

Location: Town Office, Council Chambers
21 Water Street, 2nd Floor

Viewing on: Pioneer Cable – Channel 400
Spectrum Cable – Channel 1301 or Channel 7

Public Participation thru Zoom: Meeting ID: 856 7271 4460
NO PASSCODE NEEDED
CALL-IN: 1-929-205-6099

AGENDA

Special Council Meeting

**October 14, 2025
5:30 PM**

A. (S100225-1) Council enters Executive Session with the Assistant Town Manager and Attorney Burns of Bernstein Shur via Zoom for the purpose of discussing pending and potential litigation regarding the Town's camera system, pursuant to MRSA Title 1, Section 405(6)E.

B. (S100225-2) Council agrees to enter into the Settlement Agreement and Release between Mark Lipscombe, Craig Harriman, Patrick Bruce and the Town of Houlton regarding the Town's camera system.

C. (S100225-3) Council agrees to discontinue the pre-public period script to be read before the public comment period at Regular Council Meetings.

D. (S100225-4) The Town of Houlton ordains that Chapter 7 General Assistance Appendix A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H dated October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025 of the Houlton Code be replaced with General Assistance Appendix A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H dated October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026. (Note: The document in its entirety is available at the Town Office during normal business hours.)

Appendix A – Total Monthly Allowed GA Maximums

Appendix B – Food Maximums

Appendix C – Housing Maximums

Appendix D – Utilities

Appendix E – Heating Fuel

Appendix F – Personal Care & Household

Appendix G – Mileage Rate

Appendix H – Funeral Maximums

(Introduction)

The maximums are reviewed annually by the state and amended as needed.

Adjournment

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AGENDA

Regular Council Meeting

**October 14, 2025
6:00 PM**

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comments

I. Minutes: Special Council Meeting of September 16, 2025, Special & Regular Council Meeting of September 22, 2025 & Special Council Meeting of October 2, 2025

II. Old Business

A. (S090325-2) The Town of Houlton ordains that the 2025 Municipal Budget appropriations be amended as follows:

DEPARTMENT	ACCOUNT	TITLE	AMOUNT
SPECIAL PROJECTS	111-98-8-02	AUDIO IMPROVEMENTS	-\$15,000
SPECIAL PROJECTS	111-98-8-45 (NEW)	COMPUTER UPGRADES	+\$15,000
SPECIAL PROJECTS	111-98-8-57	WEED CONTROL	-\$4,250
SPECIAL PROJECTS	111-98-8-45 (NEW)	COMPUTER UPGRADES	+\$4,250

(Public Hearing)

Audio improvements in Council Chambers will not be completed this year and weed control was paid with TIF funds.

B. (S090325-2) The Town of Houlton ordains the transfer of up to \$7,991 from the Undesignated Fund Balance to Special Projects account 111-98-8-45 for the purchase of computer equipment and installation in various departments.

(Public Hearing)

Up to \$25,000 was approved for transfer on February 24, 2025 to cover interest on a Tax Anticipation Note, and only approximately \$5,000 of that will be needed.

C. (S100225-4) The Town of Houlton ordains that Chapter 7 General Assistance Appendix A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H dated October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025 of the Houlton Code be replaced with General Assistance Appendix A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H dated October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026. (Note: The document in its entirety is available at the Town Office during normal business hours.)

Appendix A – Total Monthly Allowed GA Maximums

Appendix B – Food Maximums

Appendix C – Housing Maximums

Appendix D – Utilities

Appendix E – Heating Fuel

Appendix F – Personal Care & Household

Appendix G – Mileage Rate

Appendix H – Funeral Maximums

(First Reading)

The maximums are reviewed annually by the state and amended as needed.

III. New Business

A. (100125-1) Council approves the execution of the application to the Department of Public Safety Bureau of Alcoholic Beverages by Wine Until Nine located at 84 Main Street, for renewal of liquor license.

(Public Hearing)

Approval is required by the state.

B. (100125-2) Council authorizes the Town Manager to submit an application to the State of Maine Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program for an Economic Development Grant on behalf of Serendipitous Dragonfly for an amount up to \$60,000. (Note: The purpose of the request is to assist the applicant in creating an indoor play space at the 79 Main Street location and will include the creation of up to 2 new jobs. The application is available for review at the Town Office during normal business hours.)

(Public Hearing)

This is a requirement for the grant process.

IV. Discussion and Reports

A. Gateway Bridge Inspection Report

B. Town Managers Report

C. Councilors' Remarks

V. Adjournment

**Special Council Meeting
September 16, 2025**

Chair Torres called the meeting to order at 2:04 PM with all councilors present, except Councilor Matthews who was excused.

Executive Session

A. (S090225-1) It was moved by Councilor J. McLaughlin, seconded by Councilor Lake that Council enter into Executive Session with the Town Attorney, the Town Manager and the Police Chief for the purpose of union negotiations, pursuant to M.R.S.A Title 1, Section 405(6)D.

Vote was taken as follows: Councilor J. McLaughlin, yes; Councilor Lake, yes; Councilor Peters, yes; Councilor Brown, yes; Councilor E. McLaughlin, yes.

They entered Executive Session at 2:05 PM and returned to Open Session at 3:21 PM.

Adjournment: On motion by Councilor J. McLaughlin, seconded by Councilor Lake, the meeting adjourned at 3:21 PM with all in favor.

**Special Council Meeting
September 22, 2025**

Chair Torres called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM with all councilors present.

A. (S090325-1) It was moved by Councilor J. McLaughlin, seconded by Councilor Lake that Council enter into Executive Session with the Town Attorney and the Town Manager for the purpose of union negotiations, pursuant to M.R.S.A Title 1, Section 405(6)D.

Vote was taken as follows: Councilor J. McLaughlin, yes; Councilor Lake, yes; Councilor Peters, yes; Councilor Matthews, yes; Councilor Brown, yes; Councilor E. McLaughlin, yes.

The Town Attorney was not present. They entered Executive Session at 5:00 PM and returned to Open Session at 5:54 PM.

B. (S090325-2) Councilor J. McLaughlin Introduced the following: The Town of Houlton ordains that the 2025 Municipal Budget appropriations be amended as follows:

DEPARTMENT	ACCOUNT	TITLE	AMOUNT
SPECIAL PROJECTS	111-98-8-02	AUDIO IMPROVEMENTS	-\$15,000
SPECIAL PROJECTS	111-98-8-45 (NEW)	COMPUTER UPGRADES	+\$15,000
SPECIAL PROJECTS	111-98-8-57	WEED CONTROL	-\$4,250
SPECIAL PROJECTS	111-98-8-45 (NEW)	COMPUTER UPGRADES	+\$4,250

Chair Torres noted that the Audio improvements in Council Chambers will not be completed this year and weed control was paid with TIF funds. She noted that the First Reading will be held at tonight's Regular Council Meeting and the Public Hearing will be held on October 14, 2025.

C. (S090325-3) Councilor J. McLaughlin Introduced the following: The Town of Houlton ordains the transfer of up to \$7,991 from the Undesignated Fund Balance to Special Projects account 111-98-8-45 for the purchase of computer equipment and installation in various departments.

Chair Torres noted that up to \$25,000 was approved for transfer on February 24, 2025 to cover interest on a Tax Anticipation Note, and only approximately \$5,000 of that will be needed. She noted that the First Reading will be held at tonight's Regular Council Meeting and the Public Hearing will be held on October 14, 2025.

Adjournment: On motion by Councilor J. McLaughlin, seconded by Councilor Lake, the meeting adjourned at 5:58 PM with all in favor.

**Regular Council Meeting
September 22, 2025**

Chair Torres called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM with all councilors present.

Public Comments

Chair Torres noted that before opening up public comments she would like to note that the pre-public comment script was as much for the public as it was for the Council. She noted that procedure wasn't being followed, and that this was a refresher for us all. She noted that a few changes have been made to the procedure to better accommodate the speaker. She thanked everyone for being here and taking the time to participate in their local government.

She read the following: Before we begin the public comment portion of tonight's meeting, we want to thank you for being here and for taking the time to participate in your local government. By sharing your thoughts, you help guide the Council's view of community priorities and ensure your voice is heard. Please note that this is a listening session and all comments should be directed to the Council and understand that Council members will not respond to questions or comments during this time. If your concern requires follow-up, we encourage you to contact the Town Manager's office or submit a written request. Each speaker is allotted four minutes. If more time is needed it will be at the discretion of the Council Chair. Please be mindful of how your statements may affect other participants and the overall tone of the meeting. When you come to the podium begin by stating your name and your town of residence. With that, we now open the floor for public comments.

Chair Torres recognized Patrick Bruce, Ludlow resident. Mr. Bruce read the following: Dear Council members, neighbors, and friends, I'm here tonight to defend not only my rights, but that of every other person, whether they agree with me or not. And I'm going to criticize and name names if I will it so.

Prior to the 8th of September meeting, I came to you at meetings previously, not shouting, not cursing, just informing you of Maine law as it pertained to the town's illegal surveillance system. No malice, no ill will, as I've already laid those facts where I will not recite them again.

Instead, I'm here for a much more serious purpose. I'm here to protect the right to criticize government. What is at stake is not a policy, but the very foundation of public discourse. You passed a resolution that restricted what can be said on certain topics, favoring one perspective over another.

I quote, we caution all speakers, quote, the individual time limits will be enforced. Quote, while it is true that most meetings do not typically have large numbers of speakers, recent experiences, including those tied to FOA documents and camera issues highlighted the need for clear, consistent guidelines, Torres said, a day after the council meeting to the Bangor Daily News. I wonder who that's describing. I've submitted multiple FOAs. I also have spoken to multiple town meetings about the camera issues. I believe I was the first person to tell you at a council meeting that what the town was doing was illegal. I wonder who you meant. Read your policy that you voted on, and then play back the chair's comments from the BDN in your head.

Quote, but above all else, the First Amendment means that government has no power to restrict expression because of its message, its ideas, its subject matter, or its content. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall and Police Department of Chicago v. Mosley. Or, the council members, in a public meeting saying to the effect that they would like to know if non-residents of Houlton can be banned entirely from speaking at all. And the Chair, quote, yes, I would like to know that, too. Wow.

This is an attack on the fundamental principle of free speech, and it is wrong. The First Amendment is not a suggestion. It is a bedrock principle of our democracy. It explicitly prohibits the government from restricting speech because of its message, its ideas, its subject matter, or its content. This applies to all levels of government, including this government. A government that can silence one viewpoint today can silence a different one tomorrow, and that is a path we cannot afford to walk, and one that I will not walk.

Your role as elected officials is not to shield yourselves from criticism or to silence voices you find disagreeable. It is to create an open forum where all voices can be heard, even the ones you find offensive. And unpopular, especially the ones you find disagreeable and unpopular. When you engage in viewpoint discrimination, you do not strengthen the community, you weaken it by distorting the debate and breeding mistrust. True progress comes not from silencing dissent, but from hearing it, understanding it, and addressing it. Honor your obligations to the Constitution that you all swore. Reaffirm your commitment to free speech for all. I urge you all, in the most forceful manner, to vote... to rescind your policy, which you voted on.

Serenna Fitzpatrick, Civic Center Supervisor, noted that the Fall Ball Fundraiser took place this past weekend and thanked everyone who attended and those that donated, including Jamie and Sue Millar. She thanked Katie Sloat and Randi Farrar for putting this event on and choosing the John Millar Civic Center to be the recipient of the funds. She noted that nearly 40 of our local businesses donated to a large basket raffle.

She thanked Council for their support for funds to repair the sprinkler system. She announced that the sprinkler system repairs were complete and that the Fire Marshall has signed off.

I. Minutes: It was moved by Councilor J. McLaughlin, seconded by Councilor Lake that the Special & Regular Council Meeting of September 8, 2025 minutes be approved as presented.

All were in favor.

II. Old Business

A. (S090125-3) Chair Torres declared the Public Hearing open on the following: The Town of Houlton ordains that Chapter 4 Boards, Commissions, and Special Offices of the Houlton Code be amended with the addition of Article VIII, John A. Millar Civic Center Advisory Board. (Note: The document in its entirety is available for review at the Town Office during normal business hours.)

There being no public comments, Chair Torres closed the Public Hearing.

It was moved by Councilor J. McLaughlin, seconded by Councilor Lake to approve the order.

Town Manager Clark explained that this will be similar to our other advisory boards. He explained that the board will help guide through any challenges or opportunities that the facility may have.

Vote to approve the order was taken as follows: Councilor J. McLaughlin, yes; Councilor Lake, yes; Councilor Peters, yes; Councilor Matthews, yes; Councilor Brown, yes; Councilor E. McLaughlin, yes.

The order passed.

B. (S090325-2) Chair Torres held the First Reading on the following: The Town of Houlton ordains that the 2025 Municipal Budget appropriations be amended as follows:

DEPARTMENT	ACCOUNT	TITLE	AMOUNT
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SPECIAL PROJECTS	111-98-8-02	AUDIO IMPROVEMENTS	-\$15,000
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Chair Torres noted that the audio improvements in Council Chambers will not be completed this year and weed control was paid with TIF funds. She noted that the Public Hearing will be held on October 14, 2025.

C. (S090325-2) Chair Torres held the First Reading on the following: The Town of Houlton ordains the transfer of up to \$7,991 from the Undesignated Fund Balance to Special Projects account 111-98-8-45 for the purchase of computer equipment and installation in various departments.

Chair Torres noted that up to \$25,000 was approved for transfer on February 24, 2025 to cover interest on a Tax Anticipation Note, and only approximately \$5,000 of that will be needed. She noted that the Public Hearing will be held on October 14, 2025.

III. New Business

A. (090225-1) It was moved by Councilor J. McLaughlin, seconded by Councilor Lake that Council accept the bid proposal of \$27,241 from County Micro for computer equipment purchase and installation once the funding is approved.

Chair Torres noted that three bids were received.

Town Manager Clark noted that the memo in the packet outlines this dynamic. He noted that we have 17 desktops and 5 laptops that are running on Windows 10. He noted that the support will be ending in the middle of October, so we need to upgrade the hardware. He noted that we put out a request for proposals and received 3. He noted that this expense wasn't budgeted, which is why we need to move money around to support this. He noted that we had conservative forecasting for interest on the tax anticipation note which leaves us with some additional money.

