

August 30, 2017

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on August 30, 2017, in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Cole, Commissioner Bennett, County Administrator Darren Coldwell, and Clerk and Recorder Robin Benson. Commissioner Peck was absent.

Commissioner Cole opened the meeting with the **Pledge of Allegiance**.

10:00 AM Treasurer's Monthly Report/Nancy Higgins: Present were John Blodgett, Alan Gerstenecker, and Nikki Meyer, Eureka via VisionNet.

Nancy submitted the cash reconciliation and county investment reports for commission review. Nancy explained that reserves are no longer shown on cash reports and said she feels the report better reflects accurate cash balances.

Nancy submitted School District Levies for FY 2017/2018 and explained that school levies do need to be approved by the county commissioners. Nancy informed the commissioners that all school district levies are up except for Fortine and explained the process for determination of school levies, assessments, and school budgets. The 33% of the forest reserve portion that goes to the schools is estimated at \$161,150.22 for FY 17/18.

Nancy explained the short-term loan to correct the distribution of last year's forest receipts and how that loan will be paid when the taxes come in.

10:45 AM Administrative Issues: Present were John Blodgett, Alan Gerstenecker, and Nikki Meyer, Eureka via VisionNet.

Darren said Kevin Peck from Glacier Insurance has reviewed all the Libby and Troy county owned buildings and structures but still needs to review the buildings in Eureka. Darren submitted a report from Glacier Insurance for commission review and suggested a meeting with Kevin Peck to discuss the building values and cost.

Motion by Commissioner Bennett to approve the annual DEQ Contract No. 518005, Air Quality Grant as presented for \$31,757. Second by Commissioner Cole, motion carried.

Robin informed the commissioners that Lincoln County is the first recipient of a new grant called The Blitz Program through the Montana Historical Society. The grant program is to provide funding and support for a week-long processing event with significant archival collections, a proven need for assistance and a well-organized plan. Robin said she applied for the grant with the idea of inventorying, flattening, and storing the old canvas maps located in the commissioner's vault. Preservation training will be provided by members of the Montana Historical Society on September 15 and the actual Blitz Event is scheduled for October 9-13, 2017. Robin said she is enthusiastic to actually review all the old canvas maps to determine what those maps are of and their historical significance to Lincoln County. Robin said an advertisement will be going out to the newspapers next week and she is already receiving a lot of public interest to participate.

Robin submitted the minutes for August 22 and 23, 2017 for commission approval. The commissioners reviewed the minutes as submitted. **Motion** by Commissioner Bennett to approve the minutes as presented. Second by Commissioner Cole, motion carried.

11:00 AM Public Comment Time: There were no public comments.

11:15 AM FY 17/18 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Present were John Righter, Finance Deputy Wendy Drake, John Blodgett, Alan Gerstenecker and Nikki Meyer, Eureka via VisionNet.

Darren reminded everyone that the preliminary budget is a work in progress and is not final. Darren commended the department heads, including road departments for their budget reduction efforts. Darren said the road departments reduced its budget nearly \$600,000, total requirements of the levied funds decreased approximately \$85,000 overall, allocated costs were reduced to the general fund and the permissive levy decreased attributed to the employee buyout and insurance incentives.

Darren said his concern is if the road budget continues as is, in about 4 years the county will run out of reserves; there is a lack of funding in the road departments.

Total mills allowed to fund the county general fund is 100.92 mills, valuation is \$35,203 per mill.

Commissioner Bennett stated the county needs to continue looking at how to cut costs and generate more revenue.

Darren pointed out that funding public safety is taking 68 mills out of the 100 mills allowed.

Commissioner Cole pointed out that total requirement (expenditures) in FY 2013/14 were over 13 million and now we are down to 9 million. Commissioner Cole said the county over the past few years has been tightening its spending and thinking outside the box improving process and procedures.

Nikki asked how the county could reduce the allocated cost to the general fund. Darren said if you cut costs then you allocate less; basically, a decrease in cost of government allows for allocating less.

Commissioner Bennett commented that as we move forward, increased line items in budgets will need justification for those increases.

John talked about the road reserves and that as it decreases, that interest is lost to the county. John said the county will need to get to a point where those reserves are no longer allowed to decrease before they are completely depleted. There was a brief discussion about Schedule A and private roads that are plowed by the county crews but are not county roads. John commented that if he is receiving a county service, then he feels he should pay for it.

Darren submitted the preliminary Non-Levy budget spreadsheet for commission review. Darren commented that non-levied funds (mostly grant based funds), pay for many county employee wages.

Darren thanked Robin Benson for her expertise, saying that as early as last night we were still brainstorming together.

Commissioner Cole thanked Darren, Wendy, Dallas and Robin for all their hard work. Commissioner Cole said he sees the new processes and the county moving forward in a positive direction.

Robin said it was good that the finance department rolled budgets over and then began the process from that point; analyzing, decreasing and eliminating duplicated line items. Simplifying budgets is beneficial not only for the budget process but for improved department head budget management.

1:15 PM Appointment of County Attorney: Present were Commissioner Peck via conference call, Cyndi Miller, Colleen Stewart, Skye Teske, Marcia Boris, Kathi Hooper, Jeff Zwang, Bernie Cassidy, Deb Kambel, Richard Hader, Jake Mertes, John Blodgett, Alan Gerstenecker, and Nikki Meyer, Eureka via VisionNet.

Commissioner Cole, Commissioner Bennett and Commissioner Peck expressed their appreciation to Bernie Cassidy on his many years of service and wished him well in his retirement. Commissioner Cole stated that according to the process, Lincoln County received one application for the interim county attorney position from Marcia Boris.

Darren provided the MCA 7-4-2206 for Commissioner approval of an interim County Attorney and stated the process has also been approved by MACo.

Motion by Commissioner Bennett to appoint Marcia Boris as the interim Lincoln County Attorney. Second by Commissioner Peck, motion carried unanimously.

Bernie congratulated the Commissioners for their decision stating that he is comfortable leaving with Marcia as the county attorney and Jeff as her assistant with great supporting staff.

Marcia thanked the commissioners and stated that she is honored that the Commissioners and Lincoln County has put their trust in her. Marcia said the Lincoln County Attorney's Office will do its best to ensure that trust is not misplaced.

1:30 PM EMA Update/Vic White: Present were Alan Gerstenecker, John Blodgett and Nikki Meyer, Eureka via VisionNet.

Vic updated the commission on old and current grant projects as follows:

- The FY 15/16 Homeland Security Grant project for the repeaters is complete. This was a 100% funded grant at no cost to the county.
- FY 16/17 EMPG Grant project to place a repeater at the water treatment plant for the Libby Police Department is completed.
- FY 17/18 Homeland Security Grant was approved for a generator for the Lincoln High School in Eureka to establish an emergency shelter and a radio communications tower at the Libby Water Treatment Plant to help improve communications within the county. This also was a 100% funded grant at no cost to the county.

Vic commented that he has worked with Ernie Anderson and Robin Benson on the County Safety Program and feels it will be left in very good hands. Vic said MACo is very excited the county picked these two individuals to continue the county safety program.

Vic commented that Dallas is an excellent HR Manager and will do a great job for the county.

Vic said Brent Teske is rolling right into the position of EMA Planner and will be a very good addition to Lincoln County.

Vic said the sheriff and deputies have gained a lot of experience with emergencies, mainly fires and flooding and they are able to make good, quick decisions. Vic said his future concern for the county is the ability to continue to attain grants that assist emergency services; we need to ensure that radios are replaced, especially for law enforcement.

Vic read a letter of resignation expressing his enjoyment working for Lincoln County.

Darren commented that Vic has been greatly appreciated in his work at HR Director and EMA Planner.

Commissioner Cole and Commissioner Bennett thanked Vic for his service, expressing it's been positive and refreshing to work with him.

2:00 PM Callahan Creek Update: Present were Mike Fraser, Alan Gerstenecker and John Blodgett.

Mr. Fraser submitted a progress report for the Callahan Creek Restoration and Mitigation Project. Mr. Fraser gave a brief overview of communication with Mr. Welch and informed the commission that he and Commissioner Bennett will be meeting with Mr. Welch later today with a hopeful outcome agreement to remove the gravel and place as a road with

follow up channel work and construction of a barb in the fall as part of restoration. This will expose the wetlands and eliminate the need for other wetlands mitigation.

The progress report states Mr. Fraser toured the Chapel Side repair on the Vermillion River with USFWS, Forest Service and Nathan Green. Based on a casual observation, the flood events are not as great as on Callahan Creek. The site visit was valuable as team building with the agencies.

Two reaches of Callahan have been surveyed as reference reaches. In general appearance, they are both similar to the lower section, a wide valley, a wide overflow bed and narrow low flow channel. Ripples and pools are not significant, except where extremely large boulders create the opportunity.

HDR should have a draft plan by the end of next week for the internal review.

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Mike Cole, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Robin A. Benson, Clerk of the Board