October 28, 2026

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on October 28, 2026, in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby Montana. Present were Commissioner Teske, Commissioner Hammons, Commissioner Duram, County Administrator Matt Williams and Clerk and Recorder Corrina Brown.

Zoom participation: Alaena Woody, Alyssa Ruttenburg, Anthony Jenson, Bree Dahm, Bri Hilyer, Candice Comstock, Chanel Geer, Deb Burell, Danielle Faris, Darren Short, Evan Comella, Gail Burger, Jen Brown, Jennifer Curtiss, Jessica Jenson, Justin Burich, Katie Anderson, Lauren O'Neill, Linda, Melanie Howell, Michael Miller, Nikki Meyer, Pam Boyke, Roland Jorgenson, Sandra Epps, Scott Mattheis, Sierra Gustin, Stormy Langston, Suzanne Resch, Svea Jorgensen, Thomas Maxwell and TP Max.

10:00 AM **Administrative Issues/Old Business: Approve Minutes. Administrative Issues/Old Business. Lease Agreement Extension with USFS at Libby Airport. Master Agreements with Morrison & Maierle. Ratification of Letter of Support Submitted by County Administrator for Seventeen-Mile Bridge Repair. PILT Claims. Claim Approvals:** Present were Ann German, Brian Berreman, John Boyke, Mike Lee, Patty Rambo, Rocke Gifford, Sierra Gustin, Stuart Crismore and Tony Wickham.

- Approval of Minutes: **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve the October 21, 2026, meeting minutes. Second by Commissioner Duram. No public comment. Motion carried.
- The board discussed the U.S. Forest Service special use permit for the West Kootenai Fire Hall property. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to renew the special use permit for the West Kootenai Fire Hall. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.
- The Board reviewed a five-year extension of the U.S. Forest Service lease at Libby Airport for wildfire-fighting helicopter operations at an annual rate of $4,000, payable in semiannual installments of $2,000. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to renew the lease based on the Airport Board's recommendation. Second by Commissioner Duram. No public comment. Motion carried.
- The Board discussed the master agreements with Morrison-Maierle to formalize consulting services related to grant pursuits and airport projects, including lighting, the airport master plan and runway maintenance. The agreements support previously discussed grant applications and project components. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to approve the master agreement with Morrison-Maierle. Second by Commissioner Hammons. Discussion resulted in Commissioner Duram **amending his motion** to approve the Morrison-Maierle planning contract separately from the engineering contract, as requested by the FAA. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to approve the Morrison-Maierle engineering contract. Second by Commissioner Hammons. It was clarified that the Board had previously accepted the Airport Board's recommendation to retain Morrison-Maierle for the planning and engineering contracts. No further public comments. Motion carried.
- Administrator Williams read the letter of support submitted to the Montana Department of Transportation's Better Local Bridges Program for the 17-Mile Bridge truss repair project. The application requests $380,000 in grant funding toward the $475,000 project, with a $95,000 local match. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve the letter of support. Second by commissioner Duram. No public comment. Motion carried.
- PILT Claims: none
- Claim Approvals: **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve the set of claims. Second by Commissioner Duram. No public comment. Motion carried.
- County Administrator's Report: Administrator Williams provided an update on preparations for the November 3, 2020, General Election, including election judge training, polling place staffing, ballot preparation and transport, absentee ballot counting and election security procedures. He confirmed that all polling locations were fully staffed and reviewed voter identification requirements, polling hours and restrictions on electioneering. He requested the appointment of a post-election audit committee and thanked election staff, judges and the public.
- Commissioners Report:
  - Commissioner Duram reported on application reviews, a special Eureka Dispatch Board meeting and ongoing efforts to address EMS challenges in the Eureka area.

10:15 AM **Board Appointments. Post-Election Audit Board Appointments.:** Present were Ann German, Brian Berreman, DC Orr, John Boyke, Mike Lee, Patty Rambo, Rocke Gifford, Sierra Gustin, Stuart Crismore and Tony Wickham.

- *Lincoln County Weed Board*: One vacancy; no applications were received.
- *Lincoln County Port Authority*: Two vacancies; two applications. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve Patty Rambo and Phillip Erquiaga. Second by Commissioner Duram. No public comment. Motion carried.
- *Fisher River Valley Fire Service Area*: Two vacancies; two applications. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to appoint Becky Cassel and Paul Rmelhart as prescribed, with Paul filling the term expiring in June 2029 and the second appointment contingent upon Stuart Crismore's resignation. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.
- *Upper Yaak Fire Service Area*: One vacancy; one application. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve Sharon Sullivan to the Upper Yaak Fire Service Area. Second by Commissioner Duram. No public comment. Motion carried.
- *West Kootenai Fire District***:** Five vacancies; five applications were received.
  Motion by Commissioner Duram to appoint Dean Riley for a one-year term. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.
  Motion by Commissioner Duram to appoint Jeanine Masciola for a one-year term. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.
  Motion by Commissioner Duram to appoint Judy DeLeon to a two-year term. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.
  Motion by Commissioner Duram to appoint Justin Burich to a three-year term. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner Duram to appoint Thomas Maxwell to a two-year term. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.

10:30 AM **Public Comment Time Non-Agenda Items:** Present were Ann German, Brian Berreman, DC Orr, John Boyke, Mike Lee, Patty Rambo, Rocke Gifford, Sierra Gustin, Stuart Crismore and Tony Wickham.

DC Orr expressed concerns about longstanding issues and accountability within local law enforcement and the justice system. He cited past allegations involving law enforcement officials and raised concerns about potential political conflicts of interest among local attorneys in the current police chief's case. He urged greater accountability and expressed doubt that the current matter would result in a conviction.

Ann German responded to previous public comments, disputing their accuracy and stating that the allegations discussed were publicly available for review. She clarified that the Troy officer referenced was currently being prosecuted and cautioned against accepting the prior speaker's statements at face value. She also expressed support for the role of elected officials and emphasized the importance of the legal process.

Candice Comstock expressed concern about alleged political discrimination by local attorneys.

Sandra Epps asked the Board to release the findings on the investigation of Election Administrator Melanie Howell and explain the reason for her termination. Commissioner Teske stated that the personnel matter remains ongoing and cannot be discussed publicly until the process was complete.

10:45 AM **Consideration of Candidates for Appointment to the Board of County Commissioners District 2 Seat:** Present were Brian Berreman, Candice Comstock, Darren Short, Jennifer Nelson, Jesse Haag, John Boyke, Mike Lee, Patty Rambo, Rhoda Cargill, Rocke Gifford, Scott Shindledecker, Stuart Crismore and Tony Wickham.

Commissioner Teske opened public comment regarding the candidates submitted by the Lincoln County Republican Central Committee for the District 2 Commissioner vacancy. Rocky Gifford opposed consideration of Tony Wickham. DC Orr expressed support for Tony Wickham. Commissioner Hammons recused himself. Commissioner Duram nominated John Boyke to fill the District 2 Commissioner position for the remainder of the two-year term. With no further nominations, nominations were closed. Both Commissioner Teske and Commissioner Duram voted aye.

Administrator Williams advised that election judge appointments would be sent by email today and asked reserve judges to remain available by phone, particularly for Election Day vacancies.

11:00 AM **Treasurer's Cash Reconciliation Report:** Present were Brian Berreman, John Boyke, Rocke Gifford and Sedaris Carlberg.

Sedaris Carlberg, Treasurer, presented the cash reconciliation report and reported a fraudulent payroll incident involving Troy School, resulting in a $3,299 discrepancy. After accounting for the incident, the remaining discrepancy was $1.10. The Treasurer is working with the appropriate parties to resolve the issue. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to accept the Treasurer's cash reconciliation report. Second by Commissioner Duram. Administrator Williams noted the County is temporarily holding some long-term investments in cash to maintain liquidity while developing a formal investment policy by year-end. No public comment. Motion carried.

11:15 AM **Preliminary Plat Review & Decision - Husted/Knoll Subdivision (First Minor). Lakeshore Construction Application Review & Decision - Hittle (Bull Lake) – Planning Department:** Present were Brian Berreman, Coral Koberstein, John Boyke, Kristin Smith, Mary Husted and Paul Husted.

Kristin Smith, Planning, presented the Husted/Knoll Subdivision preliminary plat for review. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to approve the preliminary plat subject to the 10 conditions outlined in the staff report. Second by Commissioner Hammons. Discussion included the need for a turnaround to accommodate emergency services and provide adequate space for vehicles to turn around. No public comment. Motion carried.

Kristin presented the Hittle lakeshore construction permit to address unauthorized fill and restore disturbed areas within the lakeshore protection zone. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve the lakeshore construction permit with eight conditions. Second by Commissioner Duram. Discussion focused on bringing the property into compliance with regulations. No public comment. Motion carried.

11:30 AM **Stockpile Transfer Bid Opening - Aggregate & Other Materials at Lincoln County Port Authority Site. Acceptance of Landfill Truck Barn Quote. Consideration of Locations for Animal Shelter:** Present were Amanda Harcourt, Anthony Jenson, Brian Berreman, Darren Short, Don Luthey, Jeff Zwang, John Boyke, Kathi Hooper, Stuart Crismore and Tammy Brown.

Commissioner Teske unsealed two bids to transfer the ARP clean fill stockpile: Noble Excavating for $126,000 and Thompson Contracting Inc. (TCI) for $89,700. The bids will be forwarded to ARP for review to ensure compliance with project requirements, with a recommendation to be presented at the following week's meeting. No action taken.

Administrator Williams advised that no bids were received for the landfill truck barn despite multiple solicitations. A negotiated contract quote was received from MQS in Columbia Falls for $257,730 for the building and $57,120 for concrete, totaling $314,850. Kathi Hooper, Health Director, noted the project is within budget, with $42,561 in insurance proceeds received for the wind-damaged building. Electrical work and overhead doors will need to be purchased separately, and construction is expected to begin in the spring. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to approve the negotiated contract for $314,850. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.

Kathi Hooper, Health Director requested authorization to submit a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application to the Montana Department of Commerce for construction of an animal shelter at J. Neils Park in Libby, to be operated by the Lincoln County Health Department. **Motion** by Commissioner Hammons to approve the application for

the CDBG. Second by Commissioner Duram. Discussion included ensuring no conflicts with existing CDBG grants, confirming the proposed location and clarifying that the county's matching contribution would include in-kind land and development work. Administrator Williams read Resolution 2026-30. Commissioner Hammons **amended his motion** to reflect approving Resolution 2026-30. Second by Commissioner Duram. Kathi advised the grant match will consist of in-kind contributions, including the land and county labor to prepare and develop the animal shelter site, with other eligible grants potentially contributing toward the match. No public comment. Motion carried.

Administrator Williams presented the recommendation for appointments to the County Audit Committee for the November 3, 2026, General Election. Recommended members: Ann German, Jessica Jensen and Dallas Bowe. Alternates: Sharon Craig and Casey Vincent, to serve if a member is unable to participate. **Motion** by Commissioner Duram to appoint the County Audit Committee as recommended. Second by Commissioner Hammons. No public comment. Motion carried.

11:45 AM **Consideration of Candidates for Appointment to the Position of Justice of the Peace:** Present were

Commissioner Teske noted the two candidates for Justice of the Peace were Scott B. Johnson and Jeffrey Zwang. Stormy Langston stated both candidates were qualified but expressed concern that each had pending cases requiring a pro tempore judge, potentially increasing county costs. Commissioner Hammons nominated Jeffrey Zwang for the office of Justice of the Peace. Second by Commissioner Duram. Discussion included the workload of the County Attorney's Office, the upcoming judicial training and appointment timeline and the potential for tele-court or other services in North Lincoln County to improve access to justice. Mr. Zwang expressed willingness to explore options to improve court access while protecting the rights of defendants and victims. No further nominations were made. Commissioners Teske and Hammons voted aye, and Commissioner Duram voted nay.

11:55 AM **Adjourned**

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

_____
Brent Teske, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Corrina Brown, Clerk of the Board