

Bear Lake County Commissioners' Meeting
March 13, 2023
Commissioners' Chambers – Paris, Idaho

The Board of the Bear Lake County Commissioners met in its regular meeting at 9 a.m. Monday, March 13, 2023, in the Commissioners' Chambers in Paris, Idaho. Video access to the meeting was available via Zoom. Members present were Commission Chairman Bradley D. Jensen, Commissioner Rex L. Payne, Commissioner Wynn S. Olsen and Board Clerk Amy Bishop. Also in attendance were Attorney Adam McKenzie, Assessor Jannelle Sparks-Jensen, Superintendent Todd Boehme, Treasurer Tricia Poulsen, County Building Inspector Wayne Davidson, Deputy Clerk Paul Christiansen and various members of the public.

APPROVE AGENDA – ACTION ITEM

Commissioner Payne asked to have an item added to the meeting agenda. He said he had been contacted by a group called Team Rubicon that specializes in emergency disaster preparation and mitigation. This group wants to come to the Bear Lake County area and provide volunteer service efforts to remove snow from roofs of individuals who are either unable to physically do it themselves or do not have the finances to hire someone. Payne said he had tentatively told the group to come to the meeting at 1:30 p.m., barring any objection from the Board.

Payne also requested to add section (a) of Idaho Code 74-206(1) to the Board's scheduled executive session, providing the Board the opportunity "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."

Board Clerk Amy Bishop said another revision to the executive session needed to be made. The Board did not need to utilize section (f), providing them an opportunity "To communicate with legal counsel for the public agency to discuss the legal ramifications of and legal options for pending litigation, or controversies not yet being litigated but imminently likely to be litigated. The mere presence of legal counsel at an executive session does not satisfy this requirement."

Instead, she said, the Board would need to use section (d) "To consider records that are exempt from disclosure as provided in chapter 1, title 74, Idaho Code."

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

ELECTED OFFICIALS UPDATES/COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Assessor Jannelle Sparks-Jensen said in February the Motor Vehicle Department brought in \$91,270.54 via Idaho Transportation Department transactions; \$2,909.50 via Idaho Parks and Recreation transactions; and a total of \$227.74 through 59 QR Code Renewals and/or renewals conducted by mail.

Sparks-Jensen said she had attended an Assessor's Workshop the previous week and had found it to be very helpful and informative. There are a few legislative bills on the horizon that will involve property tax. One bill, if passed, will allow the Idaho State Tax Commission to hold tax money from distribution to Assessors' Offices unless those offices comply with orders given by the commission, she said.

The county has received its preliminary ratio study from the consulting appraiser, Sparks-Jensen said, and the county will again see an increase in property values this year. However, that increase is not expected to be as substantial as last year. The consulting appraiser examines appraised values of all properties that have sold, compares them and determines if values are too far off from the market. Sparks-Jensen said that when reviewing the preliminary ratio study, it is imperative that assessed values are within 90-110 percent of market value and that the Price-Related Differential is showing a uniformity ratio between 0.98 and 1.03 on the scale.

The current preliminary ratio study shows the county is low in some areas. Assessed values are at 89.67 percent and need to be brought into compliance. Additionally, she said, vacant land currently has a price differential that is too high. To fix that issue, Bear Lake County needs to raise the assessed values of higher-valued properties – such as those around Bear Lake – because they are currently too lowly valued and are not proving equitable with everyone throughout the county.

This preliminary ratio study report shows the adjustments Bear Lake County needs to make in order to not show any bias. While the report indicates higher-valued land is receiving a bias, the county wants these reports to show there is no observed bias toward any type of property and that all property owners are treated equitably, Sparks-Jensen said.

Sparks-Jensen said all her office's departments are running smoothly and working hard to serve in their different capacities.

Clerk of the Board Amy Bishop said her office has been preparing for the March 14, 2023, School Levy election. She emphasized that elections with only one ballot item take as much time and preparation as those with a larger ballot.

