

October 4, 2017

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on October 4, 2017, in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Cole, Commissioner Bennett, County Administrator Darren Coldwell, and Deputy Clerk and Recorder Chris Nelson. Commissioner Peck was absent until 1:45 PM.

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

9:00 AM **Forrest Service Update:** Present were Alan Gerstenecker, John Blodgett, Chris Savage, and Elka Woods.
Fires

- Total acres to date 85,000 from 75 fires
- Most acres burned on the KNF that have been documented, or at least since the 30's. Records weren't very well documented till 1959.
- Prior year comparisons: 1994-54,642; 2000-45,295; 2015 31,826
- Largest fire prior to this season was Dry Fork Fire in 1988 at 13,000 acres
- Fires this season: Caribou 24,753; West Fork 20,072; Moose Peak 13,903; Gibraltar Ridge 12,938; Cub Creek 5,823; Weasel 3,925.
- Went over 80 days with only .04" of rain, when the average is 2.1" for Libby. Similar numbers across the forest

Savage said if the fires had started in early August there could have been many structures that could have been lost. Commissioner Bennett said that we were blessed. Savage said they saw good support and coordination with the county and they were very thankful for it. Commissioner Cole asked about the Young Dodge timber sale and how much damage was done. Savage said they had three timber sales that were in or close to the fire. The forest service will go in and estimate how many trees were burnt in the sale area and the units and work with the contractor.

Kootenai National Forest Timber Program-Forest Priorities

- Currently have approximately 170 mmbf of uncut wood under contract.
- Currently have 44.7 mmbf held up in litigation (all Libby RD sales).
- Signed Galton ROD in July and Flower FONSI in September.
- Young Growth Draft in the middle of the comment period.
- Sold about 75 mmbf this year.

Montanore

- Drafting proposed action and notice of intent to start a SEIS for just the evaluation phase.
- Continuing to work w/USFWS on revising BA's.

Rock Creek

- Finishing up objections. RO granted another 30 day period.
- Reinitiated consultation w/USFWS for Bull Trout in the EF Bull River drainage, due to Montanore groundwater modeling cumulative effects and critical habitat listing.

Capital Christmas Tree

- Accomplished goal of making over 10,000 ornaments. Now focusing on the Tree Cutting Ceremony. Tree cutting ceremony now will be on November 8th, with a pre-ceremony on the 7th.
- Finalized route. First stop will be in Eureka on the 13th, then Whitefish. On November 14th will be in Libby, Troy and Trout Creek.
- Tree lighting ceremony will be December 6th.

10:00 AM **Kathleen Watson Land Exchange:** Present were Alan Gerstenecker, John Blodgett, Paul Dalziel
Kathleen had purchased land on Airbase Flats which at the end of the Yaak shooting range. Unknown to them, they were shooting into her property. They proposed exchanging 2.12 acres. Commissioner Bennett said they have had an appraisal done and a survey needs to be done. Commissioner Cole asked what the process is. One concern that came up was you have trap and skeet shooting and the debris from that possibly going into Kathleen's property. Jerry said he has prepared an easement agreement and Kathleen is very open and agreeable. Commissioner Bennett said he has talked to Kathleen and will also talk to her later about concerns that were raised.

10:30 AM **Approval Closed Meeting Minutes:** Present were John Blodgett, Alan Gerstenecker.

Motion by Commissioner Bennett to approve the closed meeting minutes of August 22nd and September 14 as presented. Second by Commissioner Cole. Motion carried.

10:45 AM **Administrative Issues:** Present were Krista Nemeroff, John Blodgett and Alan Gerstenecker.

MOTION by Commissioner Bennett to approve the fire meeting minutes of September 18th as presented and the regular meeting minutes of September 27th with the caveat of checking there was a motion made to make payment to the city for Balsam sidewalk project. Second by Commissioner Cole. Motion carried.

11:00 AM **Public Comment Time:** Present were Krista Nemeroff, John Blodgett, and Alan Gerstenecker.

No one from the public made comment.

11:15 AM **Snow Removal Discussion:** Present were Krista Nemeroff, John Blodgett and Alan Gerstenecker.

One of the areas the county is looking at to save money is decreasing snow removal in some areas that are schedule A (forest service) roads. Darren presented the commissioners with a draft policy that all the road foreman and the county attorney have looked at and made comments on. Commissioner Cole said he has noticed that there are many forest service roads that have homes on them and they should be looked at. There are also subdivisions that are being plowed that do not contain county roads. Commissioner Cole said to preserve the road fund they need to look at where the savings will be. Whether that is decreasing plowing or road maintenance or a combination will need to be looked at. Commissioner Bennett said that Lincoln County is one of only two counties that do net levy money for roads.

Commissioner Cole said they need to first look at saving money before they look at levying funds. Commissioner Cole said the whole process will be educational but right now they are just looking at all the possibilities and solutions. Darren said they need to see what makes the most financial sense, not for just the next 5 or 10 years but the next 100.

1:30 PM **Planning Dept. Bear Valley RV Park Subdivision Report:** Present were Alan Gerstenecker, Kristin Smith, Jake Mertes, Trish Seacrist, John Seacrist and Matt Nerdig.

Jake presented the Bear Valley RV expansion and went over the project proposal. The owners want to add 54 spaces to the existing 36 spaces. They are requesting a parkland waiver as it is surrounded by public lands. A site visit was conducted and found issues with a blind corner and also found that there would be impacts on wildlife and wildlife habitat and public health and safety. The recommendation was to grant preliminary approval subject to 22 conditions that addresses impacts on wildlife, wildlife habitat and the public health and safety issues. Commissioner Cole asked about possible thinning on the property. Jake said they recommended annexation into the rural fire district, setting up somewhere they could draw water from and getting rid of any slash piles. Also recommended a setback of the lots from the wooded areas. Commissioner Bennett asked about the exception they requested on the parkland. Kristin said they already have a nice community area that also has a playground. **Motion** by Commissioner Peck to give preliminary approval to the Bear Valley RV Park expansion. Second by Commissioner Bennett. Motion carried unanimously.

2:00 PM **Fortine Cemetary District:** Present was Krista Nemeroff.

Chris informed the commissioners that Fortine/Trego Cemetery board did not receive any applications for one open position on the board and Clerk and Recorder Robin Benson requested that they advertise for the position.

2:30 PM **Eureka Airport Project:** Present were Krista Nemeroff, Nigel Davis and Brad Dronville.

Nigel and Brad from Morrison Maierle met with the board to discuss the Eureka Airport Project. They did a walkthrough of the project and they will put together a report of that for the board. They have brought paperwork for the commissioners to sign to pay the contractor.

Meeting adjourned at 2:40 PM.

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Mike Cole, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Chris Nelson, Deputy Clerk of the Board