

August 28, 2024

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on August 28, 2024, in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Hammons, Commissioner Letcher, Commissioner Teske, Lincoln County Administrative Assistant Jennifer Brown and Clerk and Recorder Corrina Brown.

Zoom participation: Adam Stephenson, Brian Phillips, Chanel Geer, Darren Short, DJ Welch, Election Center, Feleisha Storkson, Glen Lake Irrigation District, HR Dept., Jesse Haag, Kathryn Murphy, Kerri, Maranda Davis, Rhonda Rockwell, Scott Shindledecker, Susan Resch and TVN Staff.

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

10:30 AM **Administrative Issues/Old Business: Approve Minutes / Board Appointments / Open KBP Commercial Re-Development Project Bids / County Gravel Pit Land Swap / Approve Wellhead Protection Zone**. Present were Andy Evanson, Brett McCully, Dave Harmon, Eric Drake, Gary Trowbridge, Jesse Haag, Noel Duram, Ray Stout and Robin Blumberg.

- Minutes of August 21, 2024, regular meeting for approval: **Motion** to approve the August 21, 2024, minutes by Commissioner Teske. Seconded by Commissioner Hammons. No comments. Motion carried.
- Board vacancies and applicants were presented by Clerk and Recorder Corrina Brown.
 - Libby Park District: 1 vacancy. 1 applicant -Patty Johnson
Motion to appoint Patty Johnson to the Libby Park District by Commissioner Teske. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No comments. Motion carried.
 - Library: 1 vacancy. 1 applicant – Justin Horner. The board recommended his appointment.
Motion to appoint Justin Horner to the Library Board by Commissioner Teske. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No comments. Motion carried.
 - Troy Park District: 1 vacancy. 2 applicants – Shelly Anderson and Sarah Roadman. The board advised either candidate is a win for the board. Commissioner Teske noted a board member recommended appointing Sarah Roadman. **Motion** to appoint Sarah Roadman to the Troy Park District by Commissioner Teske. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No comments. Motion carried.
 - Weed: 1 vacancy. *no applicants*.
 - Eureka Area District Dispatch: 1 vacancy. *no timely applicants*.
 - McCormick Fire District: 1 vacancy. 1 applicant - Carol Balsiger. The board supports appointing Carol.
Motion to appoint Carol Balsiger to the McCormick Fire District by Commissioner Hammons. Second by Commissioner Teske. No comments. Motion carried.
 - Trego/Fortine/Stryker FSA: 1 vacancy. 1 applicant - Marie Lynch. The board supports appointing Marie.
Motion to appoint Marie Lynch to the Trego/Fortine/Stryker Fire Service Area by Commissioner Hammons. Second by Commissioner Teske. No comments. Motion carried.
 - Tobacco Valley Industrial District: 4 vacancies. *no applicants*.
- Open KBP Commercial Re-Development Project Bids: Received bids from Thompson Contracting and Noble Excavating. Thompson Contracting schedule #1 sewer improvements \$659,430 #1A demolition \$362,000 #2 water distribution improvements \$211,270. Noble #1 sewer improvements \$341,145 #1A demolition \$120,500 #2 water distribution improvements \$174,477. Andy Evanson will review the bids and send a recommendation letter.
- County Gravel Pit Land Swap: Commissioner Letcher advised the Eureka County Shop area has little remaining usable gravel and occasionally floods. A neighboring property owner, who also owns a gravel pit, is willing to swap for irrigatable land. This swap would allow the county to continue mining the gravel ridge, providing long-term benefits. A commercial appraiser would cost about \$4,000 and a survey would be needed if this is agreed upon. **Motion** by Commissioner Teske to approve moving forward with a land swap with Yorlum Ranch in Lincoln County. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No comment. Motion carried.
- Approve Wellhead Protection Zone for Barnabee Lake Subdivision: Commissioner Letcher advised of researching and finding no septic systems within 100' of this area and found sufficient space for the one property owner in the area. Commissioner Letcher clarified they are establishing a new protection zone around a new well to replace a failing one. Commissioner Teske inquired whether the property owner needs to be notified. Robin Blumberg, from the Sanitation Department, requested specifics on the parcel and will review and advise.

