

Bear Lake County Commissioners' Meeting
January 9, 2023
Commissioners' Chambers – Paris, Idaho

The Board of the Bear Lake County Commissioners met in its regular meeting at 9 a.m. Monday, January 9, 2023, in the Commissioners' Chambers in Paris, Idaho. Video access to the meeting was available via Zoom. Members present were outgoing Commission Chairman Vaughn N. Rasmussen, Commissioner Bradley D. Jensen, Commissioner Rex L. Payne, incoming Commissioner Wynn S. Olsen and Board Clerk Amy Bishop. Also in attendance were Attorney Adam McKenzie, outgoing Assessor Heber Dunford, Incoming Assessor Janelle Sparks-Jensen, Superintendent Todd Boehme, Treasurer Tricia Poulsen, County Building Inspector Wayne Davidson, Magistrate Court Judge R. Todd Garbett, Sheriff Bart Heslington, Coroner Chad Walker, Deputy Clerk Paul Christiansen and various members of the public.

APPROVE AGENDA – ACTION ITEM

MOTION: Commissioner Jensen made a motion to approve the meeting agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Payne. The motion carried.

SWEARING IN OF CLERK AND NEW COMMISSIONERS – ACTION ITEM

Clerk of the Board Amy Bishop was sworn in by Commissioner Rasmussen. After taking her oath of office, Bishop swore in Commissioners Payne and Olsen, who were both elected on November 8, 2022.

After Commissioners Payne and Olsen took their oaths of office, Commissioner Rasmussen – no longer in office – stepped down from his position as Chairman of the Board. Before exiting, he thanked his fellow commissioners, elected officials, county employees and constituents for allowing him to serve them as a county commissioner for the past 17 years.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ORGANIZATION – ACTION ITEM

With former Commissioner Rasmussen now gone from the Board, a new commission chairman needed to be elected, Bishop said. This would have to be done through a motion and vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Olsen made a motion that Commissioner Bradley D. Jensen be appointed as Chairman of the Board of Bear Lake County Commissioners. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Payne. The motion carried.

SWEARING IN OF OTHER ELECTED OFFICIALS – ACTION ITEM

After taking his position as Board Chairman, Commissioner Jensen swore in three other elected officials – Janelle Sparks-Jensen as Bear Lake County Assessor; Tricia Poulsen as Bear Lake County Treasurer; and R. Todd Garbett as Bear Lake County Magistrate Court Judge.

BOARD ASSIGNMENTS

Commissioners Jensen, Payne and Olsen decided amongst themselves who would take on which Board assignments.

It was decided that Commissioner Jensen would serve as liaison to and with the Planning and Zoning, the Judicial Selection Committee, Road and Bridge, the Bear Lake Regional Commission, the District Landfill, the Tri-County Grooming Committee and as Emergency Incident Commander.

Commissioner Payne was selected to serve as liaison to and with the Bear Lake County Airport, Bear River Mosquito Abatement, Bear Lake Historical Society, the National Oregon/California Trail Center, the Bear Lake County Ambulance Service, the Soil and Water Conservation District, the Idaho Transportation Department Five-County Coalition and the Bear Lake County Extension Office.

Commissioner Olsen was selected to serve as liaison to and with the Bear Lake County Fair Board, the Bear Lake Memorial Hospital Board, the Bear Lake County Translator District, the Montpelier Golf Course, Fish Haven Mosquito Abatement, The Region 6 Behavioral Health Board, the Bear Lake Senior/Community Center, the Southeast Idaho Council of Government, the Four-County Alliance of Southeast Idaho (4-CASI) economic development group, the Sixth District Juvenile Detention Center Board, Bear Lake Riflemen Gun Club and contact for the Bear Lake County Veterans Services.

Various citizens who are either currently serving or who have volunteered to serve as liaisons to and with certain boards were discussed and appointed, pending their acceptance. These included Dennis Hunzeker for Animal Damage Control; Ed Lyon as Bear Lake County Veterans Services Officer; and Bear Lake County Sheriff's Chief Deputy Ryan Larsen with Waterways. Former Commissioner Vaughn Rasmussen volunteered to serve in a citizen capacity with the 4-CASI economic development group and to finish out his current term as Chairman of the Southeast Idaho Health District, with the option to serve as a trustee afterward at the Board's discretion. Rasmussen also advised he would be glad to finish his appointment term with the Eastern Idaho Resource Advisory Committee – a position he was appointed to some years ago by then-President of the United States Barack Obama.

The commissioners chose to allow all Bear Lake County elected officials to take part in the Sixth District Elected Officials Meetings, which are held quarterly. Commissioner Jensen said all elected officials are welcome at these meetings, but Bear Lake County would set up a rotation of attendees to ensure the area was always represented.

ELECTED OFFICIALS UPDATES

Heber Dunford provided his final report to the Board as outgoing Bear Lake County Assessor. He said the vehicle registration volume had risen in December to \$125,975.57, up from \$100,978.53 in November. This total came from the 149 vehicle registrations totaled in December, up from 81 the previous month.

Kevin Frank, the commercial appraiser that Bear Lake County is working with, is making good progress and has almost completed the initial phase of fieldwork necessary to be on schedule for the assessment cycle, Dunford said. The re-appraisal program is aligned with this year's requirements on the number of

parcels that will need to be addressed this year. Additionally, Jase Cundick, the District 5 consulting appraiser for the Idaho State Tax commission, has recently said the other counties in his district are yielding data that is similar to that coming from Bear Lake County, Dunford said. Although the market is slowing down, sale prices are remaining steady. This means Bear Lake County will likely see increased values in assessments again this coming year. Dunford said deed transfers and mapping efforts are up to date with the recording process.

Dunford publicly expressed his appreciation for the Assessor's Office staff, saying it had been a pleasure and education to have worked with them the past four years.

BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to open the Board of Equalization session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Olsen. The motion Carried.

The Board entered the Board of Equalization at 9:44 a.m. to discuss an appeal to the sub roll from Brian and Nancy Bell, owners of property located at 185 W. Wilks Lane in Paris. Assessor Janelle Sparks-Jensen said the property is a summer home and is intended to be occupied three to four months each year. She said her office had assessed the property value at \$528,075, but the owners believe the property value to be less than that at about \$441,000 – a difference of about \$87,000 between the cost to build and the appraised value.

Sparks-Jensen said property assessments reflect the dollar amount that a property can sell for on the market, not the cost of construction and materials that were needed to build it. Additionally, she said, the occupancy roll is based off the annual roll, and the market was very active at the time the occupancy roll was tallied. Although the market has slowed down, values remained high at the time of the property assessment.

Sparks-Jensen provided several comparative examples of homes in Paris and Bloomington that are between 27 and 100 years older than the property in question – all with similar square footages and amenities. These properties were sold for either close to the same or more than half, respectively, of the appraised value of the appellant property. Additionally, she said, values are largely comparable for similar properties based off recent sales of 55 homes in the Bear Lake valley.

The appellant was not present at the Board of Equalization, so no rebuttal was heard.

MOTION: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to close the Board of Equalization session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Payne. The motion carried.

The commissioners left the Board of Equalization session and re-entered their regular meeting at 9:56 a.m.

MOTION: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to tax the discussed property at the current assessed value. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Payne. The motion carried.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to approve the sub, occupancy and missed sub roll. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Olsen. The motion Carried.

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Commissioner Payne said he had been a part of the screening for a new associate agent for the Bear Lake County Extension Office. Originally there had been four applicants, but one had not submitted a complete application, he said. The three applicants who had submitted complete applications were all very good candidates for the position and all three will be interviewed. The extension office is examining dates on which to hold the interviews, Commissioner Payne said.

GENERAL BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

RATIFY CLAIMS

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to ratify the claims before the Board. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Olsen. The motion carried.

APPROVE MINUTES

MOTION: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for December 12, 2022. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Payne. The motion carried.

AUDIT ENGAGEMENT LETTER

Clerk Amy Bishop said that Certified Public Accountant Gary Teuscher had provided to the Board an audit engagement letter that explained the scope of the county audit needing completion for the year. This letter, Bishop said, needed approval in order to allow Teuscher to conduct the audit.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to approve the audit engagement letter and approve Gary Teuscher to conduct the Bear Lake County audit. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Olsen. The motion carried.

AWARD RETIRED LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER HANDGUN

Sheriff Bart Heslington told the Board the county has statutorily been provided the right to award a service weapon to any retiring deputy who is in good standing with the agency they have worked for. Heslington said that Gregg Knutti was now retiring after nearly 32 years of law enforcement service and the Bear Lake County Sheriff's Office was now asking permission to award him with his service revolver in recognition of his years with the agency.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to award retiring Bear Lake County Deputy Gregg Knutti his service weapon while extending a thanks for his years of service to the county. Commissioner Olsen seconded the motion. The motion carried.

ELECTED OFFICIALS UPDATES, CONTINUED – SHERIFF’S REPORT

Sheriff Bart Heslington provided to the Board his elected official report, which provided a year-end summary of his agency’s law enforcement officer activities; the total funds collected and disbursed through driver’s license issuances; total fees collected by the Sheriff’s Office; total disbursed for civil garnishments; and total jail housing costs, from January 1, 2022 to November 30, 2022. At the time the jail housing costs report was compiled, no data for December 2022 was available, Heslington said.

Heslington also provided each of the commissioners a copy of his monthly written report, which served as a breakdown of the monthly accruals since the Board’s meeting on December 12, 2022.

As in past months’ meetings, Heslington again provided an update on his department’s staffing concerns and issues. He advised that the Sheriff’s Office was nearly at full staffing for the first time in several months. The department has hired two dispatchers that currently are undergoing on-the-job training. Once they are certified and working on their own, Heslington said, that will bring the dispatching center to full staffing requirements. Additionally, he has extended an offer for a part-time position but that individual has not started with the department yet. The part-time dispatcher will begin their training once the two new full-time dispatchers are working on their own.

Heslington said he had hired a new patrol deputy at the beginning of January, and that individual currently is taking part in the in-house portion of his training. Due to cancellations with the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) sessions, Heslington said he has been unable to get the new deputy scheduled for the academy but will do so at the earliest possible time. A second patrol deputy will come aboard with the Bear Lake County Sheriff’s Office before month’s end, Heslington said. That individual is already POST certified and, after completing the in-house training, will transition to regular patrol. At that time, the law enforcement department will be fully staffed.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT & LOCAL ASSISTANCE AND TRIBAL CONSISTENCY FUND REVIEW

Clerk Amy Bishop provided an overview of where the county is with the payments it has received through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The county had received two payments with accrued interest and Bishop provided the Board a printed breakdown of the categories and projects for which money had been spent. The county has a remaining \$60,000 from the ARPA fund, she said, and it has committed some of that money to projects that it has not yet purchased items for.

Additionally, Bishop said, Bear Lake County will receive by month’s end two allocations of \$460,000 apiece from the Idaho Association of Counties through its Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund (LATCF). These funds are set apart to assist natural resource counties and can be used for general governmental spending. Bishop said the Board will need to examine the best way to use that funding.

Commissioner Jensen requested Bishop provide to the Board a list of all the projects it has committed funding to. Bishop advised she would get that information to each commissioner after the meeting.

TAX CANCELLATIONS

Treasurer Tricia Poulsen told the Board that 10 property taxpayers had signed up for the homeowner's exemption after books had been closed. Additionally, one taxpayer had paid taxes for multiple garbage services when they only really have a single can. Because of these discrepancies, Poulsen said she was submitting tax cancellations that totaled \$4,499.85 and reflected changes for 11 tax parcels – parcels 29241, 2238.01, 231, 24011, 5259, 811, 174, 531, 1489, 1126 and 1137.

Poulsen also reported the Bear Lake County Treasurer's Office had collected just more than \$4 million from the tax drive, with much of that coming via online payments. Going forward, Poulsen said, her office hopes to utilize an employee from the Bear Lake County Assessor's Office to assist with the tax season efforts.

Poulsen said that on December 29, 2022, taxes had not balanced. Because of that, there will be one additional cancellation in January, and that will be brought to the Board at a future meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to accept the order of cancellation of taxes as prepared and presented. Commissioner Payne seconded the motion. The motion carried.

APPROVE ANNUAL ROAD AND STREET FINANCIAL REPORT

Clerk Amy Bishop said the annual Road and Street Financial Report is sent to the state each year and shows revenues and expenses for roadways. It also shows lane miles; maintenance conducted and funding totals dedicated; and upcoming future projects. This report is then used by the Idaho Legislature to examine what the county's needs are.

Most highway funding received is in relation to the population of the area, she said.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to accept and approve the Annual Road and Street Financial Report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Olsen. The motion carried.

RATIFY PUBLIC DEFENSE ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Bishop said the expenditure for indigent defense were \$113,000. This information needed to be approved and forwarded to the state by January 3, 2023. That information now came before the Board as a formality in public session.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to ratify the Public Defense Annual Financial Report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Olsen. The motion carried.

AIRPORT GRANT AGREEMENT AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Bishop reported the county had received grant funding from the state through the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) in the amount of \$52,297.61. This money is dedicated to phase 2 of the construction of a snow removal equipment building at the county airport, as well as the purchase of snow removal equipment. The state requires this funding be accepted via resolution, she said.

Bear Lake County Resolution 2023-01 – which accepts the grant offer from the State of Idaho – would, first, accept the funding in the amount of \$52,297.61; second, authorize the Board chairman to sign on behalf of Bear Lake County; and, third, provide that a true copy of the grant agreement be attached to the resolution itself.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to accept the Airport Improvement Program grant agreement. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Olsen. The motioned Carried.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to approve and adopt Bear Lake County Resolution 2023-01. Commissioner Olsen seconded the motion. The motion carried.

GRANT OVERSIGHT RISK ASSESSMENT

Bishop said the AIP Grant Oversight Risk Assessment provides an analysis of the policies in place in association with airport improvements, and provides information for policies available that will ensure the county will have good financial options in place for implementation of said improvements.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to adopt the Airport Improvement Program Grant Oversight Risk Assessment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Olsen. The motion carried.

SCHEDULE ROAD MAP MEETING/HEARING

The Board scheduled a Road Map public hearing for 1 p.m. on February 13, 2023. This will be the same day as the Board’s regular February meeting. Bishop said scheduling the hearing for that day will allow the publication and advertisement of the meeting be made in conjunction with statutory requirements.

SNOWMOBILE GROOMER PURCHASE

At its December regular meeting, the Board had approved and signed a grant agreement for the purchase of a new snow groomer. Bishop said that because of a tight timeline with the grooming season, and in an attempt to meet grant requirements, bids need to be opened soon.

The Board scheduled a special meeting for 5 p.m. on January 25, to allow Trail Grooming Project Manager Chief Deputy Ryan Larsen to open bids.

The Board adjourned for a short recess at 10:37 a.m. The regular meeting reconvened at 10:45 a.m.

WAYNE DAVIDSON – BUILDING INSPECTOR REPORT

County Building Inspector Wayne Davidson presented his monthly report to the Board. He said thus far January had been pretty slow in his office, with only two building permits having been issued for heater installations. Similarly, there were no new housing starts in the month of December.

Still, Davidson said, there is a lot of work being done on existing building projects throughout the

county. This has provided him with lots of inspections to conduct.

BROOKE ALLEN – DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE AND INFO ON GRANTS FOR FIBER OPTIC EXPANSION

Clerk Amy Bishop said Brooke Allen from Direct Communications would not appear before the Board. Allen had expected to receive new grant information from the state, but that information had not come to him prior to the meeting. Because of this, Allen would reschedule and present that information to the Board at its February meeting.

LEVY CALCULATION FOR PUBLIC DEFENSE

Clerk Amy Bishop said she had a conference call scheduled later in the week with the clerks of other counties throughout Idaho to discuss how to implement a uniform approach to the issue of levy calculation for public defense funding. She said the state is working toward a new public defense model, and last year the Idaho Legislature opted to allocate funds to counties to pay for part of the costs associated with public defense, providing a plan on how to approach the levies be in place by the end of 2022. In the meantime, Bishop said, the legislature had dedicated a reduced levy to provide for the amount needed for public defense.

While the courts have fines and fees, the determination for how much is levied for public defense – not how much is spent in total – comes off the total levying authority, Bishop said.

County Attorney Adam McKenzie said the county has not designated when property tax or sales tax levies are appropriate. The reality is that no Idaho counties are making that designation to determine what amounts for this public defense fund need be taken out of property and sales taxes, he said.

The Board opted to table this issue and discuss it further at a future meeting once more information has been gathered.

TODD BOEHME – COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT

County Superintendent Todd Boehme told the Board that replacement work on Jericho Loop Bridge over Saint Charles Creek is on schedule to be completed by mid-January, following some delays that had previously set back the project.

Boehme said that prior to the January 9 meeting – due largely to the demands of winter storm plowing needs – he had been unable to address the Snowmobile Club Hill Climb parking lot snow removal. He said he planned to get someone out there as soon as he could so access to the lot could be opened.

Boehme said the Road and Bridge Department has been shorthanded and doing the best it can to keep up with the county's plowing needs. He reported he has worked to address all public concerns he has been contacted about in regards to winter maintenance on the roadways.

The Road and Bridge Department has run into an issue with one of its all-wheel drive sanding trucks,

Boehme said. He currently is looking for the needed parts so the truck can be fixed. If those parts can be found, the truck can be fixed in house and will not have to be sent to a repair shop. Unfortunately, he said, parts are difficult to allocate because the vehicle is 23 years old.

ROAD AND BRIDGE TRAINING POLICY – ACTION ITEM

Boehme said his department currently is going through the application process in order to hire new employees. While he has received many good applications, Boehme said that a recent change to the Federal Transportation Laws is requiring that anyone attempting to get a commercial driver's license (CDL) attend a course put on by an accredited organization. Because of this change, higher time and monetary demands are being placed on those individuals than in the past.

The cost of these courses can range anywhere from \$2,000 to \$8,000, he said. These courses consist of online work, in-classroom work and behind-the-wheel learning. Because Bear Lake County requires its Road and Bridge workers have a Class A CDL – and because he has received many applications from individuals who do not have a CDL at all – Boehme said he was asking the Board to help him determine if that CDL needs to be obtained at the expense of the applicant or at the expense of Bear Lake County.

If the county paid the cost of this certification, it would be similar to its handling of applicants in the Bear Lake County Sheriff's Office who then need to be sent to a law enforcement academy prior to active duty.

County Attorney Adam McKenzie said that this situation should be no different than the hiring of other professionals – the necessary requirements have to be met. Additionally, he said, there is the worry that if the county pays for the certification of the employee, that employee could then leave shortly after the credentials have been awarded and paid for. To prevent that, he said, the county could enter into contract agreement between an applicant and the county as the employer that would require the employee work a certain amount of time for the county. If that contract was broken, the employee would be subject to a contract penalty.

A second option is a wage reduction, he said. If the county opted to pay for the CDL certification of an employee, it could reduce that employee's wage for a certain number of months and by a certain monetary amount until the cost of certification was repaid to the county.

MOTION: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to revise the current Road and Bridge Department application to state that a CDL is required before the employee can start work and that preference will be given to applicants who already have the required CDL. Additionally, Bear Lake County will assist employees in obtaining the required CDL at the cost of said employee. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Payne. The motion carried.

DECLARE SURPLUS PROPERTY

The Board decided it would publish the declaration of surplus property for an old Assessor's Office vehicle and old Senior Center vehicle, which had been discussed at a previous meeting. Additionally, the Board chose to table declaration for a water truck owned by the Bear Lake County Fair board and any

Road and Bridge vehicles.

SHSP GRANT

This item had previously been addressed and no further action was needed on it, Clerk Amy Bishop said.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ITEMS

Boehme said he had approached some contractors about the construction of a new Emergency Operations Center (EOC). He reported that new construction would range between \$200-\$300 per square foot. EOC electrical requirements mean a generator would be needed at the location. If the county chose to rent a building rather than build a new location, the cost of moving the existing generator to the location would depend on the type of property rented, Boehme said.

Additionally, he said, he had reached out to a radio communications company about the cost of moving and reimplementing the radio tower and other communications equipment at a new location. At the time of the meeting, Boehme had not received a reply from the company.

The Board directed Boehme to proceed with the replacement of the furnace in the existing EOC building and bring any additional information he received before the board in the future.

Boehme said he attended the recent Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) meeting in Caribou County to learn more about the Rocky Mountain Power Shutoff Program and how it will affect Bear Lake County.

