

January 23, 2019

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on January 23, 2019, in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Peck, Commissioner Bennett, Commissioner Letcher, County Administrator Darren Coldwell, and Clerk and Recorder Robin Benson.

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

9:45 AM **HECLA Update, Bruce Vincent:** Present were Doug Stiles, Luke Russell, Ted Werner, Ben Kibbey, Rima Austin, Robert Mast, Alan Gerstenecker, and Tina Oliphant.

Doug said the ROD has been received from the forest service on the Rock Creek Mine which authorizes phase 1 work, mainly data collection. Began development of the operating plan and will submit it back to the forest service once the government shutdown is lifted.

Doug commented that Montanore is conducting additional data collection and working alongside the forest service. Doug expects to complete those efforts and move forward after the government shutdown. Doug commented the Forest Service and Fish Wildlife has been very responsive.

Doug said the Troy Mine has begun some of the planning and is completing the surface tailing storage facility. Work is being conducted to complete storm water management on a permanent basis. HECLA Mining did put a short video on their website showing work done at the Troy Mine.

Commissioner Peck discussed the importance of invitation and scheduling legislative visits to the mine sites; there is something about actually seeing the ground. Commissioner Peck was clear that there is commissioner support and when it is needed to reach out.

Commissioner Bennett talked about the benefits of being able to show community support and commended Bruce for putting together a community support group.

10:15 AM **Discussion Support of RTP Grant for Fishing Pond Amenities:** Present were Tina Oliphant, Alan Gerstenecker, Ben Kibbey and Rima Austin. Also present were Nikki Meyer, Eureka via VisionNet.

Tina said that Lincoln County Port Authority (LCPA) is requesting a support letter from the Commissioners to formalize the in-kind match for a grant application to Recreational Trails Program of the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. The grant request is for \$15,345 and in-kind match is \$13,077 for county work of labor and equipment on the parking lot to be established adjacent to the kid's fish pond. At the current time the Port Authority is managing temporary portable toilets for public waste disposal but wishes to establish a more permanent fixture that is ADA compliant.

Motion by Commissioner Bennett to approve in-kind support by the county, up to \$13,077 for county work of labor and equipment on the parking lot to be established adjacent to the kid's fishing pond. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried unanimously. The commission signed a support letter authorizing the Lincoln County Road Department to contribute manpower and equipment in the equivalent amount of \$13,077.

10:30 AM **Administrative Issues:** Present were Alan Gerstenecker, Ben Kibbey and Rima Austin. Also present were Nikki Meyer, Eureka via VisionNet.

- Robin presented the minutes for January 16, 2019 for Commissioner approval. **Motion** by Commissioner Bennett to approve minutes with corrections. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried unanimously.
- Darren received a letter from the state about HB473 and informed the commission that Lincoln County will receive approximately \$206,000 to be used in the road department budgets.
- The commissioners signed a letter to Governor Steve Bullock in appreciation for his November 2018 letter to the EPA to leave all remaining remediation monies left to the Libby project to fund future operations and maintenance costs and thanks the Governor for continued work and support for forest reform. The letter also states the commission has been critical in some correspondence and remain in strong opposition to the administration's stance on the HECLA mining "bad actor" issue.
- The commission discussed briefly the Good Neighbor Authority and how it can benefit counties. **Motion** by Commissioner Bennett to spend \$10,000 from the central economic development fund to support moving forward with the State Good Neighbor Authority. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried unanimously.

10:45 AM **Public Comment Time:** Present were Alan Gerstenecker, Ben Kibbey and Rima Austin. Also present were Nikki Meyer, Eureka via VisionNet. There were no public comments.

11:00 AM **Leavett Group/American Fidelity Insurance:** Present were American Fidelity Kyle Clemons, Leavitt Group Pete Shatwell, H.R. Director Dallas Bowe, Alan Gerstenecker, and Ben Kibbey. Also present were Nikki Meyer, Eureka via VisionNet.

Pete talked about the healthcare challenges, communication with EBMS and education for employees. Pete said he would like to have opportunities to visit with county employees about all benefits and complexities of health care insurance. Leavitt has been working with American Fidelity to help with employee health education. Pete said he would like to schedule a group presentation first, and then individual employee conversations as needed through American Fidelity.

Kyle talked about the lack of education and communication to employees across his region and offered to go out to Eureka and Troy to meet with those employees outside Libby.

Pete expressed understanding that cost to the county is a concern and stated the trust as a whole is running well right now.

Commissioner Bennett spoke about one on one communication with employees and how information is beneficial to the search for the best insurance options, but at the same time keeping employee confidentiality.

Dallas said it would be very beneficial for there to be an insurance person with expertise to refer employees to when they have health care questions that may be specific to them. Dallas said we need to streamline and update our process. Kyle said the goal is to streamline process and employee healthcare education.

2:00 PM Weed Department Update, Dan Williams: Present were Rima Austin, and Alan Gerstenecker. Also present were Nikki Meyer, Eureka via VisionNet.

Dan explained the weed management that was conducted last summer, saying the county is doing well with bio-control with thistles; not all bio-control applications kill the plant, but keeps it from going to seed. Knap Weed bug control does kill the plant by eating the root. Tansy Ragwort is another bio-control weed using bug methodology to kill the plants as well as spraying; the decrease in plants is amazing. All county roads were sprayed except Edna Creek which is first on the list this spring.

Dan said we have been fighting Rush Skeleton weed since 1994. Lincoln County has 190 sites; 4 that had plants in it this year; we are looking at eradication in Lincoln County. This work is all grant funded by the state.

The Lincoln County Weed Program is very good and has been built up over the years. The weed program is mainly funded by grant and revolving loan money.

The Commissioners commended Dan on his recent *Weed District of the Year Award* from the Montana Weed Control Association.

2:30 PM Budget Amendment: Discussion Replacing Tobacco Prevention Representative: Present were Jennifer McCully, Kathi Hooper, Rima Austin and Alan Gerstenecker. Also present were Mike Cole and Nikki Meyer, Eureka via VisionNet.

Jennifer discussed Resolution No. 2019-02. Resolution is for a budget amendment for revenue and expenditures that were not known at the time of the budget adoption. Public Health and Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) Grant and Early Childhood/Headwater Grant funds will be increased. **Motion** by Commissioner Bennett to approve Resolution 2019-02 as presented. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried unanimously.

Jennifer said the Tobacco Prevention Specialist has decided not to return after maternity leave and is requesting approval to hire a replacement. **Motion** by Commissioner Bennett to approve hiring a Tobacco Prevention Specialist, a grant funded position. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried unanimously.

2:45 PM County Fairgrounds Discussion: Present were Finance Director Wendy Drake and Alan Gerstenecker. Also present were Mike Cole and Nikki Meyer, Eureka via VisionNet.

Commissioner Peck apologized for not being present at last week's meeting on this issue. The rodeo ground project has been approved for \$150,000 worth of concrete. Mike will be submitting the bill for the first half of the concrete. The rodeo association originally said they would pay for the \$72,861 invoices in the November 9, 2016 minutes. Now it is being budgeted in the \$150,000. Commissioner Peck said this discussion is to change how the \$72,861 will be paid from what is stated in the November 9, 2016 minutes.

Motion by Commissioner Bennett to approve payment of the pre-cast bleachers delivered to the Tobacco Valley Rodeo Association in 2016 before the agreement for improvements to Lincoln County Fairgrounds was signed. The funds will be deducted from the total funds allotted for the project described in Exhibit A of the agreement. Second by Commissioner Letcher, motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Peck clarified it is within the budget of the agreement. It's all the same project and the same work is getting done. Commissioner Letcher commented the total project was not approved in 2016 but it is approved now.

3:00 PM Meeting Adjourned

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Mark Peck, Chairman

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