

August 2, 2023

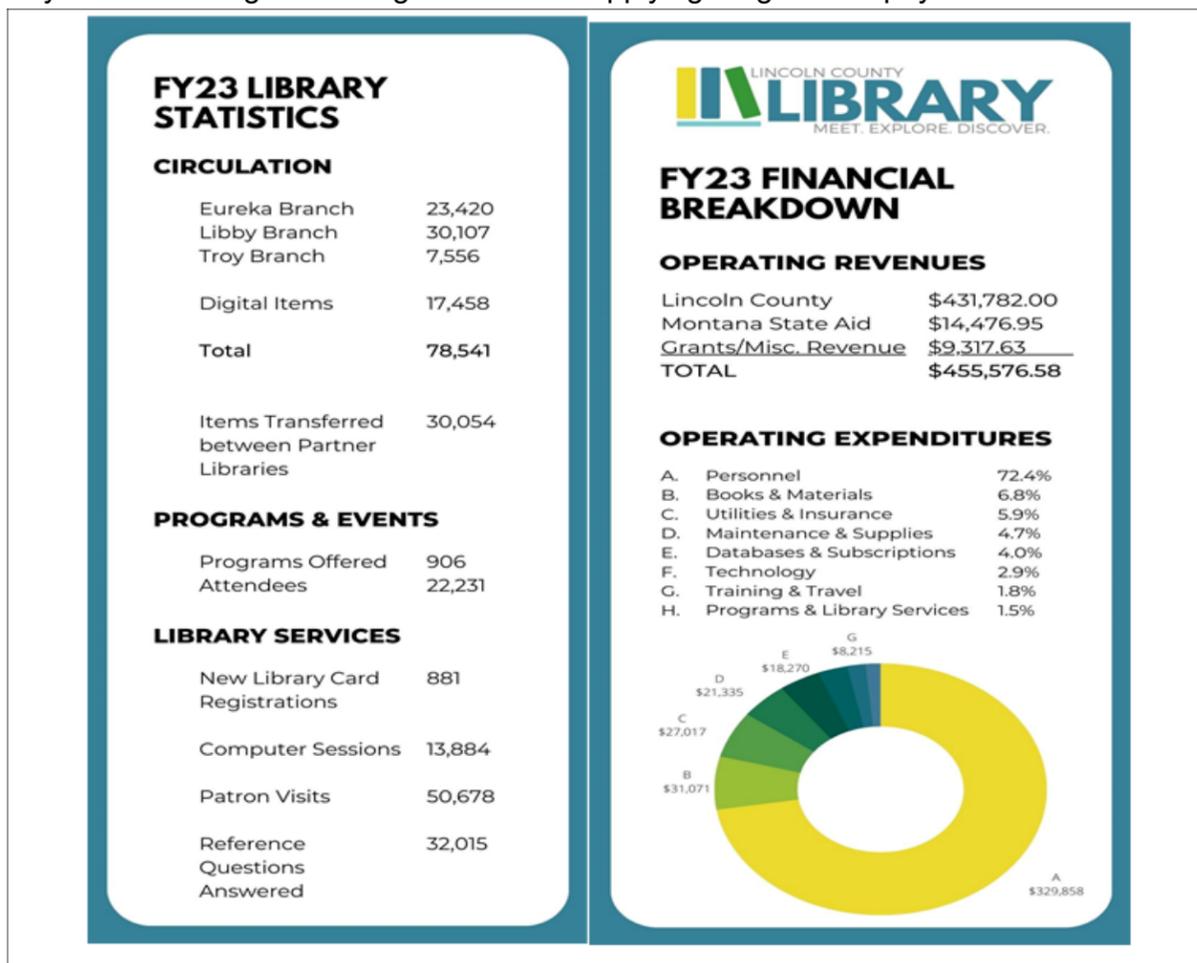
The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on August 2, 2023, in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Teske, Commissioner Letcher, Commissioner Hammons, Lincoln County Administrative Assistant Jennifer Brown and Clerk & Recorder Corrina Brown.

Meeting allows for teleconferencing and VisionNet availability. Present online were Chanel Geer, Melanie Howell, Rebecca Nelson Reporter-Tobacco Valley News, Ray Stout Reporter-Kootenai Valley Record, Alyssa Ramirez, Hayden Blackford and Jesse Haag.

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

09:45 AM **Library End of Year Update:** Present were Tom Lane EMA, Nathan Gassmann USFS, Alyssa Ramirez Library.

Library Director Alyssa Ramirez provided an overview of year end results as shown below. Alyssa stated the library also received approximately \$50,000 from the Foundation, a non-profit which was largely invested in books, magazines, new Troy computers and program support. Alyssa advised Friends of the Library Group contributed ten-fifteen thousand dollars, which allowed the Libby Library to upgrade the lighting. Alyssa commented on the library usage in the Eureka area where Siri reports roughly 30 people a week attend story time. Commissioner Teske questioned status of TLOC. Alyssa advised they have hired a grant writing firm and are applying for grants to pay for the construction.



10:00 **USFS:** Present were Tom Lane EMA, Nathan Gassmann USFS, Scott Shindlecker Reporter-Western News, Jennifer Nelson Forester, Luke, and Keeli.

Nathan of USFS presented forest wide information. Commissioner Letcher questioned inconsistent dates published for public comments and Nathan explained the USFS continues to accept comments as the substance of feedback is more important than dates. Nathan discussed the Forest Plan Amendment addresses grizzly bears outside the recovery zone. Commissioner Teske questioned the Bears Outside Recovery Zones process. Nathan stated the Bear Management Unit is a Fish and Wildlife Service definition and covers areas grizzly expand from. Nathan stated the FS got involved in determining this process through using the Forest Service Plan, leading to the concept of BORZ establishing criteria to evaluate additional grizzly showing up routinely. Nathan advised the Fisher BORZ area was administratively considered a BORZ area designation then the judge ruled this required a Forest Plan designation and that ruling of a Forest Plan Amendment changed everything. Commissioner Teske expressed support for the new process as it requires public input and an official amendment to the Forest Plan. Commissioner Teske advised of concerns about designating the entire forest a BORZ area. Nathan assured the FS has criteria and is not aiming for a blanket designation. Nathan stated the Forest Plan Amendment is being drafted and will include the new Fisher River area while other areas are being expanded on. Nathan advised grizzly are not static and the intent is to account for this. Nathan discussed 5 active fires across the zone. Nathan stated crews responded to the incident inside the OU3 zone and had water on it the first day. Commissioner Teske questioned a lack of direct communication with the FS despite having Cooperating Agency status. Nathan assured he will share this concern. Commission Letcher questioned the over-snow motorized plan regarding concerns of waking up the bear and the impact this may have on winter forest harvesting. Commissioner Hammons met with Sam on the Trojan Trail project. Commissioner Teske had hunters reach out regarding Snowshoe Mine area where a trail has degraded. Nathan advised the FS did not agree to build a new trail but believes the old trail was cleared of bush last year. County Forester Jennifer Nelson asked Nathan to address the rumor about AWR and release of acreage in Ripley. Nathan advised that discussions are currently in litigation and information will be shared through the Commissioners when appropriate. Jennifer stressed even a call back stating this can't be commented on due to litigation would be nice.

10:30 AM **Administrative Issues/Old Business: Approve Minutes. Resolution 2023-25 Amended Resolution Prohibiting Open Burning. Resolution 2023-26 Adopt Stage 2 Fire Restrictions.** Present were Tom Lane EMA, and Scott Shindledecker Reporter-Western News.

- Minutes of July 26, 2023, regular meeting for approval. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve July 26, 2023, minutes. Second by Commissioner Teske. No comments. Motion carried.
- Resolution 2023-25 Amended Prohibiting Open Burning: Commissioner Letcher advised this is to amend the stage I restrictions in Resolution 2023-24 approved last week to specifically include language to include commercial or private land. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve Resolution 2023-25 amendment. Second by Commissioner Teske. Commissioner Teske advised the resolution specifically states as provided by MCA 7-33-2206 that specifically outlines any residential or commercial property, forest, range or cropland specifically laying out the violation and spelling this out all over again is redundant. No further comments. Motion carried
- Resolution 2023-26 Emergency Resolution Prohibiting Open Burning Stage II Fire Restrictions: EMA Director Tom Lane advised this restriction is requested by Fire Managers within the entire zone and an effort was made to put more detail within the Resolution emphasizing the exemptions do not absolve of responsibility. **Motion** by Commissioner Teske to approve Resolution 2023-26. Second by Commissioner Hammons. Commissioner Teske advised this takes affect one minute after midnight Saturday August 5<sup>th</sup>. No public comments. Motion carried.
- Commissioner Hammons presented a request for funds from Maintenance Director Joe Nagle regarding replacing a heating/cooling unit located in the Treasurer's office, providing document; with repairs costing more than replacement. **Motion** by Commission Teske to approve the estimate of \$15,623 to replace the unit from PILT per the bid from Comfort Systems USA. No comments. Motion carried.
- Administrative Assistant Jennifer Brown stated Director of Finance Wendy Drake wanted in the minutes that the Sheriff's Office has paid the dog loan with a check for \$32,385.

10:45 AM **Public Comment Time:** Present was Scott Shindledecker Reporter-Western News.  
No public comment.

11:00 PM **Libby Archery Club Target Discussion:** Present was Teri Rayome-Kelly.

Teri provided an overview of the current target bales last replaced in 2011 and the shooting complex which houses the targets. Teri stated both sides of these targets are shot out and well used. Teri advised the new target bales are about \$2,000 plus shipping and if the County buys the targets the Libby Archery Club will complete the swap out and do all associated maintenance. Director of Finance Wendy Drake provided information regarding funding. **Motion** by Commissioner Teske to approve up to \$3,000 to purchase targets using Economic Development funds. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No comments. Motion carried. Teri thanked the Commissioners on behalf of the Archery Club.

11:15 PM **Planning Department Budget Meeting:** Present were Jesse Haag and Director of Finance Wendy Drake.

Director of Planning Jesse Haag advised his budget is new resulting from spitting from Environmental Health / Sanitation. Jesse clarified this budget includes himself and one part-time contracted employee. Commissioner Teske stated the vision is to grow the Planning Department to encompass GIS and county addressing. Jesse stated he has put in for grants that would assist with updating subdivision regulation, related forms, website, etc. which if received, would be put out for bid. Jesse listed a plethora of requests he fields that are completed by statutory requirements and advised in addition he receives daily calls and emails for various information where additional resources would allow for more timely responses. Director of Finance Wendy Drake confirmed this is the last department budget to review. Commissioner Teske advised Jesse to coordinate with IT for a Black Mountain login as the system tracks departmental revenues and expenses allowing for better management.

11:26 pm **Break**

02:30 PM **Public Safety Communication:** Present were Tom Lane EMA, Kimberly Mole, Sheriff Darren Short, Undersheriff Brent Faulkner, Ray Stout Reporter-Kootenai Valley Record and Dallas Bowe HR.

Sheriff Darren Short commented that the current status of Troy Dispatch is closed, and the Sheriff's Office is managing it with one dispatcher and as of Monday they have a temporary dispatcher, but there is no budget to support this. Undersheriff Faulkner advised they forecast 2 dispatchers with family benefits at \$170,000 plus \$25,000 of incidentals such as building backup generator with propane, \$100 per month to the City of Troy for rent, utilities, fees and service updates. EMA Director Tom Lane expressed concern with coverage observed at the Troy Dispatch and recommended a council of government review the operation providing information to both the County and public. Undersheriff Faulkner sought approval of expenditures for one new temporary dispatcher now until this is resolved. Kim stated it is nice knowing her calls will be answered and hopes this is resolved soon. Commissioner Hammons advised resolving this is a legal process and will take time. Commissioner Hammons commented it's more than dispatch staffing, or a full Dispatch Board as Troy Dispatch also lacks budget funds. Dispatch Board applications are due August 4<sup>th</sup> with appointments August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Commissioner Letcher set a one-year goal to separate oversight and consolidate communications. Commissioner Teske will plan monthly update discussions.

3:10 PM **Adjourned**

**LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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Josh Letcher, Chairman

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Corrina Brown, Clerk of the Board