Bishop said she had received an email from the Idaho Association of Counties concerning Idaho House Bill 292. This will be a sweeping property tax bill that will hold the counties responsible for finding other sources of revenue to subsidize those property tax reliefs provided by the bill. Because the email said there will be alterations to how the budget and levy system works, Bishop said she is reserving judgment of the bill for now.

The county received no bids for the three vehicles – a 2003 GMC Envoy and two 2007 Dodge Durangos – that had been declared as surplus property, Bishop said. The departments that had been using the vehicles prior to the advertisement can now proceed to find a buyer and sell them outright.

Bishop said that, just prior to the Board meeting, she had received a call from Kerry Haddock with the Montpelier Golf Course. Haddock had reported the course's cart barn had collapsed sometime Saturday night due to heavy snow accumulation, and between 20 and 25 carts were inside at the time. The Montpelier City Fire Department would be responding to the area to evaluate the extent of the damage

and determine if the structure was stable enough to enter. Bishop said the two relative memorandums of understanding – between Montpelier City and the golf course and Bear Lake County and the golf course, respectively – will have to be evaluated to understand where the parties' insurance policies will stand. However, she said, the county's MOU with the golf course does say the county bears the responsibility for providing cart storage.

Bishop said a new deputy court clerk had been hired and has started training with Caribou and Franklin counties. Hiring a recovery court coordinator to be shared between Bear Lake, Caribou and Oneida Counties is ongoing, she said, and it is possible a fourth county may join in that relationship.

Commissioner Payne reported he had received word the Soil Conservation District will be sending out 1099 forms.

He said that Greg Kunz, the manager of Walton Feed in Montpelier, has been making preparations for the community's needs during potential spring flooding. Walton Feed has 3,000 drawstring-equipped sandbags on order, with an additional 10,000 ordered for county use. Commissioner Payne said Kunz also is working to get a load of sand at the Walton Feed store so the public can fill the bags there.

Commissioner Payne said he was working with County Attorney Adam McKenzie on drafting a memorandum of understanding for the Department of Public Lands in regards to the water between the high-water mark and the actual water mark. However, the effort has been delayed because state public lands and the Department of Parks and Recreation have not been able to agree on what needs to be in the MOU. Still, there is a tentative timeline for this agreement to begin May 10, 2023.

The University of Idaho Extension in Bear Lake County will hold an applicant screening for its open extension educator position on Thursday, March 16, Commissioner Payne said. The extension has received four applicants and they will be reviewed before interviews are scheduled.

The Bear Lake County Ambulance Service will hold an active shooter training at 2 p.m. on April 28. The training will be held at Bear Lake High School on a day when there is no school in session, he said.

Commissioner Olsen said he had attended a recent Fair Board meeting and is very comfortable with the new board members. He said he is confident they will do a great job as they plan what will be done at the 2023 Bear Lake County Fair.

Commissioner Olsen said he had been unable to attend the recent Southeast Idaho Council of Governments (SICOG) meeting, held in American Falls. However, he was able to join the meeting via Zoom. While he is still working to learn more about SICOG's responsibilities and how it interacts with the county, he said he has been very impressed thus far.

Commissioner Jensen asked Commissioner Olsen to watch for any special interest loan opportunities that SICOG may extend. He said it's likely SICOG will ask Commissioner Olsen to be on the decision board for those loan offers.

The Bear Lake Senior Center is working to raise money for the facility improvements it's working to

implement, Commissioner Olsen said. The center will hold a rifle raffle and other fundraisers in the near future. Additionally, the center is researching the option for its building to hook to a newer existing water line that does not run directly beneath the roadway – something that has been a concern with the center’s current water hookup line. The old water line splits between the senior center and the old Taylor building, which Maverik purchased recently. It may be an option to connect the center to a newer line that serves the existing Maverik building, Commissioner Olsen said.

Commissioner Olsen said he and others had worked to remove snow from the roofs of some fair buildings in order to prevent any structural damages or collapses. Like so many in our community, these individuals have done their best to keep up with the heavy snow accumulation, he said.

Commissioner Jensen said he had attended a district landfill meeting and reported that everything – with the exception of new building projects – is on schedule. Building projects have been delayed due to waits on the equipment needed for the projects. Even used equipment is scarce at this time, he said.

GENERAL BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS

RATIFY CLAIMS

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

APPROVE MINUTES

MOTION: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to approve the minutes for the February 13, 2023, Regular Commissioners Meeting and the February 21, 2023, Special Commissioners Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Payne. The motion carried.

SET BUDGET HEARING DATE

The Board discussed the appropriate scheduling for Fiscal Year 2024 budget proceedings. The final draft of the FY2024 budget will be presented during the Board’s regular August meeting, to be held Monday, August 14, 2023.

MOTION: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to set the Fiscal Year 2024 budget hearing for Monday, August 28, 2023. Commissioner Payne seconded the motion. The motion carried.

NOXIOUS WEED PARTICIPATING AGREEMENT WITH US FOREST SERVICE FOR WEED CONTROL CHEMICALS

An agreement stating Bear Lake County will purchase \$3,000 in weed-combating chemicals from the Federal Government of the United States was brought before the Board, provided to Clerk of the Board Amy Bishop by Todd Transtrum.

County Attorney Adam McKenzie said he was still reviewing the participation agreement and would

have that process completed by day's end. He advised the Board to approve the participation agreement pending the complete review by the county attorney.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to approve the Participating Agreement between Bear Lake County and the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Caribou-Targhee National Forest, pending attorney review by Adam McKenzie. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Olsen. The motion carried.

ROAD MAP RECERTIFICATION

Commissioner Jensen said there were no substantive changes proposed for the County Road Map; however, he said, there was a clarification that needed to be made.

McKenzie said one of the accepted roads on the previously certified map had been mislabeled in an incorrect location. This change would simply remedy the typographical error made for Little Valley Road. The map – which was previously recorded in 2017 with the Bear Lake County Clerk's Office as instrument No. 230317 – will be re-recorded pursuant to Idaho Code 40-202 and will supersede the previous recording. No changes were made to the roads adopted, except to correct the placement of Little Valley Road, as it was drawn incorrectly on the previous map, he said.

Bishop said a number of meetings had been held in which necessary changes to Idaho Transportation Department roadways were identified, but no additional changes had been found for Bear Lake County roadways.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to accept the Bear Lake County Road Map with the correction of the identified typographical error. Commissioner Olsen seconded this motion. The motion carried.

WAYNE DAVIDSON – BUILDING INSPECTOR REPORT

County Building Inspector Wayne Davidson reported work on a few new residential properties had begun in February, whereas December and January had seen no new residential starts. Davidson has been conducting inspections of properties at which contractors have been finishing indoor work, but overall, that has remained slow.

This is the time of year when people encounter issues with their furnaces, so that type of permitting has still been strong, he said. Additionally, engineers designing plans for spring construction have been contacting his office and are eager to get started on new projects as soon as the snow has melted. Davidson said this has shown him new construction projects will be at least in the normal figures, if not more than usual.

There are a number of new commercial and largescale construction projects on the horizon, including an entirely new Maverik building. NAPA Auto Parts also wants to build a new store in Montpelier, and the groundbreaking for the Montpelier LDS temple is scheduled to begin June 17, Davidson said.

Davidson said he and County Maintenance Head Tyson Boehme have kept a close eye on the Bear Lake County Courthouse and the effects it has felt from this winter's heavy ice and snow buildup.

Commissioner Olsen told Davidson to expect a call from the Bear Lake County Fair Board concerning permitting for future fairground building expansion efforts.

