

PISCATAQUIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING

May 21, 2024

DOVER-FOXCROFT

Minutes

8:30 AM PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Piscataquis County Commissioner Chairman Andrew Torbett called the meeting into session at 8:30 AM in the Chambers. Commissioner Wayne Erkkinen and Commissioner Paul Davis were in attendance. The meeting was available online on Zoom.

1. Piscataquis County Commissioners reviewed and approved the minutes of the May 7, 2024 meeting. M: Paul Davis S: Wayne Erkkinen V: 3-0-0
2. Piscataquis County Commissioners had no adjustments to be made to the agenda.
3. Piscataquis County Commissioners reviewed for approval the County expenditures in the amount of \$86,085.45. M: Paul Davis S: Wayne Erkkinen V: 3-0-0
4. Piscataquis County Commissioners reviewed for approval the Jail expenditures in the amount of \$16,061.41. M: Wayne Erkkinen S: Paul Davis V: 3-0-0
5. Piscataquis County Commissioners reviewed for approval the Unorganized Territory expenditures in the amount of \$26,878.68. M: Paul Davis S: Wayne Erkkinen V: 3-0-0
6. Piscataquis County Commissioners reviewed for approval the Payroll Warrant for May 9, 2024 in the amount of \$139,333.19. M: Wayne Erkkinen S: Paul Davis V: 3-0-0
7. Piscataquis County Commissioners reviewed the Utility Location Permit applications for pole replacements on Lyford Road in Orneville requested by Consolidated Communications of Northern New England Company LLC. It was filed with the State of Maine Department of Transportation in Augusta. We will file the application in the County Commissioners pole/permit book Volume 21 pages 274-286 in the Registry of Deeds. M: Wayne Erkkinen S: Paul Davis V: 3-0-0
8. Piscataquis County Commissioners heard an update from Angela Arno, Executive Director of PCEDC. She had a guest, Perry Williams of the Mountain Ski Project on Zoom, who spoke to the Commissioners. Perry Williams stated he has been working in the UT and is back under contract with Big Squaw. We took a step back but now are working with Jim Confalone on a closing. It is looking good and the lawyers are involved. We are going with the exact same package as before but it will be phased in slower, but consistent. We will start this summer on tearing down the old hotel, lodge and then work on the snow making. The storm wiped out the snow making capability. The site will be cleared and then we will begin working on snow making. We will meet in June with the Friends of the Mountain. We will place the order this summer for the chairlift which takes over a year to get and then it will take 4-6 months to put it in. We are building our team of architects, engineers, lawyers and finance. We are looking forward to and will make an announcement once we close. Commissioner Paul Davis asked if the base lodge is where the swimming pool was? Perry said yes. Commissioner Paul Davis said where kitchen is too? Perry said yes, everything will be coming down. We are working with PCEDC Executive Director Angela Arno on the Brownfields grant. That building is obsolete with asbestos that needs to be removed and disposed of properly. So, we will really clean the site

up. Commissioner Chair Andrew Torbett asked if he thought they would encounter delays with LUPC? Perry said he did not think so because they have secured that permit. Part of the plan was a two-step permitting process and we followed the advice. LUPC was step one and that was issued and remains the same. Currently, we are working on the permit for new housing which will take a year and a half. Commissioner Paul Davis asked if the lower part would be open? Perry said yes on a limited basis, the Friends of the Mountain have run it and they have a lease that gets transferred to us at closing so we will work with them. The December 18 storm washed everything out and destroyed the pump by the dam and eliminated the water source so there was no way to make snow. They opened with natural snow only. It was a shame because it was in good shape from all the work that was done over the summer. Mountain View Pond is a great water source for the mountain. Commissioner Paul Davis said there were once 100 employees there. The pump at the pond was made from tractor motor and is outdated. New electric pumps will be installed. Commissioner Wayne Erkkinen said he has found all the plans and will readjust to the top of his pile. We have a big team and are ready to go to work. Have gone through the LUPC planning board and now coordinate with DEP. The site impacts three acres. Have already met with so they know what the plan looks like but it will be streamlined. Just a matter of calculating all the engineering factors. We appreciate your support and you will be seeing more in the press.

