

JEROME COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Monday, June 15, 2020

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

Meeting convened at 9:02 A.M.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Crozier reported from a Fair Board meeting that directors were planning to hold the County Fair in 2020 if they could meet guidelines regarding the spread of the coronavirus. He said board members had held a lively discussion about the recently held match horse races.

Commissioner Crozier stated he had also visited with a resident about a highway condition and had referred him to the Jerome Highway District. He had spoken further with a resident about rock chucks near the Jerome Transfer Station, who said he did not want to shoot them but wanted to stop them from disrupting his farm ground. Commissioner Howell suggested referring the resident to the Solid Waste District. Commissioner Crozier had also spoken with Jeremy Varley, noxious weed program manager for the State of Idaho.

Commissioner Crozier and Commissioner Crouch had attended a meeting of the Republican Central Committee where new officers were installed.

All three Commissioners had listened to a report from Governor Brad Little, who informed that the number of coronavirus cases was rising but that most patients did not require hospitalization. They had also attended Live History Day held at the I-Farm, which they said was well attended.

Commissioner Crouch reported that he and Commissioner Howell had attended a Press Conference from Governor Brad Little held in Twin Falls regarding the spread of the coronavirus. They were also present at a Fly-In at the Jerome Airport hosted by Precision Aviation.

Commissioner Crouch said he had attended a Jerome 20/20 meeting, where directors reviewed projects and discussed the need for a new truck route. They had also heard a presentation from a wind power company desiring to locate in Jerome County.

Commissioner Crouch had also participated in board meetings of the Jerome Chamber of Commerce and Joe Mama's Car Show. He had attended a St. Luke's conference meeting and had met with the airports manager and some airports advisory board members as well as Doug Fisher with Limelight Equipment about tractors for the Jerome Airport.

Commissioner Howell reported from a SIRCOMM (emergency communications) meeting that an audit report for the agency was good and that staffing was complete except for one position.

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He had also attended a meeting of the Snake River Canyons Park Managing Board and said the chairman of the Park Board would report from it that day.

Commissioner Howell stated he had met with local highway district, Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), Congressional, and State representatives to discuss the third bridge project across the Snake River Canyon. He said the ITD would complete another feasibility study and that Twin Falls County would be contacting Jerome County about creating a joint powers board between the two counties.

SNAKE RIVER CANYONS PARK TRASH WAIVER

Present were Mike Tylka and Don Zuck, representing the Snake River Canyons Park Managing Board.

Mike Tylka told the Board that Park Board member Bill Bridges had been taking about a sack of garbage a week to the Jerome Transfer Station and asked if the Board could waive his fees at the Station.

❖ A Motion was made by Commissioner Crozier to waive the fees for trash from the Snake River Canyons Park collected by Bill Bridges or any other Park board member. It was seconded and carried with unanimous ayes.

BUSINESS AND/OR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

The Board was in receipt of an e-mail from the director of the senior center in Eden in response to the Commissioners' question of whether the County could help with extra expenses resulting from the coronavirus pandemic.

❖ A Motion was made by Commissioner Crozier to contribute \$1300 to the Silver and Gold Senior Center in Eden for two months of utilities due to extraordinary circumstances brought on by the coronavirus. It was seconded and carried with unanimous ayes.

The Board signed Retail Alcoholic Beverage Licenses to: Lorena Plascenia dba Geminis Beauty Salon, Jerome; Northwest Land and Cattle Company, Inc., dba Kwik Service Sinclair, Jerome; and Landmark of Hazelton dba Landmark of Hazelton, Hazelton.

Commissioner Howell signed a Catering Permit for El Sombrero, Jerome, to be used at 392 B East 300 South, Jerome.

The Board signed a leave request for Deserae Jones.

The Board signed a Direct Deposit Detail dated June 9, 2020, with a grand total of \$135,033.46 and a Payroll Claims Approval by Fund with a grand total of \$317,776.25, both dated June 9, 2020, for the May 24, 2020, through June 6, 2020, payroll period.

OLD BUSINESS

The Board was in receipt of an Amended and Restated Joint Powers Agreement among Jerome, Gooding, Lincoln, and Twin Falls Counties.

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❖ A Motion was made by Commissioner Crozier to sign a Joint Powers Agreement for SIRCOMM allowing first responders information about COVID-19 infected callers. It was seconded and carried with unanimous ayes.

MIKE TYLKA—SNAKE RIVER CANYONS PARK UPDATE AND FY 2020-21 BUDGET REQUEST

Present representing the Snake River Canyons Park Managing Board were Mike Tylka and Don Zuck.

