

**March 15, 2023**

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on March 15, 2023 in the Lincoln County Annex, Eureka, Montana. Present were Commissioner Teske, Commissioner Letcher, Commissioner Hammons, and Clerk and Recorder Robin Benson.

Meeting allows for teleconferencing and VisionNet availability.

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

**9:30 AM Planning, Yorkie Subdivision:** Present were County Planner Jesse Haag, Ken E. Davis, Victoria Downing, Darwin Pluid, Colleen Owen, Scott Mattheis, Rebecca Nelson, Dianne Hansen, Shawn Smith, Michelle Byrd, Solomon Alcain, Thomas Lane, Corrina Brown, Kathleen Johnson, Nick Enblom, Ray Stout, B Dahm, Thorin Geist, Sheriff Darren Short, Marcia Boris, Lincoln County Health Department, Wendy Drake, Jeff Zwang, Scott Shindledecker, and Kerry Finley. Yorkie Subdivision is located approximately four miles west of Libby, on Hwy 2. The subdivision proposes creating one additional single-family lot on an existing residential parcel. Jesse gave an overview of the subdivision report, impacts, and 12 conditions. Planning staff recommends preliminary approval to Yorkie Subdivision subject to conditions and based on the findings in the staff report. **Motion** by Commissioner Teske to grant preliminary plat to Yorkie Subdivision subject to conditions and based on planning staff recommendation and findings in the staff report. Second by Commissioner Hammons, motion was unanimous.

**9:45 AM Nick Enblom Morrison & Maierle, Approval for Eureka Airport Fueling Station:** Present were Scott Mattheis, Victoria Downing, Darwin Pluid, Colleen Owen, Shawn Smith, Scott Shindledecker, Dianne Hansen, Michelle Byrd, Corrina Brown, Thomas Lane, Kathleen Johnson, and Rebecca Nelson.

Nick expressed this is a continuation of the project for installation of a fuel tank at the Eureka Airport. The commissioners reviewed the grant summary, an estimated cost total of \$501,500 the local share cost is \$50,150. Nick said he is here to answer any questions and have discussion about moving forward.

Scott Mattheis talked about the need for this project; there are more inquiries about the possibility to get JET-A fuel at the airport. Scott said he is in meetings with the forest service about having a place for operations, and a place to fuel in Eureka would generate income and reduce time and increase trips to a fire. Scott said the airport is thriving and the board is thinking about ways to generate revenue, but expressed the airport is losing opportunities by not having this installed.

Nick talked about the funding, federal share is 90%, and local share is 10%.

Scott talked about people who are willing to donate money and potential grant opportunities to help pay for the county share.

Nick submitted a Task Order No. 4-2020, Master Agreement between Lincoln County and Engineer, Morrison-Maierle, Inc. for commissioner approval.

Commissioner Teske commented it would be a real benefit for fire suppression.

Scott said the request is for the county to loan money for the local share to the airport. Approximately \$32,000 is set aside to help with the local share. **Motion** by Commissioner Teske to approve project submittal and loan local share cost to the airport board to be paid out of PILT. Second by Commissioner Hammons, motion was unanimous. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve Task Order No. 4-2020 between Lincoln County and Morrison-Maierle to move forward with the project submittal. Second by Commissioner Teske, motion was unanimous.

**10:00 AM Colleen Owen, DEQ Brownfields Information:** Present were Victoria Downing, Colleen Owen, Shawn Smith, Dianne Hansen, and Rebecca Nelson.

Colleen gave an overview of what Brownfields is and the services and potential opportunities Brownfields can do for our community. Brownfields helps properties with expansion, redevelopment or reuse of which may be complicated, due to the need for investigation and cleanup of hazardous material. Colleen provided examples of redevelopment projects in other areas across the state and how Brownfields can assist with funding to move projects forward. Brownfields helps with environmental issues to help counties reach project goals.

Commissioner Letcher discussed how revitalizing old buildings seems to be something people want to see more of.

**10:30 AM Administrative Issues/Old Business / Resolution 2023-11 Libby Creek Water/Sewer Project,**

**Environmental Certifying Official / Resolution 2023-10:** Present were Victoria Downing, Rebecca Nelson, Dianne Hansen, Shawn Smith, Michelle Byrd, Solomon Alcain, Thomas Lane, Corrina Brown, Kathleen Johnson, Ray Stout, B. Dahm, Thorin Geist, Sheriff Darren Short, Marcia Boris, Lincoln County Health Department, Wendy Drake, Jeff Zwang, Scott Shindledecker, and Kerry Finley.

- Robin submitted the minutes for March 8, 2023 for approval. **Motion** by Commissioner Teske to approve minutes as submitted. Second by Commissioner Hammons, motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Letcher commented that in today's minutes he wants to note that Rene Cratty was mentioned in the commissioner meeting two weeks ago but was not mentioned in the minutes.
- Resolution 2023-11 Designating Jim Hammons as the Environmental Certifying Official regarding the Libby Creek Water/Sewer Improvement Project: Commissioner Hammons submitted the signature page for commissioners and county clerk to sign. Commissioner Hammons read Resolution 2023-11 in its entirety. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve Resolution 2023-11 as submitted. Second by Commissioner Teske, motion was unanimous.
- Commissioner Letcher said he will abstain from Resolution 2023-10, Appointing Special Deputy County Attorneys for the Purpose of Providing Prosecutorial Assistance. Commissioner Teske read Resolution 2023-10 in its entirety. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve Resolution 2023-10 as submitted. Second by Commissioner Teske, motion was unanimous.

- Commissioner Teske read minutes from 2013 where commissioners approved a hiring freeze. Commissioner Teske clarified the hiring freeze in 2013 was for cutting back on expenses, and since then, not finding any documentation to rescind that hiring freeze. HR requested this be reviewed since there has been hiring since 2013. **Motion** by Commissioner Teske to rescind the 2013 hiring freeze. Second by Commissioner Hammons, motion was unanimous.  
Commissioner Letcher spoke about understanding that decisions were made for budget shortfalls at that time.
- Commissioner Teske said he received a request from HR to amend a portion of the Lincoln County Personnel Policy. Commissioner Teske read a portion of the personnel policy and talked about issues of hiring already budgeted personnel in departments, non-grant funded positions. New language will read: *Commissioners require that all new positions and wage increases, not currently budgeted for within the budget year, be reviewed and approved by the Commissioners. Once approved by the Commissioners, the Department Head/Elected Official will send an email to the Human Resource Department with the following information.* **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to amend the Lincoln County Personnel Policy as stated above. Second by Commissioner Teske, motion was unanimous.

10:45 AM **Public Comment Time:** Present were Victoria Downing, Rebecca Nelson, Dianne Hansen, Shawn Smith, Michelle Byrd, Solomon Alcain, Thomas Lane, Corrina Brown, Kathleen Johnson, Ray Stout, B. Dahm, Thorin Geist, Sheriff Darren Short, Marcia Boris, Lincoln County Health Department, Wendy Drake, Jeff Zwang, Scott Shindlecker, and Kerry Finley.

Dianne spoke about recently becoming involved in county political doings. Dianne expressed concerns about the federal government having control over our county through grants, and county boards will not refuse federal grant money, is there a way that citizens can say no, I don't want this. Dianne noted that she thought our county was very liberal and had no idea how many people think the same, conservative. Dianne asked if people can begin refusing bits of federal grants. Conservative people don't want to be obligated by federal grants. Dianne asked about impeachment proceedings, how is it possible to impeach certain officials.

Dianne said at the Board of Health meeting, a man spoke up about board directives and plans and maybe we don't need those things. Dianne talked about how the natural response to harm or a virus is to stay away from the deadly thing going on, I am for less government and less regulations.

DC Orr asked why Commissioner Letcher abstained from voting on Resolution 2023-10, noting the proper procedure, if they recuse themselves, they should give a reason.

Commissioner Letcher stated he grew up across the street from the man involved.

DC commented that he was at the meeting when Jerry Bennett was appointed to the audit committee, and he objected, and Jerry did withdraw his name, showing lack of understanding. DC expressed some big problems in the county attorney's office and commented that he stands behind Commissioner Letcher.

11:00 AM **Library Update on Troy Library and Opportunity Center (TLOC):** Present were Library Director Alyssa Peck, Sharee Miller, Barb Hvizdak, representing Mosaic Architecture Kalina Vanderpoel and Jeff Downhour, Dianne Hansen, Rebecca Nelson, Wendy Drake, Michelle Byrd, Shawn Smith, Scott Shindlecker, and Ray Stout.

Alyssa talked about this exciting project of expanding the Troy Library and adding the Opportunity Center to help needs in the Troy area. Alyssa provided visuals and designs to see current progress and future design. Alyssa said she is looking for approval to move forward. The next step would be starting a capital campaign. The library has been working on this for 2 years. Alyssa talked about the architectural report, paid from grant funds.

Jeff talked about the design, preliminary architectural report, scope of project, cost estimate, and design.

Kalina talked about how the design applies to the multi-purpose community center for special events, kitchen area, different classes offered to the public and meetings.

Jeff provided details of the structure, accessibility, space for staff, community meeting room, maintenance, heating/cooling efficiency, and efficient building use as well as diagrams of the ambulance barn.

Alyssa said our ask for today is do we have a green light to move to the next phase of moving into a capital campaign.

Alyssa commented that 5 grants are identified associated with this project to help with cost.

Commissioner Hammons asked if grants don't fall into place, is there a plan to scale back.

Sharee said she is very confident we will continue to find funding opportunities.

Jeff said there is a process for scaling back prior to final design, it's not uncommon. Costs and where we are at in funding will be reviewed.

Alyssa discussed budget and has budgeted \$3,500 to cover water/sewer and electrical and is anticipating \$2,000 to \$3,000 more annually to maintain the building. The library can absorb some of that cost, but we have fundraising projects, and possible mill levy options, as well as renting out some spaces to help offset costs. There are a lot of unknowns at this time.

Commissioner Letcher asked about added employees or cost of having the community space cleaned, as well as added maintenance cost. Commissioner Letcher explained he has been in the construction business for many years and there are a lot of costs not being considered. My concern is the budget but he appreciates all the work that has gone into it, noting that increased size and spacing means increased maintenance cost.

Sharee spoke about Friends of the Library, and how they help with maintenance of sidewalks and other operational costs. Sharee said she thinks maintenance could be less in the long run.

Alyssa pointed out that she has 3 buildings and all of them are very old and we are faced with significant upgrades because they require continual maintenance. Alyssa expressed that she feels this is a great opportunity.

Sharee noted the library in Troy is continually exceeding the space, more people than space allows for.

Alyssa talked about increased public use, and managing that with decreased budget, decreased staff, and expressed TLOC is a benefit for the library and community.

Sharee said next step is going after funding and organizing a capital campaign.

Commissioner Teske talked about grant administration, and the burden on finance, he would like to see something in place for grant administration.

Alyssa said some grants run through the foundation, but some grants do require to be run through the county.

Kalina talked about the next phase, the architectural report will be completed in April, and then grant submittals to CDBG, and other concurrent grant fund raising.

Jeff reminded everyone this is preliminary, there is review of funding before final design.

**Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to allow the library to pursue working with the architect and further refine TLOC design, address concerns of commissioners and research funding opportunities. Second by Commissioner Teske.

Dianne talked about intelligence is obtained from reading and emphasized the importance of reading.

Kerry Finley questioned what commitment the county is making by giving a green light.

Alyssa said the county is not on the hook for anything at this time, grants can be denied.

It was agreed by the commissioners to postpone the motion until next week to be listed on the agenda.

12:00 PM **Adjourned**

## **LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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Josh Letcher, Chairman

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_

Robin Benson, Clerk of the Board