Bear Lake County Commissioners' Meeting

April 13, 2026
Commissioners' Chambers – Paris, Idaho

The Board of Bear Lake County Commissioners met in its regular meeting at 8:30 am Monday, April 13, 2026, in the Commissioners' Chambers in Paris, Idaho. Video access to the meeting was available via Zoom. Members present were Commission Chairman Rex L. Payne, Commissioner Wynn S. Olsen, Commissioner Alan P. Eborn, and Clerk of the Board Amy Bishop. Also in attendance were Prosecutor Ronnie Keller, Treasurer Tricia Poulsen, Assessor Jannelle Jensen, Chief Deputy Sheriff Wes Barnhill, various staff, and members of the public.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Board reviewed the agenda.

MOTION: Commissioner Eborn made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion received a second from Commissioner Olsen. The motion carried.

MOTION: At 8:37 am, Commissioner Eborn made a motion to go into executive session under Idaho Code §74-206(1)(f); 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 motion received a second from Commissioner Olsen. Roll call: Commissioner Payne, aye; Commissioner Eborn, aye; Commissioner Olsen, aye.

MOTION: At 8:45 am, Commissioner Eborn made a motion to leave executive session and return to the regular meeting. The motion received a second from Commissioner Olsen. The motion carried.

Commissioner Payne reported that attorney Kristian Beckett had asked the Bear Lake County Prosecutor, Ronnie Keller, to stipulate to a dismissal of the petition against the Board of Commissioners under IRCP 41.

MOTION: Commissioner Eborn made a motion to accept the proposed stipulation to dismiss the petition against the Board of Commissioners. The motion received a second from Commissioner Olsen. The motion carried.

ELECTED OFFICIALS UPDATE

TREASURER TRICIA POULSEN

Tricia Poulsen reported that there are two remaining parcels with unpaid taxes. She reported that both parties were aware of the past due taxes and she believed they will pay.

ASSESSOR JANNELLE JENSEN

Jannelle Jensen presented the amounts collected for Idaho Transportation Department ($117,710.55) and Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation ($4,621.00) for the month of March. She reported that she attended the spring Idaho Association of Counties meetings. She also reported that new legislation limits the ability of the assessor's office to access properties to measure houses for tax purposes, possibly causing inaccurate tax assessments. Effective March 31, 2026, the building inspector will include a waiver with all new building permits. Her office will work on getting waivers signed on current construction.

CLERK AMY BISHOP

Amy Bishop reported that her office staff sent out twenty-five absentee ballots the previous week. She met with the elected clerks from the Sixth Judicial District the previous week. Bishop reported on adjustments that will be made to the amount each county is contributing to the law clerk fund. Bishop reported that TJ Burbank, the county's IT professional, would be working in-house during the coming week to ensure that the Laserfiche storage is set up. The State Cyber Security expert was scheduled to arrive that afternoon to discuss any changes that need to be made.

Commissioner Eborn asked Clerk Bishop about the cybersecurity as it relates to the county's Homeland Security Grant. Clerk Bishop directed the Emergency Manager, Nic Higgins, to talk to Burbank about this.

CHIEF DEPUTY SHERIFF WES BARNHILL

Wes Barnhill reported that there is road construction happening on Highway 30. The Sheriff's Office has increased patrols in that area.

PROSECUTOR RONNIE KELLER

Ronnie Keller was excused after the executive session earlier in the meeting.

BUILDING INSPECTOR WAYNE DAVIDSON

Wayne Davidson reported that the new building inspector, Mason Garbett, started training today. Davidson will be introducing Garbett to the city councils and mayors of each city as well as contractors around the county. Garbett will be attending city council meetings and learning the zoning ordinances of each city. Davidson reported that supplies are still expensive, but building activity is normal for this time of year. He issued 3 large permits for construction at 7 Mile Ranch in St Charles. He reported that construction at the new Transfer Station is going well.

RFQ FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ORDINANCES

Commissioner Payne received the Request for Proposals for rewriting the county's comprehensive plan. Clerk Bishop read aloud the Request for Proposals in its entirety. The Board heard a comment from Kathi Izatt, who requested this item be tabled until the next meeting to allow for public input about what goes in to the plan. Discussion was held among the Board.

MOTION: Commissioner Eborn made a motion to change the due date for the request for proposals for the comprehensive plan to April 27, 2026. Commissioner Olsen noted that the dates for the meetings will need to be reset as well. The motion received a second from Commissioner Olsen. The motion carried.