He noted that he invited each of the contractors to the meeting in case there were any questions for them. He noted that Mark Lipscombe from County Micro, which is his recommendation was here in person tonight.

Chair Torres noted that she knows the people from County Micro and thinks they do excellent work. She also noted that she likes that we chose somebody local.

Councilor E. McLaughlin noted that she had never heard of the company from Texas that put in a bid. She noted that she felt uncomfortable with that and feels we should go with someone local.

Vote to approve the order was taken as follows: Councilor E. McLaughlin, yes; Councilor Brown, yes; Councilor Matthews, yes; Councilor Peters, yes; Councilor Lake, yes; Councilor J. McLaughlin, yes.

The order passed.

B. (090225-2) It was moved by Councilor J. McLaughlin, seconded by Councilor Lake that Council notify the voters of the Town of Houlton of the Regular Municipal and Referendum Election to be held on November 4, 2025, by signing the Municipal Election Warrant.

Chair Torres noted that this is a requirement, and that the Polls will be open 7AM- 8PM at the Gentle Memorial Building, 128 Main Street.

Vote to approve the order was taken as follows: Councilor J. McLaughlin, yes; Councilor Lake, yes; Councilor Peters, yes; Councilor Matthews, yes; Councilor Brown, yes; Councilor E. McLaughlin, yes.

The order passed.

C. (090225-3) It was moved by Councilor J. McLaughlin, seconded by Councilor Lake that Council authorize the Registrar of Voters to be available at the Town Office during the hours the Town Clerk's Office is open for the purpose of registering voters and making name and address changes. (Note: Office hours Monday thru Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and on Thursday, October 30th from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Chair Torres noted that this is a state requirement to inform citizens of the times they can register to vote and make name and address changes before the election. This can also be done at the polls on election day.

Vote to approve the order was taken as follows: Councilor E. McLaughlin, yes; Councilor Brown, yes; Councilor Matthews, yes; Councilor Peters, yes; Councilor Lake, yes; Councilor J. McLaughlin, yes.

The order passed.

D. (090225-4) It was moved by Councilor J. McLaughlin, seconded by Councilor Lake that Council confirm the appointment of Charity Cyr to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board for a 2-Year Term expiring 1/31/2027.

Chair Torres thanked her for volunteering.

Town Manager Clark noted that Charity's application noted that she works with youth and looks forward to giving back to the community. He noted that he's happy to have her on the board.

Vote to approve the order was taken as follows: Councilor J. McLaughlin, yes; Councilor Lake, yes; Councilor Peters, yes; Councilor Matthews, yes; Councilor Brown, yes; Councilor E. McLaughlin, yes.

The order passed.

IV. Discussion and Reports

A. Town Managers Report

Town Manager Clark announced that the downtown sidewalk project was out to bid. He noted that there is a pre bid meeting tomorrow with any interested contractors.

He noted that tax revenues are coming in quite nicely and we will start to pay off the tax anticipation note earlier than forecasted. He noted that in November/December we should have nearly \$4,000,000- \$5,000,000 in the bank. He noted that he was looking into going out to bid for a short-term CD. He noted that he didn't feel we should sit on that kind of money in the bank at a lower interest, that a CD would be a better rate.

He noted that he doesn't pay for a Bangor Daily News subscription, therefore he only gets to see the headline and part of the first paragraph. He noted that there's been a lot of inaccurate reporting, and some dishonest reporting. He noted the recent article that stated the court had ordered the town to release documents. He noted that wasn't true. He noted that the town actually offered an in-camera review on some pending litigation that the court took us up on. He noted that the documents that are being released are related to the in-camera review. He noted that he felt that it was fairly misrepresented, and feels it's important to stand up against the media.

He noted that free speech is recognized and that the intent of the statement was just to remind folks that this is a public meeting and comments made about town employees could be used as defamatory statements in civil rights suits. He noted that it wasn't to limit what they could say, just letting them know the possible outcomes of what they choose to say. He reminded everyone that the Council only has one employee, and that employee is him. He reminded everyone that other personnel matters that need to be taken care of need to go through the appropriate administrative channels which would be the department head or himself.

He stated that he came here to do the right thing and that he is new to this industry. He stated that the constant negative coverage of his work and what's been covered about the town is pretty damaging. He noted that that it is creating a negative reputation among his peers and future professional relationships.

He stated that when he started in January, he was given guidance to utilize some TIF funds and to figure out how to fund roads. He noted that the town had \$200,000 budgeted for roadwork this year, and we've been able to invest over \$1,500,000. He noted that the Reservoir Hill Road project had no funding when he started, and with great support from the staff, we pulled off a special referendum election to get the funding. He noted that the project is nearing completion and under budget.

He noted that with Council's support we were able to invest over \$1,000,000 of TIF funds on regular expenses and expenses as it relates to development and promoting our development programs. He also noted that at the last meeting, the Council supported going out to a referendum for \$2,200,000 for road work.

He noted that he recently announced that a suit named Craig Harriman v. Town of Houlton was dropped by Harriman, which is something that he's been navigating since he got here in January. He also noted that he announced that tax bills were going out at no valuation or mil rate increase during a time when we're seeing municipalities across the state have pretty major increases. He noted that he's not pointing these things out to make a victory lap, he's saying these to be clear that he's extremely proud of the work that he's achieving with the support of department heads and other employees, despite the negative light that the media portrays. He noted that the public is portraying that we're continuing down a negative path, but would like to reassure Council that with their support, his work here is just getting started.

B. Councilors' Remarks

Councilor E. McLaughlin thanked Town Manager Clark and noted that she understood the hard work that him and many of the employees in this town are doing. She noted that she would like to clarify that there's been reporting of the vote that was taken for the public comment procedure. She asked for it to be known that she is not for it, that she unequivocally opposed the Chair's opening remarks during the first read of it. She noted that she continues to feel the same way.

She noted that she feels that everyone has a right to be heard and that 120 seconds, now 240 seconds wasn't long enough if someone wanted to share an expertise on a matter. She noted that she feels every person has the right to be heard in their family, at their employment, and at the local, state and federal government levels. She noted that she feels as though limiting the time of somebody speaking is oppressing them from having the right to discuss without pressure of feeling they've got to race through. She noted that time can be added at the discretion of the

Council Chair, and that the overall tone being good is the goal. She noted that she felt that with three of the previous chairs, the tone was not good about different things. She also noted that she didn't believe that it being at the discretion of the Council Chair gives a democratic ability of all the Council members having a say in that.

She noted that she feels that it is oppressive, as she's been on the other side of it being a citizen where she's been threatened, degraded and received eye rolls when she was speaking about important topics that had impact in the town. She noted that she would like what she said to go on record and that people know that she honors what is said at the podium, whether she agrees with them or not. She noted that she didn't feel it should come down to one person to dictate what is happening here. She noted that there have been situations in the past where people have asked for things to go to referendum. She noted that citizens make choices and all the choices the Council make are for the citizens.

