

**OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF BLAINE COUNTY
REGULAR MEETING OF THE JANUARY 2021 SESSION**

Fourth Day

Tuesday, January 19, 2021

Pursuant to Statutory Provisions, the Board of Blaine County Commissioners (BCC) met this day at 9:00 a.m. Present were Chairman Dick Fosbury, Vice-Chair Angenie McCleary, and Commissioner Jacob Greenberg; County Administrator Derek Voss; County Administrative Services Manager Mandy Pomeroy; Blaine County Grants and Procurement Specialist Stephen McDougall Graham; Outreach and Education Specialist Stephanie Carlson; Recording Secretary Sunny Grant; and *Idaho Mountain Express* reporter Gretel Kauffman.

Due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, most participants in this meeting were by webconference or teleconference.

Commissioner Fosbury called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Also present: Hulen Meadows residents Kathy Percival; Wendy Jaquet and Sarah Michael.

- Hulen Meadows resident Kathy Percival said the proposed Sun Peak Preserve project's primary goal is to improve Big Wood River health. Biota Engineering says this could be achieved by widening the river channel under the Hulen Meadows Bridge. If the project is approved, traffic over the bridge will be increased. Percival said the bridge is not addressed in the Sun Peak Project plan, and suggested the County consider a new bridge with a wider span, and a bicycle-pedestrian lane.
- Hulen Meadows resident Wendy Jaquet said Hulen Meadows is almost built out, and there seems to be more traffic than there used to be. She asked if the State's infrastructure money might be available for the bridge, and suggested the County do a traffic count.
- Hulen Meadows resident Sarah Michael said it would be good to know if the County has any plans for the Hulen Meadows bridge.
 - *Chairman Fosbury said the Hulen Meadows bridge was built to meet 1970s standards. The bridge is on the north end of the Wood River Trail system, and a wider bridge to allow for a pedestrian/ bicyclist lane would be a smart move. The BCC will order a traffic count, and watch progress of the Sun Peak park.*
 - *Greenberg is Idaho Association of Counties Transportation Committee Vice Chair and will get an update of the Governor's office plans to distribute funds for transportation and infrastructure.*
 - *McCleary said Land Use would pay close attention to river health when a Stream Alteration Permit application is submitted. Blaine County Road and Bridge Manager Steve Thompson said the existing bridge is rated relatively well at this time. The County will be updating its Transportation Plan in upcoming months.*
- Kiki Tidwell sent the BCC a copy of the Final Order with the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) 2017 Decision on Idaho Power transmission line. The Order says, "This Order does not constitute approval of any cost of the line for ratemaking purposes. The Company will be required to apply to the Commission for inclusion of the costs of the line in its rates at a later date." She said the Order does not mandate that the line be built, and doesn't say that local land use concerns are secondary. Tidwell suggested the County apply to the PUC before it gives up its Conditional Use Permit that requires undergrounding and levies a financial burden on so many residents.
 - *Greenberg said the BCC is in the business of gathering information and making best decisions under the circumstances. PUC staff has told the BCC what would and would not likely be approved by the PUC. The BCC is considering a proposed new route to underground distribution lines and other lines from Hospital Way north to Elkhorn Road for \$9.1 million, instead of undergrounding the transmission line from the Hailey Substation to Hospital Way for \$38 million.*
County Attorney Graves and the County's consulting attorney Ron Williams said the PUC has primacy over the County, and this seems to be the best path forward, confirmed by the County's recent survey of public opinion on Idaho Power's redundant lines.
Greenberg said he appreciated Tidwell's efforts to supply the BCC with information that may be relevant to their decision-making, but he thinks the BCC is going to have to make a decision soon.

COUNTY DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Treasurer's Report - John David Davidson

- The Treasurer, Assessor, Clerk and IT are researching a new GovPros payment process.
- Idaho House Bill 562, passed last year, eliminated any deadline for homeowners to apply for the Homeowners Exemption for that year. Late exemption filing could cause taxing districts, which budget based on property taxes, to end up with a budget shortfall; and there are other concerns and complications. State treasurers want the property owner to benefit from the exemption without causing complications for the County and taxing districts. There will probably be more tax cancellations to clear up late Homeowners Exemptions.

Assessor's Report – Jim Williams

- There were 470 sales in the fourth quarter.
- Department of Motor Vehicles was closed last week for training. The new ITD process seems straight-forward and is not causing any problems. There are now five people in DMV who can handle transactions.
- Idaho Transportation Department has been getting resident complaints about processing delays. ITD suggests they (ITD) collect all counties' mail and internet transactions in a centralized location. Williams said Blaine County is handling all transactions efficiently on a daily basis. County Assessors met with the Governor and agreed that ITD should have an opt-in system available if a county needs help.

Administrative Services – Mandy Pomeroy

Job Description Review for Sustainability Program Manager

Also present: Outreach and Education Specialist Stephanie Carlson.

Pomeroy has drafted a Sustainability Program Manager job description for BCC review.

The City of Ketchum and Blaine County will each contribute \$60,000 toward the position; plus Hailey will contribute personnel resources. An Advisory Committee would include Idaho National Laboratory, Power Engineers, Idaho Power, etc.

County Administrator Derek Voss said "sustainability" is defined as long-term planning, and anticipating how to improve community and its processes to be stable in the future. Greenberg said they should look for someone with experience and education, who's ready to go after grants and get things done. He wanted to be sure the salary was adequate.

The Sustainability Manager will report to the County Administrator, with Outreach and Education and Grants support from Administrative Services.

County Administrator - Derek Voss

- Emergency Communications' new 911 call-taking system goes live this week.

CONTRACTS, GRANTS AND AGREEMENTS

• FY21 Waterways Improvement Fund - West Magic Boat Docks

Also present: Blaine County Waterways Director Lamar Waters.

Waters requested permission to apply to the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation Waterways Improvement program for a new boat dock at West Magic, for \$38,395, including 20% match of \$7,679. There are sufficient funds in the vessel account.

Greenberg moved, seconded by McCleary, to approve the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation Waterways Improvement Fund grant application by Blaine County in the amount of \$30,716 for the West Magic Boat Dock #3, with a County match of \$7,679. Motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT CALENDAR

- **Resolutions 2021-01 Transfer of Funds to Ketchum Police Department Trust Account** Record #
- **Resolution 2021-02 Sheriff Budget Adjustment** Record #
- **Resolution 2021-03 Weeds Budget Adjustment** Record #
- **Resolution 2021-04 E-911 Budget Adjustment** Record #

Greenberg moved, seconded by McCleary, to approve the Commissioners Consent Calendar for January 19, 2021. Motion passed unanimously.

BOARD of COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

- **South Central Behavioral Health Board** – McCleary said the Board is looking for community grants for the region to address mental health and substance abuse challenges.
- **Picabo resident concerned about streets and lane striping** – Fosbury forwarded the letter to County Engineer Jeff Loomis, Road and Bridge Manager Steve Thompson, and to Commissioner McCleary to share with Blaine County Transportation Committee and Idaho Transportation Department. Road and Bridge is installing some speed signs within the town of Picabo.

COVID-19 Updates

- **Adaptive Planning Committee** – The committee is discussing logistics for mass vaccinations once the vaccinations are received.
- **Emergency Medical Services Health Emergency Operations Center** – Currently, Blaine County cases are higher than surrounding counties, perhaps because tourists and people from surrounding counties are coming into Blaine County.
- **Blaine County COVID-19 Risk Level Plan** – Blaine County is in the critical level, with a significant increase in positive tests, probably due to New Year's and tourist influx.
- **St. Luke's Wood River had three COVID patients** last week, but is managing the situation.
- **Blaine County team members in the Judicial Building have been exposed.** Fifth District Court is a state agency, and has a policy in place to protect staff and patrons. Court clerks are County employees, and interact with County employees in other departments.

Greenberg moved, to convene as the Blaine County Ambulance District. Motion passed unanimously.

BLAINE COUNTY AMBULANCE DISTRICT

- **Consider approval of Ambulance District personnel administering vaccines**

Also present: Blaine County Chief Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Tim Graves.

Greenberg, County Attorney Graves, County Administrator Voss and Blaine County Medical Director Dr. Terry O'Connor reviewed a request to allow Ambulance District contract personnel to administer vaccines among their department, in conjunction with St. Luke's. The BCC supported Ambulance District personnel who are qualified to administer vaccines to administer the COVID vaccine, under authority of Dr. O'Connor, provided St. Luke's handles administration.

Greenberg moved, seconded by McCleary, to support the Ambulance District utilization of personnel to administer COVID-19 vaccines. Motion passed unanimously.

Greenberg moved, seconded by McCleary, to reconvene as the Blaine County Board of Commissioners. Motion passed unanimously.

BLAINE COUNTY CHARITABLE FUND UPDATE

Also present: Mary Fauth.

The Charitable Fund has an ongoing need for emergency funds through the end of 2020 and beginning this year for transportation, insurance, medical bills, childcare, etc. Fifty-two percent of their clients are in the extremely low and low income level; 80% of the applicants Hispanic. They learn about the Charitable Fund through other agencies in the valley. Fauth said the fund looks sufficient for the new three months. Greenberg asked Fauth to let the BCC know if there are people who need an ongoing monthly contribution.

STAFF PRESENTATION OF THE BIG WOOD RIVER ATLAS INTERACTIVE STORYMAP

Also present: Blaine County Floodplain Manager Kristine Hilt and Senior GIS Analyst Kelly Green.

Kristine Hilt, County Floodplain Manager / Project Manager for the Big Wood River Atlas, and County Senior GIS Analyst Kelly Green, presented the final StoryMap.

Hilt presented features of the StoryMap, which is a very condensed version of the Atlas. Green explained how to access all layers of information included in the interactive StoryMap.

BREAK

Administrative Services Specialist Jenny Lovell was present for the afternoon session.

LAND USE and BUILDING SERVICES HEARINGS

- **Comprehensive Plan - Chapter 8, Land Use. Public hearing and consideration of proposed amendments to Title 8, Comprehensive Plan. The Hailey & Bellevue Canyons subarea draft, a part of the Land Use chapter, is complete and presented for hearing.**

Also present: Blaine County Land Use and Building Services Director Tom Bergin; Deputy Director Kathy Grotto; and Blaine County Comprehensive Plan Consultant Lisa Horowitz.

Grotto read public notice.

Greenberg moved, seconded by McCleary, that notice was adequate, Motion passed unanimously.

Land Use sent out 881 surveys, and received 71 responses, about 8% response.

Most important to residents of this sub- area: Access to outdoor recreation; natural beauty; and rural, agricultural landscape. Residents value trails, quiet, and wildlife.

Changes that residents are proud of: Open space acquisition and conservation; access and trails; little change, slow growth, and preservation of rural character.

Changes that are most concerning: Motorized vehicle recreation; growth and traffic; and loss of access.

One question unique to this sub-area: Are the several larger parcels within two miles of the cities of Hailey and Bellevue appropriate for compact residential development?

- Yes. 10% said we definitely need more housing close to jobs and services.
- Possibly. A reasonable number of well-designed homes and with good access.
- No. Keep the county rural at densities of one unit per acre or less.

Development of geothermal is a unique priority for this sub-area. Campgrounds, including for RVs, could be considered for several canyons.

Residents would most support affordable housing in the form of accessory dwelling units, employee housing, and small pockets of multi-family housing on smaller lots.

Primary concerns for development are water availability, rural character and wildfire.

Lisa Horowitz reviewed the draft with the BCC.

Public Comment:

- Jim Laski asked staff to revisit references to Lee’s Gulch.
- Laski didn’t understand what connection there was to campgrounds in canyons. Most campgrounds are closer to road.
- Rich Gouley questioned the relevance of the survey with less than 10% response. Gouley said geothermal resources may be connected to water rights.

Fosbury said there are frequent requests from visitors and athletes and sports teams who hope to find camping and RV park areas in the WRV.

Greenberg moved, seconded by McCleary, to continue this Comprehensive Plan - Chapter 8, Land Use hearing to February 2, 2021, at 1:30 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

LAND, WATER & WILDLIFE PROGRAM (LWWP)

- **Funding Request: Sun Valley Institute for Resilience (SVIR), as part of its Impact Idaho Fund Pilot Program, requests LWWP funds to advance regenerative food production practices at Itty Bitty Farms in Carey and Lookout Farm, 11038 Hwy. 75, south of Bellevue. Specifically, SVIR requests \$5,000 (or 50%) of the project costs for Itty Bitty Farms and \$15,000 (or 43%) of the project costs for Lookout Farm.**

Also present: Blaine County Land Use and Building Services Director Tom Bergin and Land Use Planner Allison Marks; Blaine County Land, Water and Wildlife (LWW) Program Levy Advisory Board (LAB) Program Coordinator Wendy Pabich; Sun Valley Institute for Resilience (SVIR) Executive Director Lexie Praggastis, SVIR Investment Director Brooke Pierce, and SVIR Local Food Alliance Co-Director Amy Mattias; Christensen Global Strategies CEO Aimée Christensen; and Sarah Michael.

Bergin said this is a Land, Water and Wildlife funding request. Public notice is on the Agenda, as appropriate for today’s hearing.

This proposed project received recommendation from the Land, Water and Wildlife Levy Advisory Board.

LWW LAB Program Coordinator Wendy Pabich said the LAB reviewed this application in two different LAB hearings, and voted to take an expedited review of both projects because they’re relatively small and straightforward. Itty Bitty Farms requests \$5,000, and Lookout Farm requests \$15,000, both to foster a regenerative renewable agricultural ecosystem in the valley. The LAB was supportive of the two food-production projects.

Lexie Praggastis said Itty Bitty Farms and Lookout Farm are pilot projects in SVIR’s Invest Idaho Fund. Each is a separate application and request for LWW funding. Blaine County has lost one-third of its farmland since 1974, and is at risk of losing 135,000 acres of fine agricultural farmland to development. Over 90% of food produced in Idaho is exported. Idahoans import a majority of their food, but demand for locally-grown organic food is increasing, and local farms have an opportunity to meet growing market demand and ensure farm preservation for generations to come. These projects value and steward our natural resources and farm workers, which is in alignment with the LWW goals and Blaine County’s Comprehensive Plan.

- Itty Bitty Farms in Carey wants to expand its growing space, extend its growing season and increase its annual yield by 10,000 lbs. Itty Bitty Farms is a farm/greenhouse operation with an on-farm retail store in Carey. Itty Bitty Farms is requesting a recoverable \$10,000—\$5,000 from SVIR and \$5,000 from LWW.
- Lookout Farm is a vegetable farm and Community Supported Agriculture located in Bellevue. They have 14 acres, two of which they have transitioned from alfalfa/grass/hay to vegetable production. Lookout Farm is requesting a recoverable \$35,000—\$20,000 from SVIR and \$15,000 from LWW.

The purpose of the Sun Valley Institute for Resilience’s newest program, the Impact Idaho Fund, is to attract and mobilize mission-driven capital for innovative projects that advance sustainable, renewable and regenerative practices related to food practices, land, water, and energy.

- Greenberg and McCleary didn’t think Blaine County LWW funds should support Itty Bitty Farm’s retail operation.
 - *Praggastis said all LWW funds will be allocated for caterpillar tunnels, irrigation and weed management.*
 - *Wendy Pabich said agriculture is a big environmental concern, with water use, carbon, and nutrient leaching, which are all tied into biogeochemical cycles. She said the LAB looked at these projects holistically.*
 - *Lili Simpson said these grants are to the individual farmers. They are pilot projects that will be educational for the community for other farmers and will help create young farmers.*
 - *Martha Bibb supports using grant money and matching funds to see local land being used to produce food for local humans. It’s sad to see sagebrush steppes tilled up to grow alfalfa and hay and water-hungry crops that are exported for animals.*

McCleary asked that a monitoring report be part of the Grant Agreement. Pabich agreed, and said the Sun Valley Institute will be monitoring the farms.

Greenberg moved, seconded by McCleary, to support the Levy Advisory Board in funding the Sun

Valley Institute in Itty Bitty Farms and Lookout Farm projects, and request the Blaine County Commissioners produce the grant documents, Agreement and Funding Resolution with the condition that the BCC just considered. Motion passed unanimously.

WOLF HUNTING AND TRAPPING IN BLAINE COUNTY UPDATE AND DISCUSSION

Also present: Idaho Fish and Game Region 4 Magic Valley Commissioner Greg Cameron; IF&G MVR Supervisor Craig White; IF&G MVR Communications Director Terry Thompson; IF&G MVR Wildlife Manager Mike McDonald; IF&G MVR Conservation Officer Josh Royse; IF&G Statewide Predator Program Manager Katie Oelrich; and Paul Stevenson and Megan Davis.

The BCC have received over 50 comments opposed to wolf trapping that will be forwarded to Idaho Fish and Game. Fosbury said Blaine County funds IF&G beneficial projects, but the County is a recreational community that values trail use and there have been a couple bad incidents with hikers and pets in illegal traps. The BCC said trapping endangers the recreation-based economy.

F&G MVR Supervisor Craig White said IF&G is currently taking input on big game, and putting forth proposals for public scoping that will be passed on to the IF&G Commission for final guidance and decisions. White said IF&G has no formal trapping proposal at this time, although the Commission will consider proposals from Idaho Trappers Association and Foundation for Wildlife Management for trapping in March. White said anyone can present a proposal or petition to IF&G.

McCleary said the hunting season used to be seven months, and is now 11 months. Residents are opposed to the season being extended even more to 12 months. She strongly opposed trapping in Units 48 and 49. Greenberg concurred.

Public Comment:

- Garrett Dutcher, Wood River Wolf Project, said wolf trapping, and an extended season, don't reflect the interests of Blaine County.
- Boulder-White Clouds Council Executive Director Lynne Stone said wolf traps and snares keep her from taking her dog and grandchildren on trails in Blaine County and Custer County. She volunteered to put up WARNING signs at trailheads and throughout the state.
- Janie Davidson read a graphic letter from Idaho Senator Michelle Stennett, who, with two friends, were on a hike when Stennett's dog was caught in an unidentified illegally-placed trap, and, in his agony, bit her hands and dislocated her thumb. Friends had to run for miles to get cell service, and got help from two men strong enough to help release the dog, and get Stennett and her dog to medical attention.
- Janie Davidson, speaking for herself, said this was a traumatic experience for everyone.
- Idaho Trappers Association President Rusty Kramer said Wood River Valley livestock producers and multiple sportsmen groups said wildlife needs to be managed by science. Units 48 and 49 are two of the highest livestock depredation areas in the entire state. The organization encourages its members to do what they can to eliminate as many pet conflicts as possible.
- Sarah Michael, on the Wood River Wolf Project Steering Committee, said the Friends of Wildlife Management website pay \$1,000 for every wolf carcass in high depredation areas. Units 48 and 49 are not on their list of high depredation areas.
The WRWP has practiced non-lethal control, including working livestock dogs, with eight to 10 sheep bands in Blaine County for the last 13 years, and depredation in this County is very low.
Michael said there is only one hunting outfit member of the Outfitters and Guides website vs. all the recreationists who visit Blaine County.
- Amy Simpson said Blaine County's recreation economy far outweighs the hunting economy. She said IF&G data said Idaho wolf trappers are trapping 48% non-target species, including rare species.
- Francie St.Onge, an outfitter in Units 48 and 49, said the majority of their clients, including deer and elk hunters, are from south-central Idaho, and don't want wolf traps around.

The BCC invited written public comment; and will compile input and submit a letter to IF&G.

County Administrator Interviews

The BCC will work with Voss to develop a standardized list of questions for the applicants.

COVID Risk Level Plan – Fosbury said Blaine County is again in an extreme risk level. The BCC has adopted a policy that requires department heads and elected officials to inform HR of any employee who currently has a COVID infection or is in quarantine in order to avoid spread and having to close County offices again.

ADJOURN

At the hour of ___ p.m., with no more business before them, the County Commissioners adjourned.

Attest: _____ Approved _____
JoLynn Drage Dick Fosbury
County Clerk Chairman