

**LINCOLN COUNTY PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**  
**TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2025 – 5:30PM**  
**LINCOLN COUNTY COURTHOUSE – LIBBY | NORTH ANNEX VIDEO CONFERENCE**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 5:30 PM**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>John Damon, Chair</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Veronica Bovee Anderson</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Paul Johnson</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Ernie Anderson</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Roberta McCanse</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Jim Gibson</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Kurt West</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Scott Mattheis</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Doug Fryer</u>

**STAFF:** Jesse Haag, Kristin Smith, Alisha Osborne (Assistant Planner)

**PUBLIC:** Joe McCafee. Noel Duram

**AGENDA**

- Meeting called to order at 17:30.
- Approval of December 19, 2024, Meeting Minutes.
  - S. Mattheis has a correction.
  - V. Bovee-Anderson motions to approve with the correction. E. Anderson seconds the motion. All in favor, motion carries.
  - E. Anderson motions to move the public comment to the next item. S. Mattheis seconds the motion. All in favor, motion carries.
- Public Comments 17:32
  - Joe McCafee says he wants to move the trailers out of his lot and have rental units instead. He asks what his options are, and what the process is to do that.
  - J. Haag explains the Buildings for Lease or Rent process for rentals of four or more units, and the sanitation review. He asks where the property is located.
  - J. McCafee says it is just south of the highway.
  - N. Durham says they are looking to move the sewer and water. A short discussion on water and septic process occurs, covering the review process and contact information.
  - S. Mattheis asks if it is in the subdivision regulations.
  - J. Haag explains that that is a separate process and is also covered by the Montana Code Annotated (MCA).
  - J. Damon says it is also on the website.
- Growth Policy 5-year Review-Continued 17:40

- R. McCanse asks about the goals.
- J. Haag explains the implementation tables in the Growth Policy, and that it is currently in draft form. Once more information is received, it will be sent to the board members.
- A brief discussion on mail and contact information occurs.
- J. Haag discusses the growth policy and timeline and explains the end goal is for the board to discuss and make a recommendation to the Commissioners based on the criteria listed.
- K. Smith explains the approach and that it is an umbrella document to address areas that have issues and therefore contains the most prominent issue and most current data.
- S. Mattheis suggests an update to the figures and tables to reflect the current data.
- P. Johnson says it would be nice to have more than just the input of three hundred people.
- K. Smith says if the board decides in favor of an update, there are grants available. The board has a brief discussion of the ways to involve the community, and some of the major concerns are brought up. The board discusses challenges and concerns regarding available housing, jobs, healthcare, and water. The board then discusses the best ways to approach the revisions and how best to gather the necessary data needed.
- V. Bovee-Anderson asks if the goals still fit.
- K. Smith says that the public participation process is how we get the goals, and the board sifts through the input from the public.
- P. Johnson says this is the first step.
- J. Damon says the pertinent data from today is needed.
- V. Bovee-Anderson asks how it is organized.
- K. Smith says the data is organized by topic.
- R. McCanse asks about the meetings required for the process of review.
- K. Smith explains there are several stakeholder meetings, and then another round of meetings so it is a process.
- R. McCanse mentions the lack of veterinary care and how to remedy that.
- E. Anderson says a grant process could help.
- J. Haag explains the timeframe and estimates issue and how there has been tremendous growth since the pandemic, and how it relates to issues with taxes and second homes in the county.
- P. Johnson asks about the Commissioners' thoughts on this.
- K. Smith says it is guided by statute and the policy is every five years, and that the board should decide if it is time for an update. If they decide it is, the Commissioners get the decision from the Planning Director. She agrees it can be challenging.
- E. Anderson mentions his quarterly meetings as an example of how some updates are done.
- K. Smith explains the importance of robust review processes.
- R. McCanse asks who looks for the grants.

- J. Haag says he has handled grants and that the Department of Commerce has planning-specific grants. The board has a discussion on how to obtain grants and the issues with tracking data. A discussion on data gathering issues and flaws occurs, and schools are mentioned as an example. The board discusses feedback from schools with regards to subdivision expansion and accommodation of additional students. J. Haag says there has been feedback from schools suggesting the inability to accommodate additional students.
  - S. Mattheis asks if that is due to a lack of teachers.
  - K. Smith says we do not know.
  - S. Mattheis says that is hard to believe.
  - K. Smith says we were surprised as well.
  - K. West says there are a lot of retired folks coming here. The board has a brief discussion on school numbers and their impact, funding, mills that have closed, taxes, the limitation of job opportunities and housing issues. The board discusses hidden costs from necessary infrastructure that occur, and how that causes what was intended to be affordable housing, unaffordable.
  - J. Haag says that the department gets a lot of calls from people who are relocating here with their families. He cites a few recent conversations with people who are able to move here to work remotely, and others from areas experiencing drought who attracted to the areas water resources. He explains how the Growth Policy is a guidance document for decision making, but that the Commissioners do not have to follow it. He says we try to conform to the Growth Policy and explains how it works and the usefulness of it. He explains the legislative criteria, Montana Subdivision and Platting Act (MSPA) process, and the Montana Association of Planners (MAP) process of updates and major changes in legal framework that is used to stay on top of legislative updates on the local government level. He discusses using the implementation tables and the criteria to determine how complex and relevant the goals are today. He says the Planning Board can review the policy and give their thoughts and make a report.
  - V. Bovee-Anderson says to look on page sixty-three and get a better idea of the goals.
- Adjournment
    - P. Johnson motions to adjourn.
    - John Damon asks if there is any other discussion.
    - S. Mattheis seconds the motion. Adjourned. 18:56