

March 9, 2022

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on March 9, 2022 in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Bennett, Commissioner Teske, Commissioner Letcher, County Administrator Jim Hammons and Clerk and Recorder Robin Benson.

Meeting allows for teleconferencing and VisionNet availability.

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

9:30 AM **County Forester Jennifer Nelson:** Present were Dustin Webb, Elizabeth Story, Donna Martin, Derrick Perkins, Rebecca Nelson and Ray Stout.

Jennifer provided and gave an overview of the following County Forester Update:

County Forester Update to the Commissioners 3/9/22

J. Neils Park – Work will begin in J. Neils on Monday, March 14. The DNRC will be working in the northeast portion of the park doing fuel reduction, sanitation, and hazard tree removal. General clean-up in other parts of the park. This is our third year. FEC will be assisting with removal of dead, diseases and weak trees along the powerline. Partial-park closures from Monday – Thursday, 8:00-5:00 along the walking path on northeast side, between County Park Road and Northwood Ave. Four weeks of work, funded under KFRI. Notices are out to the Western News and Kootenai Valley Record. Dallas has been informed.

Beetle grant work in the west end will not start until fall to avoid further beetle infestation.

Landfill – Cell 2 prep – Purchasers are looking at the timber and four contractors have been contacted for estimates. Expect to be on site in a month.

City fuel reduction work – working with the City of Libby to treat approx. 30 ac along County Shop Road, KPFL and River Road.

Joint Chiefs – KNF has received the JC funding as of yesterday for 2022 work. Request for county GNA work is from the ground up on Unit 16. Spoken with Nate Gassmann, letting him know it is a long shot for 2022, but that the county is interested in becoming involved. I have talked to the State GNA coordinator, Greg Archie, and he will be here tomorrow to talk about how the county can gear up for GNA involvement. Good response to the outreach with seventeen landowners applying to NRCS for funding to treat their lands, exceeding funding for 2022. Focus will likely be on properties adjacent to Ripley Project.

KFRI – work continues and trying to use money that will expire in June. No extension is allowed due to the way the grant was constructed at the State. Several projects underway including J. Neils, FWP Chain of Lakes, various private projects in Troy, West Kootenai, and Libby. Wendy and Dallas will be charging some of their time to the grant.

County Burn Permits – Much work has gone into developing the Lincoln County portion of the permits, with the help of the FS, DNRC and Health Dept. The sole focus is on the Outdoor Burn Control Area around Libby, currently and it will be expanded to the county after April. We are expecting a to be able to go live by next week.

Other - Era of Mega Fires – April 14, Dome Theater, Kootenai Climate Group and L.C. FireSafe Council

Forest Counties Annual meeting – April 14, AFRC meeting April 19-21, Arbor Day – April 29

9:45 AM **Resolution 2022-07 Polling Place Locations:** Present were Election Administrator Paula Buff, Amanda Eckart, Donna Martin, Elizabeth Story, Jennifer Curtiss, Jennifer McCully, Nick Raines, Rebecca Nelson, Derrick Perkins, and Ray Stout.

Paula informed the commissioners that election staff toured all 7 Lincoln County Polling Places looking at logistics and security and is recommending polling places be moved to more secure locations. Paula noted the absentee rate has increased exponentially in Lincoln County, currently at 59% and steadily rising. Paula said she has talked to constituents and has heard concerns regarding secure ballot drop locations. Ballot Kiosks are now located at law enforcement/dispatch centers in Libby, Troy and Eureka. Kiosks are bolted to floors and under 24/7 video surveillance improving ballot security with less transports. With reduced polling places and ballot drop locations, there are fewer moving parts and less margin for error with the chain of custody of ballot transport to the Election Center. The recommendation also allows for social distancing coupled with ADA legal requirements.

Commissioner Bennett commented this was a lot of work and appreciates those efforts.

Commissioner Teske agreed the proposed changes increases both, ballot security and election integrity.

Commissioner Letcher read Resolution 2022-07 Polling Place Locations in its entirety.

Commissioner Bennett asked if there were any questions or comments. There were no public comments.

Motion by Commissioner Teske to approve Resolution 2022-07 Lincoln County Polling Place Locations. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried unanimously.

The commissioners signed a letter that will be going out to all Lincoln County electors, approximately 13,300 notifying electors of changes in poll locations and ballot drop locations.

Robin commended Paula and Amanda on their diligence and hard work to ensure Lincoln County Elections are secure and safe for all county electors.

All resolutions can be viewed in their entirety on the Lincoln County website www.lincolncountymt.us Under Clerk and Recorder Department.

10:00 AM **Health Department:** Present were Kathi Hooper, Jennifer McCully, Nick Raines, Donna Martin, Elizabeth Story, Derrick Perkins, Rebecca Nelson, and Ray Stout.

- **Solid Waste & Recycling**

Kathi said the expansion project is moving forward and she is working with the engineer. The letter of intent to expand has been submitted to DEQ.

A credit card reader has been received and will be installed at the landfill. There are approximately \$47,000 past due invoices owed at the landfill, mainly from contractors that regularly use the landfill. Letters will go out to all contractors, notifying them of the change.

The online burn permit system will be activated on Friday, March 11. Last year, approximately 800 residential burn permits were issued.

- **Environmental Health**

Nick talked about the Accela proposal for permitting, inspection and tracking software and explained how the system works. Other county departments that need tracking software potentially will be able to tie into the system as well. Initial set up cost is \$43,560 with an estimated \$15,000 annual fee. Nick said the development process will include dedicated time set aside for employee training.

Commissioner Teske commented that the software is more expensive than anticipated, but in the long run, it will save employee time and money and will help with other departments that track information.

