

Minutes of Meeting
Idaho Office of Emergency Management
July 26, 2021
3:00 p.m.

The Kootenai County Board of Commissioners: Chairman Chris Fillios, Commissioner Leslie Duncan and Commissioner Bill Brooks met to discuss the following agenda item. Also present were Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Director Tiffany Westbrook and Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio. Also present were FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) Representatives Vince Maykovich and TJ Dargan, Idaho Office of Emergency Management Director Brad Richy and Northern Area Field Officer Jay Baker, and Idaho Governor's Office Policy Advisor Louis Hougard.

- A. Call to Order:** Chairman Chris Fillios called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.
- B. Changes to the Agenda (Action):** There were no changes to the agenda.
- C. Business (Discussion):**

Discussion with Idaho Office of Emergency Management Director Brad Richy

Idaho Office of Emergency Management (IOEM) Director Brad Richy praised Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Director Tiffany Westbrook for her excellent work. He commented that the COVID pandemic response had been ongoing for 400 or 500 days and asked for any feedback from those present. He remarked that his office had also been involved with the January windstorm that had caused so much damage locally. He said his department had cooperated with FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) Representative TJ Dargan.

Ms. Westbrook said that the help she received from the state had been appreciated. She commented that this had been a new situation for everyone and that everyone had done the best they could. She noted that she had been working on the windstorm issues with both FEMA and the State and had observed some redundancy in the process. She offered some suggestions for streamlining their efforts.

Mr. Richy agreed that duplication of paperwork, in particular, was time consuming and said he hoped to bring improvements to the process. He asked the Commissioners for their input.

Chairman Fillios replied that their major concerns had involved employee compensation and the amounts of leave allowed during the pandemic.

Chairman Fillios described the County's handling of CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) Act and ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds.

Mr. Richy stated that there would be a State Preparedness Conference held October 2, 2021 through October 6, 2021. He said his office would pay for one Commissioner and

Ms. Westbrook to attend. He described some of the topics that would be covered during the event.

Mr. Richey discussed the implications and requirements of the County's receipt of the EMPG (Emergency Management Program Grant) and matching funds needed for different grants. He offered some suggestions for the Commissioners to explore regarding possible grants for infrastructure improvements and repairs.

IOEM North Area Field Officer Jay Baker announced that Ms. Westbrook would speak on this topic at the National Homeland Security Conference.

In response to Mr. Baker's request, Ms. Westbrook described the ways CARES Act funds had been used in Kootenai County. She explained how the OEM Office was relocated and how the Fairgrounds were used.

Commissioner Leslie Duncan pointed out that about \$500,000 in taxpayer funds were also used for the OEM relocation so far. She said this was for land purchase, repairs to the existing building and creation of an additional maintenance position. She noted that about \$655,000 from CARES was used. She asked the FEMA and State Representatives to find out whether there were ways that any of the taxpayer dollars could be refunded.

FEMA Representative TJ Dargan explained his position in the chain of action for emergencies that occur in Idaho. He noted he was tasked with finding every bit of money possible that Idaho was eligible for through various programs and making sure the funds were used properly.

Commissioner Duncan remarked that the County had found that backup generators were needed during the January windstorm, because District Court had wanted to proceed with business that day but the campus had lost electricity.

Ms. Westbrook said she had submitted three projects for FEMA reimbursement after the windstorm: the Harrison Breakwater for \$20,000, \$6,000 in general costs due to the storm and Solid Waste costs, all of which totaled a bit more than \$100,000. She said she had submitted information to FEMA and was now working with the State to get any expenses covered that she could.

Idaho Governor's Office Policy Advisor Louis Hougard introduced himself and explained that he was present to gather information on Emergency Management operations for the governor.

- 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 3:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BRANNON, CLERK

CHRIS FILLIOS, CHAIRMAN

BY: _____
Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk
