

Upper Valley Economic Council

Meeting Minutes: June 24, 2019

Next Meeting: Monday July 22, 2019 at 7:00 pm.

The meeting was brought to order at 7:00 pm.

Present: Alvin Theriault, Peter Qualey, Brian McQuarrie, Lois Eash and Jeff Packard.

Guests: Fred Michaud - Scenic Byways Program Coordinator
Rep. Stephen Stanley - Medway

Minutes: It was moved, seconded and passed to accept the minutes of May 20 , 2019.

Treasurer's Report/Sign Warrants: Office Manager Packard presented the Treasurer's report for June 24, 2019. The Board voted to approve the report as read. The Board signed the warrants.

Fred Michaud - Millinocket Lake Project & Byway Update: Fred gave the Board the background of the Katahdin Woods & Waters Scenic Byway. The funding for the Parking Lot & Bathroom on the Lake Road was initially to be funded by Federal grant money from the State of Maine. In November of 2016 Fred got a call from Senior Management of the DOT that the bid package was posted for the Patten but the Governor's Office has pulled the project. We will also probably lose the Federal money for the Lake Road Project. In April of 2017 Fred was trying to get back the funding for the Lake Road Project. They expect to hear back by May 6th on The Maine Historic Preservation Commission project review. There is \$250,000 available with the cost of project being \$390,000. They have found another \$150,000 additional finding but it needs approval from the DOT Commissioner. Without the additional funding a bathroom could not be constructed. A decision was made to go ahead and construct the Parking Lot. Fred informed the Board about what the Parking Lot will look like and how it is being constructed. Office Manager Packard gave an update to the Board on the Parking area at the Millinocket Lake Gateway Project: There's surface paving scheduled for next Friday and then pavement striping the following Monday. The EMERA power line is in the pipeline and the light poles should be shipped in the next two weeks. The landscape is complete except for the big kiosk with roof and the roadside turnout sign. Both are in production and likely to go in the ground hopefully the week after 4th of July. We can open the site up Tuesday before the 4th of July and put the finishing pieces together without trouble - Larry Johannesman. Fred showed a concept design of the Bathroom to the Board. Fred has been working to acquire funding for a Bathroom and Maintenance. Fred was successful in acquiring \$2,500 per year for 10 years for maintenance in funds from the Piscataquis County Commissioners from their White Water rafting Fee Reimbursement fund. The Maine DOT has a \$50,000 matching grant for the Bathroom which was matched by the Piscataquis County Commissioners. The Nature Conservancy is giving \$20,000, Private donation of \$5,000, potential USDA grant for \$50,000, which leaves \$25,000 to construct the Bathroom.

Baxter State Park will sponsor a grant application through the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund for \$25,000 if UVEC agrees. The grant requires an Agency Sponsor. Estimation for a well is \$45,000 and for the Bathroom is approximately \$150,000. Fred is looking to raise capital for the maintenance for 20 years for about \$10,000 per year. There are people who will do they maintenance if we can raise the funding for the cost. Before the Maine DOT canceled the plan to supply funds for maintenance, there were two Rest Areas the Maine DOT was considering closing down and the money saved matched by \$5,000 for the maintenance: One in Haynesville which was subject to vandalism and one in Oxbow which has very little use. Those closures would have saved \$7,600. The DOT decided to put the money saved back into the Maine DOT's budget. Fred and Matt Polstein will make an effort to the Maine DOT Commissioner to get these funds back for the maintenance cost for the Bathroom. Fred stated once the whole project is done UVEC can ownership of the property or turn it over to another 501 (c) 3. Alvin stated that UVEC was willing to aide this project by taking temporary ownership but UVEC's intentions were to turn it over to another 501 (c) 3. Fred presented an opportunity for UVEC to have a concession stand on the side of the Bathroom sell Ice Cream during the Summer Season. The UVEC Board decided that they did not want to participate in this as well. A motion was made by Alvin Theriault to have Baxter State Park sponsor a grant through the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund. Lois Eash seconded the motion. The motion passed. UVEC needs to get insurance on the property. The USDA grant needs an amendment in the UVEC Bylaws mentioning that its area of interest includes Piscataquis County. The Board agreed to add an amendment which will include Piscataquis County through UVEC's participation with the Scenic Byway.

Broadband/Fiber Optics: TIF money can be used to finance broadband. Signed into law Thursday June 13.

Betterment Grant: The decision on the grant will be forth coming in June.

Gloria MacKenzie Grant Update: Office Manager Packard got the quotes for the Stacyville grant and Jill Ducharme will be writing the final proposal to be submitted by June 30.

Office Manager's Report:

The May Food give out had: 51 Households Served
Sherman – 25 Households
Stacyville – 13 Households
Other Towns - 13 Households
There were a total of 143 people served.

A meeting was held by the St. John - Aroostook RC&D Steering Committee at 11:00 on Friday, June 7, 2019 at the Aroostook County Office, Administrative Hearing Room at the Court House in Caribou. The purpose of the meeting is to decide whether to dissolve the organization and how to dispense any assets. Chairman Qualey informed the Board they dissolved and dis pursued their assets to the St. John Soil & Water, Central Aroostook Soil & Water, and the Southern Aroostook Soil & Water.

KRDB Update:

1. A company called Omega Benefits is looking to expand into the Katahdin region. They outsource Human Resources for Businesses. They are hiring a Operations Manger for their Maine Division.
2. There is an opportunity for a warehouse facility in the Katahdin Region as storage for Paper from paper-mills.
3. Economic Director Mike Elliott will be compiling a data base of commercial property available in the Katahdin Region.
4. A federal resource forum that will be held at the Higher Ed Center in East Millinocket on July 19, 2019. So far, SEVEN federal agencies will be coming to have a closed round table discussion, and more could be coming! After the closed session, we will be opening it up to the public so local businesses and others can learn more about how these agencies support the economic development efforts here in the region. Sherman Town Manager Debra O’Roak will be attending.
5. Town Manager Debra O’Roak & Office Manager Packard met with Tom Boutureira - Program Officer for the Elmina B. Sewall Foundation. The Sewall Foundation is in an exploratory phase and seeking input from community leaders in the region about how we might be able to better serve the region. Discussions were held on the obstacles facing Stacyville & Sherman and what these two areas need for economic development. Tom wanted their opinion on the National Monument and the several organizations formed in the Millinocket, East Millinocket & Medway area.

Business up-date: No Update.

UVEC RBEG Update: There was a citizen who asked for the loan documents but has not filled them out at this time.

Sherman Boralax Plant: The deadline for the payment of Personal property tax is nearing. If they are not paid the Town of Stacyville will take ownership. There is a company interested in buying the Plant.

Meeting Adjourned at: 7:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

John Qualey, Treasurer