She noted that a businessperson spoke to her about their concerns with regard to the longevity of the bricks. She asked if it was possible to see an example of what the bricks look like and what the difference in longevity is of the tar vs brick. She noted that we have a lot of areas that have beautiful bricks that are historical and wondered if we could make a balance by keeping some of the bricks.

She apologized if she came off a little harsh as she tries to keep her tone down. She noted that the tone towards her has not always been that way and finds it unacceptable. She noted that it will also be unacceptable for anyone that is speaking to Council.

Chair Torres noted that the public comment script is not a policy, it is a procedure. She noted that it was in a way a role model for what we expect to happen. She noted that she was sorry if it offended anybody.

She noted that she appreciated the letter that the Town Manager had added to the tax bills. She noted that it was an eye-opener to get a letter saying where things were going. She noted that the Fall Ball was amazing and proceeds went to a great cause. She noted that people asked why the money was donated to a town entity. She noted that it would probably go towards some pretty good programs for the Civic Center, and feels that it is appropriate.

She reminded everyone that the next Regular Council Meeting will be on October 14th instead of the 13th as it is a holiday.

V. Adjournment: On motion by Councilor Lake, seconded by Councilor J. McLaughlin, the meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM with all in favor.

**Special Council Meeting
October 2, 2025**

Chair Torres called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM with all councilors present, except Councilor Lake who was excused.

A. (S100125-1) It was moved by Councilor J. McLaughlin, seconded by Councilor Peters that Council enter Executive Session with the Town Attorney and the Town Manager for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter, pursuant to MRSA Title 1, Section 405(6)A.

Vote was taken as follows: Councilor J. McLaughlin, yes; Councilor Peters, yes; Councilor Matthews, yes; Councilor Brown, yes; Councilor E. McLaughlin, yes.

They entered Executive Session at 5:00 PM and returned to Open Session at 5:59 PM.

Chair Torres asked at this time if any Councilor had a motion to bring forward. No motion was brought forward.

Adjournment: On motion by Councilor Peters, seconded by Councilor Matthews, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 PM with all in favor.



General Assistance Maximums Reference Sheet-Aroostook County

SFY 2026: Oct 1, 2025-Sept 30, 2026

OVERALL MAXIMUMS (A)				
Persons in Household				
1	2	3	4	5
\$803	\$871	\$1,085	\$1,486	\$1,569
Household of 6 =				\$1,644
*Note: Add \$75 for each additional person.				

HOUSING MAXIMUMS (C)				
Bedrooms	Unheated		Heated	
	Weekly	Monthly	Weekly	Monthly
0	\$149	\$640	\$181	\$779
1	\$155	\$667	\$196	\$844
2	\$192	\$826	\$245	\$1,054
3	\$273	\$1,174	\$338	\$1,451
4	\$278	\$1,196	\$356	\$1,529
Recovery Residence			\$147.00	\$633.00
26+ rooms			\$102.90	\$443.10

FOOD MAXIMUMS (B)			
Persons	Weekly	Monthly	
1	\$69.30	\$298.00	
2	\$126.98	\$546.00	
3	\$182.56	\$785.00	
4	\$231.16	\$994.00	
5	\$275.12	\$1,183.00	
6	\$330.47	\$1,421.00	
7	\$365.35	\$1,571.00	
8	\$416.05	\$1,789.00	
Note: For each additional person add \$218 per month.			

FUNERAL MAXIMUMS (H)	
Cremation	\$1,125
Additional costs that may be allowed:	
* A cremation lot in the least expensive section of the cemetery.	
* Urn, not to exceed \$55.	
* Transportation costs at a reasonable rate per mile.	
Burial	\$1,620
Additional costs that may be allowed:	
* Wholesale cost of cement liner, if required.	
* Opening and closing of gravesite.	
* A lot in the least expensive section of the cemetery unless they can provide a lot in a municipally owned cemetery.	

ELECTRIC (D)

Without electric heat/hot water

# in HH	Weekly	Monthly
1	\$19.95	\$85.50
2	\$22.52	\$96.50
3	\$24.97	\$107.00
4	\$27.53	\$118.00
5	\$29.88	\$128.50
6	\$32.55	\$139.50

For each additional person, add \$10.50/mo

NOTE: For an electrically heated dwelling also see "Heating Fuel" maximums below. But remember, an applicant is not automatically entitled to the "maximums" established applicants must demonstrate need. 1) Electricity Maximums for Households Without Electric Hot Water: The maximum amounts allowed for utilities, for lights, cooking and other electric uses excluding electric hot water and heat:

WITH electric heat/hot water

# in HH	Weekly	Monthly
1	\$29.63	\$127.00
2	\$34.07	\$146.00
3	\$39.67	\$170.00
4	\$46.32	\$198.50
5	\$55.65	\$238.50
6	\$58.68	\$251.50

For each additional person, add \$14.50/mo

2) Electricity Maximums for Households with Electrically Heated Hot Water: The maximum amounts allowed for utilities, hot water, for lights, cooking and other electric uses excluding heat:

HEATING FUEL (E)

Month	Gallons
January	225
February	225
March	125
April	125
May	50
June - August	0
September	50
October	100
November	200
December	200

NOTE: When the dwelling unit is heated electrically, the maximum amount allowed for heating purposes will be calculated by multiplying the number of gallons of fuel allowed for that month by the current price per gallon. When fuels such as wood, coal and/or natural gas are used for heating purposes, they will be budgeted at actual rates, if they are reasonable. No eligible applicant shall be considered to need more than 7 tons of coal per year, 8 cords of wood per year, 126,000 cubic feet of natural gas per year, or 1000 gallons of propane.

PERSONAL CARE & HOUSEHOLD SUPPLIES (F)		
# in HH	Weekly	Monthly
1-2	\$10.50	\$45.00
3-4	\$11.60	\$50.00
5-6	\$12.80	\$55.00
7-8	\$14.00	\$60.00
For each additional person add \$1.25/wk or \$5 per month		
Mileage Rate (G)		
\$.54 per mile		

SUPPLEMENTS FOR HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN UNDER 5 (F)		
# of Children	Weekly	Monthly
1	\$12.80	\$55.00
2	\$17.40	\$75.00
3	\$23.30	\$100.00
4	\$27.90	\$120.00
When an applicant can verify expenditures for the following items, a special supplement will be budgeted as necessary for households with children under 5 years of age for items such as cloth or disposable diapers, laundry powder, oil, & shampoo, up to the following amounts:		

GA Hotline: 1-800-442-6003, option 2 then 1

Revised 09/04/2025



Application Copy

File Number: 100985

Job Type: Renewal Application

LICENSE #

CAR-22-106495

APPLICATION DATE RECEIVED

2025-09-12

LICENSE TYPE

On-Premises: Beer, Wine & Spirits

LICENSEE

HEATHER LAFONTAINE

AGENT NAME

EFFECTIVE DATE

2024-10-14

EXPIRES

2025-10-13

STATUS

Active

PREMISES NAME

WINE UNTIL NINE

NEW SECONDARY LICENSE(S)

