

**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Kootenai County Assessor Appointment**  
**May 20, 2020**  
**1:00 p.m.**

The Kootenai County Board of Commissioners: Chairman Chris Fillios, Commissioner Leslie Duncan and Commissioner Bill Brooks met to discuss the following agenda items. Also present were Clerk Jim Brannon, Coroner Warren Keene, M.D., Prosecutor Barry McHugh, Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney R. David Ferguson, Chief Deputy Treasurer Laurie Thomas, Customer Service Clerk III Amy Sweet, Customer Service Technician II DeeAnn Reed, Chief Deputy Assessor Joe Johns, Residential Appraiser III Robert Scott, Community Development Director David Callahan, Information Technology (IT) Application Systems Manager Matt Snow, IT Application Systems Manager Ryan Naccarato, BOCC Administrative Supervisor Leighanna Keiser, BOCC Senior Business Analyst Nanci Plouffe, and Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio. Also present were Kootenai County Residents Bjorn Handeen, Bela Kovacs, Roger Garlock and Monica Kovacs, State Representative Tony Wisniewski, Coeur d’Alene Press Reporter Jennifer Passaro, and Former BOCC Commissioner Marc Eberlein.

- A. Call to Order:** Chairman Chris Fillios called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.
- B. Chairman’s Opening Remarks (Discussion):**

**Purpose of the Meeting**

Chairman Fillios stated that the purpose of the meeting was to select the successor to the County’s recently deceased County Assessor Rich Houser. He said the person chosen would be sworn in today and would immediately assume his duties.

Chairman Fillios offered a tribute to Rich Houser’s memory, describing him as a “man of kindness, duty and benevolence.” Mr. Houser will be sadly missed at the County and in the community at large.

**Procedures per Idaho Code §59-906**

Chairman Fillios read the essential portion of Idaho Code §59-906 into the record: Public Officers, Chapter 9, Resignations and Vacancies.

“(1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, all vacancies in any county office of any of the several counties of the state, except that of the county commissioners (who shall be appointed by the governor), shall be filled by appointment by the county commissioners of the county in which the vacancy occurs in accordance with the procedure prescribed below until the next general election, when such vacancy shall be filled by election.

The vacancy shall be filled as follows: the county central committee of the same political party, if any, of the former officer, whose office is vacant, shall submit a list of three (3) nominations to the board of county commissioners within fifteen (15) days from the day the office is vacated. The board of county commissioners shall fill the vacancy by

appointment from the submitted list within fifteen (15) days. Should no appointment be made within fifteen (15) days, the county central committee of the political party submitting the nominations shall designate one (1) of the three (3) nominees to fill the vacancy. The person selected shall be a person who possesses the same qualifications at the time of his appointment as those provided by law for election to the office.”

**Assessor Legal Qualifications per Idaho Code §34-621**

Chairman Fillios read the relevant section regarding the legal qualifications required for an Assessor, as per Idaho Code §34-621, into the record.

“No person shall be elected to the office of County Assessor unless s/he has attained the age of twenty one (21) at the time of his/her election, is a citizen of the United States and shall have resided in the county for one year, next preceding his election.”

**C. Assessor Appointment Consideration (Discussion):**

**Nominations from Republican Central Committee**

Chairman Fillios read the letter from the Republican Central Committee, chaired by Brent Regan, in which the three candidates present were nominated, into the record.

Chairman Fillios announced that each of the nominees would next be allowed an initial statement of five minutes. After that, he said Commissioner Leslie Duncan would ask the prepared interview questions, for which each person would be allowed three minutes for a response.

Commissioner Duncan stated that she considered both Mr. Handeen, his wife Holly and Mr. Garlock personal friends. She said she did not feel this would affect her decision today, but wanted to include the information on the record in the interest of transparency.

**Statement from Nominee Bjorn Handeen**

Kootenai County Resident Bjorn Handeen described his education, work and personal experiences and other qualifications to hold the office of Assessor.

**Statement from Nominee Bela Kovacs**

Kootenai County Resident Bela Kovacs described his education, work and personal experiences and other qualifications to hold the office of Assessor.

**Statement from Nominee Roger Garlock**

Kootenai County Resident Roger Garlock described his education, work and personal experiences and other qualifications to hold the office of Assessor.

### **Verification of Legal Qualifications of Nominees**

Chairman Fillios requested each of the three candidates verify that they meet the requirements of minimum age of twenty-one (21), minimum time in the State one (1) year, minimum time in the County thirty (30) days.

Mr. Handeen, Mr. Kovacs and Mr. Garlock verified that they met those requirements.

Senior Accounting Technician Teresa Mallery entered the meeting at 1:27 p.m.

Community Development Director David Callahan exited the meeting at 1:29 p.m.

### **Board Questions and Answers**

Commissioner Duncan asked the following questions of the candidates, in rotating order:

1. Please describe your experience and education as they pertain to this position.
2. In your career, what is the largest budget you have managed? What was your role in the development of that budget?
3. What is the highest number of employees you have supervised at one time? What types of positions have you managed?
4. Do you know which departments the Assessor oversees? Where does your experience apply to the departments of the Assessor's Office?
5. Describe your most challenging or difficult leadership experience. What was the outcome?
6. What are your future goals, personal or professional, or both?
7. How will you transition into the role of Assessor? What steps will you take to understand and lead the Assessor's Office?
8. How will you engage and support the staff of the Assessor's Office?

Ms. Mallery exited the meeting at 1:50 p.m.

Mr. Callahan reentered the meeting at 1:55 p.m.

Commissioner Bill Brooks asked the candidates to respond to his question: What are the three main methods used to determine a property's valuation in the Assessor's Office?

Mr. Handeen, Mr. Kovacs and Mr. Garlock responded.

Commissioner Brooks stated he had been looking for an answer of examination of comparable properties, income, and cost. He pointed out these were out of the Real Estate 101 book.

Mr. Callahan exited the meeting at 2:01 p.m.

Chairman Fillios invited each nominee to take three minutes to offer a closing statement.

Mr. Garlock, Mr. Kovacs and Mr. Handeen summed up their presentations.

**D. Deliberations/Decision (Action)**

Chairman Fillios announced the completion of the interviews and opened the proceedings to deliberations for the Commissioners.

The Commissioners expressed their commendations and thanks to the candidates. They unanimously agreed to select Mr. Kovacs as the new Assessor.

Commissioner Brooks moved that the Board appoint Bela Kovacs to fill the position of Assessor. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Deputy Clerk Ginorio called the roll:

Commissioner Brooks: Aye

Commissioner Duncan: Aye

Chairman Fillios: Aye

The motion carried.

Assessor's Office Customer Service Clerk III Anna Engels, Customer Service Clerk III Shelli Halloran, Customer Service Technician II Michelle Goughnour, Administrative Secretary/Leadworker RaeAnne Capaul and Administrative Manager Reba Grytness entered the meeting at 2:15 p.m.

**E. Administration of Oath to New Assessor**

Clerk Jim Brannon administered the oath of office to Mr. Kovacs.

**F. Adjournment (Action):** Chairman Fillios adjourned the meeting at 2:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BRANNON, CLERK

CHRIS FILLIOS, CHAIRMAN

BY: \_\_\_\_\_

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Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk