

**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Human Resources: Personnel Changes**  
**February 11, 2021**  
**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 items. Also present were Assessor Bela Kovacs, Clerk Jim Brannon, Finance Director Dena Darrow, Treasurer Steve Matheson, Human Resources (HR) Director Sylvia Proud, Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Darrin Murphey, BOCC Communications Manager Nancy Jones and Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio. Also present were Coeur d'Alene Press Reporter Madison Hardy and Kootenai County Resident Sandra White. Commissioner Duncan, Mr. Murphey and Ms. White were present via teleconference.

**A. Call to Order:** Chairman Chris Fillios called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

**B. Changes to the Agenda (Action):**

Human Resources (HR) Director Sylvia Proud requested that item one be removed from the agenda.

Chairman Fillios agreed.

**C. Business (Action):**

**Communications Services Administrator 5 Year Matrix – KCSO**

This item was pulled from the agenda.

**Request for Staff Bonuses – BOCC**

Chairman Fillios stated this was the first time he had recommended bonuses for BOCC personnel. He explained that three BOCC staff members, due to COVID and other issues, had each worked more than 100 hours which would have been considered overtime had they been hourly employees but salaried employees are not eligible for overtime. He said one bonus was \$1,500 and the other two were \$1,000 each.

Ms. Proud confirmed that the loaded cost to the County would be \$4,212.

Chairman Fillios said there were funds in the BOCC budget to cover this, despite the bonuses not being previously included.

Treasurer Steve Matheson began by praising the BOCC staff involved, noting that he had depended on input from all three employees and had only good things to say about them. He said that he would also be asking for bonuses for staff members in the near future, to compensate for exemplary performances during difficult times in his department. He noted that those bonuses would be fully covered from salary salvage. He cautioned the Commissioners that other Elected Officials would probably come to the Board asking to

distribute bonuses as well. He asked how the Board would respond if those Elected Officials did not have salary savings available to cover such bonuses.

Commissioner Leslie Duncan stated that her concerns were that the bonuses were out-of-budget and that the Board could not be certain there would be salary savings to cover them. She said she felt the employees were performing exceptionally well and deserved recognition, but that some other form such as comp time or Employee of the Month might be more appropriate. She added that the Board had previously denied similar requests and given specific direction that out of budget bonus requests would not be considered. She also noted that, since the Board did not have the funds to offer such treatment to other departments whose staff had been strained by COVID, she felt equity could become an issue.

Commissioner Duncan suggested including bonuses in their calculations for the upcoming budget season. She said she had been working with Ms. Proud to develop a standard bonus policy for the County before October 1.

Assessor Bela Kovacs offered his praise for BOCC Communications Manager Nancy Jones, in particular, for her efforts. He indicated he agreed with points made by Treasurer Matheson and Commissioner Duncan. He reminded the Commissioners that he had previously spoken with each of them regarding recognition for some of his employees for the extra efforts extended before and during the pandemic.

Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Darrin Murphey reminded all present that determination of compensation, including bonuses, was solely under the authority of the Board.

Clerk Jim Brannon asked the Commissioners to consider the precedent they would be setting, should they award the bonuses out of budget. He reminded them that they had previously warned all Elected Officials against making any out of budget requests.

Commissioner Bill Brooks commented that he supported the proposal to award the bonuses. He said he felt the situation with the BOCC staff was unique.

Ms. Proud stated that she was still working on a County-wide bonus policy.

Chairman Fillios brought up \$32,000 in bonuses that he said had been paid within the Clerk's departments two years ago. He said this was what caused the Board to adopt their new policy. He pointed out that personnel policy allowed the Board to consider out of budget bonuses on a case by case basis.

Chairman Fillios confirmed that the BOCC had not included these bonuses in its budget. He remarked he was not sure they should budget for bonuses for FY22, depending on what the Legislature decided regarding taxing authority. He said they might choose to offer other rewards instead.

Chairman Fillios said that the BOCC did have the dollars to cover the expense, just not all in the "A" Budget. He stated there would be money left in the "B" Budget, which would be applied.

Chairman Fillios commented that the Appraisers had the advantage of improved technology, so fewer personnel were able to keep up with the load with less effort. He said he wasn't sure if it completely balanced the demands made by increased population, but he felt it was a mitigating factor.

Assessor Kovacs agreed that technology had offered advances, but not to the extent that the problems had been resolved. He offered details of some of the difficulties his different departments had weathered recently, particularly in DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles) and reminded those present of suggestions he had made in the past for alternate types of employee recognition.

Clerk Brannon noted that the amount of \$32,000 previously quoted was inflated and the bonuses distributed at that time had included District Court staff as requested by First Judicial District Trial Court Administrator Karlene Behringer and the District Judges. He stated that the bonuses had also all been funded from salary savings. He pointed out that Elections staff had run an Election under very difficult circumstances with very limited staff due to COVID, but had not been offered bonuses. He said he felt that personnel had been stretched in many areas and that offering selected, out of budget bonuses would set a bad precedent.

Clerk Brannon acknowledged that the Board alone had authority to set compensation and could approve or deny any such request from any other Elected Officials' departments. He asked the Commissioners to consider the impression that would be made by these actions.

Chairman Fillios voiced understanding of the points presented.

Ms. Proud stated that Compensation Policy 120, section 3.12, "Use of Bonus Payments," read, "The County's compensation philosophy allows for the consideration and use of lump-sum bonus payments. The basis for utilization of such a reward mechanism will be determined prior to implementation." She affirmed that the proposed actions were within the bounds of Policy 120. She said that the Personnel Matrix Guidelines also included the statement that bonuses, whether budgeted or unbudgeted, still needed to come before the Board of County Commissioners for review and approval.

Commissioner Duncan said that she felt these awards should be put off until the end of the third quarter of the fiscal year to be sure the savings were there in the budget.

Chairman Fillios said he disagreed with her. He stated that the "B" Budget would have enough money remaining in it because travel expenses had been reduced due to COVID.

Commissioner Duncan stated that she felt this set a very bad precedent at this time and said they should prepare for many similar requests to be brought to the Board in short order.

Commissioner Brooks moved that the Board approve the bonuses as described, one for \$1,500 and two for \$1,000. Chairman Fillios 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.

**Executive Session pursuant to Idaho Code §74-206(1)(b) to consider the evaluation, dismissal or disciplining of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent (Closed Session – Discussion)**

**Decisions/Direction (Open Session – Action)**

No information requiring an Executive Session was submitted.

- 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.

Kootenai County Resident Sandra White voiced her objections to County employees receiving bonuses when some local residents no longer had jobs or insurance. She said she felt any surplus funds should be returned by lowering taxes.

Chairman Fillios remarked that the Board had budgeted a 0% increase to property taxes for FY21.

Ms. White responded that she still felt taxes should be reduced instead of bonuses being paid.

- E. Adjournment (Action):** Chairman Fillios adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BRANNON, CLERK

CHRIS FILLIOS, CHAIRMAN

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk

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