

October 17, 2018

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on October 17, 2018, in the Lincoln County Annex, Eureka, Montana. Present were Commissioner Cole, Commissioner Peck, Commissioner Bennett, and County Administrator Darren Coldwell. Also present was Clerk and Recorder Robin Benson, Libby via VisionNet.

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

**9:30 AM Tracy McIntyre/Midvale Sewer Update:** Present were Tracy McIntyre, LeeAnn Schermerhorn, Josh Letcher, Bo Pitman, Rosalie Aduato and Nikki Meyer. Also present were Nancy Higgins, Kathi Hooper, Jake Mertes, and Wendy Drake, Libby via VisionNet.

Tracy said the funding is in place for 2019 for the Town of Eureka Project and she is here to present a funding opportunity for a septic replacement grant. The grant is through DNRC to apply for a septic loan program, but the county must apply for the grant funds. If the county moves forward, an MOU will be written between the county and Town of Eureka. It would be set up as a revolving loan fund for septic upgrades. LeeAnn commented this is a real win for the town.

Commissioner Bennett asked about the \$205,000 and if there is any cost to the residents. Tracy said there is no cost to people who qualified for use of the funds. Tracy explained that her conversation with DNRC about the funding loan, is the money would first go to Midvale residents any leftover would be for the county in a revolving loan fund.

Darren commented the county does not have the best of luck having other people oversee grants that the county applies for and recommends that if the county does move forward with this, the county oversees the monies. Darren said it sounds more like a loan, not a grant. Wendy said she talked to the auditor and was told they never heard of it set up this way before; most counties go after the grant and monitor the funds themselves.

Tracy said the purpose was to hand the county a program. Darren said the county needs to have more involvement and oversee the loan program.

Jake commented that it's a good program for low income people that cannot afford to fix their septic systems but expressed that the funds should be available countywide and not just for a portion of the county but feels that as far as the administration, the county should have oversight. Wendy agreed.

Tracy said her conversation with DNRC was that funds were to first go to the Midvale area and predicts approximately 57 hookups from the Midvale area. Commissioner Cole suggested setting up a meeting for further discussion. Darren commented that this just came to us and we haven't had time to look at it yet.

Commissioner Peck expressed concern about it being more of a loan than it is a grant, and will the money be paid back.

Darren commented that the Town of Eureka could also consider a short term 2% loan from PILT instead of a federal loan with more restrictions. Commissioner Peck commented as to why even deal with DNRC if we don't have to.

Commissioner Bennett clarified that if we are exploring this, we should look at every other financial option.

Tracy said the town project is already moving forward, that's confirmed; this is to help with that project, giving residents in the Midvale area some assistance. Commissioner Cole said the essence is that we want to move forward in the most beneficial manner, so we need to have further discussion with everyone involved, including Jake, Wendy, Commissioners and Darren. Commissioner Peck expressed concern regarding liens and if we move forward it needs to be set up correctly. Darren will set up a meeting for further discussion.

**10:00 AM Bryan Donner/USFS:** Present were Nikki Meyer and Josh Letcher.

*The following outline was submitted by Bryan Donner:*

Lincoln County Commissioner's Meeting  
October 17, 2018  
Eureka, Montana

Updates from the Rexford/Fortine Ranger Districts:

1) Fire Season Update:

- a. All seasonal firefighters have been laid off for the season
- b. Some prescribed burning is being accomplished this week with the warmish and sunny days.
- c. Thirty-one fires were started this past season, with four escaping initial attack.
- d. Those four resulted in the Tenmile and Sterling Complex incident, which eventually totaled about 2000 acres.
  - i. These fires required three different Incident Management Teams over the course of seven weeks to manage and suppress.

2) Current large planning projects:

- a. Caribou Fire Salvage
  - i. Forest Supervisor Chris Savage signed the Decision Notice on August 3.
  - ii. With an approved Emergency Situation Determination, no objections could be filed.
- b. Ten Lakes Travel Management Final EIS and draft Record of Decision is being prepared for release in two to three months.
- c. Trego Triangle Blowdown Salvage signed in late August.
  - i. October winds created need to reassess situations in the McSutton and Tween sale areas, as well as possible other salvage needs elsewhere.
- d. Gateway Restoration Project – No objections were received and the decision was signed in mid-August.
- e. A proposed action for the Tenmile Sterling Fire Salvage Project is being prepared and should be released for comment in the next 2 or 3 weeks.

3) West Kootenai Green Box Site relocation – submitted proposed alternative site and are awaiting a response.

4) Lake Koocanusa Scenic By-Way – trying to locate available Landscape Architect to begin initial evaluations for vegetation removal

- 5) YCC crew had a successful summer with everyone hanging in there, lots of projects getting completed, and only one minor injury.
- 6) Timber Sales Update
  - a. All three Caribou sales sold in early September and operations have begun on Canada South.
  - b. Nine large sales (>5MMBF) and 5 smaller sales are currently open in various stages of completion

Commissioner Peck discussed the county working on a real prioritized integrated plan for fuels work and community fire protection. Commissioner Peck expressed the desire for more involvement and coordination with the forest service; really sit down and have a coordinated plan and utilizing Good Neighbor Authority opportunities.

**10:45 AM EMA MT DES Annual Grant Approval:** Present were Nikki Meyer and Josh Letcher. Also present was John Blodgett, Libby via VisionNet.

Darren submitted the annual EMA MT DES Grant of \$64,789 for commissioner approval. **Motion** by Commissioner Bennett to approve the annual EMPG Grant for FY 18/19. Second by Commissioner Peck, motion carried unanimously.

**11:00 AM Administrative Issues:** Present were Nikki Meyer and Josh Letcher. Also present was John Blodgett, Libby via VisionNet.

- Robin explained the minutes for July 31, 2018 were never formally approved by the commission and presented the minutes for July 31, 2018 special meeting and October 10, 2018 regular meeting for Commissioner approval. **Motion** by Commissioner Bennett to approve July 31 and October 10, 2018 minutes as presented. Second by Commissioner Peck, motion carried unanimously.
- Robin explained that she did advertise a vacancy on the Fortine/Trego Cemetery Board approximately one year ago to fill an unexpired term through June 2019. An application has been recently received from John C. Slesar. Robin said she did not get this specifically on the agenda, so we can add it on the next regular meeting, but copies of the application are submitted for review.
- Darren submitted an additional insurance policy through MACo for inmates that is approved annually at .91/day per inmate. **Motion** by Commissioner Peck to approve the additional insurance through MACo as presented. Second by Commissioner Bennett, motion carried unanimously. Darren clarified that it's a renewal policy.
- Commissioner Peck submitted a letter to DEQ and EPA formally requesting a meeting to discuss long term funding for material left over in homes and any issues that have not been finalized yet have been discussed for a very long time.
- Commissioner Peck commented on a meeting at the shooting range with Chas Vincent and Nate Gassman. Commissioner Peck said he had not been out there for a while and was blown away at changes and how well it's been managed; no citizen complaints since the gate went in. The meeting was about rescoping the range for 10 days and Commissioner Peck said he felt there was strong support. The point is to redo the NEPA process. Scoping letters were sent out 3 years ago and we want to do it again for additional public comment and process.

**11:15 AM Public Comment Time:** Present were Harry Richards, Bo Pitman and Nikki Meyer. Also present were Sheriff Bowe, Undersheriff Griffeth, Dallas Bowe, Wendy Drake, Darren Short and John Blodgett, Libby via VisionNet.

Harry expressed frustration about the sheriff and county attorney offices to the commission. Larry said he has submitted complaints to the sheriff's department and commissioners expressing his complaints, but they have never been responded to. Commissioner Peck commented that the commission has no authority on how the county attorney conducts her department, and in the court, there is a judge present. Harry said he is expecting a response from the commission regarding his complaints. Commissioner Cole thanked Harry for his comments. Sheriff Bowe stated for the record that the sheriff's department has answered all the complaints and they were unfounded.

**11:30 AM Sheriff's Department Hiring Questions:** Present were Bo Pitman, Nikki Meyer and Josh Letcher. Also present were Sheriff Bowe, Undersheriff Griffeth, Dallas Bowe, Wendy Drake, Darren Short and John Blodgett, Libby via VisionNet.

Sheriff Bowe asked about the hiring process to fill a position for the Drug Task Force. Darren said all the departments have made some drastic cuts and although he realizes the sheriff's department is different, still wanted to know if there was opportunity to run without the deputy position being filled.

Sheriff Bowe said the drug task force needs two people; cannot operate with just one person for safety reasons as well. Commissioner Peck wants assurance the position will spend more time in Lincoln County, especially with the amount of overtime. Commissioner Peck expressed those positions are needed here, Lincoln County has a drug problem.

Commissioner Peck stated that he wants assurance the utilization is more local. Sheriff Bowe said he can assure those concerns will be met. Commissioner Cole asked how successful the Drug Task Force Program is. Sheriff Bowe said our focus is keeping it from spreading and it is very hard to measure. Undersheriff Griffeth commented that this year alone, there were 51 search warrants for houses and vehicles.

Darren clarified he is not opposed to replacing Scofield's position, but could we get by without backfilling his position.

Sheriff Bowe said if we do not backfill the deputy position, it would leave a huge gap on the street. Undersheriff Griffeth expressed there have been discussions about some things to be done to manage the DUI program better and feels we are moving in the right direction to do so.

**Motion** by Commissioner Peck to approve the authorization to fill the detective position and backfill the deputy position; to fill both positions as needed. Second by Commissioner Bennett, motion carried unanimously.

**1:00 PM Bill Caldwell/Airport Update:** Present were Nikki Myer and Josh Letcher. Also present was Bill Caldwell and Martha Hendrickson, Libby via VisionNet.

Bill asked about getting a capital improvement fund set up for the airport board, explaining there is upwards of \$12,000 coming from the forest service for fire activity. Darren suggested putting it into the gas fund instead of creating a new

fund; but the funds will need to be tracked, otherwise there will be a lot more restrictions if put in a capital improvement fund and a CIP plan will need to be in place specifically outlining how the money will be spent. Bill said putting it in the fuel fund would work and he will set up tracking. Commissioner Cole said the money needs to be reflected in the budget.

Bill said there is insufficient fuel capacity for Jet A fuel. During fire season, helicopters use their own fuel tenders, the smaller ones rely on the airports fuel tank using several thousand gallons a day, and we can run out of fuel which does not do anyone any good. The discussion is how to increase the capacity of Jet A fuel and have more on hand when needed. MT DNRC has a program where they provide counties with emergency use equipment which is free; not purchasing the equipment. There are large fuel tenders available that can be transferred to the county on loan, so we have use of it. The program allows equipment to be used only for emergencies 90% of the time. Bill said he drafted a letter from the commissioners to DNRC requesting they search for that equipment for use at the Lincoln County Airport. Bill is asking the commissioners to look at the letter for further discussion, clarifying the commissioners need to make the request to DNRC. There is no cost for the equipment, but there will be cost for the transportation of the equipment to Lincoln County and maintenance. Bill said the equipment requested is a tanker truck. Commissioner Bennett suggested a tanker truck, not necessarily a tractor trailer. Bill said he will check on how the insurance works out for doing this transaction and the regulations for driving and operating it on airport grounds. Commissioner Bennett requested looking at getting a surface tank as well. Bill said a space to locate it would be the issue at the fuel facility site, but he will do some further research and get back to the commission.

Commissioner Bennett said it is the airport boards responsibility to make those decisions. Commissioner Cole agreed.

1:30 PM **Planning Department:** Present were Nikki Meyer and Josh Letcher. Also present were Jake Mertes, Brett McCully and Byron Sanderson, Libby via VisionNet.

- **Cummings Family Transfer:** Jake received a request from KSI on behalf of Jeanette Cummings. Jake said there is no attempt to evade subdivision review and planning staff recommends approval. **Motion** by Commissioner Peck to approve the Cummings Family Transfer subject to planning staff conditions and recommendations. Second by Commissioner Bennett, motion carried unanimously.
- **Truman KS&G Final Plat:** Jake said all conditions for Truman SK&G Subdivision have been met and planning staff recommends approval. **Motion** by Commissioner Peck to approve final plat for the Truman SK&G Subdivision subject to planning staff conditions and recommendations. Second by Commissioner Bennett, motion carried unanimously.

2:00 PM **Commissioner Cole/Eureka Fairgrounds Update:** Present were Nikki Meyer, Svea Jorgenson, Gail Workman, BeeGee Cole, and Josh Letcher.

Svea updated the commissioners on the 2018 Lincoln County Fair. The fair brought in over \$11,000 dollars between vendors, camping fees but Svea wasn't sure what the vendors made in sales. Currently the fair board is taking bids for the new youth building but doesn't anticipate it will be built until spring. Commissioner Bennett asked if the youth building was to replace the one that fell in. Svea said that it was. The board is planning on a 36 x 46 building.

Commissioner Cole discussed the current rodeo improvement project, which had been put on hold previously. He said the current set up and seating does not allow for growth. The current seating is also wooden bleachers and requires a lot of maintenance. The seating they are looking at is prefabricated cement and has no maintenance associated with it once it is installed. They are also planning on building skyboxes that could be leased for \$5,000 a year. The project would also increase seating from 1,500 to 3,500. Commissioner Cole expressed that making the improvements would put Eureka at the forefront of rodeo events in Montana. The concept is for the county to pay up front and be paid back by the rodeo association. Commissioner Bennett asked how the repayment would work. Commissioner Cole said they weren't thinking of necessarily repaying a dollar amount but funding the fair rather than the county was one option discussed. Darren asked if they could do a portion of the ticket sales to pay back the loan; 10% of gate or something similar. Commissioner Cole said that could be a possibility. Darren said the county has been fiscally responsible and not touched PILT. The project is estimated to cost \$385,000. Darren said they will take it under advisement and schedule another meeting about it.

3:00 PM **Meeting Adjourned**

## LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Mike Cole, Chairman

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