BEAR LAKE WATCH – LEGISLATION UPDATE – ACTION ITEM

Section 43 of Idaho Code covers every body of water throughout Idaho, except Bear Lake, said David Cottle, who serves as co-executive director of Bear Lake Watch. He reported to the Board that Senator Mark Harris had drafted new legislation and introduced it to the Idaho Senate Resources and Environment Committee, and this bill recognizes Bear Lake as a highly valued resource, as well as the lake's unique characteristics. The bill will provide for preservation and enhancement efforts by the state without changing anything with water rights, Cottle said. Public access to the lake will not change. In fact, he said, this bill will protect that.

The bill is set to be introduced to the Idaho House of Representatives on Wednesday, March 15, by Representative Josh Wheeler, Cottle said. Similar legislation was to be in place with the Utah legislature but scheduling issues prevented it from reaching the body only a week before the end of session. It will be re-introduced next year, he said.

It is likely the Bear River Water Adjudication process has prompted the state to realize Bear Lake was not previously recognized as part of the Idaho water system, whereas this bill will finally recognize the lake, McKenzie said.

TRICIA POULSEN – TAX CANCELLATION PARCEL 60209

County Treasurer Tricia Poulsen said a tax cancellation for garbage fees on parcel 60209 was before the Board. Two years ago, the owner of the Red Rock Mobile Home Park had requested two dumpsters be brought to the park for residential garbage disposal. However, Kelly Lewis – owner of parcel 60209 – had been charged additional county garbage fees. Because of this oversight, cancellation of those fees in the amount of \$210.00 was needed.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to accept the cancellation of garbage fees, amounting to \$210.00, for tax parcel 60209. Commissioner Olsen seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Poulsen said the Board at its March 14, 2022, meeting had agreed to waive the interest and penalties for the Elk Country Sports Shop property – tax parcel 00152.00 – if owner David Schreiber agreed to pay \$80.00 per month until the back taxes were paid off. Schreiber's last payment to the county was made in October 2022.

Poulsen said she had made several attempts to contact Schreiber – via telephone calls and mailed letters – and now came before the board to determine if her office should still waive penalty fees in the amount of \$348.86 and interest in the amount of \$18.16 for the year 2018. This would result in a total of \$367.02 being added back to Schreiber's balance owed to the county, she said.

Bishop reviewed the minutes from the March 2022 meeting and found the Board had stated if the payments were not made faithfully and became delinquent again, those penalty and interest fees would be added back on to the total Schreiber owed. Poulsen said she would comply with the Board's direction from March 2022 and add that total back to the overall balance.

Poulsen said ten properties are up for tax deeds. Five of the properties are on track to be paid by month's end, while the other five properties are indeterminate.

The Board adjourned for a short recess at 10:21 a.m.

The Board reconvened its meeting at 10:31 a.m.

TODD BOEHME – COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT

County Superintendent Todd Boehme reported one of the Road & Bridge Department's graders – which the county plans to trade-in in the near future – had been hindered by damage to the lift hoist cylinder which raises the machine blade up and then lowers it. While the department was able to get the equipment into an operational and useable state, if repairs are not made the potential of losing another grader during a time when it is so desperately needed is high, Boehme said.

The cost of repairs will total \$5,392.46. The trade-in value of the equipment will not be supplied to the county until closer to the date that trade-in occurs, he said.

PARIS PARK BRIDGE – ACTION ITEM

Boehme said the United States Forest Service has applied for funding to aid with the Paris Park Bridge Project. If that funding can be secured, the design phase will be conducted during summer 2023 and will be coordinated by the USFS and Bear Lake County. Construction on the project will begin in 2024. The county's in-kind share of the project will be \$30,000, he said.

The USFS plans to address two narrow culverts located on Forest Service Road 427 that currently limit fish passage and variable water flows. One of those culverts is located below the USFS boundary on the road segment managed by Bear Lake County. The other culvert, located in Paris Springs Campground, will be replaced during the same time period, Boehme said.

