

October 22, 2025

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on October 22, 2025, in the Lincoln County Courthouse Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Teske, Commissioner Hammons, Commissioner Duram and Clerk and Recorder Corrina Brown.

Zoom participation: Boyd White, Danielle Faris, Darren Short, Feleisha Storkson, Jesse Haag, Matt Quinn, Melanie Howell, Ray Stout, Robin Blumberg, Traci Street, Travis Sigea and Tyler Hartz.

10:00 AM **Administrative Issues/Old Business: Approve Minutes. PILT Claims. Commissioners' Report:** Present was Stuart Crismore.

- Approval of the minutes: **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve the October 15, 2025 regular commissioner meeting minutes. Second by Commissioner Duram. No public comment. Motion carried.
- PILT claims: Libby Floor Covering \$5,478.40 for Lincoln County building in Troy for new flooring. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to approve it. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.
- Commissioners' Report:
 - Commissioner Teske provided an update on last week's ordinance 2025-01 discussion, noting that statute prevents striking that language, therefore the matter remains on hold pending legal review. He reported on several board meetings, including the Hard Rock Mining Impact Board, which provided updates on the Black Butte Copper Mine—now permitted and moving forward with feasibility studies amid rising copper prices—and the Stillwater Mine and Smelter, which is facing market challenges from Russian metal imports and is supporting a proposed federal tariff on rare earth minerals allowing them to compete in the world market. He noted Sweetgrass, Park, and Stillwater counties currently receive impact funds. The Lincoln County Port Authority ratified a license agreement with Family Health and Wellness, discussed a new lease with the Remote Control Racers Club, addressed language for volunteer coverage at the swim pond and discussed relocating operation and maintenance materials currently stored on Noble's property. A new site has been developed and will be tested by ARP. If contamination is found, the Operation and Maintenance program will be responsible for cleanup. The Land Board approved a conservation easement covering approximately 53,000 acres, primarily Green Diamond lands, preserving them for public and timber use. Commissioner Teske also noted that the Federal Forest Resource Coalition reported progress on the Fix Our Forest Act, which would benefit the county through improved forest management and fire mitigation efforts.
 - Commissioner Hammons reported on closing out two trail grants—the Kootenai Falls Trail and the Airport Trail. Due to weather conditions, paving at Kootenai Falls will be completed next spring. The Airport Trail project was completed under budget, allowing for the inclusion of additional improvements, including replacement of a deteriorated fence, which has been approved as part of the grant funding.
 - Commissioner Duram reported attending the Land Board meeting, noting that split mineral rights on the conservation property are still being litigated. He expressed appreciation that approximately 8,000 acres in the Happy's Inn area were removed from the easement to allow for potential future development. He also cited progress on revising the Heath Department CDG grant contract to better fit Lincoln County's needs. While the total grant amount remains unchanged, the funding structure is being adjusted to provide flexibility and include support for hiring an additional health department employee. He read a letter regarding Lincoln County's severe financial challenges, including budget shortfalls, reduced services and reliance on unreliable federal funding (PILT/SRS). He highlighted uncertainty with federal grant funded county programs. He expressed concern about county-owned properties held by other entities and the need for local control. He called for open discussions on future financial sustainability and income strategies.

10:15 AM **Public Comment Time Non-Agenda Items:** Present were Stuart Crismore and Steve Woolley.

Stuart Crismore inquired whether Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) contributes payments in lieu of taxes (PILT) for its transmission lines running through the county, estimating around 50 miles of line. Commissioner Teske noted that Senator Cuffe had previously pushed for BPA-related funding during the treaty renewal process, but those efforts were unsuccessful. The board agreed it may still be worthwhile to further explore BPA contributions as a revenue source.

10:30 AM **Fisher River Fire Service Area Discussion:** Present were Stuart Crismore and Steve Woolley.

Stuart Crismore, Chair of the Fisher River Valley Fire Service Area (FRVFSA) Board, requested that the commissioners direct the County Ambulance Board to recognize FRVFSA as a fourth ambulance district, providing representation for both the taxes paid and services delivered in their area. He explained that FRVFSA operates a fully licensed ground ambulance service and has been self-funded since 2006. Commissioner Teske asked whether this was a new application and Stuart confirmed it is a subsequent submission. Board member Steve Woolley noted he has attended ambulance board meetings where this issue has not been addressed. He clarified that the district receives Fire Service Area (FSA) fee funding but no ambulance tax revenue, despite residents being assessed for ambulance services and he added that those collected funds do not flow back to the FSA. The discussion also covered FRVFSA's call volume, billing procedures, and access to grants through its dual role as both an FSA and a licensed ambulance provider.

10:45 AM **Extension Requests for Tobacco Flats North & South Subdivisions Preliminary Plat:** Present was Jesse Haag.

Jesse Haag, Planning Director, presented a request for a three-year extension of the preliminary plat for Tobacco Flats North and South subdivisions, citing financial hardships. The Planning Department recommended granting a two-year extension, with a new expiration date and the condition that the applicant submit a written update on the work status. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram was amended to approve a three-year extension of the preliminary approval of Tobacco Flats North and South subdivisions that would expire November 2, 2028 and the applicant will submit a written update of the status of work to Planning Department. Second by Commissioner Hammons. Tyler Hartz, owner of Tobacco Flats North and South, clarified that the subdivision was approved three years ago. He explained that he purchased the property behind the arena prior to the development of the Barnaby Heights subdivision, which was already largely

complete and later acquired by him. Barnaby Heights required some DEQ updates, which he completed to move the project forward and begin recovering investment costs. He noted the financial challenges of developing Tobacco Flats North and South independently, citing current economic conditions such as high interest rates and inflation. He requested a three-year extension to allow sufficient time to sell additional homes in Barnaby Heights and begin full infrastructure work on Tobacco Flats. He agreed to submitting written annual progress. No further public comment. Motion carried.

11:00 AM **Public Hearing: Amended Plat of Lot 14a of Meadow Peak Subdivision – Family Transfer:** postponed

11:15 AM **Final Plat Decision for Rural Propane Services Subdivision:** Present was Jesse Haag.

Jesse Haag, Planning Director, presented the final plat of the Rural Propane Services subdivision, noting that all ten conditions for approval have been met and recommended approval of the final plat. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to approve this per Planning Department request. Second by Commissioner Hammons. Matt Quinn with Lincoln Electric expressed appreciation for Jesse’s efforts in working through the process and the commissioners consideration. There was no additional public comment. Motion carried.

11:18 AM **Adjourned**

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Brent Teske, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Corrina Brown, Clerk of the Board