

JEROME COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Thursday, April 9, 2020

Special Meeting

PRESENT: Charles Howell, Chairman
Ben Crouch, Vice Chairman
John Crozier, Commissioner
Jane White, Deputy Clerk

Meeting convened at 1:45 P.M.

UPDATES ON THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

The Board discussed protocol for obtaining information about the coronavirus epidemic and determined the Health District would be the point person.

Commissioner Howell said he had spoken with Assessor Rick Haberman, who had said the public was not being served with the closure of the Courthouse and that he would like to help customers more adequately.

The Commissioners agreed with opening the assessor's office on a limited basis.

❖ A Motion was made by Commissioner Howell to authorize Assessor Rick Haberman to open his offices to the public, based upon strict health/safety guidelines, with one public person at a time, and appropriate spacing for waiting customers. It was seconded and carried with unanimous ayes.

Commissioner Howell reported he had spoken with the local Health District, the Twin Falls County Commissioners, the County emergency management director, and a representative from Blaine County regarding updates on the coronavirus.

TELEPHONE CALL FROM GOVERNOR BRAD LITTLE

Governor Brad Little said Idahoans' compliance with the stay-home order had made a difference in the spread of the coronavirus.

The Governor asked for unemployment updates from Jani Revier, director of the Idaho Department of Labor. She said there has been a tremendous increase in the number of people filing for Unemployment Insurance, which is a huge strain on the Department's resources because it was at low staffing levels. Revier spoke of extensions and extra payments but said receiving checks would continue into May. She said the federal government would fund 50 percent of the cost of unemployment for county employees.

Governor Little said the federal Cares Act was bringing cash to Idaho.

Dave Jeppesen, director of the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, said applications for Food Stamps had increased 42 percent from the previous year and followed with more statistics

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from the coronavirus pandemic. He stated the CDC [Center for Disease Control] was recommending face coverings.

Brad Richy, director of the Idaho Office of Emergency Management, told of supplies ordered by his office for use during the pandemic.

Governor Little said Idaho was at the latter end of the epidemic compared to some other areas. He said his goal is to flatten the curve of infected persons but to guard against a second wave of the virus. He added that the State would freeze all property values at their 2019 assessment.

Jeppesen answered a question about immunity and returning to work. He said antibody testing would tell if a person had suffered from the virus but would not indicate whether he or she was still contagious. He urged health-compromised or high-risk individuals to take extra precautions.

In answer to when the Governor would reopen the economy, he said to look for guidance. He added that county fairs and rodeos should take precautions and that he was intent on reopening schools in the fall.

Governor Little stated it would be important when reviewing the pandemic to determine if Idaho had done the right thing.

Another call from the Governor was planned for the following week.

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 P.M.

Respectively submitted:

Charles M. Howell, Chairman

Jane White, Deputy Clerk

A. Ben Crouch, Vice Chairman

John Crozier, Commissioner