RECORDS RETENTION POLICY

Commissioner Payne reviewed a brief history of the attempt to create a records retention policy in Bear Lake County. Discussion was held among the Board about information that should be included in the policy.

At 9:37 am, Commissioner Olsen asked for a break. The meeting resumed at 9:45 am.

COMMISSIONER COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT REPORTS

Commissioner Olsen reported that the IDAWY transfer station construction is ongoing. The project is due to be completed by fall. He addressed an amendment to House Bill 1083, which allows for Idaho Department of Water Resources to change the way well water is used if a well services more than five houses. He also addressed House Bill 555, which removes responsibility for landfills from Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and gives the responsibility to the Department of Environmental Quality. Commissioner Olsen reported on cuts to Medicare and the effect on rural hospitals. He reported $800,000 would be eliminated from Road and Bridge funds, reducing the amount available for special projects. He answered questions about the future of the local landfill.

Commissioner Eborn reported that the Mosquito Abatement District is in need of a new manager. He reported that the Mosquito Abatement District made an agreement with local beekeepers about the timing of spraying. He indicated that the $800,000 eliminated from the Road and Bridge Department would be diverted to Idaho State Police for officer retention and training. Commissioner Eborn mentioned that the reconstruction of the comprehensive plan is long overdue. He is interested in keeping growth manageable while making the best use of county funds. Commissioner Eborn read the mission statement of the Senior Citizen Center. He reported the staff and volunteers are doing a great job, and they go above and beyond for Bear Lake County.

Commissioner Payne reported that he had spoken to Marnie Spencer about the Extension Office. She determined that the money for an extension educator will stay in Bear Lake County. Additionally, Spencer reported to Commissioner Payne that of the three food dehydrators at the Extension Office, two were purchased with county money and will stay in the county. Commissioner Payne reported that he received an email from Barbara Petty, the Director of Extension at the University of Idaho, indicating she will be retiring August 31, 2026. He reported that he attended a meeting held by Idaho Department of Fish and Game where he learned that the number of cisco in Bear Lake is declining, likely due to depredation. As a result, Fish and Game will adjust the number of lake trout and cutthroat trout they plant in Bear Lake this year. Commissioner Payne reported that the City of Montpelier will be holding a public meeting on April 15, 2026, regarding the annexation and rezoning of a parcel on North 8th Street. Bear Lake County owns land adjacent to the proposed annexation. Commissioner Payne reported on a request for a crosswalk sign at Camp Lifton.

GENERAL BUSINESS

MOTION: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to ratify the claims before the Board. The motion received a second from Commissioner Eborn. The motion carried.

Minutes were presented to the Board for approval from the March 9, 23, and 30, 2026, Commissioner meetings.

MOTION: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 9, 23, and 30, 2026, Commissioner meetings. The motion received a second from Commissioner Eborn. The motion carried.

Clerk Amy Bishop reported there were no items to be heard for Board of Equalization. She reported that her office received a Tax Exemption Application from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints for each parcel they own.

MOTION: Commissioner Eborn made a motion to approve the property tax exemptions for all LDS Church properties in Bear Lake County. The motion received a second from Commissioner Olsen. The motion carried.

Clerk Bishop will send a letter to the church, noting the approval.

Clerk Bishop reported about the Idaho Airport Aid Grant Agreement. This is a state match for the federal grant to rehabilitate the apron and runway in the amount of $11,512.11.

MOTION: Commissioner Eborn made a motion to approve the grant agreement for fiscal year 2027 for the Bear Lake County airport as well as resolution 2026-02. The motion received a second from Commissioner Olsen. The motion carried.

MOTION: Wynn made a motion to add a 2001 Dodge van to the surplus list. The motion received a second from Commissioner Eborn. The motion carried.

Clerk Bishop reported that the proposed Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation-Off Highway Vehicle agreement outlines the funds we will receive from recreational vehicle registrations.

MOTION: Commissioner Eborn made a motion to approve the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation-Off Highway Vehicle grant in the amount of $3,612.51 and $8,590.76 from the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation Off-Highway Vehicle program for the purpose of law enforcement. The motion received a second from Commissioner Olsen. The motion carried.

Commissioner Payne addressed the Letter of Support for the 4-County Alliance of Southeast Idaho Economic Development Professional Grant. Clerk Bishop reported she received an email requesting a $500 increase; the letter of support is only for the grant application. Clerk Bishop indicated that the requested increase can be addressed when she works on next year's budget.

MOTION: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to support the efforts of the 4-County Alliance in the amount of $6,500 for the 2027 fiscal year upon approval of the county budget. The motion received a second from Commissioner Eborn. The motion carried.

Commissioner Payne reported that Mitch Poulsen, Executive Director of the Bear Lake Regional Commission, was unavailable for today's meeting. Poulsen reported to Payne that the City of Georgetown was ready to proceed with the area of impact hearing. Clerk Bishop outlined the time required for notice and provided a possible date for the meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to set the public hearing date on May 26, 2026, for the City of Georgetown area of impact, with the time to be determined later. The motion received a second from Commissioner Eborn. The motion carried.

MOTION: Commissioner Eborn made a motion to go into a public hearing concerning Sheriff's fees. The motion received a second from Commissioner Olsen. Roll Call: Commissioner Payne, aye; Commissioner Eborn, aye; Commissioner Olsen, aye. The motion carried.

Chief Deputy Sheriff Wes Barnhill reported that the State of Idaho has increased their fees $5 for nearly everything. The Sheriff's Office proposed two new fees: a $45 per hour Sheriff's Keeper Fee when the Sheriff's Office is ordered by the court to standby on civil matters and a $10 fingerprint fee for non-Idaho residents. Richard Spencer objected to the increase in sheriff's fees. He argued that the hearing was not posted appropriately, violating the mandatory posting for timely notice. Spencer requested that his objection be added to the minutes of today's meeting.

MOTION: At 10:38 am, Commissioner Olsen made a motion to leave the public hearing and return to the regular meeting. The motion received a second from Commissioner Eborn. The motion carried.

Commissioner Payne noted that he would like to consult with the county attorney regarding the objection.

MOTION: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to postpone a decision on the sheriff's fees until after the posting question can be reviewed by the county attorney. The motion received a second from Commissioner Eborn. The motion carried.

APPROVE POLLING LOCATIONS

Clerk Amy Bishop proposed moving two polling locations back to the LDS church buildings in Bennington and Dingle. She indicated the LDS church would like the county to sign a temporary use agreement. Bishop reviewed the list of all polling locations.

MOTION: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to approve the proposed polling locations for the May 19, 2026, election. The motion received a second from Commissioner Eborn. The motion carried.

MOTION: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to approve Temporary Use Agreements for the Dingle and Bennington locations upon receipt of the documents and after being reviewed by Prosecuting Attorney Ronnie Keller. The motion received a second from Commissioner Eborn. The motion carried.

COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

County Superintendent Todd Boehme reported that the Road and Bridge Department is keeping up with ongoing equipment repairs. They will grade gravel roads as the weather allows. He recently attended a meeting for county supervisors; all counties are continuing projects as state funds allow. Boehme reported that the surplus auction is complete and all equipment has been picked up. He will sell all unsold equipment as scrap metal. He reported the county road map is ready for board approval. Boehme spoke about a failing culvert by Indian Creek that may need to be replaced.

ANDREA GUMM/DAN DARLINGTON – SIMPLOT SMOKY CANYON MINE UPDATE

Andrea Gumm and Dan Darlington reported on mine operations at the Simplot Smoky Canyon Mine. They answered questions from the commissioners about the longevity of the project and future plans to relocate to Slug Creek. Gumm reported about ongoing community outreach that is being done and indicated she will accommodate tours of the mine for community members.

ROY BUNDERSON – RMP PROJECT UP PARIS CANYON

Roy Bunderson gave a history about the Rocky Mountain Power project in Paris Canyon. Bunderson is concerned with the reason for taking the power plant offline. He would like a total accounting of the project. Discussion was held with the Board and Clerk Bishop about the project.

The Board had a lunch break until 12:15 pm.

FISCAL YEAR 27 PUBLIC HEALTH BUDGET – MAGGIE MANN

Maggie Mann from Southeast Idaho Public Health Department notified the Board that the Southeast Idaho Public Health Department budget hearing will be held May 28, 2026, at 9:30 am. Bear Lake is the host county this year and the Board Chairman is responsible for attending. She reviewed the existing budget and changes for the 2027 fiscal year budget. Commissioner Payne indicated that Bear Lake County will support the outlined budget for fiscal year 2027.

MOTION: Commissioner Olsen made a motion to adjourn. The motion received a second from Commissioner Eborn. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 12:49 pm.

Rex L. Payne, Chairman

5-11-2026
Date Approved

ATTEST: _____
Amy Bishop, Clerk

AUDITOR AND RECORDER
BEAR LAKE
COUNTY
STATE OF IDAHO