

Minutes of Meeting
FY2020 Preliminary Budget Review – Assessor
May 1, 2019
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 item. Also present were Assessor Rich Houser, Chief Deputy Assessor Joe Johns, County Surveyor Rodney Jones, Vehicle Licensing Manager Holly Thompson, Specialized Appraisal Manager Jeff Hurt, Residential Appraisal Manager Darin Krier, Mapping Manager Betty Conces, Administrative Manager Reba Grytness, Chief Deputy Clerk Jennifer Locke, Finance Director Dena Darrow, Budget Accountant Michelle Chiaramonte, Human Resources (HR) Director Sylvia Proud and Deputy Clerk Ronnie Davisson.

- A. Call to Order:** Chairman Chris Fillios called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.
- B. Changes to the Agenda (Action):** There were no changes to the agenda.
- C. Business:**

FY2020 Budget Review – Assessor (Discussion)

Finance Director Dena Darrow presented an updated Preliminary Summary to the Board, noting that the work they had done in the prior session had reduced the deficit to roughly \$11 million. Assessor Rich Houser introduced the Assessor’s Management team and proceeded to provide an overview of his budgets.

Mr. Houser began by showing there was a slight increase in printing costs for their assessment notices and Commissioner Leslie Duncan had inquired about the reduction in the Seasonal/Temp line item. Mr. Houser explained that previously, there had been a temp that assisted with their Circuit Breaker program but now they were going to attempt to utilize their administrative staff members, which was why there had been a reduction. Commissioner Duncan then inquired about their increase in advertising costs, as it was something that had not been done previously. Administrative Manager Reba Grytness explained they were developing a video for their website, which would describe the appraisal process and what the Assessor’s Office did; it was mainly an educational tool for the public. Commissioner Duncan then asked if there were any spots within the travel budget that could be cut; Mr. Houser explained they always try to do their training online when they can in order to cut costs, but appraisers were required to retain their certifications, which equated to 32 hours of training every two years.

County Surveyor Rod Jones explained that his budget had remained the same over the past five years, but noted there were several pieces of equipment that were outdated and needed to be replaced. Mr. Jones also requested a new used vehicle, with a preference for a 4x4 truck with a canopy.

Vehicle Licensing Manager Holly Thompson spoke to her budget requests, one of which was three new title clerk positions. She said that since the county was growing, there was

an increase of vehicles, boats, and other motorized vehicles that needed registering and pointed out that there was not enough staff to keep up with the demand. Mr. Houser explained that Vehicle Licensing was mostly self-funded and that the three new proposed title clerks would be funded by admin fees. Mr. Houser pointed out other slight increases in overtime and shredding services.

Mr. Houser explained that with the amount of growth through the County, the Assessor's Office was having difficulty maintaining the level of work quality and time needed in order to meet statutory deadlines. He said that an option to help satisfy this concern was an increase in overtime funding.

Mr. Houser then explained their new program request for a program called Mobile Assessor, which linked to their currently used valuation program. He said that not only will there be new residences to value, but roughly 20% of the entire County would also have to be inspected while the other 80% had value that needed to be maintained. The requested program would allow the appraisers to take a tablet into the field and any information that they input would be automatically linked to the current valuation software, therefore reducing the amount of time the appraisers spent on updating files in two separate programs. Commissioner Brooks asked if the program would reduce any personnel costs over time and Chief Deputy Assessor Joe Johns explained it would help streamline the current workload and processes so the current staff could optimize their time and would help relieve the tension, noting that they may have to increase staffing sizes in the future based entirely on growth. Mr. Houser pointed out that what made the program so enticing was that it had been designed by an appraiser who had received a degree in Computer Science, had the understanding of the appraisal job and knew what tools an appraiser would need. Mr. Houser said he would also be willing to decrease the request to one iPad per team, but noted that he had included one for each appraiser in his budget. Ms. Grytness said the iPads that would be needed to run the program would be around \$950 each and were requesting 17 total. The Board opted to flag the request to discuss later.

The Board had no further questions regarding the Assessor's Office requests.

Mr. Houser, Mr. Johns, Mr. Jones, Ms. Thompson, Specialized Appraisal Manager Jeff Hurt, Residential Appraisal Manager Darin Krier, Mapping Manager Betty Conces, and Ms. Grytness exited the meeting at 10:06 a.m.

Ms. Darrow provided more information to the Board on their deferred decisions from the prior meeting. First, they discussed \$80,000 for renovations in Community Development and opted to cut the request. Ms. Darrow continued through the rest of the list, making a few clarification points on the Public Defender, Fairgrounds, Snowmobile and IT budgets. They briefly discussed the upcoming Sheriff's Office budget meeting and had no further questions.

D. Public Comment (Discussion): 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. Adjourn: Chairman Fillios adjourned the meeting at 10:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BRANNON, CLERK

CHRIS FILLIOS, CHAIRMAN

BY: _____
Ronnie Davisson, Deputy Clerk
