

January 22, 2020

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on January 22, 2020, in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Letcher, Commissioner Peck, County Administrator Patrick McFadden and Deputy Clerk and Recorder Chris Nelson. Commissioner Bennett was in Washington DC.

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

10:00 AM **Montana Department of Transportation Speed Limit Study:** Present were James Freyholtz, Derrick Perkins, Duncan Adams, Ray Stout, Nikki Meyer and Troy Truman.

James Freyholtz from the Montana Department of Transportation (MDOT) said they have three studies completed in our area. The first area James discussed was on US Highway 93 from the intersection of MT 37 to the border. Over a three-year period, there were 18 crashes although there were no crashes in the last 2 ½ miles. During that same period, the Montana Highway Patrol reported 65 traffic stops that resulted in 79 citation. MDOT recommends a 60 mph speed limit beginning at the end of the 45 mph speed zone and continuing north to just beyond the intersection with Ksanka View Road. A 50 mph speed limit was recommended in the transitional area entering and departing the port of entry. Commissioner Letcher said there are some major developments that would be coming in adding the traffic and that it would be good to address reductions in speed before the developments are put in. James said that until there is an issue, the MDOT would recommend waiting and doing another traffic study at that time.

The next study was one the county had requested along the portion of Secondary 567 which encompasses the Red Dog Saloon/Bobtail Cutoff area. The crash and citation history over a three-year period showed that between milepost 5 and 8 there was one vehicle rollover involving an ATV that showed alcohol as a contributing factor. During that same time there were three citations issued, two of which were associated with the ATC accident. The MDOT recommendation is to extend the 45 mph zone south to encompass the curve so that it coincides with the beginning of the 55 mph zone. In the immediate area of the Red Dog Saloon, the MDOT supports the county's request for a 35 mph zone.

The last speed study area was of Kootenai River Road. A three-year review of crashes showed five crashes reported with adverse road conditions being a factor in four of them. In that same time period, there were two traffic stops which resulted in two citations being issued. The MDOT recommendation is to leave the speed limits where they are. The recommendation would be to leave it as is at 55 mph. Commissioner Peck wondered why anyone need to 55-60 in that area coming into the curves. I understand the data but sometimes you must look at something and take a proactive approach and not wait for a crash or fatality to then make a change. Commissioner Peck said they will go over the study with Commissioner Bennett when returns from Washington DC. Commissioner Letcher asked if they were going to do a study at the Fortine Mercantile. James said he looked at some of the data in that area and it didn't show much but they had not done a speed study there. Commissioner Letcher recommended parking out there for a few hours and told James he will probably see a few near-miss accidents. Commissioner Peck said he will set a 30-day timeframe for the response letter.

10:30 AM **Administrative Issues:** Present were Ray Stout, Derrick Perkins, Duncan Adams, Nikki Meyer and Troy Truman.

- **MOTION** by Commissioner Peck to approve January 15, 2020 minutes as written. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried.
- Patrick presented an annual grant from the DNRC. **MOTION** by Commissioner Peck to approve the DNRC Wildland Fire Grant. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried.

10:45 AM **Public Comment Time:** Present were Ben Scott, Nikki Meyer, Ray Stout and Duncan Adams.

Ben Scott, president of the cross-country ski club, presented the board with a letter he had received that contained inaccuracies about the club. Ben said he is frustrated with the county forester whom he feels has issues with the club and who also made disparaging and inaccurate statements at the last city council meeting. Ben said he is disappointed as a taxpayer by this and feels it is a witch hunt by someone whom he feels is usurping their authority. He also wanted to make sure this person did not spend any county time on this issue as it is one that pertains to the city only. Commissioner Peck said he will investigate the issue and see if it was done on county time. Commissioner Letcher agreed and said it is very important to first establish if she used personal time or work time before the board does anything else.

11:15 AM **Joel Cobb FCC Districting Petition:** Present were Ben Scott, Nikki Meyer, Ray Stout and Duncan Adams. Joel met with the board to discuss a petition to the FCC for redistricting. During the 2017 fire season Joel said many people had complained that it was hard to get information on the news as Lincoln County is in the Spokane District. He would like to petition the FCC to redistrict Lincoln County so that its news channels come out of the Missoula District and taxpayers can get news that applies to their area. Joel was wondering if this is something the commissioners would be interested in. Commissioner Peck said that speaking for himself he would absolutely be interested in it. He said it would be good to have several meetings in the county to get the public's input. Joel wondered what path the board would want to pursue to inform the public. Commissioner Peck said a public hearing is one thing they would need to do so the input is part of the public record. Commissioner Letcher agreed and said that the public could also mail in their input/comments. Commissioner Letcher said he was pleased to see someone taking this on and get the process started. Commissioner Peck wants to put this on the agenda for their next meeting in Eureka; not a public hearing but just a more detailed discussion that can allow them to take some steps forward on this.

11:30 AM **ARP update with Virginia Kocieda:** Present were Mandy Harcourt, Virginia Kocieda, Elzhon Anderson, Ray Stout, Duncan Adams and Virginia Kocieda.

Virginia met with the board to give an update on the ARP and would like to make monthly appointments with the board. She is currently working on a draft final on what will be paid in the cooperative agreement and is working on a budget. The O & M plan is still open for public comment until February 6th. Virginia informed the board the EPA will not be funding air monitoring in OU3 during fires and DEQ believes it is not something they need to fund. She is not sure how she will fund

the monitoring for this fire season but is hoping to find a grant that could pay for the program. Virginia presented the board with several figures that change depending on how fast they want results. Commissioner Peck suggested contacting WR Grace and see if they would fund it. If it is a declared emergency that may open funds that could also pay for it. Virginia said there has been discussions about moving the ARP offices to a new building. Commissioner Peck said they have looked at some options, but he wants to make sure they make the right move. Commissioner Peck apologized for the time it is taking but said they will get together and look at the former Lincoln County Title building across the street as an option.

12:00 PM **Meeting Adjourned**

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Mark Peck, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Chris Nelson, Deputy Clerk of the Board