

July 15, 2020

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on July 15, 2020 in the Lincoln County Annex, Eureka, Montana. Present were Commissioner Peck, Commissioner Bennett, County Administrator Patrick McFadden and Clerk and Recorder Robin Benson. Commissioner Letcher was present via phone conference.

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

10:30 AM **Administrative Issues:** Present was Ray Price. Nikki Meyer was present via phone conference. Also present was Derrick Perkins, Libby via VisionNet.

- Robin presented the minutes for July 8, 2020 regular meeting for approval. **Motion** by Commissioner Bennett to approve minutes as submitted. Second by Commissioner Peck, motion carried unanimously.
- Robin presented three annual resolutions for approval; Resolution 2020-14 To Set COLA, Resolution 2020-15 To Set Elected Officials Base Salaries, and Resolution 2020-16 To Set Justice of the Peace Base Salary for FY 20/21. **Motion** by Commissioner Bennett to accept Resolutions 2020-14, 2020-15, and 2020-16 as presented. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried unanimously.
- Commissioner Bennett talked about a tax invoice sent to Oregon that came back as undeliverable, however, the late notice was delivered. The homeowner is asking the commission to abate the \$34.97 in late and interest fees. **Motion** by Commissioner Bennett to abate interest and penalties for George Carl Stall for \$34.97. Commissioner Letcher talked about a similar situation of a tax bill that was not received by homeowner Brad Gallup who lives out-of-state. The tax statement was sent to the former owner. Commissioner Bennett amended his **Motion** to include Brad Gallup. Second by Commissioner Peck, motion carried unanimously. The commissioners agreed that both homeowners were in touch with the Treasurer's Department trying to get their tax statements and should not be penalized for the delay.
- Ray Price talked about a compaction roller that needs replaced. The roller has been used by the Eureka Road Department since 1997. Commissioner Peck stated the replacement compaction machine is used for chip sealing; a machine we cannot do without. Contract is a 5-year lease with option to buy through Caterpillar. Total cost is \$96,400.00. **Motion** by Commissioner Peck to approve the finance proposal with Caterpillar as presented. Second by Commissioner Bennet, motion carried unanimously.

10:45 AM **Public Comment Time:** There were no public comments.

11:00 AM **Trego School Board:** Present were Michael McCurry, Ken Smith and Dave Scott representing the Trego School Board. Also present was Nikki Myer via phone conference. Chris Nelson and Leigh Riggelman were present, Libby via VisionNet.

Dave submitted a forensic audit that he said speaks for itself regarding past school operations. He also expressed frustration with communication, errors and other services provided from the County Treasurer Department. The new school clerk has made several efforts to communicate and have errors corrected.

Patrick said he is here to help and requested that he be cc'd on all emails and all correspondence to reduce communication problems immediately. Patrick said he will review the forensic audit. Patrick clarified that the Treasurer is also the School Superintendent of Schools contributing to a heavy workload.

Commissioner Peck said combining those roles was structurally not a sound decision.

Michael agreed that it is a structural problem.

Ken said the school board has reached out and has invited Brady Selle to the board meetings, but he has never attended. Patrick commented that he has ordered a work study from Brady Selle.

Commissioner Peck commented that combining the Treasurer with Superintendent of Schools, although well intended while needing to save funds at the time, needs to be corrected. We have a situation where Treasurers may have minimal background and face a steep learning curve in that role, and we need to fundamentally fix this.

Dave agreed saying that the County Treasurer needs help. Commissioner Peck said this is the first time he has heard how the combined roles is affecting an actual school board and now the county needs to look at it legally to see how to reestablish that office.

Michael said the school board members are elected officials and have to answer to its citizenry and felt this needed to be brought to the commissioners' attention.

Commissioner Peck thanked the school board members for bringing their concerns and for their service.

11:15 AM **Eureka Dispatch Discussion:** Present were Joyce Hudson and Patty Dickens-Turk. Also present was Leigh Riggelman and Chris Nelson Libby,

Joyce said she is here to participate in and be helpful in discussing entitlement funds. Joyce said there was no notification when the entitlement funds were not going to be dispersed to the districts any longer.

Commissioner Peck apologized, saying he heard that from other districts and agreed that it is not a good way to do business. Commissioner Peck explained the state gives money back to the counties to offset taxable income. The county was in deficit spending, yet we were giving money to levied funds that have legal authority to levy their own funds and we made the decision to pull those funds back into the county.

Commissioner Bennett further explained that the county was looking for every avenue a few years ago to offset the deficit spending, but agreed the county should have communicated this better to all the districts.

Joyce said the Eureka Dispatch is spending more money than they are bringing in which is not the usual. Joyce said the board is discussing a levy to be brought to the people and have set a public hearing and are sending notices to the taxpayers for their input to move forward with the process. Joyce said the district board would appreciate anything the commissioners can do to help and thanked Robin Benson and Commissioner Letcher for their assistance. Commissioner Bennett commented regarding the levy, the more information you can get out to the people, the better. Joyce said she has been serving on the board since 1998. The commissioners thanked her for her service.

12:00 PM **Meeting Adjourned**

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Mark Peck, Chairman

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