

Bear Lake County Commissioners' Meeting
September 12, 2022
Commissioners' Chambers – Paris, Idaho

The Board of the Bear Lake County Commissioners met in their regular meeting at 9 a.m. Monday, September 12, 2022, in the Commissioners' Chambers in Paris, Idaho. Video access to the meeting also was available via Zoom. Members present were Commission Chairman Vaughn N. Rasmussen, Commissioner Bradley D. Jensen, Commissioner Rex L. Payne and Board Clerk Amy Bishop. Also in attendance were Attorney Adam McKenzie, Assessor Heber Dunford, Sheriff Bart Heslington, Superintendent Todd Boehme, Fire Chief Mark Parker, Treasurer Tricia Poulsen, Deputy Assessor Jannelle Jensen and Deputy Clerk Paul Christiansen.

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.

ELECTED OFFICIALS' UPDATES

Treasurer Tricia Poulsen said her accounts are in a good position. She said the county had received its second American Rescue Plan (ARPA) payment. She said what money was not being actively used had been invested into a state pool, but because of the liquidity of that money it can be returned to Bear Lake County's coffers within a day. She also said she anticipates a successful tax drive this year.

Assessor Heber Dunford said activity through Gem building had risen compared to the previous month. He said similar fluxes are often seen during the summer months, but also said he hasn't seen a significant impact on the volume of Assessor's Office business.

Dunford said the Assessor's Office is making moves to hire a new Motor Vehicle Deputy to replace Jannelle Jensen — who was selected in the May 2022 Primary Election to serve as the Republican candidate for Bear Lake County Assessor in the November 2022 General Election. Dunford said a job description has been prepared and hiring needs to be done as soon as possible in order to properly train the employee before the end of the year. The commissioners all said they didn't feel it is necessary for them to be actively involved in the hiring and interview process for the new deputy. However, Commissioner Jensen requested Dunford notify the board prior to public announcement of the employee's hiring. It was decided that, upon attorney review by Bear Lake County Attorney Adam McKenzie, the job listing will be posted publicly.

Dunford said the commercial appraisal process has started in an effort to take advantage of the good weather conditions. He added that occupancy, new construction and revaluation efforts are keeping the Assessor's Office busy. Naaman Dolence of the Assessor's Office Mapping Department has completed state certification and has become a recognized and certified mapper, Dunford said.

The real estate market continues to see high values consistently, he said. Dunford and the Assessor's Office staff continue to work to bring local assessed values closer in line with what the market shows, but there are some extreme examples where assessed values are 30 to 40 percent below the market values. Most areas have moved closer to being on target with a 5 to 10 percent margin, Dunford said.

Clerk Amy Bishop said her office is gearing up for the November 2022 General Election. The Clerk's Office already has ballots ready to go to the printers. She also said she's been working diligently to get levies prepared and they are ready now. She added she hopes the Idaho Legislature will consider altering its processes in order to get the levy information and feedback from the tax commission to local governmental clerks in a timely manner in the future so they don't have to prepare them at the last minute, as has been the case historically.

Bishop said new staff members in the Bear Lake County Clerk's Office are progressing nicely.

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Commissioner Payne said he had received an email from Deloy Romrell, local foreman with the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), offering thanks to all Bear Lake County officials, commissioners, emergency responders, superintendents, foremen and maintenance workers who have aided with and supported the improvement efforts made to the Hellhole Road leading to a communications tower in the area. Payne said this effort provides an opportunity for success and betterment for all involved in emergency services.

Commissioner Payne reported he had received a phone call from a concerned hunter regarding a road closure up Jacobs Canyon. The information had been relayed to County Superintendent Todd Boehme and it is being addressed, Payne said.

Commissioner Jensen said the landfill reports solid waste collection has skyrocketed, with 20 percent more waste collected this year to date than had been collected at this time a year ago. He also said some ARPA funds received by the state had been released and that \$115,000 is earmarked to pay for engineering and design costs for a new landfill project.

County Communications meetings continue. Commissioner Jensen said he and Sheriff Bart Heslington are waiting for emergency communications radio system project proposals to be turned in from a few different service vendors. This process has been a slow one, he said, but Heslington continues to push toward project completion.

Commissioner Rasmussen, who reported attending a recent Gem Plan insurance meeting, said the county was in good standing in regards to claims filed. August actually saw the county's claims in the negative due to the nature of claims filed, he said, adding that no changes to health insurance costs are thought to be on the immediate horizon.

Commissioner Rasmussen said he had attended a Southeastern Idaho Board of Health meeting on Thursday, September 8. He learned there are one or two cases of monkeypox in Southeast Idaho. Although a vaccine is available, he said, vaccination only is recommended if someone has been exposed

to the virus. Prevention steps and precautions are similar to those taken against COVID-19 — especially in regards to washing hands frequently and avoiding too much physical contact.

The number and frequency of COVID cases remains high, he said. The Board of Health continues recommending anyone showing any symptoms stay at home, he said. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has made free home COVID tests available to the public through its website. While these aren't 100 percent accurate all the time, Commissioner Rasmussen said, they do work and are simple to use.