Two road crossings on FSR 427 will be improved to meet improved flow capacity standards while also incorporating stream stimulation. The replacement structures implemented will either be bridges or open-bottom arch culverts with natural streambed.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to approve the funding application for the Paris Park Bridge Project to be submitted to the Bear River Environmental Coordination Committee. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Olsen. The motion carried.

Boehme said the county has been approached by the residents living in a subdivision on East Shore Road. Those individuals have expressed interest in changing the subdivision name plaque on the sign – which is located in the county right-of-way – at the area’s entrance. That in and of itself is not a problem, he said, but the residents also have said they would like to install powered sign lighting; brick and mortar around the sign columns; and other beautification and expansion amenities. The subdivision’s homeowners association will pay for that work, if permitted, he said.

Boehme said he had conferred with Jeffrey Sorenson, project engineer with Keller Associates, regarding safety requirements for the sign changes if permitted to remain in the existing right-of-way. Sorenson said sign supports and hardware have to be crashworthy and have to meet a bevy of additional safety standards set forth by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. If the HOA chooses to not implement those standards, the sign has to be removed from the county right-of-way and moved onto the HOA’s property, Boehme said.

Attorney McKenzie said it is his belief that if the right-of-way is to be expanded in the future as part of planned roadway improvements on East Shore Road, a discussion between the county and the HOA will have to be had to discuss who is responsible for the sign at that time.

Additionally, Boehme said the Road & Bridge Department is doing all it can to keep up with snowplowing and road maintenance needs this winter. The department is fully staffed now, with the last two crewmembers hired and training.

TODD BOEHME – EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR

Boehme said he had attended an Emergency Managers workshop in Pocatello the previous week. At the meeting, there was discussion how the State of Idaho is revisiting, revising and improving emergency coordination standards.

Tetra Tech, an engineering firm out of Idaho Falls, had contacted Boehme and asked for some help with the State Hazard Mitigation Plan for earthquakes. The firm has reached out to communities throughout the state and has asked that Boehme identify 50 structures located in Bear Lake County that could be impacted by seismic activity and supply the firm with that list.

Boehme asked the Board how it thought the county should deal with potential spring flooding and supplying sandbags for public use. While in the past the state has supplied these sandbags to individual counties at no charge, that is not an option this year, he said.

Boehme said he has a small number – just 250 total – of bags on hand, with some access to sand for filling. He is working to find locations throughout the county where sandpiles can be placed for public use. Boehme will work with Wayne Davidson, who manages the county website, and make sandbag location information available through that means.

Greg Kunz from Walton Feed has quoted a price of \$0.75 per bag purchased by the county, and Boehme said he has an order in for 10,000 bags for county use. Boehme said he does have some concerns some individuals who get bags for free from the county will then try to sell them on the public market in a

form of “scalping.” It may be in the county’s interest to charge the public something to access the bags in order to mitigate that potential issue, he said.

Commissioner Olsen said hauling piles of sand throughout the community might not be the best option for the county. Providing bags to community and city leaders and allowing them to distribute them to those who truly need them may be better.

Commissioner Payne said if the county chooses to distribute loads of sand to different areas, it would be beneficial if Boehme let the individual cities and townships know the county will haul a load of sand to them but will not be responsible for the cleanup afterward.

SHERIFF BART HESLINGTON VEHICLE LEASE AGREEMENTS – ACTION ITEM

Sheriff Bart Heslington was unable to appear before the Board due to a personal issue. He had supplied Clerk Amy Bishop with some information which she presented in his absence.

Bishop reported the patrol vehicles that had been ordered about 18 months ago for Sheriff’s Office use have finally arrived. The lease agreements for those vehicles had been sent to Attorney McKenzie for his review. The master lease agreement had been made with Bancorp, but the Board should be aware that an addendum had been added to that agreement as more vehicles were added to the Sheriff’s Office fleet, Bishop said.

At the time the vehicles had been ordered, \$52,000 had been budgeted. However, the cost had risen to \$82,000 since that time. Additionally, the Sheriff’s Office has decided to keep two of the newer vehicles it had been using rather than opting to trade those vehicles in. This decision had been made because the department did not feel it was getting a good trade-in value for those vehicles, and reserve and part-time deputies can use them.

To help the county, Bancorp has shifted the lease payment schedule, Bishop said. Rather than the county paying at the beginning of the year, it will now pay at the end of the calendar year. This will allow the county to make payment closer to the beginning of the new fiscal year. However, this does raise concerns for the following fiscal year because there will be a \$30,000 difference, she said.

The Board decided to table the issue so that further discussion could be had when Heslington was present. This item will be added to the agenda for the scheduled March 21 Special Commissioners Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was made during the public comment section of the March 13, 2023, meeting.

The Board adjourned for a short recess at 11:10 a.m.

The Board reconvened its meeting at 10:25 a.m.

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) (d) To consider records that are exempt from disclosure as provided in chapter 1, title 74, Idaho Code.

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 11:26 a.m. and left executive session at 11:51 a.m.

From 11:27 a.m. to 11:50 a.m. the Board discussed records exempt from disclosure.

The Board paused executive session and reconvened its regular meeting at 11:51 a.m.

SOUTHEAST IDAHO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

GRANT ADMINISTRATION PROCUREMENT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT – ACTION ITEM

Charity Staggs, grant specialist with the Southeast Idaho Council of Governments (SICOG), reported she and her team are ready to begin administrative work on a grant to secure funding for the Bear Lake Senior Center – something that had been discussed in depth at the Board’s February 2023 Regular Meeting – and all fees will come out of the grant itself at no additional cost to the county. They will begin work once they have received approval from Bear Lake County.

MOTION: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to allow SICOG to be the Grant Administrator on the Community Development Block Grant for the Bear Lake Senior Center project. The motion received a second from Commissioner Payne. The motion carried.

BEAR RIVER ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY – ACTION ITEM

Staggs said SICOG is ready to submit on the county’s behalf an Idaho Gem Grant application for the Bear River Economic Impact Study. She said SICOG has submitted these grants for the county in the past but, in order to serve as the county’s administrative agent on the grant, is required to have a county resolution passed with a new date of adoption.

The resolution will be designated as Bear Lake County Resolution No. 2023-02.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to adopt Bear Lake County Resolution No. 2023-02, which supports and endorses an Idaho Gem Grant application for the Bear River Economic Impact Study and designates SICOG as administrative agent for the grant. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Olsen. The motion carried.

RE-ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION – IDAHO CODE 74-206(1)

MOTION: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to re-enter 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; (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, or public-school student.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Payne. Roll Call Vote. Commissioner Olsen, Aye. Commissioner Jensen, Aye. Commissioner Payne, Aye.

The Board re-entered executive session at 11:59 a.m. and left executive session at 12:16 p.m.

From 12:00 p.m. to 12:15 p.m. the Board discussed the hiring of an employee and complaints made against an employee.

The Board left executive session at 12:16 p.m.

The Board held lunch from 12:16 p.m. to 12:50 p.m.

Following lunch, the Board reconvened the regular meeting at 12:50 p.m.

ERIC HEAP – SILVER STAR FUTURE FIBER OPTICS / BROADBAND IN GENEVA

Eric Heap, manager of project coordination and execution with Silver Star Communications, reported his company has lots of grant opportunities becoming available this year that address fiber optic expansion into underserved or unserved communities. Silver Star is able to serve both Idaho and Wyoming and has viewed Geneva as a candidate that could take advantage of these grants, he said.

Heap said he had come before the Board to ensure there isn't anything that would hinder him from moving forward with this process, and to get county support for the effort. He said that without the Board's support, he would not take the time to get detailed engineering for the project. The grant cycle closes on April 24, Heap said.

Commissioner Jensen said several citizens of Geneva had approached him regarding fiber optics installation and have asked why local provider Direct Communications will not take fiber optic to that area of the county. Heap said it is because there is a lot of canyon and mountainous terrain between Geneva and the nearest Direct Communications fiber optics connection. Luckily, Silver Star is close by and can more easily linkup Geneva with existing fiber optic extension.

Eventually, Heap said, Silver Star would like to get fiber optic line implemented all the way to the Pegram area of Bear Lake County. There will be challenges with right-of-way issues, but Silver Star will work those out with detailed engineering plans.

All three commissioners voiced support for the possibility of fiber optic implementation in areas of the county that are either underserved or unserved altogether by internet connectivity. With this support, Heap said he will examine detailed engineering for the Geneva connection project. Once engineering is completed, he will run financial models on fiber line and look at all grant possibilities. Next, he will draft a letter of support and provide it to the Board for signing. Heap said he would have that letter drafted and provided before the Board's regular meeting on April 10.

VACATION DONATION POLICY – ACTION ITEM

MOTION: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to allow vacation donation for an employee that had been discussed in executive session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Payne. The motion carried.

COVID LEAVE POLICY – ACTION ITEM

This issue was tabled for further discussion at the upcoming Four-County meeting, to be held Wednesday, March 15, in Caribou County.

TEAM RUBICON – ROOF SHOVELING IN BEAR LAKE COUNTY

Melinda Lee, West Branch operations manager for Team Rubicon, conferenced in with the Board via telephone to discuss a service opportunity the organization would like to provide to Bear Lake County. Ada DeClark, a Team Rubicon volunteer who lives locally and also serves as a Bear Lake County EMT, also was in attendance at the Bear Lake County Courthouse.

Lee said Team Rubicon is a humanitarian full-impact service that specializes in disaster preparedness and mitigation. She said there is a possibility for the organization to send a group of volunteers to aid Bear Lake County with snow removal from residential roofs. The group's most recent work – conducted in California and Nevada – used long snow rakes, expanding up to 40 feet long, to remove rooftop snow from homes.

Team Rubicon carries its own liability insurance and requires all volunteers on the ground to have their own health insurance plans, Lee said. The organization tries to serve those individuals that are in the deepest need, such as those who are disabled, elderly or physically unable to move the snow themselves, or those people who are financially unable to hire someone else to do it for them.

When Team Rubicon volunteers report to a home, they ask the homeowner to sign a waiver that provides permissions for the volunteers to be on the property. The waiver also states there is no responsibility on the part of Team Rubicon. The volunteers also inquire about existing structural and leaking issues at the site.

Team Rubicon gets all its funding through donations and partnerships, Lee said. While it appreciates any in-kind donations the county could offer, that is certainly not a requirement.

Commissioner Jensen said the county never wants to turn down help from those offering it. Although the Board does not know how many of the county's 3,014 residences would need this service, there is a dire need for rooftop snow removal throughout the county.

Commissioner Payne wondered how many volunteers Team Rubicon would send. Lee told him that number would depend on the feedback provided by the county and the research DeClark was doing locally.

DeClark said Team Rubicon wants to be respectful to the community and is aware there are some individuals and entities working in the community to provide snow removal service as part of their incomes.

Commissioner Olsen said he would meet with the Senior Center and inquire what individuals in that demographic will most benefit from this service. DeClark said she already has plans to work with the Senior Center to get information for which individuals are on the meal deliveries system, as those individuals do not have the income to pay for the service and could use the help. Additionally, she said she would reach out to local religious officials to determine who in their boundaries will most benefit from these services.

DeClark said Bear Lake County Fire Chief Mark Parker already has said the volunteers can stay at the Bear Lake County Fire Station during their time in the area.

The Board extended the invitation to and acceptance of help from Team Rubicon, Commissioner Jensen said. DeClark was asked to serve as the organization's local contact person and will coordinate with the Bear Lake County Clerk's Office.

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

The meeting adjourned at 1:44 p.m.


Bradley D. Jensen, Chairman

4/10/2023
Date Approved

ATTEST: 
Amy Bishop, Clerk