None selected

PREMISES TYPE

Class A Restaurant

PREMISES NAME

WINE UNTIL NINE

OPERATOR

HEATHER LAFONTAINE

PHYSICAL ADDRESS

84 MAIN ST HOULTON ME 04730-2117

MAILING ADDRESS

144 BARTON RD HODGDON ME 04730-4405

CONTACT NAME

HEATHER LAFONTAINE

PREFERRED CONTACT METHOD

Email



BRIDGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

**MEDUXNEKEAG RIVER PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE
HOULTON, MAINE**

Project #2001-167A

**Prepared for:
Sewall Infrastructure**

October 1, 2025



HEB Engineers, Inc. | www.hebengineers.com

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Maine: (207) 803-8265 | PO Box 343 | 103 Main Street | Suite 6 | Bridgton, ME 04009

October 1, 2025

Janine Murchinson, PE
Sewall Infrastructure
PO Box 190
Caribou, ME 04736



BRIDGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

Meduxnekeag River Pedestrian Bridge,
HEB Project #2001-167A

Dear Janine,

This Bridge Assessment Report has been prepared by HEB Engineers, Inc. (HEB) for the Meduxnekeag River Pedestrian Bridge over the Meduxnekeag River in Houlton, ME. On August 11, 2025, and August 12, 2025, Eric Schroeder, PE, and Jason Ross, PE, visited the site with you to make observations of the bridge. Presented in this report are field observations, discussion, conclusions, and recommendations. No structural capacity calculations were performed as part of this assessment. This work was conducted in accordance with our Agreement dated June 18, 2025, and signed on July 17, 2025.

BACKGROUND:

The existing bridge was originally constructed in 2005 across the Meduxnekeag River to give pedestrians easy access to the historic downtown Market Square and a trail that goes along the river. The Town is concerned with the condition of the superstructure, especially with the primary glulam arches. In 2014, HEB performed a site observation and noted the separation of the outer lamination of the glulam arches. Since then, the Town installed metal flashing on the top of the arches to prevent exposure to water.

FIELD OBSERVATIONS:

The bridge is a single-span, simply supported structure, with a 179' span (see Photo 1 in Appendix A). The bridge superstructure is composed of two primary glued-laminated timber (glulam) arches, each fabricated from four segments. Metal flashing and bird deterrents were installed on top of each arch. Sections of the metal flashing and bird deterrents were removed for our observations. Caulking was installed by the Town along the top of the arches in the longitudinal joint.

Each glulam arch lamination consists of two sections, one 8 inches wide and one 4 inches wide, stacked with the narrower member staggered relative to the wider member so that the laminae joints stagger along the arch's height (see Photo 2). A crown hinge is located at the arch apex, and bolted steel plate splices connect the members at approximately the one-third points of the span (see Photo 3). There are cracks, approximately 1/2-inch-wide in size, at the bottom of the arches stemming from each of the splices, ranging from 3 feet to 7 feet in length (see Photo 4). There are widespread 1/4-inch to 3/8-inch cracks in the bottom third of both arches. There are isolated locations of delamination at the north east one-third point splice. The top of the arches was inaccessible and therefore was not observed.

The arches are laterally stabilized by a system of diagonal glulam braces, transverse glulam cross-braces, diagonal steel tension rods, and steel diaphragms. There were no significant defects observed in the glulam cross-braces, steel diaphragms, one-third point splices, and the crown hinge. Several of the diagonal steel tension rods were found to be loose (see Photo 5).

The floor system is comprised of two exterior glulam girders supporting transverse floor beams (see Photo 6). The exterior girders extend above the top of the deck, acting like curbs (see Photo 7). The exterior girders are laterally cross-braced with steel tension rods. The steel tension rods were found to be loose in several locations. (see Photo 8). The alignment of the girders is not totally straight. They have a slight wave, back and forth as you travel along the span of the bridge. There are isolated locations that were observed to have minor delamination between the laminations of the glulam. Cracking and delamination appear along the tops of girders surrounding the rail post and sign connections (see Photo 9). Several sections of the top lamination of the girders have been removed, and new

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lumber has been spliced in to accommodate installation of four information signs. The laminate splices are failing at each of these locations, especially at the southwest location where the splice is split (see Photo 10).

The glulam girders are connected to the arch in two different ways. At each end of the bridge, the girders bear on transverse glulam struts, with the struts bolted to the sides of the glulam arches. Both struts have minor staining. Some of the holes appear to have been drilled in incorrect locations, resulting in extra holes in the struts (see Photo 11).

At the interior supports, the transverse steel pipe hanger assemblies are supported by vertical hanger rods that pass up through the glulam arches. The transverse hanger assemblies under the deck were inaccessible; from a distance, no visual defects were observed. One of the vertical hanger rods was found to be loose, and the nut on another hanger rod has also loosened. The rest of the vertical hanger rods were found to be tight (see Photo 12).

The floor beams and stringers are fabricated from dimensional lumber. The floor beams are bolted into the sides of the glulam girders with steel hangers and are spaced evenly across the bridge span. Three interior stringers are bolted to the face of the transverse floor beams. The floor beams and stringers have minor water staining and isolated locations of minor cracking.

The decking is 2x lumber and bears transversely across the interior stringers and transverse deck beams. The gap between deck boards varies from 3/8-inch to 3/4-inch. The decking is weathered, worn, and has minor cracking in isolated locations. Some boards are beginning to soften and cup at the edges. There are also several locations with missing screws. The decking was covered in bird droppings, especially near midspan. A steel slide plate is provided at each end of the bridge to cover the gap between the wooden deck and the concrete backwall adjacent to the approaches. The steel slide plate on the east approach has broken off and is not covering the expansion gap (see Photo 13). The steel slide plate on the west approach is still in place, but is loose (see Photo 14).

The timber components were spot tested in several locations for resistance with an IML-RESI Power Drill. The drill tests the components for soft spots or other internal defects. A summary of tests performed can be reviewed in Appendix B, and the graphs for each test can be reviewed in Appendix C.

The arches are connected to the cast-in-place concrete abutments with pin bearings. It appears the anchor bolts were originally cast in the wrong locations and replaced during construction. There are cut-off bolts visible next to the operating bolts. There are four (4) anchor bolts at the northeast bearing, five (5) anchor bolts at the southeast bearing, five (5) anchor bolts at the northwest bearing, and six (6) anchor bolts at the southwest bearing (see Photo 15). The bottom exterior bolt on the northeast bearing is bent, and the bottom interior nut is loose. There is debris in between the bearing seat and base plate at the northwest bearing (see Photo 16). One of the washers is loose on the northwest bearing. There is minor staining on all bearings, most likely from the treatment of the glulam arches. There is damage and minor surface rust on the ends of the pins, most likely from installation (see Photo 17). There is debris collecting inside each of the steel bearing assemblies (see Photo 18). The floor system, at the ends of the bridge, bears directly onto the concrete abutment wall (see Photo 19). No visual defects were observed on both ends of the floor system bearing.

