

**OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF BLAINE COUNTY
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE JULY 2015 SESSION**

Fifth Day

Wednesday, July 15, 2015

Pursuant to Statutory Provisions, the Board of Blaine County Commissioners (BCC) met this day at 9:00 a.m. Present were Chairman Jacob Greenberg, Vice Chair Angenie McCleary and Commissioner Lawrence Schoen; County Administrator Derek Voss; County Clerk JoLynn Drage; Chief Deputy Clerk Leslie Londos; Human Resources Generalist Henry Brown; County Sheriff Gene Ramsey; County Emergency Communications Director Robin Stellers; County Assessor Valdi Pace and Chief Deputy Assessor Martha Heuston; County Treasurer John David Davidson; County Land Use Administrator Tom Bergin and Planning Assistant Michele Johnson; County Information Technology Manager Clay Landon; County Indigent Services Manager Brooke Baird; County Chief Probation Officer Teresa Espedal; County Operations Administrative Assistant Andrea Walton; County Road and Bridge Manager Tom Duffy; County Buildings and Grounds Manager Patrick Boyle; Judicial Court Senior Deputy Clerk Susan Barton; Recording Secretary Sunny Grant; and *Idaho Mountain Express* reporter Tony Evans.

Chairman Greenberg called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

BLAINE COUNTY TENTATIVE FISCAL YEAR 2016 BUDGET - Public Meeting

Blaine County Budget Officer Update – JoLynn Drage

FY2016 Tax Supported Funds currently show a \$622,000 deficit between revenues and expenses. Adjustments to this report will revise the deficit to about \$345,000.

- One-time \$470,000 extra payroll expense.
- One-time cash deposit from the nursing home of \$350,000.
- The Sheriff has committed to reduce his budget by \$347,000 next year.
- If benefits are kept the same, there will be approximately \$35,000 reduction due to the difference in the 10% proposed premium increase and 8% actual premium increase.

Current budget assumptions are based on zero financial contribution to outside agencies, except for Mountain Rides, Blaine County Housing Authority and the Animal Shelter. The Fair Board and Blaine County Museum are not considered outside agencies.

Year-end available reserve is now estimated at \$2.5 million.

County Administrator Update – Derek Voss

Voss commended all departments and community service agencies for their outcome-based presentations, which he said were outstandingly valuable to understanding the purpose and value of county government.

Voss commended all departments and community service agencies for their outcome-based presentations, which he said were very helpful in understanding the purpose and value of county government.

- McCleary felt merit increases, even small ones, enhanced overall performance and would like to see merit increases incorporated every year.
- Schoen said it was important that County wages and benefits keep pace with the market.
- Greenberg liked that department heads could use merit pool funds as they feel appropriate for their department.

If the BCC determines the merit pool to be 1%, then 1% of the total salaries for each department, minus the elected official's salary, is available for the department head to allocate to employees as deemed appropriate, with final BCC approval.

Voss said the County's nine elected officials are paid at the Intro rate of their position, which can cause "compression", where a deputy can make as much as the elected official. Voss felt all elected officials were career-level positions and, therefore, elected officials should be included in the merit increase pool.

Blaine County Employee Benefits, Discussion and Decision

- County staff feel health insurance benefits are extremely important, and coverage should remain the same, with no added cost to the employee. As the economy improves, the County's benefit package helps keep good employees. Road and Bridge staff said they would rather see health benefit coverage remain the same than get a salary increase
- Greenberg agreed that health insurance was a valuable benefit. He would prefer any change, if necessary, be user-based, with a higher deductible and prescription coverage.
- Blaine County Land Use Administrator Tom Bergin said the County lost its long-time building official to a better compensation package.
- Ramsey said all 22 applicants for a recent County position mentioned the County's benefits package.
- Ramsey suggested the County consider a commercial Life Flight program for its employees as an added benefit.

Blaine County Budget Deliberations

Also present: Sun Valley Economic Development Membership Director Doug Brown.

- Schoen would like to see jail programs reinstated and funding of some of the outside agencies reinstated, although the year-end reserve would be lower and the BCC would be in the same position next year.
- McCleary said the County’s cash position wasn’t dire at this time, and she agrees with reinstating jail programs and funding outside agencies; but she does want the County to get on a sustainable path.
- Greenberg wanted to support Region IV Development and Sun Valley Economic Development, which encourage businesses to move to and invest in Blaine County.
- Greenberg clarified that the increased reserve was the result of increased revenue this year. There is still a \$327,000 budget deficit; and he wanted to be sure the County has enough reserve going forward.

The BCC discussed outside agencies; market and merit salary increases; and then went through the Budget Officer’s FY2016 Tentative Budget Assumptions and Questions. Commissioner comments and decisions on resolved issues:

- -\$20,000 - Land Use professional services line item was not exhausted in FY2015 and can be reduced in FY2016.
- McCleary has notified NAMI that the Blaine Manor building will be closed for the winter.
- Blaine County will continue with the four/10 service model, except for the Recorder’s office.
- Benefits amounts can change if workers’ family status changes.
- Vacated full-time positions will not automatically be filled. The BCC will review possible replacements with department heads. Replacing the retired maintenance technician won’t happen immediately, but is a priority.
- +\$10,000 - Increase for designated examiner.
- Increase the public defenders retainer by 5%. The County needs a couple new public defenders.
- The Administrator and Human Resources Generalist will work on a solution to compression.
- +\$40,000 - Reinstate jail programs, with the Contingency fund covering any shortfall. Probation is going to look for grant funds for these programs.
- The Old Courthouse and Annex can be cleaned on alternate nights by the current Courthouse janitorial contractor.
- General consensus of County department heads and the BCC is to leave health insurance as is.
- Land Use needs a new copier.
- Schoen acknowledged that the Clerk/Recorder is planning to provide extended hours with a decreased budget and one less employee. The BCC can reopen the budget if necessary.
- +\$76,000 for sheriff’s vehicles to get replacement schedule back on track.
- +\$20,000 for tasers for Sheriff’s department.
- The BCC decided to allocate a 2.5% increase in employee compensation with a 1½% market increase and 1% merit pool rewards strategy.

The BCC discussed their individual opinions on outside agencies:

- McCleary felt the County was not in a dire financial situation and could afford to conservatively support outside agencies, with some modest adjustment. She felt outside agencies leveraged public dollars to get grants and offered community services that saved the County money. She would support them at the approved FY2015 rate.
- Schoen agreed, but would like to see \$10,000 more for the Senior Connection. He would decrease Sun Valley Economic Development and increase St. Luke’s Mental Health Clinic; and decrease Mountain Rides’ increased request. Schoen explained his support of individual outside agencies.
- Greenberg believes the BCHA’s request is what they need to function. He would support Mountain Rides, St. Luke’s Mental Health Clinic, the Senior Connection, and Sun Valley Economic Development. He questioned whether other contributions were necessary for the organizations other than to show support.
- Greenberg said the best way to take care of indigents and reduce indigent care in the budget is to get the Idaho Legislature to expand Medicaid and get federal funding.

ADJOURN

At the hour of 3:10 p.m., the BCC finding no more business before them adjourned.

Attest: _____ Approved _____
 JoLynn Drage Jacob Greenberg
 County Clerk Chairman