

**September 2, 2020**

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on September 2, 2020 in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Peck, Commissioner Bennett, Commissioner Letcher, County Administrator Patrick McFadden and Clerk and Recorder Robin Benson.

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

10:00 AM **USFS Update:** Present were Chad Benson, Sheriff Darren Short, Undersheriff Brad Dodson, and Will Langhorne. Present was Nikki Meyer, Eureka via VisionNet. Present was Ray Stout via phone conference.

Chad talked about the biological opinion completed from Fish, Wildlife Service, allowing for moving projects into the que; Ripley Project, Pinkham Meadows, Black Ram and others are in that que. Goal 80mmbf 2021.

The forest service is competing for Great American Outdoors Act monies. Monies are split between recreational projects and road projects. Chad said the forest service is trying for improve infrastructure around Rock Creek Cedars and is applying for funds to do that. There has been 2 to 3 Search and Rescues in that area.

Chad commented that times are good right now, including GNA projects. Projects are coming off the shelves, although the conversations we are having today could be different tomorrow.

Commissioner Peck commented that we need to get away from the mindset that if we have a positive case, that we are not successful. I think everyone is doing a good job.

Commissioner Bennett said that we need to find that balance and keep life in perspective.

Chad mentioned that the spill on Dickey Lake is under investigation. Chad said he is not sure, but it could have been a contractor that spilled emulsified dust abatement product. It was a liquid based product, that through dilution is now gone. Although disappointing, it could have been worse. Chad expressed that contractors should have spill protection plans; permits are not required.

Chad said law enforcement is chasing arsonists all over the county, mainly in Eureka, 69 starts this year, 9 have been lightning and these are not campfire burns either.

Chad commented that all campsites are getting full capacity use.

Chad said Joint Chiefs projects/grants are moving forward. It would mean 5 to 8 million acres of treatment that we are calling the Libby Area WUI. Chad stated that the forest service will move full steam ahead and is committed to that work even if without Joint Chiefs and will know more in the next 2 months.

Commissioner Peck asked about setting up a meeting to discuss the Ski Club work. Commissioner Peck talked about the Ski Clubs progress, operational plan and conversations to move forward. There is a sense of frustration and it would be good to sit down and talk about it. Everyone agrees it is a fantastic project, and there are a lot of kids involved.

Commissioner Bennett said there is always two sides to the tail, and it would be beneficial having those conversation to a point of moving forward.

Chad commented that he would like to see a master plan and questioned what it looks like. Chad said he fully supports the project as well but expressed concerns of our water system and how to balance that. The water supply is more important than our recreation. We have had a contractor out there, still working through that. Sometimes balance is complicated and has a bigger picture.

Commissioner Peck will coordinate a meeting for further discussion.

10:30 AM **Administrative Issues:** Present were Sheriff Darren Short, Undersheriff Brad Dodson, DC Orr, and Will Langhorne. Present was Nikki Meyer, Eureka, via VisionNet. Present was Ray Stout via phone conference.

- Robin presented the minutes for August 26, 2020 regular meeting for approval. **Motion** by Commissioner Bennett to approve minutes as submitted. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried unanimously.

10:45 AM **Public Comment Time:** Present were DC Orr, Sheriff Darren Short, and Will Langhorne. Present was Nikki Meyer, Eureka, via VisionNet. Present was Ray Stout via phone conference.

DC commented that he has been attending commissioner meetings for 20 years. The health board was shut down due to misappropriation of ARP funds. Those funds were misappropriated through the county attorney's office, Allan Payne was a deputy county attorney at that time and his supervisor oversees the negotiations and settlement of returning some of those funds. Now, the commission is different, but the corruption is the same. The settlement is being handled shoddily. The buck always stops at the commissioner's office. The health board is directing federal funds to their personal businesses and it is a mess again. Mr. Orr said he has been told by Jan Ivers that he cannot use the word "corruption" in his comments to the health board. Mr. Orr expressed the commissioners need to step up and be involved in these conversations. Mr. Orr commented that he will be at the next health board meeting and he knows that he will be shut down. Mr. Orr said he would like the commissioners to attend to actually see and watch how the health board treats him. Mr. Orr said he would appreciate anything the commissioners can do to help.

11:00 AM **Treasurer Sedaris Carlberg / School Budget Approvals:** Present were Sheriff Darren Short and Will Langhorne. Present was Nikki Meyer, Eureka, via VisionNet. Present was Ray Stout via phone conference.

Sedaris submitted and explained the School District Levies for FY 2020/2021. Sedaris provided comparisons from last year to current year and countywide funds for education. **Motion** by Commissioner Bennett to approve school district levies for FY 2020/2021 as presented. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried. Commissioner Peck was excused.

11:15 AM **Meuse Lakeshore Permit:** Present was County Planner Jake Mertes. Present was Nikki Meyer, Eureka, via VisionNet. Present was Ray Stout via phone conference.

Jake explained the property owner is proposing to stabilize the bank from past ice/water erosional damage that is exposing tree roots. Body of water is Sophie Lake in Eureka. Jake explained the findings of fact and mitigation plan. The Planning Board recommends approval of the Lakeshore Permit subject to the conditions in the staff report. **Motion** by Commissioner Letcher to approve the Meuse Lakeshore Permit subject to planning staff conditions and recommendation. Second by Commissioner Bennett, motion carried. Commissioner Peck was excused.

11:30 AM **White Pine Subdivision Final Plat:** Present were County Planner Jake Mertes.

White Pine Subdivision is a 6-lot subdivision located off Parmenter Creek Road in South Libby. Jake said all requirements for final plat have been met and planning staff recommends approval. Jake explained access and road maintenance. **Motion** by Commissioner Letcher to approve final plat for White Pine Subdivision subject to planning staff conditions and recommendation. Second by Commissioner Bennett, motion carried. Commissioner Peck was excused.

2:00 PM **Final Budget Hearing:** Present were Dallas Bowe, Wendy Drake, Sheriff Darren Short, Undersheriff Brad Dodson and Derrick Perkins. Also present was Nikki Meyer, Eureka via VisionNet.

Patrick gave an overview of the FY 2020/2021 Tax Levy Requirement Schedule. Patrick said a \$200,000 budget decrease came from department budgets combined with the Cares Act reimbursement of \$472,606 helped balance the budget. Department supervisors are to be commended for their efforts. Patrick noted that PILT funds were not used to balance the budget.

Commissioner Bennett commented that we arrived at our goal and that is a great thing.

Commissioner Peck talked about the road budget and the importance of protecting it and keeping it away from becoming a levied fund.

Commissioner Letcher read Resolution 2020-19 Levies for Lincoln County for FY 2020-2021 in its entirety. **Motion** by Commissioner Letcher to approve FY 20/21 Tax Levy Requirement Schedule and Resolution 2020-19 as presented. Second by Commissioner Bennett, motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Bennett thanked all county departments and the finance department for their hard work.

Commissioner Peck talked about the budget timeline and process, having to make decisions prior to fully knowing revenues.

Commissioner Letcher said he appreciates the hard work and effort crunching numbers and the process of bringing department information to the commissioners.

Commissioner Bennett read Resolution 2020-18 Budget Amendment in its entirety. **Motion** by Commissioner Bennett to approve Resolution 2020-18 Budget Amendment for FY 2019/2020. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried unanimously.

2:30 PM **Meeting Adjourned**

## **LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

---

Mark Peck, Chairman

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Robin A. Benson, Clerk of the Board