

Minutes of Meeting
Elected Officials
July 15, 2020
9:00 a.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 Assessor Bela Kovacs, Coroner Warren Keene, M.D., Prosecutor Barry McHugh, KCSO Sheriff Ben Wolfinger, Treasurer Steve Matheson, Chief Deputy Assessor Joe Johns, Chief Deputy Clerk Jennifer Locke, Finance Director Dena Darrow, Staff Accountant – Budget Michelle Chiaramonte, Tax Auditing Technician JoAnn Connor, Accounting/Payroll Technician Jeanette Bradley, Court Services Director Marissa Garza, Court Services Manager Kally Young, Human Resources (HR) Director Sylvia Proud, Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney R. David Ferguson, KCSO Undersheriff Dan Mattos, Resource Management Office (RMO) Director Jody Bieze, BOCC Communications Manager Nancy Jones and Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio. Also present was Eide Bailly Representative Jody Dougherty. Commissioner Brooks and Ms. Dougherty were present via teleconference.

- A. Call to Order:** Chairman Chris Fillios called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.
- B. Changes to the Agenda (Action):** There were no changes to the agenda.
- C. Business:**

COVID-19 Testing (Discussion)

Prosecutor Barry McHugh reported that an employee in his department had tested positive before July 4, 2020. He expressed his concern regarding ensuring full compliance with HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) regulations. He noted that any other employees who had had close contact with those people would have potential consequences and even if they test negative, they would still have to quarantine themselves for the required period.

Prosecutor McHugh stated that he was asking his staff to take additional precautions,, since jury trials were due to start up again soon and they could not afford to lose people. He said he was asking his staff to wear masks unless they were in their own personal work spaces, among other things,

Human Resources (HR) Director Sylvia Proud reviewed the handout her department had prepared, “Kootenai County COVID-19 Guidelines – July 2020.”

Treasurer Steve Matheson inquired whether there was a legal difference between quarantine and isolation.

Ms. Proud said, in simple terms, isolation was invoked when someone definitely has the virus, while quarantine was invoked if they were exposed and might have it. She confirmed that an employee’s doctor would be the one responsible for telling a person to self-quarantine or go into isolation.

Chief Deputy Clerk Jennifer Locke reported that two employees in one of the Clerk's departments had tested positive and requested guidance.

Ms. Proud outlined the necessary steps the affected department should follow.

KCSO Sheriff Ben Wolfinger stated that two employees under his authority had also tested positive.

COVID Team/Eide Bailly's Opinion on Governor Little's Property Tax Relief Program (Discussion)

Eide Bailly Representative Jody Dougherty said that her company had expressed some concerns regarding the proposed Property Tax Relief Program. She commented that the instructions from the Treasury on the use of these funds were unclear and this would cause confusion for an auditor.

Resource Management Office (RMO) Director Jody Bieze agreed with Ms. Dougherty's concerns. She offered examples illustrating potential problems. Ms. Bieze added that she had been informed that the State of Idaho was seeking clarification from the U.S. Treasury Department on a number of points but she had not yet received any new information.

Finance Director Dena Darrow stated that the County's COVID Team was well staffed and working hard. She reminded the Board that specific payroll codes had been set up immediately to record any COVID related expenses. She said they had been able to gather accurate data for transmission to the State for any reimbursement requests. She reported that the total amount of payroll for the County for COVID mitigation, above normal expenses was \$30,644.96, unloaded, as of the last payroll. She added that the loaded figure would be about \$45,000 to \$46,000.

Decision on Governor Little's Tax Relief Program (Action)

Prosecutor McHugh commented that prosecutors all around the state had been discussing the tax relief program. He called attention to the letter from Latah County's Commissioners to the Governor. He noted that the letter was very cautious and contained several reservations regarding the county's future actions, but would serve as a placeholder so that county would not miss the deadline for application.

Prosecutor McHugh indicated his approval of the precautions Ms. Bieze and Ms. Darrow were taking. He suggested that the Board consider sending a similar letter to the state.

Treasurer Steve Matheson said he felt that Prosecutor McHugh's suggestion was wise. He remarked this would allow the Board to opt out at a later date, if that became necessary.

Ms. Locke commented that she believed the Board would have about 30 days to opt out, if they sent such a letter.

Commissioner Leslie Duncan asked Prosecutor McHugh if he would assist in writing the letter. He agreed.

There was general agreement expressed with this proposed course of action.

Commissioner Duncan moved that the Board opt in to the property tax relief program and submit to the governor a letter indicating that we reserved the right to opt out. Commissioner Bill Brooks 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.

Employee Bonus Pool for FY20 (Discussion)

Commissioner Duncan commented that departments often had unspent funds that would go back to the General Fund at the end of the fiscal year. She said she would like to consider using a percentage of those funds to potentially issue employee bonuses for FY20 to exceptional performers. She asked the other Elected Officials if they were interested in participating.

KCSO Sheriff Ben Wolfinger asked Ms. Darrow if this would have a negative impact on the next year's budget.

Ms. Darrow explained that, at the end of the fiscal year, they rolled forward the capital that is unspent. She stated that unspent "A" Budget and "B" Budget funds would go back to their origin points, such as the General Fund or the Justice Fund.

Commissioner Duncan clarified that she was considering savings from "A" (Personnel) and "B" (Operating) budgets for this.

Commissioner Brooks objected to the suggestion on the grounds that the County did not have standardized, uniform performance measures to determine who should receive bonuses.

Commissioner Duncan offered a list of performance measures which could be implemented. She added that the BOCC could convene a meeting in September to approve any proposed bonuses.

Prosecutor McHugh stated he would be willing to engage in a discussion of the proposal.

Ms. Proud confirmed that County policy did allow for bonuses to be awarded, with approval from the Board of County Commissioners. She said she felt that the suggestion would be acceptable as long as procedures were in place to ensure the decisions were made fairly and objectively.

Chairman Fillios voiced his willingness to consider the suggestion.

- D. **Public Comment:** This section is reserved for citizens wishing to address the Board regarding a County related issue. Idaho Law prohibits Board action on items brought under this section except in an emergency circumstance. Comments related to future public hearings should be held for that public hearing. There were no public comments.

- E. **Adjournment (Action):** Chairman Fillios adjourned the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BRANNON, CLERK

CHRIS FILLIOS, CHAIRMAN

BY: _____
Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk
