

Minutes of Meeting
Commissioners' Status Update
April 11, 2023
10:00 a.m.

The Kootenai County Board of Commissioners: Chair Leslie Duncan, Commissioner Bruce Mattare and Commissioner Bill Brooks met to discuss the following agenda items. Also present were KCSO Sheriff Robert Norris, KCSO Undersheriff Brett Nelson, Prosecutor Stanley Mortensen, Human Resources (HR) Director Sylvia Proud, Clerk Jennifer Locke, Chief Deputy Clerk Grace Blomgren, Finance Director Brandi Falcon, Adult Misdemeanor Probation (AMP) Director Keith Hutcheson, Interim Airport Director Phil Cummings, BOCC Communications Coordinator Jonathan Gillham and Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio. Also present, from the Northern Lakes Fire District, were Fire Marshall Tyler Drechsel, Training Chief Mike Mather and Emergency Medical Services Division Chief Matt Dill.

A. Call to Order: Chair Leslie Duncan called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

B. Changes to the Agenda (Action):

Chair Duncan said that item 7 from the agenda would be covered after item 1.

C. Business:

Northern Lakes Fire District MOA with Airport for Fire Station Use (Discussion)

Interim Airport Director Phil Cummings explained that the Northern Lakes Fire District (NLFD) had a new station under construction. He said that it had been proposed for the NLFD crew be housed at the Airport's Fire Station until their building was completed, around October 2023.

There followed significant discussion related to logistics and assurances that the plan would in no way negatively impact Airport coverage.

Coroner Duke Johnson, M.D. entered the meeting at 10:04 a.m.

It was generally agreed that NLFD would provide the Board with a Memorandum of Agreement in a future Business Meeting.

CDA Skeet Club Next Steps (Discussion)

Chair Duncan announced that all three Commissioners had received email notification on Monday, April 3, 2023, that House Bill 304 had passed into law. She explained that this meant that Idaho Fish and Game would be permitted to purchase between 40 and 60 acres at the Airport in order to preserve the Skeet and Trap Shooting Range. She stated that the proposal would have to be reviewed by Legal and said she was considering deed restrictions, such as a specific agreement to keep the current tenants, a concession lease for at least 25 years with clean up included, and the County being given first right of

refusal in the event of future sale of the land. She asked the other Commissioners to let her know if they had any other restrictions they wanted included.

Chair Duncan stated that the property had been released by the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration), so the only requirement should be that it be sold at fair market value.

Mr. Cummings confirmed that the FAA would have to approve the proposal, but it was unlikely that there would be any objections raised.

Chair Duncan said she was waiting to hear from outside counsel regarding other questions related to this. She indicated she expected to hear from them by the end of the week.

Commissioner Bruce Mattare suggested that the lease term be as long as possible.

Mr. Cummings and Northern Lakes Fire District Fire Marshall Tyler Drechsel, Training Chief Mike Mather and EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Division Chief Matt Dill exited the meeting at 10:09 a.m.

Future Coroner Project and Impact Fees (Discussion)

Coroner Duke Johnson, M.D. explained that, while the County had arrangements in place for both individual and large scale incidents, there were none for medium sized ones. He stated that they were dependent on local funeral homes for some services and that, in fact, some of their previously contracted funeral homes had ended their agreements with the County. He referenced the County's current agreement with Spokane, in which they agreed to accept up to 5 victims of a single incident.

Dr. Johnson said he would like to explore the possibility of using Impact Fees to expand the capabilities of the Coroner's Office. In response to a question from Commissioner Bill Brooks, he said he would like to see a refrigerated facility which could hold up to 80 bodies. He added that he had gotten architectural plans based on a building near their current facility and had been given an estimated cost of about \$300,000.

Chair Duncan remarked that she thought the facility could be completed for closer to \$150,000.

There followed discussion of the features needed in such a facility and ways the project could be funded.

Chair Duncan indicated that she felt trying to use Impact Fees would complicate the project and suggested the Board consider using Fund Balance, if they decide to commit to the project. She said the Coroner could include the request in his Budget.

Commissioner Brooks said he would prefer to use Impact Fees, since there were heavy demands planned for Fund Balance.

Commissioner Mattare asked for additional detail about the project and wondered about the probability of the County needing such a facility. He asked when Dr. Johnson thought the County might need a fully autonomous Coroner's Office, like the one in Spokane.

There followed substantial discussion of the need for the facility, the future needs of the Coroner's Office and funding possibilities.

It was generally agreed that Dr. Johnson would work with the Impact Fee Consultant, Ann Wescott.

Alternative Office Space for PAO (Prosecuting Attorney's Office) (Discussion)

Prosecutor Stanley Mortensen described the staffing levels at his office and remarked that their current space was not adequate to their needs. He said he would like to open a conversation with the Board about the possibility of securing additional offices off the Administrative Campus.

Chair Duncan remarked that the Justice Center Expansion project should be ready for occupation in about 18 months and it would provide expanded space for his department.

There followed substantial discussion about the different departmental shifts which would follow once Kootenai North became available in December 2023.

Chair Duncan suggested that Prosecutor Mortensen look for vacant office space in Coeur d'Alene, for a short term lease, at an affordable price.

Dr. Johnson and Adult Misdemeanor Probation (AMP) Director Keith Hutcheson exited the meeting at 10:36 a.m.

KCSO Pay Comparison (Discussion)

KCSO Sheriff Robert Norris reported that his department was losing trained employees within the first five years of hiring. He said he felt the current funding system was not working and urged the Board to be more proactive.

KCSO Undersheriff Brett Nelson said that there were currently 10 vacancies in Patrol. He noted that the Coeur d'Alene Police Department had recently had 15 vacancies and been able to fill them all by offering a \$10,000 signing bonus and an updated contract.

There followed substantial discussion regarding local home prices and pay offered by other law enforcement agencies in the area.

Sheriff Norris suggested that KCSO be moved to a 5 year matrix.

Commissioner Brooks voiced support for Sheriff Norris's proposals and said the sooner they were acted upon, the better.

Commissioner Mattare suggested a budget impact study. He indicated that it seemed to him that Deputies' compensation levels were falling behind more every year.

Chair Duncan stated that the wage study conducted by Human Resources (HR) did not support the assertion that our Deputies were falling behind.

Finance Director Brandi Falcon said she would be able to develop budget projections for the suggested changes but asked if she could provide them at the end of May. She explained that she and her staff would be deeply involved in departmental budget submissions until then.

The Commissioners agreed that her timeline was acceptable.

Jail Population/Staffing/Overtime Budget (Discussion)

Sheriff Norris reported that the Jail population continued to increase and would cause his department to exceed its overtime calculations. He said that transportation, medical and other security costs would also be impacted.

Undersheriff Nelson confirmed that there were 528 inmates present in the Jail as of this morning. He described overtime calculations and the amounts received by KCSO in the past.

Chair Duncan stated that there was a meeting planned with Court personnel for this coming Monday which would be directly related to this issue.

Prosecutor Mortensen, Chief Deputy Prosecutor Art Verharen, Sheriff Norris and Undersheriff Nelson exited the meeting at 10:53 a.m.

Community Action Partnership Public Official Designee (Discussion)

Commissioner Brooks confirmed that he had received an email regarding the Community Action Partnership Public Official designee, Cory Smith. He reported that Mr. Smith was a young attorney and that he had received good reports about his capabilities.

Chair Duncan remarked that she had never heard of the BOCC being involved in appointing to this position. She reported that she had gotten a copy of the Board of Directors documents and found that there were two positions assigned for Kootenai County, with the title Private Sector Representative.

Commissioner Mattare indicated that he was not sure this was a duty the BOCC should take on.

Commissioner Brooks said he would like to ask the group to come to a Status Update meeting and explain what they did for the County.

It was generally agreed that Commissioner Brooks would invite Mr. Smith to appear at a meeting.

- 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):** Chair Duncan adjourned the meeting at 10:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JENNIFER LOCKE, CLERK

BOCC SIGNATURE

BY: _____
Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk