

June 11, 2019
Finance Meeting

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a special session on June 11, 2019 in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Peck, Commissioner Bennett, Commissioner Letcher, County Administrator Darren Coldwell, and Clerk and Recorder Robin Benson.

3:00 PM Finance Meeting: Present were H.R. Director Dallas Bowe, Clerk of Court Tricia Brooks, IT Director Ernie Anderson, Treasurer Sedaris Carlberg, County Attorney Marcia Boris, Kathi Hooper, Amy Fantozzi, Jennifer McCully, Bryan Alkire, Mike Mills, and Elzhon Anderson.

IT Department: Ernie said there are no significant changes to his budget except minor cell phone costs. Darren commented the Office 365 total cost should not be coming out of the general fund but should be divided between users in each department.

The commissioners reviewed county email accounts. Ernie will be closing some accounts that are duplicated or no longer in use.

Clerk of Court: Tricia said that jury trials are paid by the county and reimbursed by the state. Clerk of Court is no longer having jury terms, but Judge Cuffe sets juries as they arise.

Tricia spoke briefly about permanent files process and the cost of purging records onto microfiche.

County Treasurer/Supt. Of Schools/Motor Vehicle: Darren commented that Sedaris is allowed by law an extra \$2,000 for the combined offices of Treasurer and Superintendent of Schools. Commissioner Peck agreed, saying rightfully so.

Sedaris said she has one employee taking on a much bigger workload. Darren said the commission will need a written explanation and a reclassification of the job description.

Employee COLA Discussion: Dallas submitted spreadsheets showing cost increases for 4%, 6%, 8%, and 10% COLA for all full-time employees excluding elected officials, deputies and union employees. Darren commented that the county has combined a lot of departments. We have 73 full-time employees and more grant based full-time employees for taxable wages which is down considerably. Commissioner Peck said he wants to give the best increase we can affordably. Darren said the county is now putting money away; we have \$700,000 more in PILT than last year. Dallas said that employees are taking on additional duties countywide and should be compensated. Darren said he has no doubt that a 6% increase would be no problem for the budget to accommodate. There was a 0% increase in health insurance and over the last 10 years, county COLA including last years 7.5% and this year's 20% still averages at 3.07% overall.

Commissioner Bennett said we need to come across going forward that we are stabilizing but agrees employees have stepped up doing more and taking on added burden. Commissioner Peck said we should educate the public on the decreases and cuts to show this is why we are doing this. The county currently has approximately 73 full-time taxable employees, compared to over 100 five years ago. Darren said he will put together numbers to show differences in cost. Commissioner Peck said it is worthy to say the money does go to our local economy.

Commissioners agreed to an 8% COLA initially, but it could change depending on the mill value and budgeting.

Commissioner Letcher said his view is that you can either hire another person or pay those stepping up a higher rate.

Commissioner Peck said we cannot continue 7% and 8% increases moving forward.

Motion by Commissioner Letcher to approve an 8% COLA for all full-time employees, excluding deputies, union employees and all elected officials with the caveat the final budget can absorb the cost. Second by Commissioner Bennett, motion carried unanimously.

County Attorney's Office: Marcia said there are no huge changes in the county attorney's budget. Marcia said she made some decreases, but the training conferences cost has increased as well as the County Attorney Association fees are also increasing.

Marcia expressed her appreciation of support to the commission regarding the COLA for employees, explaining the difficulties finding a qualified deputy attorney.

Commissioner Peck commended Marcia on the quality of opinions and support back to the commissioners and department heads.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Mark Peck, Chairman

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