Motion by Commissioner Letcher to approve \$43,560 initial startup costs using ARPA funds for the Accela Software as presented. Second by Commissioner Teske, motion carried unanimously.

- **Public Health**

Jennifer informed the commissioners that they are seeing flu cases although reporting is down.

Trista is becoming a lactation consultant for breast feeding and can now go to homes after mothers leave the hospital and help out.

Jennifer said she has been researching Electronic Health Record systems and Danielle is gathering data for the Online Resource Guide.

The Zero to Five program and Lincoln County Library now offer the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. Every child in Lincoln County can register to receive a free book by mail every month until their 5th birthday. Since the launch two weeks ago, 240 children have already registered, which is 29% of our eligible population.

10:30 AM **Administrative Issues / Road Tax Map / Contract Signature on Aging:** Present were Rebecca Nelson, Ray Stout and Derrick Perkins.

- Robin submitted the minutes for February 23, 2022 regular meeting for approval. **Motion** by Commissioner Teske to approve minutes as submitted. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried unanimously.
- Commissioner Bennett discussed the need for heavy equipment at the port authority and has talked with Road Supervisor Marc McCully. The road department does have a backhoe they do not use. Upon reading statutes, the county will place an ad in the paper of record. With a comparison of 4 different ads of comparable equipment, Commissioner Bennett recommends the county sell the backhoe to the Port Authority for \$30,000. **Motion** by Commissioner Teske to sell backhoe to the Port Authority for \$30,000. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Teske commented a backhoe helps with cleanup and work at the port that has been contracted out in the past.
- The commissioners signed the Revised 2022 Schedule A Road Agreement with the Forest Service. All road departments met with the forest service and were involved in the annual agreement.
- The commissioners signed the annual Western Montana Area VI Agency on Aging Contract. Commissioner Bennett said the only change is payments will not go to the county but will go directly to Libby, Troy and Eureka agencies to eliminate invoicing with the county.
- The commissioners reviewed the Mileage Certification Form per Section 15-70-101 MCA. Lincoln County total road mileage outside of cities is 2420.626. **Motion** by Commissioner Teske to approve the State of Montana Mileage Certification Form. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried unanimously.
- Commissioner Teske commented that an email was received from Adam Gill requesting to be placed on the agenda to present Montana C-Pace Financing options for financial assistance regarding heating, cooling and construction projects. The commissioners agreed to allow a Montana C-Pace presentation be placed on the commissioner's agenda.

10:45 AM **Public Comment Time:** Present were Ken Rayome Sr., Ken Rayome Jr., Rebecca Nelson, Ray Stout and Derrick Perkins.

Ken Rayome Sr., unit manager for David Thompson Search & Rescue informed the commissioners that they are in need of a new snowmobile to replace an existing snowmobile that is 20 years old. The proposal is for a 2022 Expedition Sport. Cost is \$14,500 with a \$2,000 trade in. Cost could be a little more or less in the fall when they come in. Ken said his proposal is for \$15,000 to cover any unexpected expenses. The commissioners will review the proposal and place on the agenda. No decisions were made at this time.

11:00 AM **Public Hearing / Libby Creek Water/Sewer Project (formerly Hartman Trailer Court):** Present were Finance Officer Wendy Drake, Danielle Maiden, Brandy Sularz, Joanna Schapley, Autumn Tigart, Adam Poeschl, John Gass, Ray Stout and Derrick Perkins.

Danielle gave an overview of the CDBG sewer system replacement project, including the purpose and proposed area, budget and possible sources of funding. The purpose of the public hearing is to obtain comments regarding the proposed application to the Montana Department of Commerce's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and other programs for the Libby Creek Community Water/Sewer Project.

The community will be connecting to city water. Grant applications are due March 31st. Danielle said she would do the grant reporting to the state.

Commissioners expressed support for the project, saying it is better for the residents in the long run for improved infrastructure.

There were no public comments.

11:30 AM **Danielle Maiden / RRGL & MCEP Application:** Present were Finance Officer Wendy Drake, Danielle Maiden, Brandy Sularz, Joanna Schapley, Autumn Tigart, Adam Poeschl, John Gass, Ray Stout and Derrick Perkins.

Danielle said the preliminary report and plan proposal are completed. It is estimated at 2.4 million for the entire water and sewer project. CDBG grant will be submitted this month. Requesting Lincoln County to sponsor other grant applications. RRGL & MCEP grant funds are only available every 2 years and those applications are due in May. Legislators review those applications, and the estimated award time is next spring. Danielle said she is hoping to start construction next summer. Danielle provided a resolution to authorize submission of the CDBG application for commissioner approval. Robin said the Resolution will be assigned number 2022-08 and she will place the language into the county format. **Motion** by Commissioner Teske to approve Resolution 2022-08, Resolution to Authorize Submission of the CDBG Application. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried unanimously. **Motion** by Commissioner Teske to approve the CDBG application. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Teske commented that it is a good project to improve quality of life, health and welfare.

12:00 PM **Break**

1:30 PM **Budget Meeting:** Present were City Administrator Jim Hammons, Finance Officer Wendy Drake and Rebecca Nelson.

Wendy submitted the FY 2022-2023 Budget Calendar for commissioner review. The commissioners discussed the dates and budget process for the 22/23 fiscal year. Discussion focused on dates/deadlines to enter budgets into BMS, budget review timelines, dates commissioners will meet with department heads, preliminary levy sheet preparation, non-levied fund budgets, public hearing and final budget adoption.

The commissioners discussed approved ARPA funds allocated to departments/projects, pending ARPA fund requests and remaining funds available.

2:30 PM **Meeting Adjourned**

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Jerry Bennett, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Robin Benson, Clerk of the Board