

October 15, 2025

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on October 15, 2025, in the Lincoln County Courthouse Libby, Montana with a hybrid quorum (in-person and remote attendance). Present were Commissioner Teske, Administrative Assistant Nikki Fox and Clerk and Recorder Corrina Brown.

Zoom participation: Commissioner Duram, Commissioner Hammons, Alaena Woody, Anita White, Barry Stidham, Chanel Geer, Danielle Faris, Deb Burrell, Ethan Lula, Gideon Yutzy, Jesse Haag, Kathi Hooper, Marina Stidham, Melanie Howell, Patty Kinslow, Ray Stout, Robert White, Sierra Gustin, Thomas Sibson, Traci Street and Travis Sigea.

09:45 AM **Administrative Issues/Old Business: Approve Minutes. PILT Claims. Commissioners' Report:** Present were none.

- Approval of the October 8, 2025 minutes: **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to accept the minutes with one correction of a comma. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.
- PILT claims: Jackson Murdo & Grant, P.C. \$4,857 for legal services related to selenium. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to pay the current fees and the full amount. Second by Commissioner Hammons. Discussion regarding potential future representation for the upcoming triannual report in the spring. No public comment. Motion carried. Freemyer & Associates, P.C. \$1,872 for legal services related to the Forest Service land conveyance of the Libby shooting range, Troy Airport and Yaak Community Hall. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve the Freemyer & Associates PILT claim for \$1,872. Second by Commissioner Duram. Discussion of reaching out to discuss this with representatives and pushing the bill through congress. No public comment. Motion carried.
- Commissioners' Report:
 - Commissioner Hammons reported on the Board of Health meeting, highlighting plans to hire a behavioral health specialist, a funding request to LASOC for a facilitator, updated animal control regulations, communal disease response plan, vaccine policy updates and various program reports. He noted a potential letter to congressional representatives regarding vaccines was also discussed.
 - Commissioner Teske reported that LASOC raised concerns to the EPA about the recent 5-year review and unaddressed science, prompting meetings to resolve issues ahead of the OU3 feasibility study for the old mine site, expected in the spring. He noted LASOC has DEQ operations and maintenance funds to support site remedy efforts. He also discussed changes under Title 50 and noted that commissioners should be involved in vaccination discussions moving forward.
 - Commissioner Duram reported on ongoing ambulance service issues in Eureka, including missed calls and the need to update dispatch policies. He noted the strain on volunteer services due to increased demand in Lincoln County, which is becoming a retirement community, and suggested the future need for a paid EMS system. He noted efforts are underway to improve coordination between dispatch and ambulance services and volunteers are being sought. He also attended a town hall meeting and a sewer update meeting, noting that construction for the ARPA-funded fairgrounds sewer project is now underway.

10:00 AM **Public Comment Time Non-Agenda Items:** Present were none. No public comments.

10:15 AM **Eureka Airport Extension and Septic Discussion:** Commissioner Duram advised that the Eureka Airport Board is exploring grant funding to expand the airport for larger planes and address septic needs. The Airport Board will revisit the plans and bring an update to the commissioners at a later date.

10:30 AM **Dog Control Ordinance Revision Discussion:** Present was Jeff Zwang.

Commissioner Teske introduced Ordinance 2025-01, proposing to remove exemptions for animal boarding facilities and agricultural or livestock operations from section 6. Barking or Howling Dogs. Kathi Hooper, Health Department Director, explained these exemptions are undefined and sometimes misused, creating enforcement challenges. Jeff Zwang, assistant county attorney, noted that these exemptions are unnecessary since the county has few such operations and taking in dogs for friends has created a loophole. He added that the Board of Health is developing licensing and regulations for boarding facilities, including noise mitigation plans. Commissioner Hammons said the change will simplify enforcement. No public comments were received and the ordinance will move forward with public postings and readings.

10:45 AM **North Star Landing Preliminary Plat Extension Request:** Present were Jesse Haag and Ken Davis.

Jesse Haag, Planning Director, presented a request for a 30-day extension of the North Star Landing preliminary plat approval, citing minor remaining work and progress on septic. He recommended approval, subject to the extension fee. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to extend 30-days. Second by Commissioner Hammons. Discussion included timing, possible SIA and benefits to the community such as road maintenance agreement and dust abatement. No public comment. Motion carried, subject to payment of the final extension fee.

11:00 AM **Public Hearing: Peace Ridge Acres Subdivision Preliminary Plat:** Present were Jesse Haag and Ken Davis.

Jesse Haag, Planning Director, presented the Peace Ridge Acres Subdivision, a proposed four-lot division of Lot 6 in the Kettlehorn Subdivision, south of Eureka. He recommended preliminary plat approval with 27 conditions. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve the preliminary plat. Second by Commissioner Duram. Commissioners discussed layout and locations of septic and wells. Commissioner Teske noted receipt of two emailed comments. Matt Sedlacek opposed the subdivision, citing concerns about increased homes, traffic and commercial development in his Eureka neighborhood. Cheri Sedlacek raised concerns about unlimited growth affecting the aquifer – particularly the Tobacco River- potential groundwater contamination from septic systems, impacts on wildlife and natural beauty and added strain on emergency services. She also noted that 86 lots were currently listed for sale on the outskirts of Eureka, per Realty.com. Public comment: Thomas Sibson, Consultant with Sam Cordi Surveyors clarified that the proposed access and lot layout are conceptual and compliant with subdivision regulations. No further public comment. Motion carried.

11:30 AM **Sunday Creek Ranch Subdivision Final Plat Decision and Lake Creek Ranch Subdivision Final Plat Decision:** Present were Dan Thomas, Jesse Haag and Ken Davis.

Jesse Haag, Planning Directed presented final plat review of Sunday Creek Ranch subdivision in the Stryker area. He noted all eleven conditions of approval have been met and recommended final plat approval. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to approve final plat of this subdivision. Second by Commissioner Hammons. Barry Stidham asked that is wife Marina be on the deed for lot 2. No further public comment. Motion carried.

Jesse Haag, Planning Director, presented the final plat for the Lakota Ridge Subdivision, an amended two-lot division of lot 15 in Lake Creek Ranch Phase 3 off Lake Creek Road. He noted the subdivision originally received preliminary approval with 10 conditions, later reduced to 9 following a condition amendment related to a water cistern after this subdivision was annexed into the Troy Rural Fire District. He advised all conditions have been met and final plat approval is recommended. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons for final plat approval. Second by Commissioner Duram. No public comment on Lakota Ridge final plat. Motion carried.

Commissioner Teske allowed for Public Information as follows:

Ethan Lula, Fish Wildlife and Parks Area Wildlife Biologist advised beginning in early September, FWP received numerous reports of dead deer in the Tobacco Valley near Eureka. These deaths were confirmed as caused by Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD), a viral illness spread by biting midges. This year's outbreak has been the most severe in recent memory, with over 200 reports and estimated mortality possibly exceeding 60% of the local deer population. White-tailed deer were primarily affected due to their proximity to water sources where midges thrive. Other wildlife, including a mule deer fawn and five elk, were also suspected victims. The outbreak remained mostly concentrated in the lower valley, with few isolated cases elsewhere. There is no risk to humans or pets and limited risk to livestock. FWP has proposed eliminating the over-the-counter B license for private lands in the area for future seasons to support population recovery. The outbreak appears to be over, as no new cases have been reported in the past week following the arrival of frost, which eliminates the midges that spread the disease.

11:45 AM **Adjourned**

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Brent Teske, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Corrina Brown, Clerk of the Board