

May 20, 2026

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on May 20, 2026, in the Lincoln County Annex, Eureka, Montana. Present were Commissioner Teske, Commissioner Duram, Commissioner Hammons and Clerk and Recorder Corrina Brown.

Zoom participation: Alaena Woody, Alisha Osborne, Ann German, Brian Berreman, Bryan Alkire, Dallas Bowe, Darren Short, Jennifer Nelson, Jessica Jenson, John Brandau, Juli Thurston, Kathi Hooper, Katie Anderson, Matthew Stull, Melanie Howell, Michelle Freese, Nathan Ueland, Ray Stout, Roland Jorgenson, Scott Shindledecker, Sierra Gustin, Suzanne Resch, Tim Dougherty and Wendy Drake.

09:45 AM **KFSC Support Letter:** Present was Traci Street.

Jennifer Nelson, Lincoln County Forester, introduced Tim Dougherty and Juli Thurston, who requested a letter of support from the Commission for a Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Local Government Assistance Grant application. Tim explained that the Kootenai Forest Stakeholders Collaborative has worked closely with the Kootenai National Forest for nearly 20 years and relies on grant funding to support meeting facilitation costs. Juli noted the organization has successfully received DNRC grants in the past and emphasized the importance of continued funding to support collaborative forest management efforts. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to sign a letter of support. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.

10:00 AM **Administrative Issues/Old Business: Approve Minutes. PILT Claims. Hauling Contract. Spay & Neuter Clinic. Commissioners' Report:** Present were Mary Duram and Traci Street.

- Approval of May 11, 2026, minutes: **Motion** by Commissioner Duram for the May 11th, 2026, meeting minutes. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.
- Approval of May 13, 2026, minutes: **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve the May 13, 2026, regular commissioner meeting minutes. Second by Commissioner Duram. Commissioner Duram corrected the minutes as he attended a dispatch meeting with ambulance staff. No public comment on the amended motion. Motion carried.
- Approval of May 14, 2026, budget meeting minutes: **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to approve. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.
- PILT claims: Jackson Murdo & Grant \$1,682.50. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to pay the \$1,682.50. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.
Jackson Murdo & Grant \$580. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to pay the \$580 even. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.
HDR Engineering, Inc \$10,012.58 bio-mass feasibility study. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to pay HDR \$10,012.58. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.
HDR Engineering, Inc \$4,394.58 **Motion** by Commissioner Duram for \$4,394.58 to HDR. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.
HDR Engineering, Inc \$5,484 **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to pay the \$5,484. Second by Commissioner Hammons. Commissioners discussed the ongoing project and related bill claims, noting the project is nearing completion and expected to benefit the community. It was confirmed the expenses were previously approved under the RFP and that invoices are being tracked to remain within the authorized amount. Traci Street confirmed the findings will be presented. No further comments. Motion carried.
- Kathi Hooper reported Evergreen Disposal requested a one-week delay to respond to contract questions. The Commission agreed to postpone the hauling contract discussion to next week.
- Kathi Hooper, Health Department, requested continued county support for the Spay & Neuter Clinic scheduled for June 20–21 in Libby, coordinated by Kootenai Pets for Life. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve, but instead of saying \$2,500 to make up for the difference between what the city will kick in, because I know that was in their contract to participate. Second by Commissioner Duram. No public comment. Motion carried.
- Commissioners' Report:
 - Commissioner Duram reported that Fairgrounds improvements are nearing completion, including final electrical work, sod installation and completed sewer infrastructure, with asphalt work up to the highway. He also noted receipt of the 2025 selenium report and EBR compliance information for future discussion.
 - Commissioner Hammons advised that trail improvements funded through a grant are nearing completion, including paving work at Kootenai Falls and upcoming installation of interpretive signage. He also noted that the concessionaire contract has been signed with operations expected to begin this weekend, providing services at the park area.
 - Commission Teske provided an update on the Port Authority meeting, including approval to proceed with access for the stockpile site and discussion of possibly conveying that land to the county. He also noted approval of engineering estimates for diversion channel and trail-related slope repairs, along with updates on a recreation management agreement, a planned sale of a 2023 Chevy Tahoe and surplus scrap metal.

10:15 AM **Public Comment Time Non-Agenda Items:** Present were Jacob Delong, Mary Duram and Traci Street.

Ann German, county voter, expressed concern regarding a notice mailed from the Lincoln County Election Department instructing absentee voters to sign their ballots, stating it has caused voter confusion and may result in ballot rejection. She referenced public discussions on social media and community posts, alleging misinformation and raising concerns about the accuracy and fairness of election communications. She urged the Commission to take prompt corrective action to clarify instructions and ensure voters are properly informed for the upcoming election.

Melanie Howell, Election Administrator, stated that she had already planned to address the issue. She clarified that while the notice was included in ballot packets, there was never any intention to ask voters to compromise their ballots and signing the ballot would not void it. She explained that two voters had already returned signed ballots and in those cases the office allowed the voters to spoil their ballots, place them in a spoiled ballot envelope and receive replacement ballots. She added that additional notices would be issued to inform voters of the process. For ballots already returned or where

voters do not contact the office, she said the resolution board would redact identifying marks to preserve ballot secrecy and, when voter intent is clear, duplicate the ballot onto a clean ballot for normal tabulation. She noted that these procedures are approved by the Secretary of State and had also been run by the county attorney.

