

Minutes of Meeting
University of Idaho Extension Office
August 3, 2020
11:00 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 Finance Director Dena Darrow, Elections/County Assistance Manager Shelly Amos, Information Technology (IT) Network Administrator Grant Kinsey, Buildings & Grounds (B&G) Operations Manager Greg Manley and Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio. Also present were Contractor Shawn Riley, North Idaho Fair General Manager Alexcia Jordan, Fair Board Member Linda Rider, University of Idaho Extension Northern District Director Mike Howell and University of Idaho Extension 4-H Educator Sharla Wilson.

- A. **Call to Order:** Chairman Chris Fillios called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m.
- B. **Changes to the Agenda (Action):** There were no changes to the agenda.
- C. **Business (Action):**

Interim Home for the University of Idaho Extension Office

Chairman Fillios stated that the University of Idaho Extension currently occupied space at the Elections Office building, but Elections needed the room for their own operations. He noted that there was a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County and the Extension that would expire September 30, 2020. He said they had been looking at relocation options at the Fairgrounds, among other places. He reported that North Idaho Fair General Manager Alexcia Jordan had told the Board that, with their revenue reduced and buildings already reserved for events, moving to the Fairgrounds would be a problem. He added that some of the buildings at the Fairgrounds were not heated, which meant they could not be used by the Extension Office during the winter.

Contractor Shawn Riley stated he would want to get Information Technology (IT) Network Administrator Grant Kinsey's opinion on some IT infrastructure questions before making any recommendations on different spaces. He listed some possible locations, along with their advantages and disadvantages.

Ms. Jordan confirmed that the State Fish & Game Department had said they would be willing to give up their building at the Fairgrounds, for a period of time and put their displays in storage. She pointed out that since the displays contained hides, that there might be insects infesting the building that would have to be exterminated. She stated that the space could house the Extension Office itself but was not large enough for their meetings, under social distancing rules.

Chairman Fillios commented that it seemed leasing a building would cost between \$7,000 and \$9,000 per month.

Mr. Riley reported that Welch Comer owned a building across the street from the Fairgrounds which they were eager to lease to the County. He said it was about 7,000 square feet and could be leased in part or in full.

University of Idaho Extension 4-H Educator Sharla Wilson said she had met with representatives of Welch Comer and the building had a lot of potential. She noted that they wanted about \$8,000 per month for rent, which was double the amount the County currently gave as "in-kind" support to the organization. She stated it would fulfill all their space needs.

Chairman Fillios confirmed that the Extension would receive about \$156,000 as part of the FY21 Budget.

Commissioner Leslie Duncan said there was another \$70,000 in unanticipated revenue received by Elections which they were willing to give to the Extension to help them relocate.

Finance Director Dena Darrow commented that the Auditor's Office would encourage finding a long-term solution to the problem. She noted that the University of Idaho had received a number of grants for distance learning and might actually go to fully online classes. She asked how those things would impact the problem of available space to house the Extension and whether the Extension would actually need as much space as previously if their offerings also went online.

University of Idaho Extension Northern District Director Mike Howell indicated that the grant funds Ms. Darrow had referenced were available only to the University campus, for formal, for-credit classes. He said the Extension offered non-formal, not-for-credit classes.

The Commissioners assured the Extension representatives that they wanted to find a space for their program, but more exploration of options would be necessary.

Ms. Darrow pointed out that the County needed to take into account that Elections provided a government mandated service. She noted that the Extension services were valuable, but not mandated.

Ms. Wilson commented that, while the Extension services were not mandated, they were in high demand by County residents. She reminded the Board of an instance in which prior commissioners had proposed ceasing support of the Extension and how the extent of the citizens' protests had changed their minds.

Mr. Kinsey reported that when the University of Idaho Extension inhabited County space, they received had free internet and phone service. He said that they would have to take on those expenses themselves if they were no longer housed in a County building.

- 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 11:43 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BRANNON, CLERK

CHRIS FILLIOS, CHAIRMAN

BY: _____
Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk
