

February 16, 2024

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a special session on February 16, 2024 in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Letcher (zoom), Commissioner Teske, Commissioner Hammons, Administrative Assistant Jennifer Brown and Clerk and Recorder Corrina Brown.

09:00 AM **GIS Grant Discussion:** Present were Jennifer Nelson, Brent Faulkner, Melanie Howell, Mike Bradeen and Jesse Haag (zoom).

Discussion centered around hiring an internal GIS employee or continuing to contract out county-wide GIS work.

MGIA GRANT		
GIS Hire Funding Source	One-Time Seed	Annual
Clerk and Recorder	\$ -	\$ 12,000.00
Addressing Fees		\$ 7,000.00
Sheriff's Office	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00
Health Department	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
County Forester	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -
Planning	\$ -	\$ -
ARP	\$ -	\$ -
EMA	\$ -	\$ -
Road	\$ -	\$ -
Weed	\$ 5,000.00	\$ -
County Commission		
Subtotal	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 39,000.00
Total	\$79,000.00	

	Credit
Credit: MGIA Grant	\$ 45,000.00
Debit: GeoData Expense	\$ (15,000.00)
Debit: Outlaw Expense	\$ (5,000.00)
Subtotal	\$ 25,000.00
Debit: New GIS Hire Expense [@\$26/hr wage/beni/fam.health] [\$88,000 all-in]	\$ (88,000.00)
In-Kind Cash	\$ (63,000.00)

Hiring a Geographic Information System (GIS) specialist can provide numerous benefits to Lincoln County, enhancing decision-making processes and improving overall efficiency in various sectors. Here are several ways in which a GIS specialist will positively impact Lincoln County:

1. Spatial Data Management:

- GIS specialists are skilled in managing and organizing spatial data, ensuring accurate and up-to-date information is readily available for decision-makers

2. Infrastructure Planning:

- GIS specialists can assist in planning and optimizing county infrastructure by analyzing spatial data related to transportation, utilities, and land use.

3. Emergency Management:

- In times of emergencies, GIS specialists can play a crucial role in disaster response by creating real-time maps, identifying affected areas, and aiding in resource allocation

4. Environmental Analysis:

- GIS can be used to assess and monitor environmental factors, helping Lincoln County make informed decisions related to conservation, land management, and sustainable development.

5. Public Health Planning:

- GIS specialists can contribute to public health initiatives by analyzing spatial patterns of diseases, identifying high-risk areas, and supporting the planning of healthcare facilities.
- Environmental Health Analysis: GIS helps in analyzing environmental factors that may impact public health, such as air and water quality, septic and proximity to hazardous sites, or the spread of infectious diseases related to environmental conditions.

6. Economic Development:

- GIS can be used to analyze economic trends, identify areas for potential growth, and support decision-making related to economic development initiatives.

7. Election Management:

- GIS specialists can help optimize electoral processes by managing voter registration data, planning precincts, and enhancing election security.
- GIS mapping can help ensure safe and accurate elections, confirming data drop locations are within the parameters of each district type.
- GIS can be employed for risk assessment, helping identify potential vulnerabilities in the election process.
- GIS can aid in optimizing the location and boundaries of precincts, considering population density, demographics, and accessibility.

8. Law Enforcement and Public Safety:

- GIS mapping is essential to all emergency services. In an ever-changing environment, GIS mapping ensures all law enforcement, fire, and medical responders can get guidance to locations from dispatchers that is accurate and timely.
- GIS specialists can assist law enforcement agencies by analyzing crime patterns, optimizing patrol routes, and supporting public safety initiatives.
- Interoperability: Integrating GIS and CAD systems facilitates seamless data sharing and collaboration. Engineers and planners can work on CAD designs while simultaneously accessing and updating geospatial information through GIS, leading to more informed decision-making.
- Map Overlay: GIS allows CAD systems to overlay various maps and layers, helping designers visualize how their CAD designs fit into the broader geographical context. This integration enhances the understanding of the spatial relationships and impacts of the designs.

9. Community Engagement:

- GIS specialists can create interactive maps and visualizations to engage the community, providing valuable information about local services, events, and resources, including but not limited to addressing look-up, voting district and security (fire, medical and law enforcement) that they fall under.

10. Efficient Resource Allocation:

- By analyzing spatial data, GIS specialists can help Lincoln County allocate resources more efficiently, whether it's related to personnel, budgeting, or service provision.

11. Regulatory Compliance:

- GIS can aid in ensuring that the county complies with various regulations and standards, particularly in land use planning and environmental management.

12. Decision Support:

- GIS specialists can provide decision-makers with spatially informed insights, enabling more informed and strategic decision-making across various departments within Lincoln County.

In summary, hiring a GIS specialist can bring a spatial perspective to the operations within Lincoln County, improving data-driven decision-making, enhancing resource management, and contributing to the overall well-being and development of the community

Discussion included how this position fits within the county's pay scale (subject to experience), advice from the county auditor regarding the best method for allocating various departmental budget funds to GIS through payroll, addressing outstanding GIS tasks countywide and fulfilling specific requests from various departments-such as the Health Department's allocation of ARPA grant funds contingent on improved septic tracking capabilities. Future consideration of other grants, including federal grants, need reviewed to assess their limitations and potential for future funding. It was noted cleanup work and training will necessitate contracted GIS services in the initial phase of the planned three-year grant. Grant specifics include in-kind contributions, meeting Tier I & Tier II priorities and variable matching requirements. Commissioner Letcher advised this hire will bring structure and uniformity as GIS work becomes increasingly important. Commissioner Teske expressed appreciation for county departments stepping up with commitments and taking the lead on this GIS initiative through the life of this grant while acknowledging the second and third year will be harder to fund.

Motion by Commissioner Teske to submit a letter of commitment and a letter of support that designates the county's commitment to the MGIA grant. Second by Commissioner Hammons. Discussion of Road Department possibly having an interest in utilizing GIS to map bridges, culverts and road signs. No public comments. Motion carried.

10:05 AM **Adjourned**

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Josh Letcher, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Corrina Brown, Clerk of the Board