The bridge substructure consists of cast-in-place concrete abutments founded on spread footings. At the west abutment, there are fine diagonal cracks from the corners of the bridge seat to the edge of the abutment, which have minor efflorescence. There is a cold joint from the original construction just below the bearing seat. There are also common, fine horizontal cracks throughout the backwall (see Photo 20). There is a bird's nest on the bearing seat, and the face of the west abutment is covered in graffiti. There is a junction box mounted to the face of the abutment (see Photo 21). There is water staining directly below the junction box, and holes have been drilled in the bottom of the box to allow water to escape. The east abutment is in similar condition with a cold joint just below the bearing seat and fine diagonal cracks from the corners of the bearing seat to the edge of the abutment. The east abutment does have a fine vertical crack at mid-width from the bearing seat to below existing ground.

Cast-in-place concrete wingwalls are provided on three corners, with a modular block wall located at the northwest corner. All concrete wingwalls have minor efflorescence at the joint between the wingwall and the abutment (see Photo 22). The southwest and southeast wingwall both have a vertical crack at mid-width of the wingwall spanning

the entire height. There is a large gap at the top of the modular block wall and abutment (see Photo 23). Some blocks on the modular block wall are deteriorating, specifically where the blocks abut against the abutment (see Photo 24).

Steel pedestrian railings are provided on both sides of the bridge, bolted to the glulam girders and extending beyond the bridge ends. The total height of the railing is 47 inches, the baluster spacing is 6 inches, and the clearance below the bottom rail is 5 inches. Neither rail is plumb; both railings lean outward. There is common failure of the paint with widespread areas of minor surface rust. One of the rail post base plate bolts is missing. Metal signs are bolted to the top of the exterior stringers in four locations (see Photo 25). The west approach features a brick walkway, and the east approach is paved. Both approaches have settled approximately 2 inches, creating small steps onto the bridge.

The river channel contains large boulders and cobbles (see Photo 26). The bridge does not constrict the channel, and there was no significant debris in the river. There were no noticeable voids in the slopes up to the bridge abutments. Both banks are overgrown with brush (see Photo 27). There is some slight erosion on the northwest corner of the bridge.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS:

The arches were the Town's primary concern and ultimately the reason for the observation. The Town's belief was that each arch section consisted of two independent longitudinal sections that were glued together and were starting to separate. However, the glulam laminations are staggered to create a single beam. There has been shrinkage of the individual laminations, but the overlapping prevents a continuous gap from the top to the bottom of the arch. It does appear the caulking and flashing installed on the top of the arches has helped to prevent further impacts from weather. Only one resistance test (#43) returned a potential soft spot in the north arch on the west end, just below the vertical tie hardware. Caulking should be reapplied where the flashing meets the edge of the vertical hanger hardware to prevent water from seeping underneath the flashing.

There are some significant cracks along the bottom of the arches, particularly in the bottom third of the arch. While these cracks may appear concerning at first glance, they do not compromise the structural integrity of the arches. The arches primarily act as compression members; therefore, the lower portions are not subjected to significant bending forces. As a result, the cracks in the bottom areas have little effect on the members' ability to safely resist and carry compression loads. However, these cracks should be monitored to verify they are not expanding. Overall, the arches appear to be in good to satisfactory condition.

The steel crown hinge, one-third splices, glulam cross braces, and diagonal tension rods appear to be in good condition with no visual defects. Several of the diagonal tension rods were observed to be loose. However, the temperature during the inspection was 92°F, which may have influenced the apparent looseness due to thermal expansion. It is recommended that final adjustments to straighten the alignment of the arches be made on a day with average ambient temperatures to ensure proper tensioning.

The exterior glulam girders are in satisfactory condition. The resistance testing indicated no evidence of significant internal defects, but there was some cracking and section loss along the tops of the girders at the railing and sign connections. The signs were not part of the original design and appear to have failed previously, been replaced, and are now failing again. It is recommended that the sign bases be removed to prevent further damage to the exterior girders, or alternatively, the connection be redesigned to allow the signs to be relocated. Approximately half of the accessible diagonal tension rods below the deck were found to be loose. Uneven tensioning of these rods may be contributing to misalignment of the exterior girders. It is recommended that these rods be tightened on a day with average ambient temperatures to ensure proper alignment.

The transverse floor beams, interior stringers, and transverse struts are in good condition, with resistance testing indicating no evidence of significant internal defects. The decking is in fair condition. The resistance testing indicated no evidence of significant internal defects, but many of the boards are cracked and cupped. While the decking is structurally sufficient, several safety hazards for pedestrians were observed, including bird droppings and missing screws that could create tripping hazards. It is recommended that individual boards be replaced as needed and that

the deck be cleaned regularly to maintain safe conditions. The slide plates are in good condition; however, they are either loose or completely dislodged. It is recommended that both slide plates be reinstalled to protect the bearing seats below and safe pedestrian usage.

The vertical hanger rods are generally in good condition; however, some rods or associated hardware were found to be loose. It is recommended that these be tightened on a day with average ambient temperatures. The pin bearings are in good condition with only minor defects. However, several anchor bolts were found to be missing, likely due to misplacement during construction. According to the shop drawings, each bearing was designed to have six (6) anchor bolts. While no signs of anchor bolt failure have been observed, an analysis should be considered to assess whether the current anchor bolt configuration is sufficient. All pin bearings and bearing seats should be cleaned regularly to prevent debris accumulation.

The cast-in-place concrete abutments and wingwalls are in good condition with minimal defects. The large gap at the top of the modular concrete block wall, where it transitions to the abutment, is allowing water to flow down the junction, resulting in deterioration of the blocks below. It is recommended to fill that gap or to reset the blocks at this transition to prevent further damage. Additionally, water has been running from the end of the block wall along the bottom of the front face, causing some blocks to become undermined. Placing riprap or resetting the blocks at these areas is recommended to prevent further deterioration and undermining of the wall.

The electrical junction box mounted on the west abutment is experiencing water infiltration. There is no evidence of staining above the box on the stem wall or bearing seat; however, staining is visible below the junction box. It is believed that water is entering the box through the wiring at the top. To prevent further exposure of electrical components to water, this wiring should be assessed, removed, and replaced as necessary by a qualified electrician.

The railings are generally in fair to good condition, with only minor defects. However, the connections to the exterior girders are in poor to fair condition, with some locations showing missing bolts and wood splitting around the connections. This may be causing the wood to split and therefore the railings to lean. It is recommended that the railings be monitored, with eventual removal and redesign of the connections advised. If the existing rail is chosen to be redesigned, we recommend sandblasting and repainting all components.

The approaches are both in fair condition. Settlement at each approach is minor, but could be a tripping hazard. It is recommended to continue monitoring the settlement and to eventually reset the pavers to be level with the deck. The channel and banks appear to be stable; however, both sides of the bridge are overgrown with brush. It is recommended to remove the brush around the substructure to allow easier inspection and to prevent moisture buildup around the bridge components.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Overall, the bridge is in good to satisfactory condition. There are no major items of concern observed during the assessment; however, there are some minor repairs and maintenance that should be performed in order to extend the service life of the bridge.

We recommend the following repairs:

- » Reinstall slide plates at both approaches.
- » Remove or redesign and relocate informational signs.
- » Replace deck boards as necessary.
- » Replace wiring at west abutment junction box.
- » Repair modular block wall.
- » Reset brick pavers.
- » Remove, revise connection, repaint, and reinstall bridge rail.

