

Minutes of Meeting
John Rubert
April 19, 2022
10:00 a.m.

The Kootenai County Board of Commissioners: Chairman Chris Fillios and Commissioner Bill Brooks met to discuss the following agenda item. Also present were BOCC Communications Coordinator Jonathan Gillham and Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio. Also present were DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality) Representatives Shawn Sweetapple and Mark Boyle, Northern Lakes Fire District Fire Chief Pat Riley and Fire Marshall Tyler Drechsel, and Kootenai County Resident John Rubert. Commissioner Leslie Duncan was excused.

- A. Call to Order:** Chairman Chris Fillios called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.
- B. Changes to the Agenda (Action):** There were no changes to the agenda.
- C. Business:**

Smoke Concerns in Hayden, ID (Discussion)

Kootenai County Resident John Rubert explained his concerns regarding air quality at his location on Hayden Lake. He pointed out that the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) did not have a sensor located at Hayden Lake and that the readings from the one on the prairie did not appropriately reflect conditions where he lived. He showed pictures which illustrated the amount of smoke generated by various types of burn piles. He stated he could not enjoy his property and asked the Commissioners to take action.

DEQ Representative Mark Boyle stated that he was the Smoke Management Program Coordinator for the State of Idaho. He said that he had been trying to address some of the issues that Mr. Rubert had brought up, specifically the prescribed fires allowed for logging entities.

Mr. Boyle stated that, since he had joined the DEQ in 2019, he had been working Potlatch Deltic, some private land owners and the Idaho Forest Owners Association to discuss how burns could best be managed. He said these discussions were ongoing and Mr. Rubert's concerns were included. He explained some of the technical aspects of air shed ventilation and how it worked in the Hayden area. He indicated that he did not know when the investigations and discussions would be completed because it took a long time to make a state-wide rule.

Mr. Boyle said he had been in contact with Mr. Rubert for some time and had encouraged him to try to get local rules passed which would be more stringent and specific than those at the state level. He offered to provide any additional information that the Board would require.

Chairman Fillios commented that an ordinance would probably be required to address the problem. He said that, by law, a public hearing would be required as part of the

process. He stated that he personally would favor this avenue because waiting for the state would probably not provide the specific relief desired. He suggested that Mr. Rubert work to develop public support as the first step.

Mr. Rubert listed actions he was willing to undertake to move this process along.

Northern Lakes Fire District Fire Chief Pat Riley stated remarked that his department's responsibility was in the areas of emergency response and preparedness, although he personally agreed with a number of Mr. Rubert's points. He said he did not think an ordinance would stop burning during the defined period under discussion and that he was neither opposed nor supportive of the proposal. He added that he would be interested in participating in the process because it would impact his department. He stated that previous Boards had implemented temporary burn bans, when appropriate, and explained the effects these had.

Chief Riley concluded that he was in favor of trying to find a better solution but was not sure that any action short of a complete burn ban would satisfy Mr. Rubert.

Mr. Rubert stated he felt it would be totally justified to stop all burning on the Lake, at least until a sensor was placed where it could monitor air quality there.

DEQ Regional Air Quality Manager in the Coeur d'Alene Region Shawn Sweetapple commented that he had been familiar with Mr. Rubert's issues for a number of years. He described the constraints under which his position functioned and the rules that were in effect regarding different types of burning. He stated that the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) required sensors to be placed in metropolitan areas, based on population numbers. He indicated that more than a single request would be needed to justify the expense of an additional monitor.

In response to a question from Chairman Fillios, Mr. Sweetapple explained that the initial cost of a monitor, depending on the model, could be between \$30,000 and \$50,000, with and additional yearly cost of around \$30,000 for maintenance and monitoring.

Chairman Fillios suggested that the representatives of the different entities work with Mr. Rubert and come up with a workable plan of action in 30 days and bring it back to the Board.

Mr. Rubert suggested mastication, a process by which materials were physically ground up and spread over the land, instead of burning. He asked that some of the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds be spent to buy a masticator and whatever type of vehicle was needed to deploy it.

Commissioner Bill Brooks suggested that the County could provide public education about the problem, to help get more citizens involved.

Chairman Fillios voiced his willingness to support an educational effort.

- 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 11:07 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BRANNON, CLERK

BOCC SIGNATURE

BY: _____
Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk