

December 5, 2018

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on December 5, 2018, in the Lincoln County Annex, Eureka, Montana. Present were Commissioner Cole, Commissioner Bennett, and Clerk and Recorder Robin Benson. Also present via VisionNet was County Administrator Darren Coldwell. Commissioner Peck was absent.

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

10:15 AM Tobacco Valley Industrial District (TVID) Discussion and Update: Present were Nikki Meyer, Tammy Lawler, Art Walters, Jason Moothart, Ethel White, Peggy Brandon and Mike Brandon. Also present were Wendy Drake, Alan Gerstenecker and Ben Kibbey, Libby via VisionNet.

Tammy Lawler, Chairman of TVID explained discrepancies from the 2010 Resolution 837-A, creation of the TVID board. Tammy said the TVID worked with the county attorney's department to help clean up the old resolution. Tammy explained changes, commenting there has been more interest to join the TVID Board, so one change is to go from a 5 to 7-member board. The Eureka Commissioner will be an ex-officio member. Tammy is seeking commission approval for Resolution 2018-21, a resolution amending the provision creating and authorizing the TVID of citizens. **Motion** by Commissioner Bennett to approve Resolution 2018-21 as submitted. Second by Commissioner Cole, motion carried. Commissioner Bennett and Commissioner Cole commended the TVID Board and the county attorney's office, stating this goes along with reconciling and updating old records.

10:30 AM Administrative Issues: Present were Nikki Meyer, Peggy Brandon and Mike Brandon. Also present were Alan Gerstenecker and Ben Kibbey, Libby via VisionNet.

- Robin presented the minutes for November 28, 2018 regular meeting for Commissioner approval. **Motion** by Commissioner Bennett to approve November 28, 2018 minutes as presented. Second by Commissioner Cole, motion carried unanimously.
- The commission signed a support letter for the continued research and monitoring of selenium levels in both the Kooconusa Reservoir and the Kootenai River coming from Canada. The Commissioners support the funding request from the U.S. Department of State and the EPA for this project. The letters were sent to Senator Tester, Senator Daines and Governor Bullock.
- Darren submitted a letter to Judge Cuffe requesting that the Lincoln County courthouse and all other county offices and departments be officially closed on Christmas Eve, December 24, 2018 at 12:00 noon. **Motion** by Commissioner Bennett to approve letter as submitted. Second by Commissioner Cole, motion carried.

10:45 AM Public Comment Time: Present were Nikki Meyer, Peggy Brandon, and Mike Brandon. Also present were Alan Gerstenecker and Ben Kibbey, Libby via VisionNet.

Mr. Brandon asked if the Tobacco Valley Rodeo Association (TVRA) pays fees to the county for using the fairgrounds. Commissioner Cole discussed cash payments, in-kind services, and maintenance the TVRA has provided. Commissioner Cole said the fair board would need to be contacted regarding use and fees of using fairground buildings. Mr. Brandon asked about revenue generated by TVRA. Commissioner Cole commented that on good years, profits have been shared with the county and expressed that it's been a good relationship between the rodeo and the fairground.

Mr. Brandon expressed frustration regarding the cost of the fairground improvement project at a time when Eureka no longer has a local Justice of the Peace, nurse and the vacant position at the annex has not been filled. Commissioner Cole clarified that approximately \$100,000 for the project will come out of the PILT fund which is not a tax-based fund and currently has a balance of close to three million. Commissioner Cole said every department and all positions are discussed every year during the budget process. Commissioner Cole said he personally did vote against the closing of the Eureka Justice of the Peace Office, but said the new system is working, he is unaware of any complaints and it does save the county over \$100,000 annually; we need to take advantage of new technologies. Commissioner Bennett explained it is more economical to have one full-time nurse that covers the whole county then to have three part-time employees.

Commissioner Cole explained the goal is to create increased revenue for the fairgrounds, rodeo, and local business. Commissioner Cole expressed that we do need more bleachers that are permanent and without maintenance. We have an opportunity to create much more revenue. Commissioner Cole clarified the bleachers will be funded by the county with a loan that the rodeo association pays back. Commissioner Cole said the bleachers on the west side were funded the same way, and the rodeo association paid it back. The people who come to our area during big events spend money in our community, and this is an opportunity to grow and allows for bigger events bringing in more revenue.

11:00 AM Troy Assembly of God/International Messengers Tax Review: Present were Nikki Meyer. Also present were Alan Gerstenecker and Ben Kibby, Libby via VisionNet.

Commissioner Bennett said he did contact MACo and clarified that the tax-exempt status of churches and schools is clearly stated in the MCA's, and that the MCA's trump Department of Revenue rules. **Motion** by Commissioner Bennett to absolve Troy Assembly of God, International Messengers and Lakeside Fellowship from the taxes and accrued penalties; fees still apply. Second by Commissioner Cole, motion carried. Commissioner Bennett clarified that fees are for refuse, fire protection oil and sprinkling fees. Troy Assembly of God and International Messengers are in good standing with the Secretary of State and have until March to submit the proper forms to the Department of Revenue. Motion applies to Lakeside Fellowship subject to standing with the Secretary of State.

11:15 AM Fairgrounds and Rodeo Arena Discussion: Present were Nikki Meyer and Adam Libby. Also present were Wendy Drake, Ben Kibbey and Alan Gerstenecker, Libby via VisionNet.

Commissioner Cole introduced Adam Libby, promoter of The Bull Thing Event and opened the meeting for discussion.

Commissioner Bennett said he visited the project with Commissioner Cole and expressed that both Libby and Troy have facilities that upgrades were done and in fairness is supportive of a Eureka project. Commissioner Bennett said the fairgrounds in Eureka is county property, but we still need to operate within common sense, to meet needs and be mindful of the taxpayers. Most of the Troy and Libby upgrades were completed with grant dollars, the question now is how do we partner with the fairgrounds and rodeo, and create a formal agreement to iron out those details. There will need to be further discussion regarding other infrastructure improvements.

Adam, discussed his history and work promoting large events all over the United States. Adam said he has been attending the Tobacco Valley Rodeo since he was 8 years old. Adam stated that he promotes 7 Professional Bull Riders events in Montana, North and South Dakota, and The Bull Thing Event is the biggest one in the Northwest right here in Eureka that he produces. The crowds are steadily increasing each year and that's how you develop a summer destination. The Bull Thing is growing each year and is set apart from all other events.

Commissioner Cole commented that we need to get some things down on paper to develop a partnership, expressing its importance as people transition, we need that officially written down. Commissioner Cole said a draft is developed and he will be sharing that hopefully as early as next week.

Adam said that as a promoter, they are looking for that unique middle of nowhere location; those types of venues. The fairground improvements are not just about rodeos, but multiple types of events, including large scale concerts.

Commissioner Cole discussed the skybox and how it will bring in revenue and experience. This is the time of year when sales are down, but possibly by the first of the year, we tentatively have 5 of them sold. Commissioner Cole commented that this is his vision, he takes ownership, but it needs to be set up and ready to go. Commissioner Cole said his vision and goal is to have a world class outfit in Eureka on county property, putting us further on the map and to set up continuity to be continued for many years. The plan is for initially nine box seats. Commissioner Cole commented The Bull Thing Event is 25 years old and the Rodeo, 95 years.

Darren said he has sent an initial agreement to the county attorney's office for review and approval and will place the fairgrounds improvement project on next week's agenda for further discussion.

11:45 AM **Replacement of Deputy for Sheriff's Office:** Present were Nikki Meyer. Also present were Sheriff Bowe, Undersheriff Griffeth, and Alan Griffeth, Libby via VisionNet.

Sheriff Bowe informed the commission that a deputy resigned early last week, and he is seeking permission to re-hire that position. The position will be promoted internally before going out to the public. **Motion** by Commissioner Bennett to authorize the Sheriff's Department to move forward to hire the vacant deputy position. Second by Commissioner Cole, motion carried.

12:00 PM **Meeting Adjourned**

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Mike Cole, Chairman

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