Ann German expressed concern that if voters signed their ballots, ballot secrecy could be compromised because election office personnel may be able to view how individuals voted. She stated that voters may be unaware of the need to request a spoiled ballot and raised concerns about voter privacy and public trust in the election process.

10:30 AM LEC: Sponsor for FEMA Grant: Present were Jacob Delong, Mary Duram and Traci Street.

Jacob Delong, Communications Manager for Lincoln Electric Cooperative, requested county sponsorship and coordination support for a FEMA BRIC grant application to underground portions of the power line in the Trego/Taylor Pass area. He explained that FEMA requires the county to serve as the primary applicant, with Lincoln Electric as the sub applicant and requested assistance with FEMA GO access. He stated the project would improve electrical reliability, reduce outages caused by trees and snow, lower wildfire risk and support long-term infrastructure resiliency in a heavily forested and high-risk area. The estimated preliminary project cost is approximately \$4 million under a 90/10 FEMA cost share, with the possibility of the state covering the remaining 10% match. The Commission advised that Boyd White, EMA Director, will serve as the county contact for the project.

11:00 AM Bid Openings for Libby Campus Water Damage Repairs: Present were Mary Duram, Skyler Goertz and Traci Street.

Commissioner Teske opened the bid received for the Flathead Valley Community College Libby Campus water damage repair project. Complete Restoration submitted a bid in the amount of \$312,940.80. During discussion, Commissioner Hammons located an emailed bid submitted by ServPro of Kalispell prior to the deadline, consisting of \$180,078.97 for remediation and \$231,836.03 for reconstruction, for a combined total of approximately \$411,915. Both bids will be forwarded to the project engineer for review and recommendation before further action is taken.

11:15 AM Kootenai Travel Collaborative Endorsement: Present were Mary Duram, Scott Matthias, Joe M'afu, Skyler Goertz and Traci Street.

Scott Mattheis presented the Kootenai Winter Travel Collaborative agreement regarding over-the-snow vehicle management on the Kootenai National Forest. He explained that the collaborative effort seeks legislative support to preserve future snowmobile access, resolve long-standing travel management conflicts and establish designated recreation areas through a consensus map and proposed forest plan amendments. Joe M'afu with the Glen Lake Irrigation District discussed watershed improvement and thinning projects within multiple Grave Creek drainages that may require temporary reopening of existing inventory roads. Tim Dougherty of Idaho Forest Group stated the proposal would have no negative impact on timber production, noted broad support from recreation, conservation and industry groups. Request is for a formal letter of support from the Lincoln County Commissioners endorsing the Kootenai Winter Travel Collaborative agreement. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to support this plan with a letter. Second by Commissioner Hammons. Discussion that the Kootenai Winter Travel Collaborative is a successful consensus-based approach to land and recreation management that could help reduce litigation and court costs. No further public comment. Motion carried.

11:30 AM Road Dist. 3 Budget Meeting: Present were Mary Duram, Pam Rackley, Ray Price and Traci Street.

Ray Price, Road Foreman, reviewed the Eureka district road budget. He proposed combining several budget line items, including repair and maintenance with machinery and equipment, as well as consolidating propane costs with fuel accounts. He noted lease agreements have helped reduce repair expenses and confirmed vehicle inventory updates are in progress, with insurance adjustments still pending, potentially resulting in an approximate \$7,000 increase. Commissioner Duram highlighted strong cooperation between the road department and other entities, including the fairgrounds, landfill, and city partners. Ray will work with Finance to update and finalize the budget figures.

11:45 AM Lincoln Co. Fair Budget Meeting: Present were Mary Duram, Pam Rackley and Traci Street.

Pam Rackley, Fair Manager, presented the Fairgrounds operating budget and noted several updates, including elimination of porta-potty rentals, addition of sewer costs and expected reductions in electrical expenses due to meter changes. She reported the lawn mower has been repaired without unexpected costs and noted donations and increased revenue from the upcoming music festival, with an overall budget increase of approximately \$2,000. She also requested approval to bring on temporary staff earlier than planned to support upcoming fair events and agreed to coordinate with HR.

11:52 Break The remainder of the meeting was held at the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana.

02:00 PM Administrator Interview: Present in Libby were Kathi Hooper and Marcia Boris.

Commissioner Teske called the Administrator interview meeting to order and requested public comment. No public comment was received, and the meeting proceeded in closed session.

03:00 PM Meadow Creek Final Plat – Planning Department: Present was Kristin Smith.

Kristin Smith, Planning Department, presented the Meadow Creek Acres subdivision final plat. She confirmed all 15 conditions of approval were met, including completion of required access, cul-de-sac improvements, and addressing.

Motion by Commissioner Duram to approve Meadow Creek Acres subdivision final plat. Second by Commissioner Hammons. Discussion of conditions having been met. No public comment. Motion carried.

03:07 PM **Adjourned**

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Brent Teske, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Corrina Brown, Clerk of the Board