

September 9, 2026

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on September 9, 2026, in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Teske, Commissioner Hammons, County Administrator Matt Williams and Clerk and Recorder Corrina Brown.

Zoom participation: Commissioner Duram, Alaena Woody, Anthony Jenson, Boyd White, Bri Hilyer, Chanel Geer, Charlotte, Cherie Gunderson, Dallas Bowe, Deb Burrell, Evan Comella, Gail Burger, Jessica Jenson, Katie Anderson, Michael Miller, Ray Stout, Roland Jorgenson, Rosemary Irish, Traci Street, Travis Sigea and Wendy Drake.

10:00 AM Administrative Issues/Old Business: Approve Minutes. PILT Claims. Claim Approvals. Notices to Proceed. Grant Approvals. Letters of Support. Proclamations & Commendations. Blue Mountain Tower Lease Agreement. County Administrator's Report. Commissioners Report:

Present were Ann German, Boyd White, Brian Berreman, Candice Comstock, Christy Sabo, Denise Devaney, Greg Allen, Jake Newton, Jessica Sisneros, Joe Crismore, Julie Gifford, Linda Ralph, Mary Nelson, Mike Cirian, Nate Pomeroy, Nathan White, Patty Rambo, Rebecca Dupre, Rocke Gifford, Sandra Epps, Mr. & Mrs. R. Siefke, Samantha Pomeroy, Sierra Gustin, Steve Gunderson, Tamara Crismore, Todd Orr and Tony Wickham.

- Approval of Minutes: **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve the September 2, 2026, meeting minutes. Second by Commissioner Duram. No public comment. Motion carried.
- PILT Claims: Jackson, Murdo & Grant, P.C.- MEIC total \$1,380. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve the Jackson, Murdo & Grant Invoice for \$1,380. Second by Commissioner Duram. No public comment. Motion carried. Jackson, Murdo & Grant, P.C – Selenium for \$37.50. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to pay it. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.
- Claim Approvals: none
- Notices to Proceed: none
- Grant Approvals: none
- Letters of Support: none
- Proclamation & Commendations: none
- Blue Mountain Tower Lease Agreement: Boyd White, EMA, presented a lease agreement between Lincoln County and Flathead Electric Cooperative for radio equipment at the Blue Mountain Tower. The agreement is an annual rental fee of \$1,800 (\$150 per month). Discussion of the fee structure, noting it is based on the prior agreement, equipment use and services provided to the community. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve. Second by Commissioner Duram. No public comments. Motion carried.
- County Administrator's Report: Administrator Williams reported that he has drafted the County's FY 2027 budget statement to be sent to the State of Montana ahead of the October 1 deadline. The Election Office continues to stay on schedule for the upcoming general election, with training and election judge outreach planned. He advised that Unite for Youth withdrew its request for substance use disorder settlement funds, so the Board will need to revisit how those funds are allocated. He provided an update on the proposed Lincoln County Community College Service Board and work with Flathead Valley Community College. He discussed the County's ongoing financial challenges, including limited taxable property, the large amount of federal land, declining timber revenues and the financial impacts of Libby Dam. Commissioners Report:
 - Commissioner Duram reported on a Western Montana Conservation Commission meeting discussion related to clean water and septic systems. He attended the Montana Rural Impact , which focused on rural economic development, and discussed the need for a local meat processing facility to serve Lincoln County producers.

10:15 AM Landfill Bid Opening: No bids were received.

10:30 AM Public Comment Time Non-Agenda Items: Present were Ann German, Brian Berreman, Candice Comstock, Christy Sabo, Denise Devaney, Greg Allen, Jake Newton, Jessica Sisneros, Joe Crismore, Julie Gifford, Linda Ralph, Mary Nelson, Mike Cirian, Nate Pomeroy, Nathan White, Patty Rambo, Rebecca Dupre, Rocke Gifford, Sandra Epps, Mr. & Mrs. R. Siefke, Samantha Pomeroy, Sierra Gustin, Steve Gunderson, Tamara Crismore, Todd Orr, Tony Petrusa and Tony Wickham.

Joe Crismore encouraged the County to work with the Forest Service regarding the shooting range's special use permit and expressed concern about maintaining continuity of services and operations at the range.

Tony Wickham referred to a due process document dated June 24, 2026, placing Election Administrator Melanie Howell on administrative leave and questioned the delay. He cited potential impacts on public trust and the upcoming election being invalidated. He urged the commission to reinstate Melanie, adding that failure to act could lead to recall efforts.

Commissioner Teske stated for general information that the commission received the final investigation this morning.

Steve Gunderson expressed concern about the upcoming election and the lack of an experienced elections administrator. He cited the potential impact on candidates and requested that Melanie Howell be reinstated.

Mike Cirian spoke on behalf of the Libby Rod and Gun Club and Libby Scatter Guns regarding the shooting range, its special use permit, safety and recent disputes involving other groups. He stated that the clubs are in compliance with the valid use permit and have provided documentation to the County and Forest Service. He noted over 1,600 range users.

Rocke Gifford suggested the County Administrator or Clerk and Recorder administer elections.

Sandra Epps requested an immediate decision regarding the election administrator. She will ask other judges to join her in boycotting this election until they get a decision.

Candice Comstock inquired of a resolution postponed at a previous meeting in Eureka. Commissioner Teske clarified that the resolution had been withdrawn.

Linda Ralph emphasized the seriousness of ensuring that Melanie Howell is in office. She stated that dozens of positions require qualified election judges, including staffing at ballot boxes, polling places and the election office. She expressed concern that without sufficient qualified personnel, there could be significant difficulties in conducting the election and emphasized that the matter requires quick decisions.

Commissioner Duram addressed election judges, emphasizing the importance of supporting the election process and acknowledged the seriousness of the situation.

Travis Sigea expressed concern regarding the nearly three months the Election Administrator has remained on leave and asked when the Board expects to have a resolution done.

Charlotte Peterson noted she was glad the investigation results had been received and stated that two county employees overheard the investigator say that he did not have enough findings to point to any guilt on the part of the Election Administrator and that he was told to keep looking and find more people to interview.

Linda Ralph responded to Commissioner Duram about the election judges, it's not that we are trying to undermine the election, but it's more that we don't want to be involved in an election that is not ethical.

Ann German expressed support for the County following its personnel procedures regarding complaints against county officials and criticized comments suggesting that the election process could be disrupted if a particular personnel decision was not made.

10:45 AM **LCPA Land Conveyance to Lincoln County Proposal:** Present were Ann German, Brian Berreman, Chris Noble, Jennifer Brown, Jim Germany, Julie Gifford, Patty Rambo, Rocke Gifford and Tony Petrusha.

Jennifer Brown, Lincoln County Port Director, discussed two proposed land conveyances from the Port Authority to Lincoln County. The first is a little over four acres for the ARP stockpile. The Board agreed the County would pay for the survey. She will contact a surveyor and bring the conveyance back for approval. The second involves the swim pond, fishpond and RC car track. The County would receive the property and associated water rights, with a management agreement to be developed. The Board discussed the insurance and management benefits of having the property under County ownership and will continue working on the details.

10:57 AM **Adjourned**

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Brent Teske, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Corrina Brown, Clerk of the Board