Update: As chairman of the Park Board, Mike Tylka thanked the Commissioners for participating in the dedication of the Roger Morley Arbor on June 2. He reported that the Board members were anticipating adding another arbor and sign site in the Park to their five-year plan. He told the Commissioners that eight of twelve items on the plan were in progress and expected to be completed with the next two months.

Tylka showed a picture of a Park sign covered with graffiti and vandalism and asked whether the County had a vandalism ordinance. The Board determined to consult its legal counsel later that day.

Tylka stated the annual Park clean-up accomplished by volunteers had been postponed from May to September 12. He said the construction of another parking lot was contingent on approval from the Bureau of Land Management and added that the benches for Yingst Grade were completed and well constructed.

Tylka said five of the nine park board members had toured Devil's Corral contingent to the Park at the invitation of its owner, George Panagiotou.

Budget Request: Tylka asked that the County again budget for at least \$25,000 in the Park budget line for FY 2020-21.

PAT BRUNING—EDEN SENIOR CENTER FY 2020-21 BUDGET REQUEST

Pat Bruning was not present due to a miscommunication with the deputy clerk. She was later scheduled to meet with the Board on June 22 to review her written report and budget request for the Silver and Gold Senior Center in Eden.

LARRY HALL—JEROME 20/20 BUDGET REQUEST

Clerk/Auditor/Recorder Michelle Emerson was present. Also present was Jerome 20/20 Executive Director Larry Hall.

Commissioner Howell was excused.

Larry Hall announced that the Jerome 20/20 economic development group would be hosting an event on July 2 from 11:30-1:30 to honor first responders.

Hall gave the Board a letter and a list of 17 projects with descriptions that Jerome 20/20 was currently pursuing. He said the County's annual contribution of \$40,000 was very much needed to combine with equal contributions from the City of Jerome and private contributors. He referred to the agency's Coronavirus Business Retention Grant Program that had lifted the spirits of local business owners.

Commissioner Howell was present.

Hall continued to explain the progress of some of the 20/20 projects.

Michelle Emerson questioned the amount of County matching funds needed for grant projects; Hall said the County matches for a parking lot in the Snake River Canyons Park and the broken bridge project would be \$15,000-\$20,000 each.

Commissioner Crouch asked about funding needed for an overlook of Shoshone Falls, and Hall indicated that about \$500,000 would be necessary.

SOUTH CENTRAL PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT UPDATE REGARDING CORONAVIRUS

Present by speakerphone were Emergency Management Director Tanya Stitt and Clerk/Auditor/Recorder Michelle Emerson; joining the call were Melody Bowyer, Linda Montgomery, and Josh Jensen, South Central Public Health District; Mike Williams, City of Jerome administrator; and Larry Hall, Jerome 20/20 executive director.

Melody Bowyer reported she and two other Health District representatives as well as Tanya Stitt had met with Margie Gonzalez with Idaho Hispanic Affairs about controlling the spread of the coronavirus.

Linda Montgomery stated she had reached out to the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation, which was making Public Service Announcements to reach agricultural and Hispanic populations with information about the virus.

Bowyer stated long-term care homes in Jerome County are controlling the spread of the virus in their facilities and were continuing to do testing.

Josh Jensen reported an increasing number of virus cases in Cassia and Minidoka Counties and a slight decrease in Jerome County cases. He said he was working with the staff of a Jerome food processing plant that had reported 10 positive cases of the virus by doing contact tracing and personal protective equipment training.

Jensen said he had addressed Bureau of Land Management representatives about holding their fire camps and that the District's public information officer had sent an e-mail regarding the virus to the Idaho Dairymen's Association.

Stitt asked questions about the County's long-term care facilities.

Jensen concluded the District's update by warning residents to wear facemasks if they are not six feet from other persons.

LINDA HELMS—TIME CAPSULE

Jerome Museum Curator Linda Helms was present.

Linda Helms brought items to place in a time capsule, and the Commissioners added other memorabilia to the box to be opened in 50 years.

AMANDA AND ERIC BOLICH—BUDGET REQUESTS

Northside Military Museum: Eric Bolich, chairman, and Amanda Bolich, curator, of the Northside Military Museum, were present.

The Boliches presented and read a letter to the Board updating the Commissioners on the operations of the Northside Military Museum and its positive impact on the people of Jerome County. The letter stated that the non-profit museum does not charge admission and relies on volunteers and contributions for its continued operation and growth.

The Boliches asked that the County again provide \$5,000 from its FY 2020-21 budget.

Veterans of Foreign Wars: Eric and Amanda Bolich represented the Veterans of Foreign Wars as the commander and auxiliary president, respectively.

The Boliches presented and read a letter to the Commissioners telling of the services of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) to veterans as well as to school students, teachers, and the community.

