

**Minutes of Meeting
University of Idaho
March 14, 2023
1:30 p.m.**

The Kootenai County Board of Commissioners: Chair Leslie Duncan, Commissioner Bruce Mattare and Commissioner Bill Brooks met to discuss the following agenda item. Also present were BOCC Administrative Manager Leighanna Keiser, BOCC Communications Coordinator Jonathan Gillham and Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio. Also present were University of Idaho Extension Northern District Director Rusty Gosz, University of Idaho Extension Educator Shelly Johnson and Kootenai County Resident Charity Myser.

- A. **Call to Order:** Chair Leslie Duncan called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m.
- B. **Changes to the Agenda (Action):** There were no changes to the agenda.
- C. **Business:**

FY24 University of Idaho Extension Office Budget Request, Rusty Gosz, Northern District Director & Shelly Johnson, Eat Smart Idaho Administrator (Discussion)

University of Idaho Extension Northern District Director Rusty Gosz introduced himself and University of Idaho Extension Educator/Eat Smart Idaho Administrator, Shelly Johnson. He remarked that they were both fairly new to their positions. He pointed out that tomorrow was the 106th anniversary of the Kootenai Extension Program and its partnership with the County and the University.

Ms. Johnson described the Eat Smart Idaho program and its funding sources. She also listed other Extension staff, including Forrester Chris Schef and Master Gardener Kara Carleton and described their programs.

Mr. Gosz described the activities of Dr. Jim Ekins, Area Water Specialist, who also belonged to their group. He offered information on the other programs, including 4-H.

Chair Duncan asked if they were presenting a flat budget.

Ms. Johnson said they were planning to put forth the same request for about \$156,519. She added that their request would also include the lease agreement signed with the County last summer.

Mr. Gosz indicated that they were seeing increasing operating budget costs in the range of 3% to 5%, on average, for the different counties.

Chair Duncan asked that they provide an overview of their whole budget program, with a focus on where the \$156,000 from Kootenai County fit into it. She asked if they had considered raising the fees for the various programs.

Mr. Gosz said some of their groups would be very willing to pay a fee for participation and that he had been discussing this with staff.

Commissioner Bill Brooks asked what would happen if the County cut its contribution in half.

Mr. Gosz described the negative impact such a cut would have.

Commissioner Bruce Mattare said he would like to see details on the return on the County's investment in their program and how it fit into the larger picture. He remarked that this would help make the case to the taxpayers that this was a good use of funds.

- 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.

Kootenai County Resident Charity Myser stated that the majority of the residents of Kootenai County did not want to fund any program that was affiliated, managed or directed by the University of Idaho. She pointed out that the University had sufficient resources to cover all its programs; their foundation was the largest in the State of Idaho, with total assets of \$460,000,000 as of FY21.

Ms. Myser said the objection came from the University's actions in prioritizing a Woke Agenda over funding. She commented that, in addition to its own assets, the Idaho State Taxpayers had been compelled to give them \$169,000,000 in the last fiscal year. She stated that this funding would allow the University to promote courses like "Critical Race Theory and Medicine." She described another program called "Life Cycle," which related to the therapeutic management of trans-masculine individuals. She noted that medical students used taxpayer funds for training to perform abortions, a procedure currently not allowed by State law. She listed her objections to these offerings.

Ms. Myser remarked that part of the \$169,000,000 given to the University by the State was \$150,000 set aside for the salary of a Chief Diversity Officer.

Coeur d'Alene Press Reporter Kaye Thornbrugh entered the meeting at 1:53 p.m.

Ms. Myser concluded by urging the Commissioners to decline to fund any program sponsored by the University. She declared that, if the richest foundation in Idaho felt that the Eat Smart and 4-H programs were of value, they could restructure their own budget to pay for them.

E. Adjournment (Action): Chair Duncan adjourned the meeting at 1:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JENNIFER LOCKE, CLERK

BOCC SIGNATURE

BY: _____
Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk