

**December 4, 2024**

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on December 4, 2024, in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Letcher, Commissioner Hammons, Commissioner Teske, Administrative Assistant Jennifer Brown and Clerk and Recorder Corrina Brown.

Zoom participation: Alisha Osborn, Chanel Geer, Crystal Denton, Darren Short, Feleisha Storkson, Jerry Regh, Jesse Haag, John Hyslop, Melanie Howell, Ray Stout, Scott Shindledecker, Sierra Gustin and Traci Street.

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

10:00 AM **USFS**: Present was Chad Benson.

Chad Benson, USFS, advised they are navigating towards receiving \$10 million for starting all the treatments around OU3. He added that a large multi-year contract process will begin in the next few months. He noted the YCC program funding did not come through, affecting up to 50 students. He also mentioned that, due to budget constraints, the USFS is not hiring any non-fire seasonal employees, confirming there will be no trail or recreation crews. However, the fire crew (approximately 57 members) will not be affected. He noted ongoing projects include Ripley, Pine Flats, Trojan Defense, Edna Fortine Mitchell Jackson and Granite 1000. Commissioner Teske advised the Port Authority has interviewed for the position of Port Director and will now address both the Grants and Contracts and Forestry positions establishing infrastructure before moving forward with the Master Stewardship Agreement. He stated grant and funding outreach is in progress for Pine Flats. Chad advised this partnership will support projects within the wildfire crisis landscape. He also mentioned that the Ranger position in Eureka has been re-advertised with a wider search.

10:30 AM **Administrative Issues/Old Business: Approve Minutes / Outlaw GIS Contract Update for 2025**: Present were none.

- Minutes of November 20, 2024, for approval: **Motion** to approve the November 20, 2024, minutes by Commissioner Hammons. Second by Commissioner Teske. No comments. Motion carried.
- Outlaw GIS Contract for 2025 was presented for approval: Discussion of the contract. **Motion** to approve the professional services agreement between Lincoln County and Outlaw GIS, LLC by Commissioner Teske. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No comments. Motion carried.
- Commissioner Teske made a correction to the minutes for the record:  
**Correction:** Two weeks ago, a workers' compensation check from Montana State Fund was presented. At that time, Commissioner Teske made a motion to start a fund for the safety program and allocate \$10,000 from the check into that fund. Upon further discussion with the Finance Director, it was noted that a fund had already been established with \$40,000, but it had seen little use as it was not widely known. Commissioner Teske **rescinded the previous motion** to start the fund and populate it with \$10,000 as a cap and proposed the following:
  - **New Motion:** Commissioner Teske moved to establish a cap of \$20,000 for the existing safety program fund, with the fund's budget-maintained year-to-year. Approximately \$9,700 would be used annually for the safety incentive program, leaving around \$10,000 annually for other safety-related projects. Traditionally, this much has not been spent, but recent expenditures, such as the purchase of door combination locks following a building security assessment last week, may result in future spending. This fund will be populated with \$20,000. Second by Commissioner Hammons. Discussion of funds no longer having to come out of PILT for the safety incentive program and this existing account will be drawn down to \$20,000, with the Montana State Fund check going to the general fund. No public comments. Motion carried.

10:45 AM **Public Comment Time – Non-Agenda Items**: Present was Senator Cuffe.

Senator Cuffe advised that when the legislative session resumes on January 6th, Judge Cuffe has been invited to perform the swearing-in ceremony. He noted that Commissioners have made suggestions, one of which was doubling the number of post-election audits, a bill now in effect that he carried. He advised his priority list includes the following items: the naming of the Hwy 37 bridge coming into Libby in honor of Art Randall. He is open to the Commissioners passing a resolution of support if desired. He discussed the Hwy 37 repairs, noting that the work done so far is terrific, but the middle section has not yet been completed. He is working on securing funding for that and has been in touch with the Highway Department. His committee assignment is vice chair of Section C, which puts the budgets together for transportation, livestock, agriculture, DNRC, DEQ, and FWP. He expressed a desire for support as he works to get that part of the highway completed. He mentioned concerns about the bumps approaching and exiting the Fisher River bridge, noting safety. He noted a desire for statewide uniformity in the county commissioner election canvassing process. He mentioned meeting with MACo and noted training will be forthcoming, encouraging participation. He also mentioned that mining, timber, and water, including the Columbia River Treaty, are on his list. He will continue to address concerns, such as the diversion of water at Channel Flats. He also anticipates a bill concerning the distribution of marijuana funds.

11:00 AM **Public Hearing- Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Amendment**: Present were Senator Cuffe, Steve Schnackenberg and Wendy Drake.

Commissioner Letcher opened the public hearing on the Fiscal Year 2024 budget amendment. Commissioner Teske read Resolution 2024-37. There was a discussion about transferring funds, including from the LATCF, to balance the budget. **Motion** by Commissioner Teske to approve Resolution 2024-37. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.

11:15 AM **Funeral Home Discussion – Steve Schnackenberg**: Present was Steve Schnackenberg.

Steve Schnackenberg read his letter of resignation as Lincoln County Coroner, effective December 31st, and expressed his gratitude for the trust he had been given. He understands that the Commissioners will appoint a new coroner until an election can be held. He recommended appointing Deputy Coroner Roger Craig Riddle, citing his extensive training and education in both the medical field and law enforcement. Steve then provided a history of the coroner's office, explaining that Lincoln County's Coroner's office was established separately from the Sheriff's office to ensure a system of checks and balances. He stated the coroner is the only one who can arrest the sheriff and sit on an inquest and encouraged Lincoln County to continue this check-and-balance system. He noted that fourteen counties have civilian coroners and confirmed there are four deputy coroners in Lincoln County.

11:30 AM **Luit Subdivision Final Plat**: Present was Jesse Haag.

Jesse Haag, Planning Director, presented the final plat for the Luit Subdivision for approval. He advised that the seventeen conditions of approval have been met, with the exception of the mailbox. He stated the post office raised safety concerns, and as a result, the mailbox will not be moved. He advised the Planning Department recommends approval. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons for final plat approval for Luit Subdivision per planning staff recommendations. Second by Commissioner Teske. No comments. Motion carried.

11:36 AM **Adjourned**

**LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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Josh Letcher, Chairman

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Corrina Brown, Clerk of the Board