He was informed that he may be scheduled once he submits documentation outlining the specific subjects he wishes to discuss at the meeting.

Mr. Velanzon also stated that the only time he is currently buzzed into the building is when attending public meetings. He reported that on two occasions he was left waiting in the cold vestibule near the speaker box for approximately ten minutes while others were admitted. He stated the temperature was 11 degrees at the time and noted that he would sit on the bench if asked.

He was advised that the building remains secure for lawful business.

Public Hearing – The Designation of a Municipal Tax Increment Financing District to be Known as the “Penobscot County Unorganized Territory Hammond Ridge & Twin Pines Municipal Tax Increment Financing (“TIF”) District”

Chair Cushing opened the Public Hearing at 9:11 AM.

Director Buswell introduced the hearing's proposal for designating a TIF District and authorizing a credit enhancement agreement related to the project in T1 R8 WELS, and explained the Commissioners would vote on the proposed designation of a TIF after the public hearing.

The panel introduced themselves. Stephen Wagner, County Attorney with Rudman and Winchell, Jonathan Pottle and Andy Hamilton of Katahdin Law representing Matt Polstein of Hammond Ridge and Twin Pines Development, Matt Polstein and Noreen Norton, an economic development consultant also representing the County.

Attorney Wagner provided an overview of Tax Increment Financing and Credit Enhancement Agreements. He then explained how the tax shift works and how it benefits the County.

Matt Polstein then reported on his project that began in 2007. Mr. Polstein summarized his plans for this mixed-use development designed to make the region a destination area with complimentary commercial uses.

Noreen Norton outlined the TIF revenue projections and proposed credit enhancement agreement terms.

Shane Flynn spoke in favor of the project and of Matt Polstein's work that he has already done in the Unorganized Territory. He expressed his feeling that this is a great opportunity for the region.

Mike Wilson spoke in favor of the project as he feels this will help downtown Millinocket.

There were no public comments in opposition.

The Public Hearing was closed at 9:59 AM

Commissioner Marshall moved to approve the Commissioner's Order as presented as Exhibit I of the District Development Program and authorize County staff and consultants to file the TIF application with the State. Commissioner Tremble seconded the motion. A vote to approve passed 3-0.

HR Update –

Director Dyer presented the Wellness Center Policy following clarification from Risk Pool Manager Malcolm Ulmer. After discussion regarding the proposed changes, Commissioner Tremble moved to approve the Wellness Center Policy as presented. Commissioner Marshall seconded the motion. The motion passed with a vote of 3-0. Signed.

Tax Abatement Appeal Hearing

Commissioner Cushing opened the hearing at 10:05 AM

- Present were:
 - David Koffman – Property Owner
 - Michelle Toder – Property owner
 - Justin McMann – Maine Revenue Services
 - Colby Higgins – Maine Revenue Services
 - For property located at Spruce Island, South Twin Lake / Penobscot County / Tax Map PE033 / Plan 12 / Lot 115 / Account 1198-6659
- Property is a 6.25-acre island parcel
- Spruce Island is not a single unified ownership. The island is divided into five separate lots; three of the five lots already have existing structures (camps); Koffman/Toder parcel is only one of these five lots and shares the island with existing and potential future neighbors.
- This property has no access to electricity, nor any road access of any sort.
- Property was purchased in 2020 for \$60,000.
- Assessed value in 2025 is \$ 261,630. The Koffman / Toder family is requesting an assessed value of \$ 130,000 (a \$131,630 reduction).
- Maine Revenue Services, Justin McMann helped lead the revaluation in the Unorganized Territory and explained the reasons the revaluation process was conducted. Mr. McMann also reported how the Maine Revenue Services determines property values and presented a sales ratio study which is performed yearly.
- Ms. Toder asked whether valuation methods differentiate between properties with electricity versus without electricity and properties that have footbridge or improved access for bringing materials to an island versus properties with no road or improved access of any kind.

The Commissioners stated that they would review the information and issue a decision at a later date.

The hearing was closed at 10:37 AM

Meeting Reconvened at 10:44 AM

Administration Update –

Administrator Tinkham reminded the Commission that there will be two more tax abatement hearings on March 18th; that meeting will start again at 9:00 AM.

Approval of Warrants-

Payroll Warrant	02.27.26 \$381,526.66
A/P General Fund	03.04.26 \$1,530,650.11
A/P Unorg Terr	03.04.26 \$199,197.90
A/P ARPA	03.04.26 \$313,488.70

Commissioner Tremble made a motion to approve the warrants per Item I on the agenda. Commissioner Marshall seconded the motion. A vote to approve passed 3-0. Signed.

Tax Abatement Appeal Hearing

Commissioner Cushing opened the hearing at 10:45 AM

- Present were:
 - Allan Symonds – Property Owner Attending via Zoom
 - Justin McMann – Maine Revenue Services
 - Colby Higgins – Maine Revenue Services
 - For property located at 27 Island Way / T3 Indian Purchase / Penobscot County / Tax Map PE032 / Plan 12 / Lot 70 / Account 198060169
- Property is a 1.72 -acre lot
- Property has been passed down by family for the last 67 years; this property can be reached by boat or hiking a footbridge
- Assessed value in 2025 is \$ 356,710. Mr. Symonds is requesting an assessed value of \$296,345 (a \$60,365 reduction)
- Rebuttal from the State Revenue Service Justin McMann reported the State's methodology in assessing the value of the properties. The Symonds has a full septic system as well as a larger lot with the Hunter comparable.
- Mr. Symonds rebutted that there is only 100 square foot difference with the comparable cottage, but doesn't feel it would cause a \$40,000 valuation difference. Mr. Symonds agrees he has a bigger property but the .7 acre in the back area is unusable as it is a cliff / hill.
- The Commissioners stated that they would review the information and issue a decision at a later date.

The hearing was closed at 11:25 AM

Payroll status changes signed for: Ketsia Keza, Megan Burby and Deborah Braun.

Commissioner Tremble moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:23 AM. Commissioner Marshall seconded the motion. A vote to approve passed 3-0.

Signature Page

Certified By:

Administrator, Blair Tinkham

Andre E. Cushing, III, Chair

Daniel J. Tremble, Commissioner

David S. Marshall, Commissioner