

**December 10, 2025**

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on December 10, 2025, in the Lincoln County Courthouse Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Teske, Commissioner Hammons, Commissioner Duram, Administrative Assistant Nikki Fox and Clerk and Recorder Corrina Brown.

Zoom participation: Alaena Woody, Dallas Bowe, Danielle Faris, DJ Welch, Feleisha Storkson, Jesse Haag, Melanie Howell, Ray Stout, Roland Jorgenson, Scott Shindledecker, Sierra Gustin, Tony Wickham and Traci Street.

**09:45 AM Administrative Issues/Old Business: Approve Minutes. Letter of Support for Heritage Museum MT Tourism Grant. Letter of Support Lincoln County-USFS Land Conveyance. Commissioners' Report:** Present were Brian Berreman and Sherry Turner.

- Approval of the minutes: **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve the December 3, 2025 regular commissioner meeting minutes. Second by Commissioner Duram. No public comment. Motion carried.
- Letter of support for Heritage Museum MT tourism grant: Commissioner Duram read a letter supporting the Heritage Museum's Montana Tourism Development Grant application, noting the project's value in restoring historic assets, strengthening local tourism and preserving Lincoln County's cultural heritage. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to support the letter of support. Second by Commissioner Hammons. Sherry Turner thanked the Commission for their support and noted that the feasibility study has been finalized and will be available to the public on the museum website and Facebook page later this week. No further public comment. Motion carried.
- Letter supporting transfer of USFS lands to Lincoln County: Commissioner Hammons read a letter supporting proposed federal legislation to transfer certain U.S. Forest Service lands—used by the Libby Shooting Range, Yaak Community Club and Troy Airport—to Lincoln County. The letter emphasizes that these facilities provide essential recreational and community services and that transferring the lands would reduce administrative burdens, allow for continued public use and support future maintenance. The letter also supports a related land exchange intended to enhance recreational access, improve wildlife habitat and address enforcement issues near Libby. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to support this letter to the senator and congressman for the land exchange into county property. Second by Commissioner Duram. The Commission noted that transferring land from federal to county ownership would benefit residents by reducing federal red tape, improving grant opportunities and providing greater stability than special use permits. The land would remain public with continued access and would revert to the Forest Service if its use changed. No public comment. Motion carried.
- Commissioners' Report:
  - Commissioner Teske reported on a briefing from the Community Action Partnership, highlighting the wide range of services they provided in 2024, including weatherization for 40 homes, 103 section 8 vouchers, 738 fuel-assistance cases, 43 energy-share assists and multiple programs for housing counseling, employment training, and energy-system repairs. He noted the organization's growing local investment, including new apartments on Commerce Way and the value of their training programs that help residents develop essential life and job skills.
  - Commissioner Hammons reported meeting with ServPro regarding the college roof leak. The west-side rooms require full remediation from the ceiling down and the estimated cost exceeds procurement thresholds. County Engineer Andy Evenson will review the needs and help prepare a bid structure and the college will be updated due to its tight timeline for spring classes. He also noted that the Port Authority is pursuing a \$20,000 grant for fuel reduction work on 25 acres at Kootenai Falls, with coordination planned with the Tribe and Forest Service. The project would improve safety and the area's overall condition.
  - Commissioner Duram reported ongoing efforts to improve ambulance service in the Eureka area, including recent meetings and strengthened mutual aid coordination with Flathead County. He advised that Secure Rural Schools (SRS) funding passed, with anticipated back payment for the previous year estimated at approximately \$2.4 million, which will provide a significant financial boost to the county.

**10:00 AM Public Comment Time Non-Agenda Items:** Present were Brian Berreman and Sherry Turner.

Brian Berreman commented on the recent tanker truck rollover at Winslow Corner on Highway 56, emphasizing the severity of the incident and the potential hazard it posed to the community. He noted that a 2023 request for a speed reduction in the area had been denied due to outdated state data and that this crash may take years to appear in state records. He commended the rapid response of the Sheriff's Office and the Fire Department but expressed concern that EPA had not been notified 2-3 hours after the incident. He described the property damage as minimal yet estimated at half a million dollars and stressed the need to revisit speed limits and improve enforcement in the area. Commissioner Teske added that the State EPA/DEQ typically responds only to extended spills and the group discussed delays in the state's statistical reporting system and the desire for reduce speeds in areas of that state highway.

Sherry Turner of the Heritage Museum encouraged the Commission to consider participating in the tourism-related grant the museum is pursuing for the Kootenai Falls area. She noted that multiple grants can complement each other, improving safety for visitors and preserving the site's appearance. She added that applying for more than one grant does not create a conflict, as projects can be amended if both are awarded. Commissioner Hammons advised they are working multiple grants in the Kootenai Falls area.

**10:15 AM Sealed bid opening: Yaak Community Hall Restoration:** Present was Brian Berreman.

Commissioner Teske opened the sealed bids for the Yaak Community Hall restoration project, noting three submissions: MBC Builders at \$316,700; Thompson Contracting Inc. at \$270,490; and Noble Excavating at \$270,097.50, accompanied by an \$80,097.50 donation that would reduce their bid to \$190,000. He stated that both legal counsel and the county engineer will review the bids and the donation component, with a recommendation to be brought forward next week.

**10:30 AM Health Department update:** Present were Brian Berreman, Bryan Alkire, Christopher Johnson, Clyde Miller, Gerald Wallace, Kathi Hooper, Matthew Stull, Melanie Howell, Robin Blumberg, Sarah Long, Sylvia Maffit and Zach Sherbo.

Kathi Hooper, Health Director, reported on septic permitting activity, with 117 permits in Eureka, 68 in Libby, and 47 in Troy, along with 552 land research requests. Of the 232 total applications, 208 have been issued and 27 remain unissued, including 192 new permits, 34 replacements, and 6 affidavits, as well as 126 COSA and 106 local reviews. Improvements continue in closing out permits and all septic permits issued after 2013 are now online, with further efforts underway. The department is awaiting County Attorney approval of a DEQ contract for a contracted state reviewer, and it has renewed the DPHHS contract for licensed establishment inspections for 2026. She noted the variance and retail food grading policies and fee updates will be presented soon. The animal shelter currently houses 7 dogs and 0 cats, with an additional 11 dogs and 5 cats placed in foster care and the draft shelter site layout from Animal Arts is being reviewed. Spay and Neutering continues to be a need. Behavioral Health has hired Kelcy Meyers and reimbursement requests have been submitted. Sarah Long reported that the mercury spill house was removed and the EPA will be onsite when the new house arrives and that mercury products can be taken to the landfill. Tobacco prevention programs and school outreach remain active. Zach Sherbo presented funding opportunities, Wildfire Smoke Clean Indoor Air Grant and avian influenza bird flu. He noted two confirmed flu cases and ongoing vaccine availability. Kathi reported that Zero to Five received Headwaters funding of \$125,000 with expanded services to ages 0–18. Bryan Alkire and Kathi reported completion of the new landfill cell construction at a total cost of \$6,272,416.79. They advised of submission of DEQ reporting, winterization of remote sites and visitor counts—590 in Eureka, 278 in Libby, and 636 in Troy for 2025—and noted that the Evergreen Disposal contract will conclude in November and licensing options are being reviewed.

11:00 AM **Election Department update:** Present were Brian Berreman, Christopher Johnson, Clyde Miller, Gerald Wallace, Melanie Howell and Sylvia Maffit.

Melanie Howell, Election Administrator, reported that the Lincoln County Election Office received commendation from the Federal Election Commission for its election security structure and its management of UOCAVA voters. She highlighted the launch of a new Facebook page, *lincolncountymtelections*, as well as a secure .gov website and .gov email addresses. She noted the county’s recognition at the C&R/EA convention for separating election duties from the Clerk and Recorder’s Office. She discussed GIS boundary changes related to fire service areas, noting the associated costs and the February 18 deadline for finalizing any adjustments. She reported that the office received funding from the LOR Foundation to purchase new furniture. She reviewed a recent, positive CISA cybersecurity assessment, which identified two areas for improvement: the need for a stand-alone election department due to infrastructure challenges—including frequent power issues (breakers tripping) and internet outages, with a recommendation for a stand-alone server—and the need for an additional full-time employee to manage the county’s 13,500 active voters, the eighth-largest voter base in the state. She emphasized the workload, which includes potentially over 15 upcoming elections and the training of more than 130 election judges. She requested assistance with hiring and funding to meet these demands. Commissioners suggested implementing battery-backup systems to address power issues and exploring grant-funding opportunities to support additional staffing. Commissioner Teske will meet with the County Attorney to determine whether a policy or resolution is needed regarding the structure of the Election Administrator position.

11:15 AM **Bull Lake Rural Fire District PILT loan:** Present were Brian Berreman, Christopher Johnson, Clyde Miller, Gerald Wallace and Sylvia Maffi.

Commissioner Hammons presented the Bull Lake Rural Fire District requested a \$500,000 PILT loan to complete construction of their new fire hall. The district detailed the long project history, significant volunteer effort and financial contributions already made. Commissioners reviewed a 5-year, 2% interest repayment schedule and confirmed the district’s capacity to repay, supported by revenue from wildland fire deployments. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to approve a loan for \$500,000 with a five-year repayment schedule for the Bull Lake Fire Department from PILT. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried. Commissioner Teske noted growth and support to the community. Annual payments will be due each December. County staff will prepare the contract and coordinate disbursement of funds.

11:25 AM **Adjourned**

**LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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Brent Teske, Chairman

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