

## November 6, 2024

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on November 6, 2024, in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Teske, Commissioner Letcher, Commissioner Hammons, and Lincoln County Administrative Assistant Jennifer Brown.

Zoom attendance: Present were Feleisha Storkson, Kristie, Michell Byrd, TVN, Scott Shindledecker, Maggie Anderson, Chanel Geer, Jerry Reigh, TJ Boswell, Laura Pluid, Allen Erhart, Ray Stout, Maranda, Dustin Webb, Darren Short, and Bryan Alkire.

Chairman of the Board, Commissioner Letcher, opened up with the **Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer**.

10:00 AM **USFS**: Personally present were Brian Berreman, Noel Duram, and Nate Gassman.

Nate Gassman informed the commissioners that the fee strips between Osprey and Em Kayan Village were never conveyed from the county to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). Fee strips are parcels of land owned by the county that are typically retained for purposes such as powerline and road rights-of-way. While the surrounding fee strips were conveyed to the USFS years ago, there remains one strip that, for unknown reasons, was never transferred. Nate presented an agreement to the commissioners to convey this strip to the USFS, should the county choose to proceed.

Nate advised the USFS will be limited in the positions they can hire due to a lack of funding. Last year, no 1039 positions were filled, and this year there will be no new 1039 hires, aside from positions within the fire crew. Each forest in the region has been allocated a set number of 1039 fire positions to fill. The pay scale has made it difficult to recruit new hires. However, there is a committed group of volunteers who continue to support the trails crew with clearing work. Due to budget cuts, some projects have been put on hold, though there are still GOA (Great Outdoors Act) funds available. Two projects—Timberlane Campground and Ross Creek Cedars—will proceed with these funds. Avalanche awareness forecasting will continue, but not to the extent it has in the past.

Nate provided updates on several projects. The Norman McCedar project has been signed, with one area now referred to as "Stormin Norman." This includes a large road package, and funding may come from the National Forest Foundation. The Kootenai area has been prioritized to receive national legacy agreements for funding. The Mitchell Jackson project is still moving forward. The Snowshoe Granite 1000 project, which is being implemented in collaboration with the state, has been scaled back due to riparian concerns. Regarding the Pine Flats project, there have been minor adjustments, and it still needs to be determined how it can be integrated with the MSA (Multiple Species Agreement) components.

10:30 AM **Administrative Issues/Old Business. Approve Minutes. CDBG Planning Grant Application Submissions 2024 and 2025 Decision. Evergreen Contract Decision**. Personally present were Brian Berreman, Noel Duram, Michael Huck, Kathi Hooper, Dustina Deans, Heather Neuman, Cadence Newman, Carol Parsons, Megan Brothers, Adam Stephenson, Matthew Stull, and Bryan Alkire.

- Minutes of October 30, 2024, regular meeting for approval: **Motion** to approve the October 30, 2024, minutes by Commissioner Teske, second by Commissioner Hammons, with no further discussion or comment the motion is carried.
- The county was denied submitting two applications for the CDBG grant, but one application may be submitted. **Motion** to approve the TLOC to move forward with submission of their application in 2024 and Trego Community Hall to submit an application in the next cycle by Commissioner Teske seconded by Commissioner Hammons. With no further comment, the Motion is carried. The commissioners sign a letter of approval for the TLOC to move forward for the grant for 2024.
- Kathi Hooper states she received additional options for 1 year and for 5 years that lowered the rates for the hauling contract. Evergreen Disposal has not reviewed the draft contract submitted by Kathi Hooper therefore the contract is not ready to be signed. The new option for the 1-year contract is \$425,000. These options will keep all the current sites open, but the number of days will be reduced. Negotiations are still in the works and Evergreen Disposal has agreed to service the sites until November 20<sup>th</sup>. Kathi has asked for a 2-year option.

10:45 AM **Public Comment – Non-Agenda Items**: Present were Kathi Hooper, Bryan Alkire, Brian Berreman, and Noel Duram.

Allen Erhart, a school board member of the Fortine District, stated that he recently received notice that the district will no longer be receiving free garbage service. He expressed that he would have preferred more advance notice regarding the discontinuation of the service. Garbage service was not budgeted for in this fiscal year. Laura Pluid, Principal of Fortine School, also questioned why such short notice was given.

11:15 AM **Green-Box Closure Discussion**: Present were Kathi Hooper, Bryan Alkire, Brian Berreman and Noel Duram.

This item will be continued to next week's agenda. A series of discussions are still needed, and the public must be given time to weigh in if an agreement with Evergreen Disposal is not reached. The county is exploring all options and will not take this matter lightly. Negotiations are ongoing in an effort to reach a resolution.

Brian Berreman expressed concern that if more sites are closed, the forests will become increasingly littered with garbage. He has already observed a rise in trash and suggested that the county could potentially secure funding from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to help prevent litter from accumulating in the forests. Brian also emphasized that community education on recycling would be beneficial.

Noel Duram agreed that community education is important and added that there will be active investigations into illegal garbage dumping.

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

11:25 AM **Adjourned**

**LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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Josh Letcher, Chairman

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer E. Brown, Administrative Assistant