

March 7, 2017

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a special session on March 7, 2017, in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Cole, Commissioner Bennett, Commissioner Peck, County Administrator Darren Coldwell, Accounting Deputy Wendy Drake and Clerk and Recorder Robin Benson.

Commissioner Cole opened the meeting with the **Pledge of Allegiance**.

10:00 AM FY 17/18 Budget Discussion:

- Wendy informed the commission that the Troy Juvenile Detention is over budget. Commissioner Peck commented that he wants to see more cost analysis with Sheriff Department operations and see numbers on paper. Commissioner Peck said that we need to change the culture to where departments need to show justification for requests. Commissioner Cole asked for a 5-year expenditure spreadsheet for the Sheriff's Department. Wendy said she would provide that for him.
- Darren said Heather from the IT Department is already training ½ day with Deb Blystone and will continue training until Deb's retirement. This saves the cost of a new employee. Darren said he is still checking into contracting out the addressing services.
- Darren spoke about health insurance options and briefly described offering more of a Cafeteria Plan, Health Savings Accounts, and Cash in Lieu of Insurance. There are several employees who can receive insurance through spouse's benefits, Medicare and retired military.
- Darren suggested discussion on offering a Buy Out Plan, stating there are pros and cons. The county may lose the knowledge of long term employees, but those employees could be replaced at a reduced wage and there would be options to not replace at all. There are cross training opportunities similar to IT training in the Planning Department right now and sometimes contracted services could be considered to reduce costs. Darren informed the commission that there is an expected 6 to 10 percent increase to healthcare costs for FY 17/18.
- Darren said we should begin the automated time card system as soon as possible. Commissioner Peck said we need to communicate that to the department heads. Commissioner Cole said it would increase tracking and control. Commissioners agreed this is a high priority.
- Commissioner Cole asked Wendy about her job and if there are areas for improvement. Wendy said she sees a few departments taking advantage of her abilities requesting her to put fund numbers on claims and expecting her to get their invoices and expecting manual warrants instead of submitting claims and invoices on time. Wendy informed the commission that department heads sign their own travel claims and suggested a new policy. Commissioner Peck said we have great department heads but the county lacks in providing training in how to budget, understanding vacancy savings, leadership skills and how to manage employees' time. Commissioner Peck said we need to begin teaching our department heads in these areas. Robin suggested Tuesdays would be a good time since we are already committed to meeting on Tuesdays; we could begin at 9:00 for department head meetings prior to our budget workshops. Commissioner Peck said he agreed only if we could bring the department heads in individually.
- There was a brief discussion about the Airport almost over budget; we need to really analyze the matching grant expense to the county. There is a lack of revenues generated by the airports. Robin said she would try to find out about any hangar lease agreements. Commissioner Cole said he would follow up on his end.
- Robin said she emailed the county auditor regarding Search & Rescue. The advice was that Search & Rescue should be set up under the Sheriff's Department and all funds would need to run through the claims process.
- Robin said her and County Treasurer Nancy Higgins could find no record that 1Mill was ever levied for the Local Government Review as voter approved in FY 13/14. The budget was set up under PILT in FY 14/15 for exactly the value of one mill at that time. Robin emailed Auditor Bob Denning on this matter. Mr. Denning responded and questioned why it was set up under PILT when the State Bars Chart of Accounts has a special fund for Local Government Reviews. Either way, Mr. Denning does not recommend doing a levy two years later. PILT will not be reimbursed those funds. Robin said fortunately, the review board only spent approximately \$5,000 instead of the \$35,153 appropriated for their two years of service.
- Robin informed the commission that her and Darren are meeting later today to finalize a FY 17/18 budget calendar and letter to the department heads.
- Robin said she has visited with Local Government Services Lead Accountant Magda Nelson and has set up a meeting for her and Darren next Friday to discuss Special District budget laws and processes.
- Budget Committee Discussion: Commissioner Peck said we really need to get this going; we are running out of time. It would be an advisory committee to the commission. Darren suggested visiting with the local reporters and explaining the purpose of the budget committee. A better name would be advisory committee and the commissioners would pick one or two people from their districts to serve on the committee as well as elected officials. Darren is communicating with Dan Clark as a potential facilitator. It is important to engage the department heads in the discussion. The goal is to prioritize county services; mandatory, discretionary and duplicated services and to determine at what level of service to provide. Commissioner Peck said a simple survey to the public with pertinent questions about services could be offered online and dispersed by county departments and local libraries. The surveys collected would be informational to the Advisory Committee. Commissioner Peck said he could put the survey questionnaire together.
- Topic to be discussed next week is the Cost Allocation Plan

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

12:00 PM Meeting adjourned

Mike Cole, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Robin A. Benson, Clerk of the Board