Amanda Bolich said the Elks Lodge donates a meeting room for the VFW so that all contributions are used toward the organization's projects. She stated that the current pandemic had curtailed some community service projects as well as fundraising efforts and requested that the County increase its FY 2020-21 contribution from \$2,250 to \$3,000.

Meeting recessed at 11:59 A.M.

Meeting reconvened at 1:30 P.M.

TRACEE MCKIM—SIGN SPARKLIGHT INTERNET RENEWAL

Chief Deputy Clerk Tracee McKim was present.

Tracee McKim presented a contract with Sparklight for internet service at the Courthouse, as previously discussed with the Board on May 11.

❖ A Motion was made by Commissioner Crozier to renew the contract with Sparklight as the County internet provider for one year. It was seconded and carried with unanimous ayes.

❖ A Motion was made by Commissioner Howell to add “Airport Tractor Discussion” to the agenda due to new information. It was seconded and carried with unanimous ayes.

AIRPORT TRACTOR DISCUSSION

Commissioner Crozier reported he had received a mechanic’s recommendation to purchase a tractor that Jerome Airport personnel had been testing.

❖ A Motion was made by Commissioner Howell to authorize the purchase a used 1984 International tractor for \$15,000 to be used at the Jerome Airport. It was seconded and carried with unanimous ayes.

GUY STUBBS—MEDICAL INSURANCE QUOTE

Present were Clerk/Auditor/Recorder Michelle Emerson and Chief Deputy Clerk Tracee McKim. Also present was Guy Stubbs, County medical insurance agent.

Guy Stubbs presented paperwork summaries including premiums and paid claims as well as County medical and dental enrollments from October 1, 2019, through April 30, 2020. He had also included letters from both Regence BlueShield and Select Health stating they were unable to be competitive with the Blue Cross renewal quote.

Stubbs said Pacific Source had submitted a quote, but he warned that a transition from Blue Cross would be tedious and difficult, with a minimal savings that Pacific Source did not guarantee for the next year. He said Delta Dental had offered slightly less premiums than Blue Cross.

Stubbs told the Board the County had experienced a loss ratio of 35 percent, and thus Blue Cross was projecting a 24 percent increase in premiums.

The Board considered the quotes and determined not to change medical insurance from Blue Cross.

❖ A Motion was made by Commissioner Crouch to proceed with the same medical insurance coverage that we have for the 2020-21 year. It was seconded and carried with unanimous ayes.

EXECUTIVE SESSION—INDIGENT APPEAL HEARING, CASE NO. 1819-132 (recorded)

Present were Social Services Director Kim Drury, Assistant Director Lorena Aguilar, and Attorney Mike Seib. Present by speakerphone was Mark Peterson, attorney for St. Luke’s.

❖ 2:32 P.M. - A Motion was made by Commissioner Howell to go into executive session per Idaho Code 74-206(1)(d), for records exempt from disclosure. It was seconded and carried with a unanimous roll call vote.

3:35 P.M. - Return to open session.

The Board determined to uphold its denial of Indigent Case No. 1819-132, contingent upon signing a Memorandum Decision written by its legal counsel.

MICHELLE EMERSON—ELECTION OVERTIME

Clerk/Auditor/Recorder Michelle Emerson was present.

Michelle Emerson sought approval to pay employees who had worked overtime in the elections department because of the COVID-19 pandemic rather than grant them compensatory time when working overtime less than 80 hours as stated in the Employee & Supervisor Manual. She said funds were available in the clerk’s budget because it was not necessary to hire poll workers for the recent mail-in-only election. She added that monetary payments could be used as grant match money.

❖ A Motion was made by Commissioner Howell to allow overtime payments associated with the elections department due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was seconded and carried with unanimous ayes.

MIKE SEIB—LEGAL COUNSEL

Attorney Mike Seib was present.

Filling Positions: The Board asked Mike Seib if it is required to fill a vacant position. He said the County does not have to rehire for a position and can restructure its hours if desired.

Vandalism Ordinance: Seib advised that vandalism is a State ordinance.

READ AND APPROVE MINUTES

❖ A Motion was made by Commissioner Howell to approve the minutes of June 1 as read. It was seconded and carried with unanimous ayes.

INDIGENT MATTERS

❖ A Motion was made by Commissioner Crouch to approve indigent matters as presented by staff. It was seconded and carried with unanimous ayes. Approved were Case Nos. 1819-071 and 1819-061. Denied was Case No. 1920-059.

Meeting adjourned at 4:13 P.M.

Respectively submitted:

Charles M. Howell, Chairman

Jane White, Deputy Clerk

A. Ben Crouch, Vice Chairman

John Crozier, Commissioner