

October 15, 2020

**EPA Update Meeting
5:00 pm**

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a special session on October 15, 2020 in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Peck and Commissioner Bennett. Commissioner Letcher was present, Eureka via VisionNet. Also present were Mike Cirian, Greg Sopkin, Jagadeesan (Jag) Sethuraman, Beth Archer, and Will Langhorne. Present via phone conference were Chad Campbell, Jason Rappe, Jenny Chambers, and Ray Stout.

Chad, representing Senator Tester's Office said he toured the mine site and was able to look at vermiculite samples, commenting that it is a beautiful area. Mike commented on the vegetation and greenery.

Commissioner Peck thanked everyone for attending today's meeting.

Greg said he is looking forward to continuing working with the commissioners and the community. Greg commented he has been able to tour some of the remediated sites and schools. Greg commented that he is impressed with everything he sees and is happy they were able to hand off OU4 and OU7 to the state of Montana. Greg expressed he is confident the state will do a good job; we are partners in that. Realizes there are still questions and he will try to answer them, and he is available to work through that.

Commissioner Peck commented the county talked with its attorney and the agreements should be ready to go.

Jenny said she is not sure the money is in hand, but it is headed in this direction and is on track. Great news on the feedback received from the county and state MOA, will get that fully processed, executed, and signed and get the money in the right hands as we move forward.

Mike commented he talked with Virginia, reviewing the history, and although he will be leaving soon, said he is still around and available to assist.

Greg talked about the transition and his role moving forward, realizing there are issues and how to handle them is to get to Montana and talk with commissioners and community. We want progress with all the superfund sites. There is a special emphasis from Administrator Wheeler to expedite cleanup, stop concentrating on process and get to action items. Do things in parallel. That is our goal, that is our mission. That is why I come out here, to hear from you what is working and what is not working and how can improve.

Commissioner Peck commented that as far as OU3, seems to be working ok, although there are still some issues to work through.

Mike commented there are issues to work through, but we are getting there, closer to Phase 1, but working with timber and the forest service side of things.

Commissioner Peck talked about the proposed agreement between the county and state to essentially take over the Wildland Urban Interface through the Good Neighbor Authority timber management. Stimson has a lot of land in the area, same with the forest service; outside of OU3. There is some level of concern. Stimson does not have anything inside OU3. Any of the fuel reduction or forest management activities under the proposal, would be handled by a joint planning committee, county, state, forest service and natural resources and conservation service. Prioritize the projects and hoping to streamline some of those issues. Commissioner Peck said he will get a copy to Mike Cirian.

Mike said he is working with the state trying to get through the feasibility study and remedy selection and is working with WR Grace. The good thing is the risks are not as high as anticipated to be. Still looking at remedy selection which won't be completed until 2022, so it's still a way out. Going through other operable units, OU1 and OU2 are partially delisted, which is a huge accomplishment. OU3 is the mine site. OU4 and OU7 are big deals, in O&M now, we got through O&F and got through covid, funding is available; hopefully is in place soon. Continue to communicate with Jason and others on the team, Virginia and her team and make sure we are still available with our knowledge as they start diving into this more, so that is good. We got a lot of money out there for O&M. Those are all good things, where we are at for OU4 and OU7. OU5, waiting on environmental covenants. Jason said regarding OU5, we are working with Tina Oliphant to get that wrapped up. Mike continued saying there were no comments during the public comment period on OU6 which is the railroad corridor. We will start working on delisting at the end of the month, so will be working with the state to get buy in on that. OU8 and the Highway Corridor are wrapping up public comment period next week. Mike commented that looking back 15 years ago or so, who would have thought we would get this far with all of this. It is very good for the community. Now we just need to figure out how to get business to come in.

Commissioner Peck asked about a number for the amount left from the settlement money that is going to be set aside.

Mike said it will still be awhile, we have to finish paying all our bills, and we still have some contractors in place, so that will probably take over a year before all the finances are complete. Our legal folks will have to go through and resolve that all is accounted for and spent or corrected. Takes a lot of time to close out something this large; 240+ million dollars.

Commissioner Bennett commented about funds available to operate with.

Mike said we originally had 11 million set aside for O&M and that has grown to 12 million; that is EPA's portion. The state has a little over 5 million in their O&M pot, and of course, the Vincent Bill.

Commissioner Peck commented about whatever is left over from the settlement will be held. Mike commented he thinks it will be close to 8 to 12 million; currently sitting at close to 10 million. Commissioner Peck said the efforts to get that held, is good and those funds will remain there. The other money we have is the Trust Fund, that we don't spend out of the \$600,00/year, automatically rolls over into the trust to sit there.

Mike questioned that \$120,000 goes into the trust annually automatically. What is not spent of the \$480,000 rolls back into the trust.

Jenny clarified that automatically 20% or \$120,000 goes into the trust and then you have the \$480,000 to spend. What is not spent of the \$480,000 rolls over into the long-term trust, now sitting at approximately 1.1 million.

Mike commented that between those three pots of money, should be able to fund things that are asbestos related.

Commissioner Peck stated that we need to be frugal and expressed that he thinks we are more fortunate than a lot of places to have what we have.

Mike said he has never worked on a project where there is a guaranteed pot of money like this. To have that guarantee is a good deal.

Greg commented about the number of sites he has worked on that are not in as good of shape financially.

Commissioner Peck said we want to make sure we stay there.

Commissioner Bennett commented that as we are getting older, we are not going to be around and talked about the need to ensure this is set up efficiently for others in the future.

Mike commented if there is anything the county needs, he is available.

Greg expressed his support for Mike, saying he has been a fixture of this community and heard about Mike after about a week of joining this project and what a great job he has done for the last 15 years and we are deeply appreciative of his service.

Commissioner Peck commented we have had some really good people on this project over the years. Commissioner Peck again expressed his appreciation of those attending today's meeting, realizing its been tough with travel restrictions.

Mike commented that one of the things working on this project that is not in other projects is having good access to the County Commissioners, access to the Mayor, as well as Tester and Daines' offices. We have had a state agency alongside us the whole way which has been a benefit to us, we are not always trying to translate all the time. Just having all the entities involved in this project has really helped.

Commissioner Bennett talked about the emotions and personal health involved throughout the community over the years.

Greg told the commissioners to feel free to contact him direct.

5:45 PM **Meeting Adjourned**

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Mark Peck, Chairman

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