

August 3, 2022

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on August 3, 2022 in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Teske, Commissioner Letcher, Commissioner Bennett, County Administrator Jim Hammons and Clerk & Recorder Robin Benson.

Meeting allows for teleconferencing and VisionNet availability.

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

09:45 AM PILT Funding for Engineering Services: Present were Veronica Bovee-Anderson, Scott Shindledecker, Ray Stout, and Rebecca Nelson.

Commissioner Letcher talked about 3 bridges in North Lincoln County that he visited onsite with Mike Fraser. One bridge is an old steel bridge with a 1921 date stamped on it, and 2 bridges are old wooden structures. Commissioner Letcher questioned how to get funding to get them replaced and conduct a bridge study/ratings by a qualified engineer. Commissioners approved an agreement for engineering services with TD&H Engineering for \$18,000. Commissioner Bennett suggested to have the cost come out of the road fund and request road supervisors to add expenditure to their existing budgets.

10:00 AM USFS: Present were Forest Supervisor Chad Benson, County Forester Jennifer Nelson, Scott Shindledecker, Veronica Bovee-Anderson, Rebecca Nelson and Ray Stout.

Chad talked about programs planned with the bipartisan monies; the Kootenai is one of the 10 in the nation that received funds. Roughly 19.3 million for the next 3 years. The challenges come from the congressional delegation part of this and micromanagement and the ability to move as fast as their expectation. Chad commented that our goal in just the fire sheds is 150,000 acres over the next 10 years, and we will still have the contingency of other planned projects.

Chad updated Black Ram, Knotty Pine, and Ripley projects. On a positive note, Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) is pumping millions into infrastructure and there are still opportunities for funding.

Commissioner Teske talked about linking roads on the historic Showshoe Trail plan. It's a collaborative effort and does not want to see those efforts fall to the wayside.

Chad commented there is a standstill on hiring, unfortunately people are declining jobs, the main reason is the lack of housing; we have vacant positions that are not filled.

Chad mentioned the letter sent by the county regarding the cooperative agency status and suggested a meeting about how to navigate processes to get projects done, and the county to prioritize projects for further discussion.

Commissioner Letcher noted the 2017 Weasel Fire, fairly large fire, but there was never any salvage work conducted.

10:30 AM Administrative Issues/Old Business: Present were Scott Shindledecker, Veronica Bovee-Anderson, Rebecca Nelson and Ray Stout.

- Robin submitted the minutes for July 27, 2022 regular meeting for approval. **Motion** by Commissioner Letcher to approve minutes as submitted. Second by Commissioner Teske, motion carried unanimously.
- Robin thanked the commissioners for their support and participation in the August Countywide Safety Appreciation and Training Day for employees. Robin commented that Lincoln County does have one of the best safety records in the state which is a significant factor in Lincoln County's reduced Workers Comp rate.
- Commissioner Bennett commented that Lincoln County usually has no real issues with district budgets, but Troy Fire District has had a couple of big expenses recently, and not enough funds available. One of the expenses is a pump for a truck. Commissioner Bennett explained a potential error in the fire district budget last year, and the bottom line is that the fire district budget was possibly underfunded. Lincoln County has loaned to districts before to help with larger expenses. Approximate cost for the pump is \$18,500. Commissioner Bennett is requesting Lincoln County to approve a loan for the pump to be paid back over 2 years. **Motion** by Commissioner Teske to approve a loan to Troy Rural Fire District for \$18,500 out of PILT for the next 2 years. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried unanimously. Payments will go back into the PILT fund.
- Commissioner Teske reached out to Third Signal and said the proposal agreement approved by the commissioners is adequate enough to move forward.

10:45 AM Public Comment Time: Present were Scott Shindledecker, Veronica Bovee-Anderson, Rebecca Nelson and Ray Stout.

Veronica thanked Commissioner Teske for reaching out to Lincoln County Rural Fire District regarding lawn mowing at fire station 2, on River Run Lane.

Commissioner Teske commented that the speed study is moving forward on a portion of Highway 37 as requested by people living in the area.

Meeting Adjourned

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

ATTEST: _____

Robin Benson, Clerk of the Board

Jerry Bennett, Chairman