

June 9, 2016

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a special session on June 9, 2016, in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Cole, Commissioner Larson, Commissioner Peck and Clerk and Recorder Robin Benson.

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

9:30 AM **Salary Committee Meeting:** Present were Bernard Cassidy, Vic White, Dallas Wamsley, Boyd White, Terry Crooks, Nancy Higgins, Roby Bowe, Bonnie Larson, Deanna Cornell and Steve Newman, Eureka via Vision Net.

Commissioner Cole thanked everyone in attendance and wanted the salary committee to be aware that committee members have term dates of 3 years and the H.R. Department is setting up a policy with clarifications on terms and responsibilities. Commissioner Peck clarified the responsibility of the salary committee is to make salary recommendations for elected officials only. The Commission will make decisions regarding COLA for all other county employees. Dallas reported the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for 2016-2017 is .01%. The COLA calculation is based upon the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers, as determined by the US Department of Labor.

Bonnie Larson shared that county employees receive health insurance for entire families, not just employees and asked if it would be beneficial to employees to allow a COLA increase and have employees pay in for family members. Bonnie said she realizes there has not been a COLA for county employees since 2011/2012.

Vic said there are provisions to do that, but you have to offer the choice to all employees. There are options that small stipends go to employees who choose to opt out of county insurance. More research would need to be conducted. Dallas said the county has 131 employees on the county insurance plan; 53 of those employees are on the family rate.

Commissioner Peck commented that the reality is that Congress has not reauthorized SRS funding, which is over a 2 million potential loss in revenue.

Nancy shared that from a supervisor standpoint, employees have not seen a wage increase in many years, but the cost of living has not decreased. It is difficult to tell employees who work so hard conducting county business that there will not be a wage increase for the 5th year in a row.

Bonnie suggested the salary committee meet next year earlier, possibly in March of each year. County Attorney, Bernard Cassidy agrees with Nancy about employees not receiving wage increases for multiple years. Steve Newman wanted to verify what "no increases" actually means. Dallas said there has been no increase to the base rate, but there is longevity increases when employees reach intermittent years of employment.

The county insurance policy for FY 16/17 has been set during yesterday's regular commissioner's meeting on June 8, 2016. The insurance premium will see an increase of 9.72%.

Bonnie recommended a 1% increase amounting to approximately \$58,000 for all elected officials. **Motion** by Bonnie Larson to recommend a 1% COLA increase for all elected officials. Second by Steve Newman, motion carried unanimously. The salary committee recommends to the commission a 1% COLA increase to all county employees. The commission will take the recommendation under advisement for the FY 16/17 budget process.

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Mike Cole, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Robin Benson, Clerk of the Board