

March 3, 2016

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a special session on March 3, 2016, in the Eureka Annex Building. Present were Commissioner Mike Cole, Commissioner Greg Larson, Commissioner Mark Peck, via Vision Net and Clerk & Recorder Robin Benson. The meeting was held to discuss road issues within the Eureka Commissioner District.

Also present were Steve Newman, Ken Marek, Josh Coleman, Buck Schermerhorn, Larry Stewart, Duane N. Hostetler, George Williams, Jim Voyles, Scott Messick, Dallas Pluid, Darwin Pluid, Bob Cuffe, Dennis Totten, Stephen Monlux, Brian Linnell, Road Supervisor's Mark McCully, Dave Kyriss, and Tim White.

Commissioner Cole welcomed everyone for attending and stated the purpose of today's meeting is to evaluate the road restrictions in Eureka. Specifically Resolution No. 930 dated March 4, 2015, amending Resolution No. 479. Resolution No. 930 applies only to Eureka Commissioner District roads.

Steve Monlux gave a brief work history of his knowledge and expertise with pavement structure and asphalt treatments. Steve currently conducts consulting services for county and federal agencies.

Steve gave an educational PowerPoint presentation about thin asphalt treatments and spring breakup. Steve explained the difference in structural design of traditional and thin asphalt pavements and discussed the replacement options for thin asphalt treatments. Thin asphalt treatment cracks when cold but those cracks heal in warm summer days, but chunks come loose, potholes form and large areas need to be replaced. Steve also explained pavement deterioration and maintenance, repair and recycling, and effective protection from breakup. Steve shared what he feels is a "public explanation" of why weight restrictions are necessary. Some explanation points are protecting valuable assets which are a budget driven issue; restrictions are greater than State because pavements are much thinner; restrictions occur at different times due to elevation, aspect and exposure and past weather. If restrictions or enforcement is lax, pavements will be returned to gravel due to high replacements costs. Steve shared the purpose of weight limits on thin asphalt during breakup and suggested using the county website as a tool to educate the public.

Steve showed pictures of portions of Glen Lake Road. The pictures gave a visual of damage he feels are caused from spring breakup damage from the spring 2015. The pictures showed damage of rutting and cracking in the loaded lane.

Bob Cuffe said he lives on Glen Lake Road and he took pictures of Glen Lake Road and said damage and problems existed prior to allowing truck traffic. Bob stated the only overloaded truck on Glen Lake Road in the county plow truck.

Commissioner Cole said he would like to keep the discussion specific to evaluating the road restrictions and how they worked or did not work. Bob Cuffe said he feels the standards now are in accordance with other Montana road restrictions and he feels Lincoln County is the only county in the State that has complete road shutdowns. Tim said the science shows that the roads are not capable of hauling the heavier loads during specific times of the year.

Bob said there has been difficulty contacting the road foreman to attain a permit. Commissioner Peck suggested focusing on that issue; we don't have that problem in Libby and Troy, although I realize there is more construction hauling in Eureka. District 1 Road Supervisor Marc McCully said Libby does not get many calls anymore. District 2 Road Supervisor Dave Kyriss said there are some road that will take the 350 lbs., some will not.

Some of the comments and topics discussed were as follows:

- Has there been an increase in damage since the new resolution and regulations since early 2015. Tim White feels he is expecting increased damage with the more lenient regulations.
- The issue is about the science, structure and foundation of the roads.
- Keep in mind that the road foreman's job is to maintain county roads.
- We're all in agreement to see commerce and economy to continue.
- Commissioner Cole said we are all saying we would like to continue with smaller loads, see improvements to the communication and the permit process, accessibility to the road foreman.
- Tim said if the commission continues to allow 350 weight limits he would want the commission to give out those permits. Feels the weight is causing damage. At that limit contractors do not need a permit, they are allowed to haul.
- Need an agreed timeframe of when zero hauling would be allowed. Tim felt two weeks is not enough time and feels chasing two week closures on different roads would mean the contractors would have to call daily.
- Maintain authority and discretions of the road to the road supervisor.
- County should show flexibility to contractors who are working around road closures.
- Road protection should be balanced with keeping the agreement set up last year.
- Contractor's goal is to have a give and take relationship with the county to balance road protection and the ability to work.
- Huge problem of people from out of town breaking the weight limit regulations from fully loaded trucks.
- Enforcement: If MDOT could help enforce restrictions, the word gets around that the restrictions are being enforced which would benefit everyone. A state certified scale would be necessary before any local law enforcement could take place.
- The agreement needs to be given enough time for a proper and thorough evaluation.

Commissioner Peck expressed frustration about whether its load limits issue combined with communication issue. The answer should be common sense and common respect. The fix is not load limits. I don't think its total road closures; we need to streamline the permit process and share flexibility.

Commissioner Larson said he feels it's the road foreman's job to protect county road and he should always maintain authority to make the call regarding closures and limits.

Commissioner Peck said the agreement was through June 2016, and we should honor that agreement, especially since it's a slow year anyway.

Commissioner Larson suggested the contractors have materials in place prior to breakup. If everyone could have that it may minimize the problem greatly. Commissioner Larson briefed the group about the road budget; costs of road departments and declining revenues.

Commissioner Peck said it is unfortunate that a newspaper article came out, throwing emotion into this, but we need to move forward by continuing the analysis and then determine the solution.

District 1 Road Supervisor noted that the current ordinance that Libby follows allows for local law enforcement.

Commissioner Cole said the commission will have further discussion with road supervisors and then make a formal decision on Wednesday during the next regularly scheduled meeting.

11:30 AM Meeting Adjourned

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Mike Cole, Chairman

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Robin A. Benson, Clerk of the Board