

June 4, 2026

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a special session on June 4, 2026, in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Teske, Commissioner Duram, Commissioner Hammons, County Administrator Matt Williams and Clerk and Recorder Corrina Brown.

Zoom participation: Veronica Bovee-Anderson

10:00 AM **Lincoln County Compensation Board Meeting:** Present were Ann German, Anthony Jenson, Brian Berreman, Dallas Bowe, Darren Short, JoAnne Cuffe, Stuart Crismore, Trisha Brooks and Marcia Boris.

Commissioner Hammons reviewed the county's wage funding strategy. He explained that \$7 million of the Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund (LATCF) allocation had been invested with the intent that annual investment earnings would help fund employee wage increases without increasing the burden on taxpayers. He reported that investment earnings for the current year are projected at approximately \$283,000. He discussed the county's investment portfolio managed through Raymond James, noting an approximate return of 2%. Discussion followed regarding interest in reviewing investment strategies to determine whether higher returns may be achievable while maintaining appropriate safeguards for public funds.

Sheriff Short addressed concerns regarding compensation for sworn deputies. He explained that under Montana law, deputy salaries are tied to the Sheriff's salary. When elected officials receive smaller increases than other county employees, deputies effectively fall behind over time because their wage progression is linked to the Sheriff's compensation. He requested that elected officials receive the same percentage increase as county employees to avoid widening the pay gap between sworn and non-sworn staff. Commissioner Teske noted that the Montana Association of Counties (MACo) and law enforcement organizations are exploring legislative changes that would separate deputy compensation from the Sheriff's salary structure.

Discussion followed regarding employee retention, historical county wage adjustments, health insurance cost increases, and the long-term sustainability of funding compensation increases through investment earnings and the county's participation in the MACo insurance pool.

Matt Williams, County Administrator, demonstrated a new budgeting and salary projection tool providing real-time analysis of the financial impacts of proposed wage increases, investment earnings and insurance costs.

Motion by Commissioner Duram to approve a 1.5% salary increase for elected officials. Second by Veronica Bovee-Anderson. No public comment. The motion carried 9–1, with Commissioner Duram opposed.

10:28 AM **Adjourned**

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Brent Teske, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Corrina Brown, Clerk of the Board