

June 23, 2021

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on June 23, 2021 in the Lincoln County Courthouse, Libby, Montana. Present were Commissioner Bennett, County Administrator Patrick McFadden and Clerk & Recorder Robin Benson. Commissioner Letcher present via VisionNet.

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

10:00 AM **Administrative Issues:** Present were Mitch Walters, Veronica Anderson, Thelma Walters, Evan Comella and Will Langhorne. Ray Stout and Rebecca Nelson present via phone.

- Robin submitted the minutes for June 16 regular meeting and June 17, 2021 preliminary budget meeting for approval. **Motion** by Commissioner Letcher to approve minutes as submitted. Second by Commissioner Bennett, motion carried unanimously.
- Commissioner Bennett explained that DPHHS distributes alcohol tax monies as described in MCA 53-24-206 for the purpose of treatment rehabilitation, and prevention of substance misuse and abuse in Lincoln County. Designee to receive funds is Gateway Community Services. **Motion** by Commissioner Letcher to sign and approve the DPHHS Service Provider County Designation Form. Second by Commissioner Bennett, motion carried.

10:15 AM **Resolution 2021-14 Elected Officials Base Salaries / Resolution 2021-15 Justice of the Peace Base Salary / Resolution 2021-16 COLA FY 21/22 / Resolution 2021-18 Departmental CIPS / 2021-19 Dissolution of Midvale Water/Sewer District:** Present were Stu Crismore, Mitch Walters, Veronica Anderson, Thelma Walters, Evan Comella and Will Langhorne.

Commissioner Bennett talked about the compensation committee and how that committee had met and recommended a 1.8% COLA for elected officials and therefore, all employees will receive the 1.8% COLA for FY 21/22. Patrick talked about the process of estimating inflation prior to receiving the actual nationwide inflation rate. Patrick said we know that 1.8% is low compared to what the actual inflation is going to be. Mitch commented that we need to recruit and maintain county employees the best we can to support our elected leaders. **Motion** by Commissioner Letcher to approve Resolution 2021-14, 2021-15, 2021-16, 2021-18 and 2021-19 as submitted. Second by Commissioner Bennett, motion carried.

All resolutions can be viewed in their entirety on the Lincoln County website at: www.lincolncountymt.us

10:45 AM **Public Comment Time:** Present were Mitch Walters, Veronica Anderson, Thelma Walters, Evan Comella, Derrick Perkins and Will Langhorne.

Mitch talked about the history of the John Birch Society and commented we are always looking at the issues of freedom; life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness and maintaining constitutional rights including the right to protect and defend ourselves. We push back against socialism and communism, and support efforts for transparency, supporting law enforcement and Christian values. The John Birch Society members would like to see reinforcement on some things at the local level, now while we can, such as firearms rights and trying to bolster that at the local level. Mitch said that maybe Lincoln County could become a model county that gets other counties fired up, especially now that Montana has the right state elected officials in place to help counties strengthen and enforce our freedoms at the local level.

11:00 AM **District Board Appointments:** Present were Chuck Gerheim, Menga Miller, Karen Casey, Mitch Walters, Veronica Anderson, Thelma Walters, Evan Comella and Will Langhorne.

Robin said board vacancies were advertised in The Western News, Tobacco Valley News, County Website, Libby Courthouse Public Bulletin Boards and the North Annex Public Bulletin Board. Robin presented applications and district board recommendations to the commissioners. **Motion** by Commissioner Letcher to appoint board applicants as presented and as recommended by their respective board. Commissioner Letcher commented that he will be attending the next Fortine/Trego Cemetery District Board Meeting and would like to postpone a decision for that board appointment until after he has met with them. Second by Commissioner Bennett, motion carried.

Board appointments were as follows:

- Boyd Hill Cemetery Advisory Board-Reappoint Alan McNeil and Moses B. Chupp Jr.
- Eureka Area District Dispatch Board-Reappoint Bo Pitman
- Fisher River Valley Fire Service Area-Appoint Stu Crismore and Stacy Dolan
- Airport Board-Appoint Mark Jacobs and reappoint Bill Caldwell, Scott Mattheis, and Deborah Lampton
- Lincoln County Library Board-Appoint Kerri Teisberg and reappoint Barb Hvizdak
- Troy Area Dispatch District Board-Reappoint Stephen Allen

11:15 AM **Libby Food Pantry - Ivers:** Present were Keith Ivers, Rhea Bernardy, Chloe Adamson, Mitch Walters, Veronica Anderson, Thelma Walters, Evan Comella and Will Langhorne.

Keith talked about the history of the Libby Food Pantry, currently serving about 350 people a month/150 families. The Libby School District has been housing the food pantry most of the years it has been operating. The Libby Food Pantry is currently located at the Asa Wood School, but now the school district is looking for a buyer resulting in the need for a new location. Keith said we are needing assistance for housing for the Libby Food Pantry to relocate and help with operating costs/utilities including lights and electricity needs. Keith said they are looking into grant opportunities. Keith commented about the possibility of an operating voted levy to support the Libby Food Pantry. There was a brief discussion about purchase options.

Commissioner Bennett talked about ARPA funds and explained the county is waiting for clarification on the use of those funds. Keith said he has talked with the state and the county commissioners would have to sign off as the agency for ARPA and/or grant funds.

Commissioner Bennett noted the timing is unfortunate that older buildings now have an increased value. Commissioner Bennett said the commissioners would consider looking at grant opportunities that are presented by the Libby Food Pantry.

11:30 AM **Planning Department:** Present were Jake Mertes, Brett McCully, John Damon, Mitch Walters, Veronica Anderson, Thelma Walters, Evan Comella and Will Langhorne.

Amell Subdivision Preliminary Approval: The proposed second minor subdivision of Lot 2 RMR Subdivision is located approximately 3.5 miles southeast of Troy off of Schoolhouse Lake Road. The developers intend to create 2 lots from the 3.0-acre parcel. Jake gave an overview of the Findings of Fact report and planning department recommendations with 6 conditions. Planning staff recommends granting preliminary approval to Amell Subdivision subject to 6 conditions and based on the findings in the staff report. **Motion** by Commissioner Letcher to approve preliminary plat to Amell Subdivision subject to 6 conditions and based on planning staff recommendations. Second by Commissioner Bennett, motion carried.

Skibba Subdivision Preliminary Approval: The proposed minor subdivision of Tract A of COS 2492 is located approximately 3 miles southeast of Troy off of Hwy 56. Access is off of Silvertip Way and Amber Road. The developers intend to create 2 lots from the 2.96-acre parcel. Jake gave an overview of the Findings of Fact report and planning department recommendations with 5 conditions. Planning staff recommends granting preliminary approval to Skibba Subdivision subject to 5 conditions and based on the findings in the staff report. **Motion** by Commissioner Letcher to approve preliminary plat to Skibba Subdivision subject to 5 conditions and based on planning staff recommendations. Second by Commissioner Bennett, motion carried.

11:45 AM **Logger Trail Sidewalk Improvement Partnership:** Mark Andreeson, Brett McCully, Jake Mertes, John Damon, Brent Teske, Jennifer Nelson, Mitch Walters, Veronica Anderson, Thelma Walters, Evan Comella, and Derrick Perkins.

Mark gave an overview of the sidewalk trail project and said he has met with the city council. Mark said the project would be a partnership with landowners, city, county, and potential grant funders. Mark commented that he visited with County Planner Jake Mertes and it was determined this project does tie into the growth policy. Mark talked about Education Way as part of the project to assist children to schools, addressing public safety; the areas to phase into this project, would be Education Way, completing the Balsam sidewalk, Louisiana Avenue, 5th Street Extension, and upgrading the 5th Street bridge. Mark commented the project is protective by keeping pedestrians out of traffic flow which is continually increasing. There was a brief discussion about sidewalk systems, maintenance, and snow removal.

The sidewalk trail system has a lot of potential not only for local people, children, senior citizen recreation, but also tourism making Libby more of a walkable town.

Brent said the city, county, and private landowners need to meet; there is a lot of grant money out there right now. The city sidewalk committee will meet for further discussion.

Commissioner Bennett suggested prioritizing for phasing and to work through any private easement issues. It is a matter of coordination and then it becomes about the money. Commissioner Bennett agreed that it is a good project.

12:00 PM **Adjourned**

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Jerry Bennett, Chairman

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