

November 18, 2020

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on November 18, 2020 in the Lincoln County Annex, Eureka, Montana. Present were Commissioner Bennett, and Commissioner Letcher. County Administrator Patrick McFadden, and Clerk and Recorder Robin Benson present Libby, via VisionNet. Commissioner Peck was present via phone conference.

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

10:30 AM Administrative Issues: Present was Derrick Perkins. Present via phone conference was Ray Stout.

- Robin submitted the minutes for October 28, 2020 regular meeting for approval. **Motion** by Commissioner Letcher to approve minutes as submitted. Second by Commissioner Bennett, motion carried.
- Commissioner Bennett submitted Resolution 2020-24, A Resolution Appointing Special Deputy County Attorneys for the Purpose of Prosecuting Violations of Title 30, Chapter 10, Montana Code Annotated. Commissioner Bennett read from the resolution to those in attendance. The Office of the Montana State Auditor, Commissioner of Securities and Insurance has filed criminal charges in Lincoln County. Due to the specific expertise required in the prosecution of violations of securities law, it is desired and deemed appropriate that Special Assistant Attorneys General from the Office of the Montana State Auditor, Commissioner of Securities and Insurance be appointed as special deputy county attorneys for the prosecution of the aforementioned case. **Motion** by Commissioner Letcher to approve Resolution 2020-24 as submitted. Second by Commissioner Bennett, motion carried.

10:45 AM Public Comment: Present were Catherine and Ed Kahle, Jonathan Allen, Melissa Berke, Lynnelle Mellinger, Diane Watson. Present via phone conference is Ray Stout and Nikki Meyer.

Catherine Kahle commented that 700 people signed a petition submitted to the commissioners and wants to know what the commissioners are doing about it. Catherine expressed frustration that there has been no progress or action from the commissioners.

Commissioner Bennett said this is a public comment time and it needs to be placed on the commissioner's agenda for further discussion.

Ed Kahle said that at the October meeting, Commissioner Peck commented that CARD has received approximately \$30,000 in covid funds and questioned that there is a conflict of interest and it may go down a path of collusion. Ed questioned if anything is being done about that. Ed said there are no conclusive tests for Covid-19, there are only tests for all covid disease. Ed said the statistics for Covid-19 are false, yet people are making decisions and mandates based on faulty information.

Jonathan Allen commented that people ask if there is precedent at the Lincoln County level regarding conflict of interest with Dr. Black and CARD receiving covid funds and asked if there has been any legal opinion or any other inquiries from a legal standpoint. Jonathan encouraged the commissioners to look into this from a legal standpoint.

Catherine talked about testing, science (cycle threshold numbers), that may contribute to many more positive test results...false positives need to be researched and acknowledged.

Diane Watson asked what the response to the petition is. Diane asked if the Commissioners and the Board of Health are open to a positive health message. Rather than shutdowns, it would be positive to have a proactive health message.

Health is something cultivated by the choices we make. We should be promoting a health message for improved health. It would be good to have an answer from commissioners and know where we stand.

11:00 AM Harrison FT Exemption Request: Present were County Planner Jake Mertes, Brett McCully, and Derrick Perkins. Also present was Ray Stout and Nikki Meyer via phone conference.

Jake gave a brief overview of the exemption request and history of property. Jake stated there had been a quitclaim deed filed on the property and that a family transfer exemption is not valid in a platted subdivision. The proposed family transfer tract is no longer in a subdivision due to the BLA in April. The Planning Dept recommends denying the request to use exemption.

Commissioner Bennett commented that the commissioners have addressed this before, and it's just that people may not understand the process and is not considered intentional evasion.

Brett suggested that Lincoln County get clarification and an official decision from MACo

Commissioner Bennett said we can postpone any decision and place back on the agenda with more information.

Jake said he will get clarification from MACo and then we can be reassured that Lincoln County is interpreting correctly.

11:15 AM Megan Bailey, Gateway Recovery: Present were Derrick Perkins. Representing Gateway Recovery were Bob Wigdorski, Eureka via VisionNet and Megan Bailly via phone.

Bob gave an overview of the Gateway Recovery services in Libby that started when the Chemical Dependency Center closed. Gateway Recovery is now open in that same building. Current services are focused on addiction and mental health.

Megan said she is working with the treatment court, other mental health services, and probation offices. Jail evaluations are conducted to ensure we get people into treatment as needed.

Commissioner Bennett said the Daily Interlake wrote an article stating the state liquor stores have sold 20,000 more cases than last year and assumes those are hard liquor statistics.

Bob commented that alcohol consumption is through the roof, mental health and suicide is seeing dramatic increases and will continue with more shutdowns.

Commissioner Bennett commented that Lincoln County had 2 suicides last year and we are at 10 this year. We cannot point this to covid, but anytime there is loss of jobs, people are on the edge, and those statistics rise. Just because we tax

something, doesn't mean its helpful, now combine that with marijuana and we find ourselves questioning how we manage this.

Bob talked about providing services in Eureka. Commissioner Letcher said he will research what those services are in the Eureka area and is willing to help coordinate efforts.

Commissioner Bennett suggested Gateway Recovery to give periodic updates to the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Letcher asked about community buy-in, volunteers or mentoring. Bob said the problem is HIPPA law, traditionally Gateway Recovery has never worked with volunteers.

Bob said staffing does limit services, the hard part is finding counselors.

11:30 AM **Tim Orthmeyer, Morrison Maierle:** Present were Tim Orthmeyer via phone conference.

Tim said he is here to give an update of airport projects for 2021. Applications have been sent in for pavement, maintenance, and rehabilitation for runways and taxiways for both Libby and Eureka airports. The Eureka project is estimated at \$350,000. The Libby project is estimated at 2.6 million. Grants are 100% matching projects. Pavement maintenance and rehabilitation projects rank very high in grant consideration by the state.

The snowplow truck for the Libby airport is planned for delivery in January.

Tim thanked the county for its reselection of Morrison Maierle to continue working with the county. Tim will keep the commissioners informed of the grant progress.

12:00 PM **Meeting Adjourned**

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Mark Peck, Chairman

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