October 1, 2025

We recommend the following annual maintenance tasks:

- » Reinstall caulking and flashing where it was removed along the top of the arches.
- » Reinstall caulking around vertical hanger hardware.
- » Tighten all nuts, bolts, and turnbuckles on the bridge.
- » Adjust all tension rods on a day with average ambient temperature.
- » Clear pin bearings and bearing seats of debris.
- » Clean bridge deck.
- » Remove brush around substructure.
- » Monitor cracks in bottom third of arches, and around splice plates.
- » Monitor bridge rails.

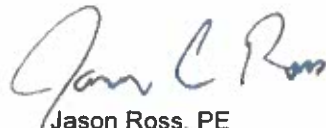
Please let us know if you have any questions or would like to discuss the findings of this report.

Sincerely,

HEB Engineers, Inc.



Eric Schroeder, PE
Staff Structural Engineer



Jason Ross, PE
Senior Structural Engineer

Enclosures: Appendix A – Photo Pages
Appendix B – Drill Testing Log
Appendix C – Drill Testing Graphs

Copy: File

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Houlton, ME Assessment Report 10-01-25.docx

APPENDIX A

Photo Pages

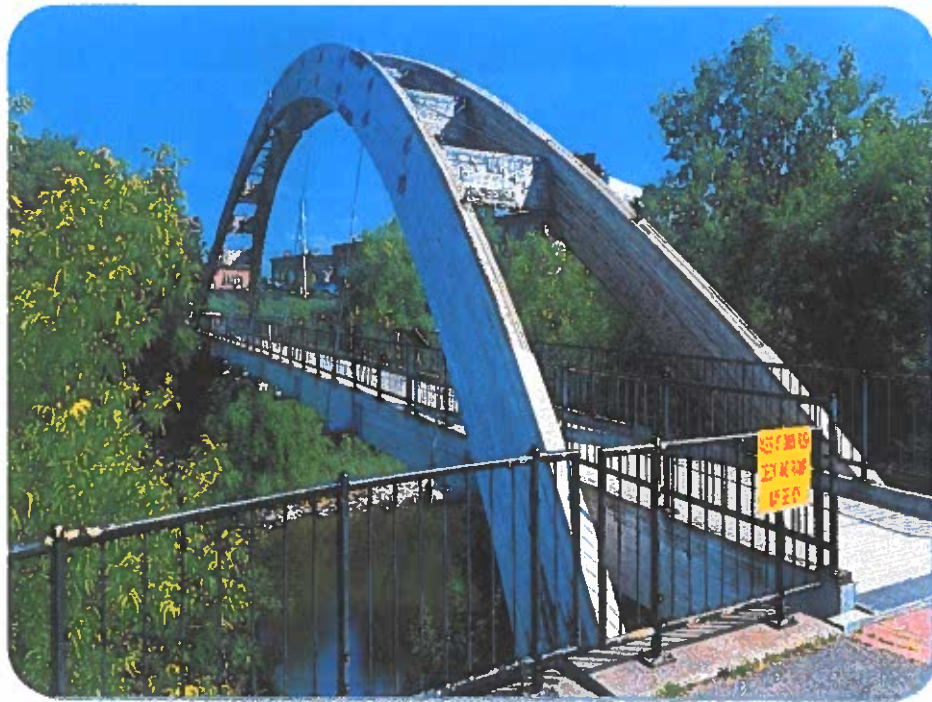


Photo 1: Meduxnekeag River Pedestrian Bridge.



Photo 2: Glulam arch end section.



Photo 3: One-third point splice



Photo 4: Northwest arch splice cracking



Photo 5: Arch diagonal tension rods and cross braces.



Photo 6: Floor system configuration.

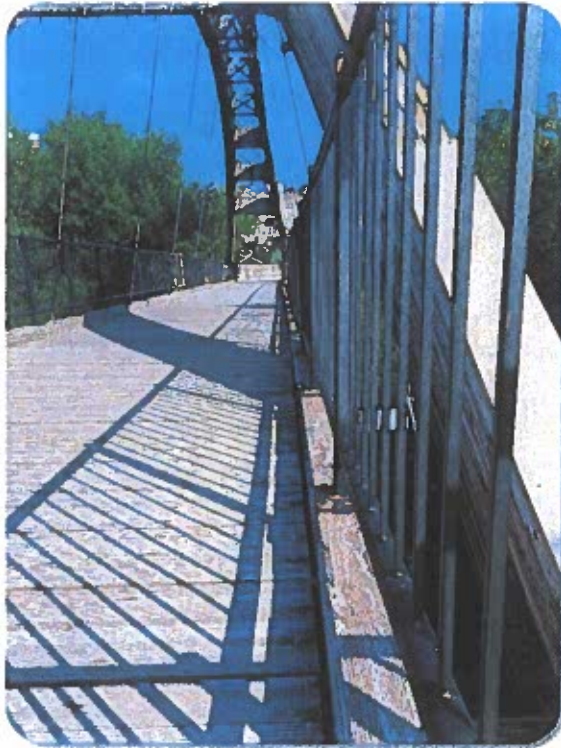


Photo 7: South exterior girder alignment.



Photo 8: Floor system diagonal tension rods.



Photo 9: Rail post base plate.



Photo 10: Informational sign mount.



Photo 11: East transverse strut.

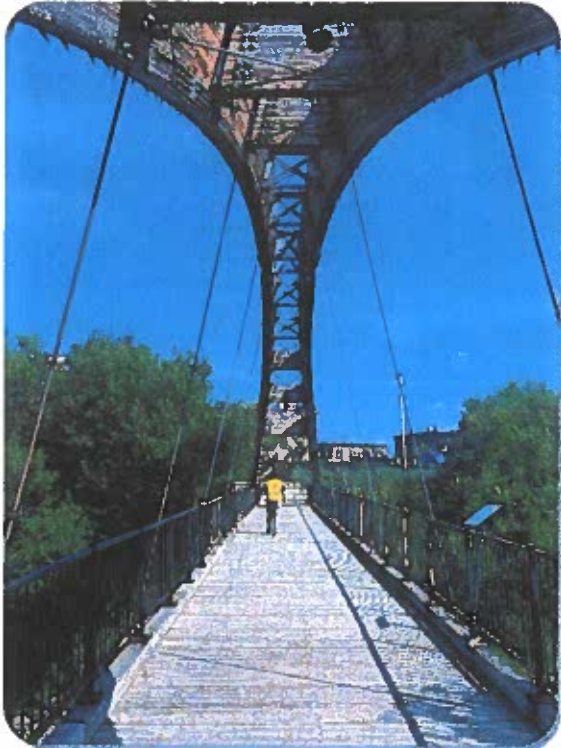


Photo 12: Vertical tie rods.



Photo 13: East approach slide plate.



Photo 14: West approach slide plate.



Photo 15: East bearings.



Photo 16: West bearing



Photo 17: Bearing pin.



Photo 18: Bearing debris.



Photo 19: Debris underneath bearing.



Photo 20: East abutment.