JOE COLES – BEAR LAKE BRAWL TRIATHLON UPDATE

Joe Coles, director of the annual Bear Lake Brawl Triathlon, came before the Board via Zoom and reported the 2022 event – which was held September 17, 2022 – had gone very well, with no health or safety issues encountered. He reported that he and his crews had conducted a preliminary cleanup around the lake just after the conclusion of the triathlon but had to halt efforts due to a storm that moved in. He said the team had returned the following Tuesday and conducted a deeper clean in the area.

Commissioner Payne told Coles the Board had received some public comments from citizens concerned there had been too much trash left along roads that was not cleaned up in a timely manner. Bear Lake State Park Manager Andrew Stokes said that trash is a concern with any type of event held around the lake. In regards to the Bear Lake Brawl Triathlon, Stokes said he encountered no more trash concerns than seen normally in areas where regular recreation is held on any given day at Bear Lake.

Bear Lake County Sheriff Bart Heslington echoed Stokes' statements, adding that with any of these events the level of cleanup is highly dependent on the individual competitor's efforts. Some participants are great at their personal cleanup, while others are lacking. As a whole though, Heslington said, the Bear Lake Brawl does as good a job as any other event held in the area. Additionally, Heslington said he

appreciated the good line of open communication and rapport that has been established between the Bear Lake Brawl coordinators and the Bear Lake County Sheriff's Office.

Coles said the Bear Lake Brawl is planning to move future events to the East Shore State Park. This will assist in alleviating traffic and parking issues.

Stokes said safety concerns are lessened in September due to smaller crowds, and traffic is decreased at this time as well. By moving the event to the east shore area, this further helps to lessen concerns, he said. Additionally, Stokes said, Bear Lake State Park staff will be involved much more than in the past, and the triathlon falls in line with the Bear Lake State Park Department's vision and mission.

SHERIFF BART HESLINGTON – RADIO COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT UPDATE

Sheriff Bart Heslington said the emergency communications agencies in the county – after months of contentious meetings – have reached an agreement on what direction the radio update project needs to go in. Historically, radio communication in the county has been a hybrid combination of individual agencies deciding what direction they thought was best for their needs. The meetings have been attended by representatives from the Bear Lake County Sheriff's Office, the Montpelier Police Department, Bear Lake County Fire, Montpelier Fire, Bear Lake County Search and Rescue and the Bear Lake County Ambulance Service.

From the law enforcement perspective, Heslington said, the operating system in place has not allowed radio communication on a single frequency throughout the entire county. This forces officers to switch between radio channels when entering different areas of the county. Additionally, Heslington said, there are several "dead spots" where radio communications are unavailable entirely, and the current system does not notify officers when they have entered these out-of-service areas.

Heslington said he had asked representatives from all communication agencies to meet together and establish a plan that best suits everyone in order to pinpoint and resolve weaknesses in the communications system. Law enforcement, ambulance and search and rescue officials use a 700-megahertz system adopted years ago as part of a state-supported emergency operations solution. Fire officials operate off a different system entirely and maintain a VHF frequency system as a primary communication in order to stay in contact with the United States Forest Service and state fire agencies.

There are two components to a communications system, Heslington said. First, radio towers provide a point where radio transmissions are collected and then sent on to users; secondly, the dispatch center base radios are the hub for communication to and from those agencies. Unfortunately, all equipment has a life expectancy, and the systems in Bear Lake County's dispatch center are at their end of life. The current provider works with dispatch and keeps things functioning, but the equipment needed for the maintenance of those systems is no longer manufactured and parts can be difficult to obtain, he said.

Heslington said the plan he and the other agency representatives agreed upon provides for replacement of two dispatch consoles. All equipment will be updated within the dispatch center and the back room where IT for radio and base stations is located. Heslington said he had negotiated with the vendor on this and they have been responsive to his requests. That upgrade cost has been quoted at \$275,000.

The second part of the proposal will convert the existing Bern Hills tower site to a full trunking site, Heslington said. This will eliminate the requirement for radio users to constantly be switching channels in the different areas they respond to by expanding the overall communication area. The cost for that upgrade is \$83,811.11. Initially, these upgrades had been quoted at a figure that was nearly double what the vendor had come down to, he said.

