

October 11 2023

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on October 11, 2023, in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Teske, Commissioner Letcher, Assistant Jennifer Brown and Clerk and Recorder Corrina Brown. Commissioner Hammons was excused.

Meeting allows for Zoom participation. Present online were Chanel Geer, Rebecca Nelson, Ray Stout, Jason Callahan, Tom Lane, JC, Brad Holding, Laura Finley, Melanie Howell and Karen Wickersham.

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

10:00 AM **Health Department:** Present were Scott Shindledecker, Miranda Davis, Sarah Long, Jennifer McCully, Steve Woolley and Kathi Hooper.

Jennifer McCully addressed public health advising of an early onset of the flu season, organizing over 50 flu clinics throughout the county. Notably, rabies has emerged as a prominent concern in Lincoln County this year. Out of the 17 critters tested due to human contact, 6 tested positive.

Sarah Long announced Red Ribbon Week, scheduled from October 30 to November 3, dedicated to promoting a tobacco, drug, and alcohol-free environment. Collaborating with schools, this year's theme is "Be Kind to Your Mind," they plan to rotate this program throughout the county's school systems. The SEEDS program, facilitated by Unite for Youth, focuses on HOPE (Healthy Outcomes through Positive Experiences) in relation to sports. Commissioner Letcher mentioned that besides affecting health, product pricing also impacts financial well-being.

Kathi Hooper gave an Environmental Health update: her department received 232 septic permit applications in 2023, which aligns with the total of 257 for 2022. Her department is currently having Contracted Reviewer Training, aimed at enabling their team to handle site modifications, lot rewrites, as well as sanitation and subdivision reviews in-house. Kathi emphasized that having a certified contractor within their office will not only generate additional revenue but also assist local residents in navigating through the process more efficiently.

Miranda Davis is addressing 36 Community Decay/Litter Violations. She advised 31 individuals have been issued violation notices, having collaborated with the sheriff's office, and she reported DEQ has taken over one property. Commissioner Teske emphasized the importance of consequences for Community Decay violations. Kathi stated she will be working to update this ordinance, and Commissioner Teske added the County Attorney recommended some language clarifications. Kathi informed the commission that grant funding is available for the removal of junk trailers, with the funding cycle starting anew on July 1 and remaining accessible until the funds are depleted. Last year, this program removed over 40 junk trailers.

Kathi provided an update on Solid Waste and Recycling. As of October 7th, the landfills have transitioned to winter hours due to daylight limiting operations. The Troy transfer site is now open on Mondays. Kootenai Surveying conducted the annual survey, measuring 44,153 cubic yards, 22 days earlier than last year. To adjust for this, an estimated volume of 46,953 cubic yards is being used, indicating a 5% decrease from last year, attributed to improved compaction. The Troy ball field green box site has adjusted its hours to be open from 7:30am to 5:30pm, including overnight closure and surveillance, resulting in fewer site violations. Both Pinkham Creek and 4th of July sites have been closed. The fence remains on the 4th of July site as residents have expressed interest in obtaining a special use permit from the Forest Service to operate their own site in collaboration with Evergreen. Commissioner Teske expressed appreciation for the community's effort. The Savage Lake site is scheduled to close next week. The Libby Creek site's amended special use permit was approved, which includes provisions for electricity and a shed. The Eureka transfer site's improved engineered design has been received. This project will now proceed to the bidding stage. Kathi stated there are no plans to close any other green box sites this fall. Commissioner Letcher sought confirmation from Kathi regarding the projected start of construction at the Eureka site, to which Kathi advised they are aiming for spring construction. She mentioned the new cell is still under review with DEQ.

10:30 AM **Administrative Issues/Old Business: Approve Minutes / Resolution 2023-29 Amend Fisher River Valley Fire Service Area Fee Schedule / Community Hall Grant Application Signing / Resolution 2023-35 Amend Troy TV Fee Schedule / Proclamation – Domestic Violence Awareness:** Present were Steve Woolley, Barb Guthneck, Kathleen Sheffield and Scott Shindledecker.

- Commissioner Teske read the Proclamation for National Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October. **Motion** by Commissioner Teske to approve the domestic violence awareness proclamation. Second by Commissioner Letcher. Kathleen Sheffield, Lincoln County Victim Witness Advocate, emphasized this year's theme: "Everybody knows someone" and stressed the importance of breaking the cycle of abuse. She pointed out Montana ranks 26th nationally for violence against women, while men are ranked 12th. Kathleen urged a look into county-wide resources to combat victim blaming and address the barriers to leaving, such as financial, housing, and transportation. She expressed gratitude for the support of this proclamation. Commissioner Teske acknowledged no easy solution to this problem and emphasized the benefits of promoting available programs. Commissioner Letcher expressed concern about a culture where victims may not recognize healthier alternatives. Kathleen agreed on the importance of clearly defining a healthy relationship. No further comment. Motion carried.
- Minutes of October 4, 2023, regular meeting for approval. **Motion** to approve the October 4, 2023 minutes by Commissioner Teske. Second by Commissioner Letcher. No comments. Motion carried.
- Commissioner Letcher read Resolution 2023-29 Amend Fisher River Valley Fire Service Area Fee Schedule. **Motion** by Commissioner Teske to approve Resolution 2023-29 with a spelling correction. Second by Commissioner Letcher. No comments. Commissioner Teske noted the public hearing raised concerns about fees not being applied to all occupied lots. He stated he's contacted a local representative about amending the statewide statute to ensure individuals using the services also cover the associated costs. Motion carried.

- Commissioner Letcher presented Trego Community Hall CDBG planning grant application for some upgrades. **Motion** to approve the grant application by Commissioner Teske. Second by Commissioner Letcher. No comments. Motion carried.
- Commissioner Teske read Resolution 2023-35 To Amend Troy TV District Fee Schedule. **Motion** by commissioner Teske to approve Resolution 2023-35. Second by commissioner Letcher. Both commissioners noted they had not received any public comments, aside from input from a member of the TV District at the public hearing. No comments. Motion carried.
- Commissioner Teske received a document from MACO regarding inmate insurance and will get with Sheriff Short.

Note: Resolutions are available on the county website: lincolncountymt.us

10:45 AM **Public Comment Time:** Present were Steve Woolley and Scott Shindledecker.

No public comment

11:00 AM **Library Update:** Present were Steve Woolley, Alyssa Ramirez and Scott Shindledecker.

Alyssa distributed Library Director's Report, highlighting an array of programs and services available to the public, as well as facility information, updates on grants and ongoing professional developments.

- All light fixtures have been updated with daylight bulbs at the Libby Branch.
- TLOC- The Preliminary Architectural Report was completed in August 2023. The Foundation has contracted with The Dotted i to pursue grants for the construction project over the next year.
- Grant-funded efforts to digitize county historical records continue. These digitized materials will be accessible on the Montana History Portal.
- Alyssa advised she and Dusty are actively engaged with the Montana Library Association. She serves on the Network Advisory Council, which directly advises the Montana Library Commissioner. Alyssa testified before the Montana legislature in support of HB 91, for the renewal, expansion, and incorporation of tribal libraries into the state's allocation for libraries. It was passed, increasing funding from \$.40 to \$.50 per capita.

Note: for a complete copy of the Library Director's Report, please contact the Lincoln County Libraries. www.lincolncountylibraries.com

11:30 PM **Planning: Thompson Chain of Lake Neighborhood Plan Update:** Present were Steve Woolley, Frank Votapka, Eric Schallon, Brent Campbell, Stephen Grode, Beth Grode, Jennifer Nelson, Jesse Haag and Scott Shindledecker.

Brent Campbell from BAC Consulting advised he is assisting Green Diamond Resources in planning for the Thompson Chain of Lakes area. They are focused on the Thompson Chain of Lakes Neighborhood Plan and its update in collaboration with the county planning department. Eric Schallon of Green Diamond Resources, a 133-year-old family-owned business, acquired 292,000 acres originating from SPP, then Weyerhaeuser and ultimately Plum Creek . He advised they are working on forest conservation easements covering approximately 272,000 acres. These efforts span across Fisher Thompson, Loss Trail, Loss Trail Expansion, Montana Great Outdoors and Upper Thompson Connectivity Project areas. Their goal is sustainable timber harvesting for wood products, with no future development planned. Eric stated Green Diamond, as a long-term hold company, prioritizes integrity, community, safety, profitability and stewardship. Their approach involves acquiring, rehabilitating and revitalizing properties using local talent. Regarding the Neighborhood Plan, Eric emphasized a significant portion of it falls under Green Diamond's ownership, about 32,000 of the 65,000 acres. Around 33,000 acres will be designated for conservation, leaving about 5,500 acres for potential community expansion, with about 4,800 in Lincoln and the remainder in Sanders Counties. These conservation easements commit the properties to commercial working forests in perpetuity. Their goal is to ensure community awareness and involvement in the Neighborhood Plan. Brent will hold open houses to present current maps, existing plans, ownership details, a list of stakeholders' needs and gather input for drafting the plan. Public comments: Stephen Grode inquired who determines the makeup of the committee responsible for generating the document. Commissioner Teske explained the document will go through various stages, including public meetings, planning board meetings, and public hearings. Jennifer Nelson, County Forester, noted that a prior plan was more grassroots-driven, centered around Happy's Inn, while this process is more influenced by the planning department. Online comment: Karen Wickersham asked for an estimated timeline for involvement with the planning department and the subsequent steps leading to inclusion in the Lincoln County growth policy. Commissioner Teske stated that it's still early in the process and no formal timeline has been set. He emphasized Green Diamond's significant ownership in the area and their eagerness to participate in the planning endeavor. Jesse Haag, Planning Director, outlined the initial steps, which involve Green Diamond finalizing easement parcels. Brent indicated the large conservation easements are projected to conclude by the end of 2025, due to the multiple government agency reviews involved. He also stated that the properties within this planning area are fairly well-defined.

11:58 AM **Adjourned**

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Josh Letcher, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Corrina Brown, Clerk of the Board