PCEDC Executive Director Angela Arno shared we will provide some assistance to the Mountain Project. In 2023, we had \$500k in protection grant funds and we worked with area business in the County to do assessment work. We look at any environmental impacts/risks and with the cleanup under new ownership the assessment grant RLF work comes hand in hand where we can show environmental hazards. If it is a non-profit, the grant can be up to 50% and if profit, we can get a low interest loan. Our RLF has \$600k still in it. We are looking to see what Perry wants to do. We can do a low interest loan for demolition. We are looking at and doing work at the Browns Mills, old tannery, which has old oil tanks and lead. Yesterday, we were just refunded up to one million dollars. We now have \$1.6 million in the fund. We now have enough for the Mountain Project, Browns Mills and a possible third project. We have \$800k in the grant's technical assistance program. The market study said the Browns Mills needs to be a housing opportunity for the top four floors as the bottom floor is flood zone. We will work with the EPA to do a cost analysis which is very time consuming. The Hotel study came in under Brownfields. Commissioner Paul Davis said he is concerned with Dulvaltex in Guilford. Angela said it is on her radar and if it sells, they can do an assessment. Grant is spent with RLF but we can get paid back and sit on program funds (Mayo Mill). We are sitting on \$80k that we could pull to cover assessment at Dulvaltex, if sells. I have been working with the Guilford Town Manager Johanna Turner. Where the old hotel burned down, if Dulvaltex sells, dam comes out, what do we do with the vacant lot is a question. Commissioner Paul Davis said it sounds like a lot of ifs. Angela said yes, we have to wait and see. Commissioner Andrew Torbett said it sounds like a lot of dealing with environmental rather than economic? Angela said yes, you have to bring dollars/taxes back in. Brownfields brings jobs in and assessments bring grants. The new hotel at the Mountain will bring jobs, taxes, food tax, etc. Commissioner Wayne Erkkinen asked about the Dover Hotel. Angela said we sent the RFP out before Thanksgiving and received no proposals. We sent out a survey but the timing wasn't good. We just reissued last week. It goes out to all of the franchises in the region. I have 15 emails, 2 calls and 1 site visit already. It has been a great response this time and the RFP will close in July. Angela handed out the Maine Highlands 2023 Economic Impact & Visitor Tracking Report from December 2022-November 2023. Visitor spending was \$1 billion between Penobscot and Piscataquis Counties. She will email it to the Commissioners. Angela said she has a \$250k grant to put in by this Friday. Commissioner Paul Davis asked her to find a buyer for Dulvaltex. Commissioner Wayne Erkkinen said there is a buyer for the one in Newport.

9. Department Heads:

- a. County Manager, Michael Williams
 - Have a meeting Wednesday with Sheriff Robert Young, Chief Deputy Todd Lyford and Annalee Rosenblatt on Union Negotiations.
 - Have meetings coming up with Road Commissioner Carl Henderson and FEMA to look at storm damage.
 - Spoke to Budget Committee members and have eight of them agree to come and meet on Thursday, May 30 at 6:00 pm to increase the UT budget. Talked to Deputy Treasurer Johanna Turner and we will be using undesignated funds so it will not increase taxes. We will not receive any FED funds until after the fiscal year and need to get over the gap caused by the storm. Deputy Director Debra Hamlin and I are learning the process from our meetings with the FEMA representatives. Our damage amount is just about \$100k with three to five more culverts to get in. Still more cleanup to be done so we are looking to be around \$120-\$130k and we may get about 70% reimbursement.
 - Emailed and left a message with Town Manager Jack Clukey with regards to the Parking Lot Policy for upcoming events. We will need to use the parking lot for Dispatch and there may not be much space left for the parade on Monday but we have not heard back so just a heads up.
- b. County Treasurer, Trisha White-did not attend.
- c. Jail Administrator, Michelle Lacroix
 - We are good. Dealing with the switch over from heat to A/C. We have 13 County, 11 FEDs, and 1 out of County.
- d. Sheriff, Robert Young
 - Chief Deputy Todd said Sheriff Robert Young had to step out. We are looking to replace Jeremy Rackliff. Commissioner Paul Davis asked if it was advertised? He said yes, but we are not having much luck.
- e. EMA Director, Jaeme Duggan-did not attend
 - Deputy Director Debra Hamlin stated, we are all good with nothing new to report. Commissioner Paul Davis asked about the cars he saw at the Bunker. She said the Eastern Area Agency on Aging works out of the bunker to deliver meals.
- f. Probate Register, Donna Peterson
 - We are moving along and have been pretty busy. Someone expressed an interest in the part-time position and started training yesterday. Will probably be about 15-20 hours per week.
- g. Deeds Register, Gail Clark
 - Nothing new to report and our numbers to date are up.
- h. District Attorney Office, Corina Rackliff
 - Case Management contract is signed and I will take lead. We will have meetings every week on Zoom. The conversion/data work will ramp up the first of June and be completed by October 2025.
 - IT will be moving on Thursday so the system will be down. We will work on non-case management things.
 - Courts e-filing is going forward but not sure on time requirements. This will take more from our office and we will need another person. I have discussed with District Attorney Christopher Almy and he agrees so we will be adding to our budget when goes to the Budget Committee.
 - Child Sexual Assault cases take more time. One case redaction took three hours and there is no way around it as it is out responsibility and we have quite a few pending.

- We have been having internet issues with our wire-less connection. We have an email out to IT. It may be that we can jump on to the County or may need an extension or boost.
 - Case numbers are up 12% from last year.
- i. Head of Maintenance, Joshua York
- HVAC is going well. They are bringing in someone to take out the old system.
 - Dispatch Construction Project is moving along well.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Andrew Torbett expressed his appreciation to everyone for the quality of work that is done here at the County.

Meeting adjourned at 9:14 AM. M: Paul Davis S: Wayne Erkinen V: 3-0-0