

Minutes of Meeting
FY21 Public Budget Hearing
August 26, 2020
6:00 p.m.

The Kootenai County Board of Commissioners: Chairman Chris Fillios, Commissioner Leslie Duncan and Commissioner Bill Brooks met to discuss the following agenda items. Also present were Clerk Jim Brannon, Chief Deputy Clerk Jennifer Locke, Finance Director Dena Darrow, Deputy Finance Director Keith Taylor, Staff Accountant – Budget Michelle Chiamonte, Accounting Supervisor – AP & Spending Lori Shaw, Accounting Clerk/AP Backup Randi Davis, KCSO Sheriff Ben Wolfinger, KCSO Undersheriff Dan Mattos, KCSO Administrative Assistant Tamara Exley, Prosecutor Barry McHugh, Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney R. David Ferguson, Court Assistance Officer Jay Sturgell, Treasurer Steve Matheson, Chief Deputy Treasurer Laurie Thomas, Community Development Director David Callahan, Solid Waste (SW) Director Cathy Mayer, BOCC Communications Manager Nancy Jones, BOCC Administrative Supervisor Leighanna Keiser, BOCC Senior Business Analyst Nanci Plouffe and Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio. Also present were Kootenai County EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Chief Bill Keeley, Kootenai County EMS Director of Administration Tracy Abrahamson, North Idaho Fair General Manager Alexcia Jordan, Fair Board Chair Jerry Johnson, Aquifer Protection District Board Chair Necia Maiani, Kootenai County Residents Robert Norris and David Ingalls, and Coeur d’Alene Press Reporter Madison Hardy.

A. Call to Order: Chairman Chris Fillios called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

B. Changes to the Agenda (Action) – Motion to Amend (Add Items H and I)

Commissioner Leslie Duncan moved that the Board amend the agenda to add items “H” and “I,” even though the changes had been previously posted more than 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Commissioner Bill Brooks seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Deputy Clerk Ginorio called the roll:

Commissioner Brooks: Aye

Commissioner Duncan: Aye

Chairman Fillios: Aye

The motion carried.

C. Chairman’s Opening Remarks

D. FY21 Budget Hearing Pursuant to Idaho Code §31-1605 (Discussion)

Aquifer Protection District

Aquifer Protection District Board Chair Necia Maiani presented their FY21 Proposed Budget. She reviewed the purpose and history of the Aquifer Protection District, as well as the federal, state and local regulations affecting it. She listed the primary services it performs, such as sewer and storm water management, water quality sampling, facility inspections and remediation activities, fostering of interagency cooperation and community outreach. She described their links with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

Ms. Maiani also reviewed their proposed Budget for FY21 totaling \$546,874, which represented a 1.4% decrease from the previous year's request. She stated they had received nine requests for projects, for a total of \$487,874, recommended eight, for a total of \$462,974 and received internal requests totaling \$83,900. She stated that their goals for the coming fiscal year were to update the Aquifer Atlas, pursue critical recharge area easements and monitor requests for progress and measurable impacts.

KCEMSS

Kootenai County EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Chief Bill Keeley provided a comparison between their FY2020 Budget and the proposed FY21 Budget. He noted that their proposed budget had gone before a public hearing on July 30, 2020, in which they received no public comment. He said it was then approved by their joint powers board. He reviewed the anticipated revenue and expenses figures.

Chief Keeley explained that the total tax increase they were taking, of \$182,916, would increase the levy rate by 13 cents per thousand of assessed value, which would actually represent a decrease. He stated it would make KCEMSS the second lowest EMS taxing district that provided paramedic level services from full time employees in the entire state.

Assessor Bela Kovacs entered the meeting at 6:18 p.m.

Kootenai County

Clerk Jim Brannon expressed his thanks to all the departments in the County for providing information to the Auditor's Office so quickly. He also thanked the three Commissioners for supporting the new format for the Budget Presentation, which made it much easier to complete the process.

Finance Director Dena Darrow called attention to the enhanced packet of information available. She added her thanks to the departments for their support and cooperation in the process.

Ms. Darrow announced that the County had been able to hold to a 0% tax increase for the coming year. She commented that COVID-19 had impacted the budget in ways never seen before. She said the County had to provide find new ways to provide services. She announced that the Operating Budgets had been reduced by departments wherever possible, coming in below last year's figures. She added that Personnel Expenses had been managed by the Board to allow completion of wage study adjustments, plus a small COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) to staff.

Ms. Darrow reported that the FY21 Budget would be \$98,989,569, a reduction from last year's amount of \$101,598,129, of which \$51,314,811 was from property tax dollars. She broke down Personnel Expense, Operating Expense and Capital Expenditures into their component parts, reviewed Fund Balance use, and showed each Elected Official's portion of the total Budget.

E. Public Testimony:

Chairman Fillios asked for public comment.

Fair Board Chair Jerry Johnson, 6903 North Valley, Dalton Gardens offered this thanks to the Commissioners for their support of the Fair in this difficult year.

Clerk Brannon expressed his pleasure in learning that next year the North Idaho Fair will run for ten days.

There were no other public comments.

Commissioner Duncan moved that the Board end public testimony and enter into deliberations. Commissioner Brooks seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Deputy Clerk Ginorio called the roll:

Commissioner Brooks: Aye
Commissioner Duncan: Aye
Chairman Fillios: Aye

The motion carried.

F. Deliberations (Discussion)

G. Adoption of FY21 Budget (Action):

Motion Regarding Aquifer Protection District Budget

Both Commissioner Duncan and Commissioner Brooks stated they had no further comments or questions regarding the Aquifer Protection District Budget.

Chairman Fillios noted that an error had been made in the APD Budget, an over count of about \$40,175, so the \$546,874 was a decrease from the published budget.

Commissioner Duncan moved that the Board adopt the Aquifer Protection District Budget in the amount of \$546,874. Commissioner Brooks seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Deputy Clerk Ginorio called the roll:

Commissioner Brooks: Aye
Commissioner Duncan: Aye
Chairman Fillios: Aye

The motion carried.

Motion Regarding KCEMSS Budget

No additional comments or concerns were expressed regarding the KCEMSS Budget.

Commissioner Duncan moved that the Board approve the KCEMSS Budget for 2021. Commissioner Brooks seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Deputy Clerk Ginorio called the roll:

Commissioner Brooks: Aye

Commissioner Duncan: Aye

Chairman Fillios: Aye

The motion carried.

Motion Regarding Kootenai County Budget

Commissioner Duncan explained the reasons she felt County employees should not receive raises in the FY21 Budget. She stated she would not be accepting her 2% increase.

Commissioner Brooks stated he felt the COLA raises were very modest and that the County needed to try to retain good staff.

Chairman Fillios reminded those present that they had conducted a Wage Study last year and learned that County employees were underpaid from 8% to 15%. He remarked that not giving the employees anything this year would have put the County further behind. He noted that the 2% the employees would receive was below the growth rate of the County of 2.5%. He said he felt they had done well, keeping the Budget to 0% tax increase this year. He stated he was in favor of the Budget as proposed.

Commissioner Brooks moved that the Board adopt the FY2021 Budget at the proposed amount, adjusted for the APD reduction, at \$98,949,394. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Deputy Clerk Ginorio called the roll:

Commissioner Brooks: Aye

Commissioner Duncan: Nay

Chairman Fillios: Aye

The motion carried.

KCSO Sheriff Ben Wolfinger, KCSO Undersheriff Dan Mattos, Solid Waste (SW) Director Cathy Mayer, and Auditor's Office Accounting Clerk – AP Backup Randi Davis exited the meeting at 6:39 p.m.

H. Resolution 2020-50 Forgone Taxes (Action)

Chairman Fillios explained that, as a result of action taken in the last state legislative session, the Board had to take "positive action" to add the amount of tax not taken this year to the Forgone Balance. He said they could add the 3% which was not taken for the 2021 Budget to the Forgone Balance, but needed to pass a resolution to do so. He added that the current balance in Forgone was about \$9.5 million.

Ms. Darrow stated that the amount that could be added to the Forgone Balance was \$1,497,799.

Commissioner Duncan expressed her opinion that the County did not need to add the amount to the Forgone Balance.

Commissioner Brooks expressed his support for Resolution 2020-50.

Chairman Fillios indicated he felt it would be safer to add the amount to the Forgone Balance this time, in view of the very aggressive stance the legislature had been taking toward counties' taxing ability. He pointed out that if a circumstance never arises that requires them to use the fund, it would have no impact on the taxpayers, but it would be there if an issue arose.

Commissioner Brooks moved that the Board pass Resolution 2020-50. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Deputy Clerk Ginorio called the roll:

Commissioner Brooks: Aye

Commissioner Duncan: Nay

Chairman Fillios: Aye

The motion carried.

Ms. Maiani exited the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

I. Decision Regarding CARES Property Tax Relief Funding (Action)

All three Commissioners expressed feelings of uncertainty regarding acceptance of the CARES Property Tax Relief Funding.

Treasurer Steve Matheson indicated he felt the program had been poorly conceived and executed and was not supported by fact. However, he said he felt the Commissioners should accept the risks and take the funding.

Clerk Brannon commented that the Auditor's Office was concerned that some of the funding could constitute double-dipping and result in future problems.

After vigorous discussion, the Commissioners decided to withhold action on this item in hopes of receiving additional information.

J. Adjournment (Action): Chairman Fillios adjourned the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BRANNON, CLERK

CHRIS FILLIOS, CHAIRMAN

BY: _____
Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk
