

**Minutes of Meeting
Elected Officials
August 18, 2021
9:00 a.m.**

The Kootenai County Board of Commissioners: Chair Pro Tem Leslie Duncan and Commissioner Bill Brooks met to discuss the following agenda items. Also present were Clerk Jim Brannon, Coroner Warren Keene, M.D., Prosecutor Barry McHugh, KCSO Sheriff Robert Norris, Treasurer Steve Matheson, Chief Deputy Clerk Jennifer Locke, Finance Director Dena Darrow, Accounting Manager Grace Blomgren, Human Resources (HR) Director Sylvia Proud, Chief Deputy Assessor Allyson Knapp, BOCC Communications Manager Nancy Jones, BOCC Senior Business Analyst Nanci Plouffe and Deputy Clerk Tina Ginorio. Chairman Chris Fillios was excused.

- A. **Call to Order:** Chair Pro Tem Leslie Duncan 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 (Discussion):**

IRS Name Update

Treasurer Steve Matheson explained that an incorrect name had been registered with the IRS, “The County of Kootenai,” instead of “Kootenai County, Idaho.” He said that this needed to be corrected because it could cause confusion and potential legal issues. He stated that his department would be working in concert with the Clerk’s Office to make the correction and look for any other errors of this type.

Treasurer Matheson stressed that “Kootenai County, Idaho” should be used on all legal documents, with the state fully spelled out, not abbreviated.

Assessor Bela Kovacs entered the meeting at 9:03 a.m.

Process for Selecting Market for Wage Study

Chair Pro Tem Duncan reminded those present that a Wage Study had been undertaken by the County in 2019, with compensation adjustments made for staff. She said another such study would be made in FY22.

Human Resources (HR) Director Sylvia Proud reviewed the history of the 2019 Wage Study, including how the market examined was determined through discussion with Elected Officials.

Kootenai County Resident William Le entered the meeting at 9:04 a.m.

Ms. Proud commented that BDPA, the company used for market data in the 2019 study, had been purchased by Ameriband. She asked the Elected Officials to provide HR with a

list of the top two or three entities to whom they felt they were losing employees, to help determine the markets the new study would include.

KCSO Sheriff Robert Norris announced that his department's staffing issues were such that he could not wait until 2023 for a new wage study to be completed in order to increase compensation. He stated that he needed funds made available right away for increased wages as well as bonuses.

Commissioner Bill Brooks voiced his support for Sheriff Norris's requests. He noted that other departments were also experiencing great difficulty in attracting and retaining staff, resulting in increased stress for all. He remarked that Community Development was one of these.

Assessor Bela Kovacs reported that his departments were under serious stress as well. He said another Appraiser had put in notice of resignation.

Ms. Proud remarked that there were currently 72 open positions in the County, with 12 new employees to be starting soon.

There followed substantial discussion of the difficulties encountered filling open positions across a number of departments and in funding increased wages, retention bonuses and recruitment bonuses.

Treasurer Matheson voiced his appreciation of HR's hard work and pointed out that there were about 10,000 open positions across the whole of Kootenai County, so it was not just the County offices that were affected.

Chair Pro Tem Duncan acknowledged the seriousness of the situation and indicated that strong efforts were being made to improve conditions. She said that money had been set aside for wage adjustments in the FY22 Budget, to take place before the new wage study.

Wage Study Implementation Guidelines

Chair Pro Tem Duncan commented that this topic had been addressed in conjunction with the previous agenda item.

End of Year Projections by Elected Official Group

Finance Director Dena Darrow reported that she had provided the Elected Officials with information on the percentage of the "A" (Personnel) and "B" (Operations) Budgets each of their departments had spent by a cutoff date of August 16, 2021 and projections for their status at the end of the fiscal year.

Chair Pro Tem Duncan reminded those present that the County was due to receive unexpected revenue of about \$4 million from sources such as sales and liquor taxes. She suggested that these funds be used to provide retention and recruitment bonuses, as previously discussed.

Treasurer Matheson cautioned that the amounts received from these sources for the next fiscal year would not be nearly as large.

Retention and Recruitment Bonuses

Chair Pro Tem Duncan reminded those present that each County employee had been issued a \$500 retention bonus last year.

Ms. Proud suggested that requirements for any retention bonuses be tightened for this year. She said these could be things such as having worked for the County for at least six months and the employee having no documented areas requiring improvement in his/her personnel file.

General support was voiced for provision of retention and recruitment bonuses.

Commissioner Brooks suggested that a task force be created to determine how, to whom and in what amount such bonuses would be provided.

Chair Pro Tem Duncan expressed concern that the additional workload could stress already overburdened Payroll staff in the Auditor's Office and suggested that bonuses be distributed with an eye to creating as little extra work as possible.

Sheriff Norris exited the meeting at 9:47 a.m.

Payroll Process

Clerk Jim Brannon stated that the Payroll Department was kept constantly busy. He described the different operations that they had to perform including onboarding new staff, updating changes in compensation resulting from promotions or other salary adjustments, removing staff that resigned or retired, updating various deductions taken from individual's pay and tracking sick, vacation and compensatory time.

Accounting Manager Grace Blomgren provided additional details on the activities of the Payroll staff.

Mr. Le exited the meeting at 10:01 a.m.

Additional discussion ensued regarding the effect issuing bonuses would have on the department's workload and related details of implementation.

- 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): Chair Pro Tem Duncan adjourned the meeting at 10:07 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM BRANNON, CLERK

LESLIE DUNCAN, CHAIR PRO TEM

BY: _____
Tina Ginorio, Deputy Clerk
