

**Penobscot County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes May 19, 2020** 2284  
**9:00 AM Commissioners Peter Baldacci, Andre Cushing and Laura Sanborn** 57°

Roll call via team viewer was taken at 0900 with all three Commissioners present.

**Approval of Minutes –**

Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to approve May 12, 2020 meeting minutes.  
Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

**EMA Update –**

- The go ahead from Governor Mills is allowing health care and dental offices to start opening up.
- In regards to Treasurer John Hiatt's question last week in regards to how the CDC looks to allow Counties to re-open – Michelle has sent inquires to the State CDC but has not received any information back.
- EMA received over 300 cloth face masks for the Dept. of Education/School lunch programs in our County. Michelle will be delivering them today for distribution.
- Commissioner Baldacci asked if Penobscot County looks like it is pretty stable. Michelle does send out daily updates with the CDC numbers for cases, deaths and recoveries.
- Commissioner Cushing asked the difference between Kennebec County and Penobscot as to why they were permitted to open up. Michelle commented that Kennebec hasn't been identified as having community spread as Penobscot County does. Kennebec's numbers are higher because their high cases are contained within Long Term Care facilities.
- Michelle informed the Commissioners that questions pertaining to the guidance set forth by CDC/Governor are being asked however; Michelle's questions via email are going unanswered. Ongoing conversation about this resulted in Michelle forwarding an email sent to Dr. Shah to Commissioners.
- Commissioner Baldacci thanked Director LaBree for all she's doing and the updates she is providing the Commissioners during this time.

**UT Update –**

UT Director Shaw Weeks reported the following:

- Director Weeks reminded the Commissioners that on March 10<sup>th</sup> Matt Lewis from Maine Stream Finance presented a request for TIF funds in the amount of \$81,250.

**UT Update – Continued:**

- This funding request was from OTELCO who is looking to increase broadband infrastructure in Argyle Township. This proposal was for \$162,000, half of which was approved by the CCs through TIF funding. The other half was to come from OTELCO's grant application to ConnectME. If OTELCO was unsuccessful with the ConnectME grant, the CCs would reassess and consider providing the entire \$162,000. The TIF Committee proposed a forgivable loan for the \$81,250, with zero percent interest over a five year period, to which the commissioners agreed on March 10<sup>th</sup> after a presentation by Matt Lewis.
- Since that approval Shaw has been working with attorney's at Rudman Winchell to finalize the agreement terms and definitions. Unfortunately, OTELCO's CEO is unwilling to sign the agreement for a forgivable loan.
- Shaw presented another option to provide OTELCO a grant for this project and with the Commissioners' approval Director Weeks will draft a new grant contract for the Argyle broadband expansion project and have our attorney review it for approval.
- Commissioners Baldacci and Cushing expressed concerns regarding grant funding including:
  1. Performance and completion of project.
  2. Precedence established in giving for profit entities TIF grant money.
  3. Transfer of assets from sale of OTELCO. (Grant funding provided to expand OTELCO's network assets would likely have to be repaid upon sale or transfer of the assets.)
- Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to support the Argyle Broadband Expansion Project in the form of a grant with acceptable Legal Language. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

**Administration Update –**

Administrator Bill Collins reported the following:

- Sheriff Morton sends his apologies for not being able to attend today's meeting. However, Sheriff provided the following:
  - Governor Mills over the weekend has issued an order for Counties to hold sentenced DOC Inmates due to transportation risks. The Sheriff is working with all other Sheriff 's regarding this Order. Our Jail population is starting to rise and the inmates are starting to get restless. The inmates that have been sentenced to the MDOC have increased from four (4) to six (6). Administrator Collins stated at last count there were 115 housed inmates with about 40-45 boarded.

**Administration Update – Continued:**

- Calls for service in Patrol are increasing with a large number of suicides, overdoses and domestic violence calls.
- Civil Department is back to work with the courts as there is an increased demand for services.
- When asked by Commissioner Baldacci if there is an update on the actions that MSA recommends on the Governor's order, Mr. Collins replied, Not Yet.
- MCCA has decided to cancel their Annual County Convention that was to be held at Sunday River this September.
- The General Unit three-year contract is in the Treasurer's Office for signature. Those who have not signed, please do so. AFSCME representative Sylvia Hebert will be in later this week to sign.
- Commissioner Baldacci and I participated via ZOOM in the LPC legislative call yesterday. The major topic of discussion was another Federal stimulus package for Local Governments (SMART). The dollar amounts nationwide is \$500B; the formula is 2/3 of those funds will go to States and 1/3 of those funds go to the municipalities and Counties.
- Administrator Collins also participated in a MCCAM meeting yesterday via ZOOM. A variety of topics discussed included.
  - This meeting held with representatives from MCCAM and MCCA, 40+ other participants with new Chief Justice Andy Mead regarding the reopening of the Courts and what new requirements will be in place.
  - The group also discussed what counties will be doing for openings. Many plan Soft Openings which means still in a partial lockdown allowing entrance by appointment only. Some employees will continue working remotely. Most are planning at opening June 1<sup>st</sup> with a couple of exceptions.
- HR Director Erika Honey and Administrator Collins participated in a conference call Thursday on workers comp reviews. This was a very positive meeting. Erika is managing our open cases.
- A reminder that next Monday is Memorial Day. The County will be closed for all non-essential personnel.
- The State Auditor sent corresponded that we will be receiving our Annual reports for the Unorganized Territory shortly.
- Bangor Daily News did a story on our Radio Tower Bond.
- We received correspondence from the FCC regarding a new tower for Verizon in the Edinburg area.
- Information was received from the Maine State Claims Board that they will be holding a hearing on July 8<sup>th</sup>. Commissioners will have to decide which one of you will represent Penobscot County.

**Administration Update – Continued:**

- Our attorney's and Bill have successfully submitted approved language to the Secretary of State for the Radio Tower Bond. The Treasurer's Statement has been put together from Finance Director Judy Alexander; Treasurer John Hiatt can sign it later today.
- Commissioners discussed the required Budget Committee meetings to present the radio tower bond for each of their Districts. This can be done remotely or in person. No definitive decision was made regarding a time or date.
- Treasurer Hiatt requested clarification on what is public vs county property. This is in regards to a protest to repeal rank choice voting that occurred last week in front of the Post Office. Commissioner Baldacci noted the side walk in front of the Post Office is not acceptable space to protest.
- Treasurer Hiatt had a question about County email usage regarding his laptop and if his privacy was invaded. Treasurer Hiatt takes offense that as a public official his emails were read. Commissioner Baldacci and Administrator Collins each assured Mr. Hiatt that his personal emails were not read and his privacy was not invaded.
- Payroll Change Notices signed for: Diana Ronald, Billie Jo Stover, Laura Doak and Dorine Jandreau.
- Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to approve the payroll and accounts payable warrants as presented. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- Payroll Warrant to be approved for week ending: \$233,574.47
- Accts Payable Warrant to be approved for week ending: \$52,361.43
- Unorganized Territory Warrant to be approved for week ending: NONE
- Unorganized Territory TIF Warrant to be approved for: NONE

**Meeting Adjourned-**

Commissioner Sanborn moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:53 a.m. with no further business on the agenda. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0

**Certified By:**

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Administrator, William Collins

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Peter K. Baldacci, Chairman

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Laura J. Sanborn, Commissioner

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Andre E. Cushing, III, Commissioner