10:45 AM **Public Comment Time – Non-Agenda Items**: Present were Christine Neils Lee, Clem Hollingsworth, Dave Harmon, Gary Trowbridge, Joe Nagle, Noel Duram, Patty Rambo, Ray Stout, Robin Blumberg. No comments.

11:00 AM **Removal and Relocation of J. Neils Bull**: Present were Christine Neils Lee, Clem Hollingsworth, Dave Harmon, Gary Trowbridge, Gina Huffman, Joe Nagle, Keith Meyers, Noel Duram, Patty Rambo, Ray Stout, Robin Blumberg, Ron Adamson, Ron Miller and Teri Noble.

Commissioner Teske noted that a few months ago, the commissioners were asked to consider relocating the bull from the sign and replacing it with something representing the mining or logging community. This decision was postponed until after the rodeo, and since then, we have received emails, petition signatures and recommendations. Christine Neils Lee presented signatures from adult members of the Neils family requesting the bull be relocated and replaced with something more appropriate to local symbolism. She emphasized that the Neils family only seeks a more historically relevant statue and no other changes. Dave Harmon, highlighted points new to this discussion. He mentioned the Neils family wants the statue moved, that Ron Adamson is willing to contribute his expertise in sculpting or creating a metal silhouette, that Jeff Gruber has provided a letter regarding the bull's removal and that the Park Board made a recommendation on the matter. Dave noted that cost has been a concern and stated LeRoy Thom has maintained his willingness to do the work for free.

Patty Rambo, representing the Kootenai River Stampede Rodeo, requested that the proposal to remove the bull be dismissed. She read a prepared statement questioning the true support for its removal and expressed that this is a community issue. Patty stated that 798 people have signed a petition supporting the bull remaining in its current location and presented signatures. Commissioner Hammons **motioned** to request a detailed plan, after reviewing the site, for incorporating the bull along with additions. Second by Commissioner Teske, who emphasized having ample space to recognize various things key to the community. Commissioner Letcher asked for a draft proposal outlining design, placement, and funding details. Commissioner Teske expressed the desire for the park entrance to be inclusive of community interests. During public comment, Ron Anderson noted that, from an artist's perspective, a wooden logger piece could be installed for approximately \$2,500, with a lifespan of ten years. Dave Harmon agreed to present example monuments, including details on silhouette concepts. No further discussion. Motion carried.

11:15 AM **Approval for Loan Request for Parson's Drop Structure Repair – Glen Lake Irrigation District:** Present was Noel Duram.

Rae Lynn Hays, Mark Peterson and Joe McAfee joined online. Joe advised this irrigation is important to the community and is deformed and deteriorated necessitating this loan request for Parson's Drop structure repairs. Joe discussed the repair plan and noted Rae Lynn's spreadsheet showing grant funding and remaining balance. **Motion** by Commissioner Teske to approve a loan to the Glen Lake Irrigation District for \$125,836 from PILT to be worked out in a contract. Second by Commissioner Hammons. Joe requested twice per year payments and asked for a contract prior to next week's board meeting. Commissioner Letcher will follow up with a contract. No public comments. Motion carried.

11:45 AM **Preliminary Public Budget Hearing:** Present were Noel Duram and Wendy Drake.

Wendy Drake, Finance Director presented the revised preliminary budget. Commissioner Teske stated the preliminary budget approved last week has had some changes, which is normal. **Motion** by Commissioner Teske to approve the newly resolved preliminary budget as presented today dated 8-27-2024. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No comments. Motion carried.

Commissioner Letcher opened the preliminary budget public hearing. No public comments.

Commissioner Teske noted that the budget discussion began with a \$2.5 million deficit. Through adjustments to cash reserves, the sheriff's department, the library and other departments, the deficit was reduced to \$636,958, which was covered using LATC funds, resulting in a balanced budget. The commissioners acknowledged individual wage increases were minimal and expressed appreciation. Commissioner Teske also mentioned the mill value is \$58,571, which reflects a decrease of about \$1,000. The overall annual budget increased by \$235,000.

12:00 **Adjourned** Commissioner Letcher closed the meeting, noting the 1:30 public hearing was postponed.

*1:30 PM **Public Hearing – Ivar Amended Lot 2 Subdivision:** postponed

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Josh Letcher, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Corrina Brown, Clerk of the Board