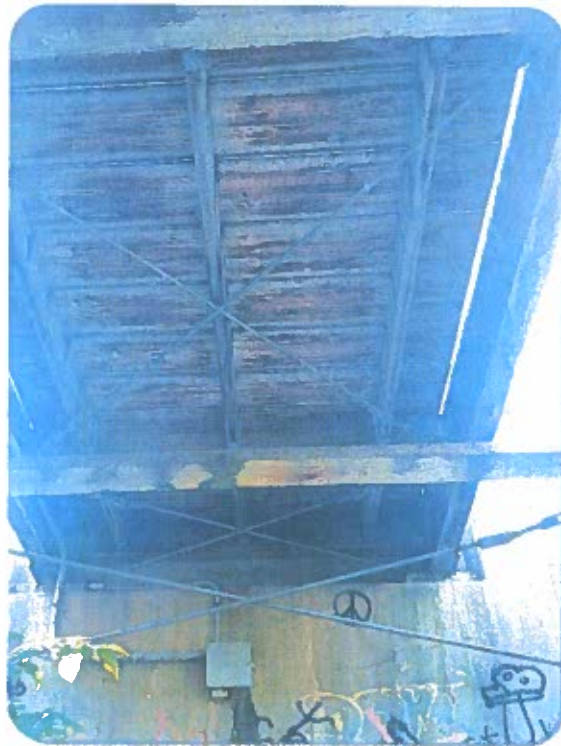


Photo 21: West abutment.

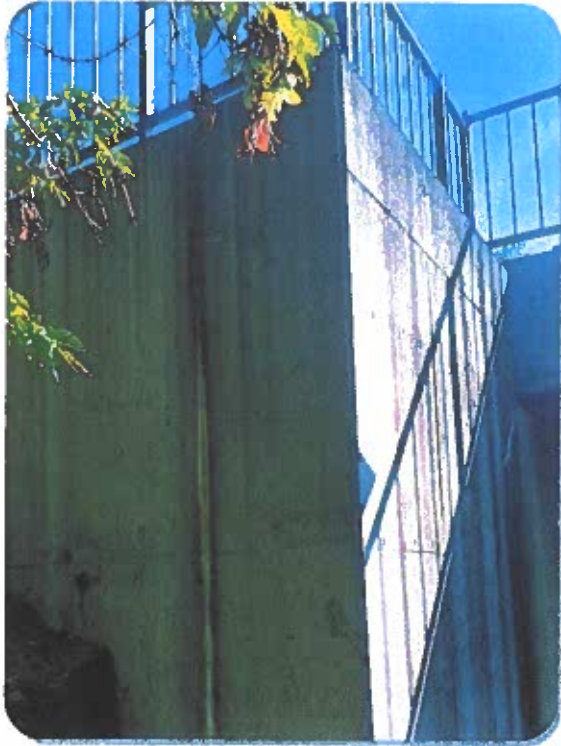


Photo 22: Northeast abutment and wingwall joint.



Photo 23: Northwest abutment to modular wall transition.



Photo 24: Modular block deterioration.



Photo 25: Informational sign.

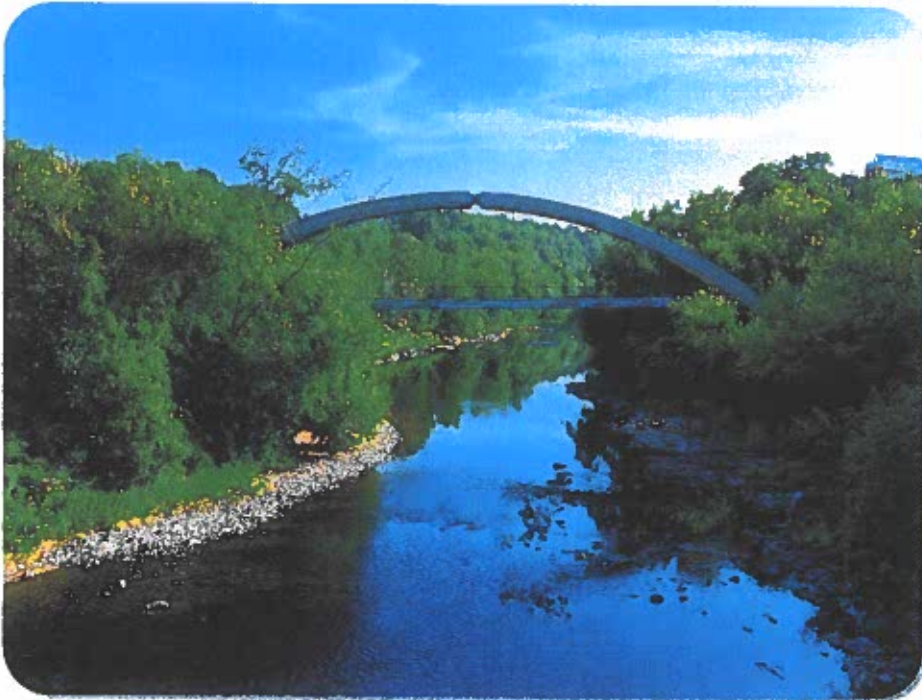


Photo 26: Meduxnekeag River.

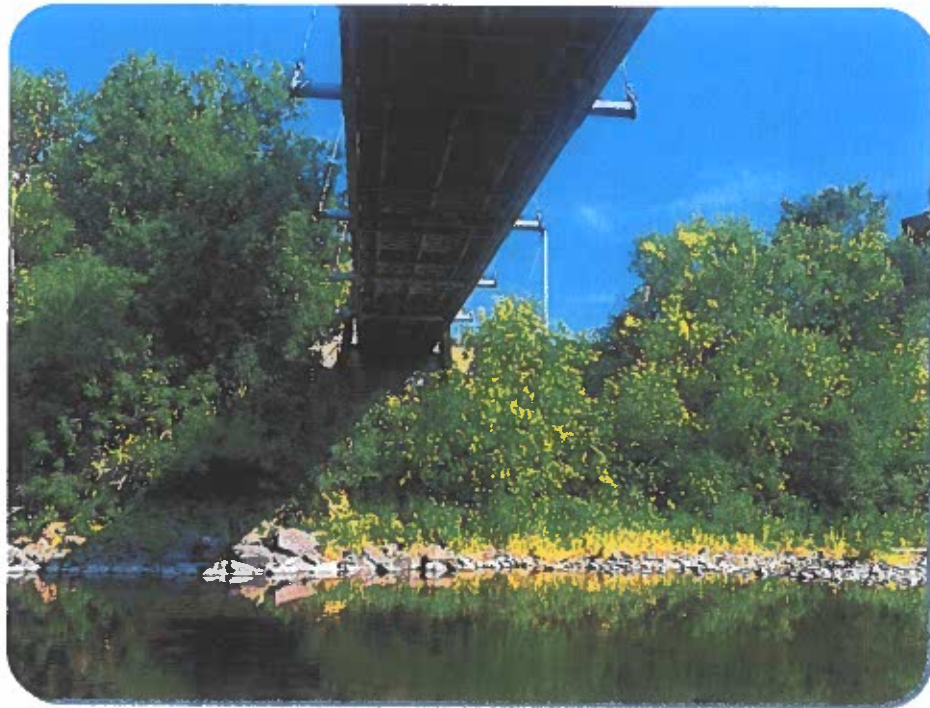


Photo 27: Brush concealing east abutment.