Each individual agency still will be responsible for the purchase of its own handheld and mobile radio units. The agencies involved have pooled their resources and there has been a commitment for funding to help pay for these upgrades, Heslington said. The communications committee plans to continue meeting so it can better address future communications needs and ensure all agencies are on the same page moving forward.

The total cost of the project is calculated at \$538,815.11. Between all project participant agencies, Heslington said, there is a current funding balance of \$450,000.

County Attorney Adam McKenzie said that per Idaho Code 67-2808, this project would not be required to be bid out as it qualifies under circumstances where copiability is of paramount consideration. This is considered to have been competitively bid already because the state and other agencies already have adopted this emergency communications system, and Bear Lake County would just be following suit, he said.

McKenzie recommended the Board hold off approving and adopting the plan and set it as an agenda item for the January 25 special meeting. In that time Heslington can ensure the vendor will honor all proposed discounts and allow McKenzie to do a final check on bidding requirements and sole source statute information.

The item was tabled until the January 25 special meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

In the Public Comment session of the January 9 meeting, Delsa Jean Alleman – as a representative for the Bear Lake Senior Center – thanked Commissioner Payne for his time as liaison to the Senior Center. Alleman said she was looking forward to working with Commissioner Olsen now that he had been appointed to fill that liaison position.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – IDAHO CODE 74-206(1)

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to go into executive session according to IDAHO CODE 74-601(1) (a) to consider hiring a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent, wherein the respective qualities of individuals are to be evaluated in order to fill a particular vacancy or need. This paragraph does not apply to filling a vacancy in an elective office or deliberations about staffing needs in general. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Olsen. Roll Call Vote. Commissioner Olsen, Aye. Commissioner Jensen, Aye. Commissioner Payne, Aye.

The Board entered executive session at 12:24 p.m. and left executive session at 12:38 p.m.

From 12:34 p.m. to 12:38 p.m. the Board discussed potential personnel to fill some pending vacancies.

The Board had lunch from 12:38 p.m. to 12:54 p.m.

The Board reconvened its regular meeting, following lunch, at 12:54 p.m.

RAISE GRANT DISCUSSION – TYLER STUART, JONES & DEMILLE ENGINEERING – ACTION ITEM

Tyler Stuart from Jones & DeMille Engineering came before the Board to provide an information update for the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equality (RAISE) applications. Stuart said the application deadline had been bumped up this year, from May to February. The proposed cost to the county is \$3,000 and would direct Jones & DeMille to revise and resubmit the RAISE application.

Stuart said in past years Jones & DeMille have alternated between planning and implementation grant application proposals. This year his team is opting to focus on planning and will apply for construction funding next year. This year's planning application focuses on East Shore Road, proceeding south from the Bear Lake Hot Springs to the Utah Border. The plan is to eventually implement two 11-foot traffic lanes with a bike path. Stuart said he anticipates there will be some right-of-way issues with the needed cuts and fills associated with eventual construction and implementation.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to have Jones & DeMille move forward with the RAISE planning grant application. Commissioner Olsen seconded the motion. The motion carried.

FAIR BOARD APPOINTMENT – ACTION ITEM

Commissioner Payne said that two terms of office – from Fair Board members Kevin Matthews and Wynn Olsen – were set to expire soon. Olsen also now sits as a Bear Lake County Commissioner, meaning he can no longer serve on the Bear Lake County Fair Board, Payne said.

Commissioner Payne said Kevin Matthews is willing to serve again, and Payne recommended the Board appoint Matthews for another three-year term. Additionally, Payne recommended Hadley Wright be appointed to fill the other vacancy. Wright's appointment also would be for a three-year term.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to appoint Kevin Matthews and Hadley Wright to each serve a three-year term on the Bear Lake County Fair Board. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Olsen. The motion carried.

SWEARING IN OF CORONER

Coroner Chad Walker was not able to attend the meeting at the time when the other elected officials were sworn into office. Because of that, Walker was given his oath of office separately by Board Chairman Jensen.

MOTION: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Payne. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 1:27 p.m.

Bradley D. Jensen
Bradley D. Jensen, Chairman

2-13-23
Date Approved

ATTEST: Amy Bishop
Amy Bishop, Clerk