

May 4, 2022

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on May 4, 2022 in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Teske, Commissioner Letcher, Commissioner Bennett, 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 GIS Replacement:** Present were Finance Officer Wendy Drake, Veronica Bovee-Anderson, Jim Mee, Tony Prestrusha, Rebecca Nelson and Ray Stout.

Robin submitted the OutlawGIS contract and explained that Ashley Bache, owner, has been GIS/Addressing with Sanders County and is interested in contracting with Lincoln County. Robin read the recommendation from current GIS contractor Jason Singleton/GeoControl recommending Ashley Bache to provide GIS services to Lincoln County. Robin mentioned the upcoming migration from MTVotes to ElectMT that Election Administrator Paula Buff briefed the commissioners about last week, and what needs to be done in the voter address library before that takes place. Robin commented that Ashley Bache is familiar with that project and has already provided that specific service to the Sanders County election department; this is a big added plus. Robin said after talking with Jason Singleton and Ashley Bache, she is comfortable with Ashley's addressing knowledge and experience, and ability to assist the elections department.

Robin said she has reached out to two GIS businesses located in Missoula for contracted GIS service quotes. Equinox is \$80 an hour and AD&J is \$73/hour for a GIS Tech I and \$124/hour for a Senior GIS Specialist. OutlawGIS, based in Sanders County is \$50/hour. GeoControl contract was \$75/hour.

Robin said Ashley can guarantee 20 hours/week to Lincoln County with the understanding that she will be physically present, spending time here, at least initially. Robin submitted a contract with OutlawGIS through December 31, 2022 at \$50/hour for commissioner approval. Robin commented that even if Lincoln County paid the entire 20 hours for all of 2022, the cost is well below that of an internal employee and by the end of the contract, we will all know if the service is working fluently and effectively for all of Lincoln County's GIS needs. Robin suggested that midway through the contract, maybe in September to review services and have a conversation if Lincoln County wants to advertise for an internal GIS employee before the contract ends.

Robin said that county departments that use GeoControl have been writing their own contracts and paying for its departmental GIS services out of their budgets and is not sure if that is the best process forward or if the commissioners want to create a GIS line item for one person to oversee for all county GIS service.

Commissioner Bennett commented that the OutlawGIS contract is financially good and he thinks the mid-term assessment is a good idea before end of contract.

Wendy said it should be one county contract, but the invoicing needs to be by hour per department; same structure we currently have.

Commissioner Teske asked about how it would work during fire season where local maps would be needed, sometimes even daily.

Robin said she would have that discussion with the person that is contracted, but she is a firm believer in cross training and does plan to have two Clerk & Recorder staff trained as best as possible with addressing and GIS mapping.

Commissioner Teske said the contract with OutlawGIS is recommended and appears to be a seamless transition.

**Motion** by Commissioner Teske to approve and sign the contract with OutlawGIS through December 31, 2022 as submitted. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried unanimously.

**9:45 AM Recreation Quarterly Report/Tony Petrusha:** Present were James Mee, Veronica Bovee-Anderson, Douglas Crum, Brian Walsh, Rebecca Nelson and Ray Stout.

*Tony submitted and gave an overview of the following report.*

Recreation Manager of Projects  
First Quarter Summary  
Cabinet Country Consulting LLC  
April 6, 2022

Pool – met in December and voted to stay the course and continue to evaluate pool options. Confident in the template prepared and that it will have value for a project in the future

Libby Outdoor Recreation Association (LORA) – has standing as a registered entity with Montana State and as a tax-exempt charitable organization under 501 (c)(3). Working on an active list of stakeholders and community engagement programs.

The LORA directors meet remotely each month to manage the organization, and there is an additional monthly meeting of the Flower Creek trail development team.

Creating a project list based on the Greater Libby Area Trails Plan, this will help to guide program. Continue to develop the Flower Creek Rec Dev Plan, it is the key a coherent long-range plan for projects and funding.

LORA/KRDC pursued a grant with the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) from the MT FWP and were rejected for failing to submit country of origin certification for steel. Still looking for grants to purchase bridge railing steel.

Flower Creek Road is upgraded, paving to be completed in mid-July, with funding from a RAC grant and county roads.

Report presented to:

Park Board Meeting 6 April  
City Council Meeting 18 April  
County Commissioner meeting 4 May

Tony commented is that he is a paid contractor by the park board, city and county and his mission is to have recreational contracts and projects and to help those projects move forward. To help develop recreational projects and work with organizers, not be the head of LORA or the head of a pool project etc...

As we move forward with LORA, Bear Aware Program, bear spray demonstration and practice will be held at the Ponderosa Room. Social Media person is the main form of communication, discussed efforts for someone to establish and maintain a social media platform with current information.

There was a brief discussion regarding now plowing/maintenance to Turner Mountain.

Commissioner Bennett said that he appreciates Tony updating the commissioners and suggested a quarterly update or as needed.

10:00 AM **USFS:** Cancelled.

10:30 AM **Administrative Issues:** Present were James Mee, Laurie Walsh, Veronica Bovee-Anderson, Douglas Crum, Brian Walsh, Rebecca Nelson and Ray Stout.

- Robin submitted the minutes for April 26 preliminary budget meeting, and April 27 regular meeting for approval. **Motion** by Commissioner Teske to approve minutes as submitted. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried unanimously.

10:45 AM **Public Comment Time:** Present were James Mee, Laurie Walsh, Douglas Crum, Brian Walsh, Rebecca Nelson and Ray Stout.

James Mee said he is here to talk about the election process and some of the comments that he has recently read in the newspaper regarding the Republican Women's Club. James thanked the commissioners for their service and expressed that he is proud to live in Lincoln County and conveyed he says that because of the good people that are working for the county.

James commented that in *Washington's Farewell Address* he expressed concern that these 3 issues could arise and to be aware of sectionalism, foreign entanglement, and political parties.

James asked when did the county not advertise far and wide as pointed out in the newspaper. Lincoln County elections have always been advertised and well known by its citizens. James said he is aware the state and federal government inspects and approves election machines and he does not question that process, but in the article, it said nobody could inspect the machines. James gave an example that when he travels by plane, he trusts the inspection of that plane prior to boarding.

James said that according to the article it appears that the members of the Republican Women's Club are ready to lend a hand in a hand count-based system. This group is a republican party, a lot of this stuff just doesn't make sense.

James said the comments regarding no early voting, no mail in ballots and no machines speaks of voter suppression.

There is a lot of concern right now regarding voter suppression and James gave an example of the logger in the Yaak who cannot make it to the polls as one example of many. Our last election was great and James expressed frustration about trying to fix a system when it's not broken. Lincoln County has always run fair and great elections. James commended the election staff for Lincoln County and said he is aware of how hard they work to ensure our elections are great. One of the principles of democracy is dealing with a loss.

Commissioners thanked James for coming in and for his comments.

Commissioner Bennett commented that the commissioners are very proud of our staff.

Douglas Crum commented that in all his years in Lincoln County, he has never had any distrust, there has been no fraud or illegal voting. The recent newspaper article just creates animosity. If we win, we win, and if we lose, we lose. Douglas expressed that he has confidence in our election officials, unless you can prove to me that they are doing something incorrectly.

Laurie Walsh said she agrees with Douglas and James and feels everything is going right here, and is in favor of keeping what we already know is working well.

11:00 AM **Planning / Erwert Subdivision Preliminary Plat:** Present were County Planner Nick Raines, The proposed minor subdivision of Lot 1 of Upper O'Brien Creek Subdivision is located in the Meadow Creek area, approximately 4 miles southwest of Fortine. Access is via Meadow Creek Road. The proposal is to create two separate single-family residential lots. Nick gave an overview of any environmental impacts and explained the recommended conditions for preliminary approval. Planning staff's recommendation is to grant preliminary approval subject to 9 conditions and based on findings in the staff report. **Motion** by Commissioner Letcher to approve preliminary plat to Erwert Subdivision, subject to 9 conditions and based on planning staff's recommendation. Second by Commissioner Teske, motion carried unanimously.

There was a brief discussion about subdivisions and RV Parks coming up or currently in review.

11:15 AM **WGM Group / Libby Creek Sewer Project:** Jon Gass, Rebecca Nelson, Tom Lane, and Ray Stout. Jon discussed the Libby Creek Sewer Project; a public hearing was held and the CDBG grant moved forward with county support. Jon said he is trying to secure funding sources and is asking county support for an RRGL grant, due on the 16<sup>th</sup>, and will need a county signature for that grant submittal. Jon explained that an MOU would ultimately be required between the city and the county. The city is also sponsoring an MCEP application, so, there is a joint effort between the

city and county for this project to move forward. The MOU would be an effort to bring the grants under one entity to simplify the administration.

Commissioner Bennett explained that as long as Neighborhood Works is the grant administrator, the MOU should not be that difficult to complete, and suggested a document be written for commissioner and county attorney review and place on the commissioners agenda.

**11:30 AM Superintendent of Schools Discussion:** Present were County Treasurer Sedaris Carlberg, HR Director Dallas Bowe, Rebecca Nelson, Tom Lane, and Ray Stout.

Commissioner Bennett explained that we are here to brainstorm what we need to do regarding the recent resignation of the County Superintendent of Schools. Commissioner Bennett said he will get information and guidance from the State Superintendent Elsie Arntzen.

Dallas commented that that the resignation comes after the deadline to have the name removed from the ballot and we need to know if the resignation is for just the appointed position or the elected position as well.

Commissioner Bennett expressed that the official resignation is from the appointed position. There is one person that will be elected because there is no opposition. In the meantime, we will need to appoint someone to fill that position through December 2022.

Commissioner Teske said this is not the first time this has come up, there must be an avenue to move forward.

Tabled until further research on the legal process to move forward.

Commissioner Letcher suggested a contracted person to fill the position to help with immediate workload and responsibilities.

**11:40 AM Meeting Adjourned**

**LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jerry Bennett, Chairman

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Robin Benson, Clerk of the Board