Commissioner Rasmussen said he has several upcoming meetings on his schedule, including a Board of Health trustee meeting to discuss legislative issues. He said he also will attend an ICRMP meeting on September 13 in Boise. ICRMP continues to make itself available to offer assistance and consolation on any issues, such as those related to human resources, that county employees may be facing, he added.

Rasmussen will attend a four-county meeting on October 1 to discuss issues facing Southeast Idaho and how the counties can assist each other in mitigating problematic circumstances.

RATIFY CLAIMS

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

APPROVE MINUTES

MOTION: Commissioner Jensen made a motion to approve the minutes for August 8 and August 29. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Payne. The motion carried.

DESIGNATE POLLING PLACES

Clerk Amy Bishop said there were no changes to the polling place locations used in the previous election.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to designate the existing polling places. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jensen. The motion carried.

CERTIFICATE OF RESIDENCY

Three individuals — Riley Hayes, Ethan Moss and Allison Payne — were presented to the board for Certificates of Residency consideration.

MOTION: Commissioner Jensen made a motion to accept the Certificates of Residency for Riley Hayes and Ethan Moss. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Payne. The motion carried.

MOTION: Commissioner Jensen made a motion to accept the Certificate of Residency for Allison Payne. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rasmussen. Commissioner Payne abstained on the

grounds of having a familiar relation with the individual being considered. The motion carried.

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD MEMBER APPOINTMENT

Commissioner Jensen said Bear Lake Planning and Zoning Commission Board Member Paul Peterson had resigned from the body. Julia Rowland has been chosen to fill that vacancy, with the approval of the Bear Lake County Board of Commissioners, he said.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to accept Julia Rowland to fill the vacancy on the Bear Lake Planning and Zoning Commission Board. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jensen. The motion carried.

COURTHOUSE HEAT TRACE

Commissioner Payne reminded the board there had been a problem with ice buildup last winter on the Bear Lake County Courthouse roof. He said the south side of the building has an area where two sections of roof meet and the snow gathered in that area, eventually becoming ice through a process of melting, pooling and freezing in the section. Courthouse Maintenance Head and Janitor Tyson Boehme, who had spent a large amount of time addressing the issue the past winter through shoveling efforts, had been asked to get multiple project estimates to fix the problem.

Boehme said he had spoken to three local electrician businesses and was waiting for their estimates to come in. He said he had spoken to Bear River Electric, South Pointe Electric and Dennis Bills. Due to workload, Bear River Electric had pulled their name from consideration, Boehme said. When the estimates are provided, Boehme will work with Commissioner Payne to determine the best course.

MOTION: Commissioner Jensen made a motion to allow Commissioner Payne to approve an estimate decision up to \$16,000, based on the lowest estimate provided. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Payne. The motion carried.

IMAGINE IDAHO — MOU

Deputy Clerk Paul Christiansen said he, Clerk Amy Bishop and Commission Chairman Vaughn Rasmussen had participated in a conference call with representatives from Imagine Idaho, a foundation that helps communities throughout Idaho to identify areas in their regions that are either underserved or completely unserved by broadband connectivity and availability. The representatives from Imagine Idaho had been eager to assist Bear Lake County to get started identifying areas of the community in the most need of broadband upgrades or implementations. The first step is to get the local community to participate in a speed test campaign, in which individuals can log in via computers or internet-connectable devices to a testing website from their homes. The data is then transferred to Imagine Idaho, where it can compare similar data from other tests and identify areas of concern.

Christiansen said Imagine Idaho also had provided examples of advertisements and campaign materials aimed at sparking public interest. These could be tailored to Bear Lake's needs, should the county opt to

move forward with this process.

Commissioner Rasmussen said that, regarding broadband connectivity, the communities of Geneva, Pegram and Nounan already had been identified as some of the most underserved in Bear Lake County. This was discussed on the conference call, and while it typically might not be monetarily feasible for local broadband service providers to install connections for these lowly populated and isolated areas, Imagine Idaho helps to identify solutions and options where these areas are not left out.

Following the conference call with Imagine Idaho, Commissioner Rasmussen had asked that a memorandum of understanding (MOU) be provided by Imagine Idaho to Bear Lake County. An example, needing only to be filled in with Bear Lake's specific details, was provided to the board. Commissioner Rasmussen said he was impressed by the different approach Imagine Idaho appeared to be taking with this project — examining what Bear Lake's needs are and offering assistance in procuring solutions, rather than only telling Bear Lake County what is needed.

MOTION: Commissioner Jensen made a motion to support the MOU provided by Imagine Idaho, following review by Bear Lake County Attorney Adam McKenzie. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Payne. The motion carried.

PUBLIC DEFENSE AGREEMENT

Clerk of the Board Amy Bishop said Bear Lake County will continue accepting applications for the Public Defender position through September 15. The award amount of \$18,720.00 is provided to aid in workload assistance and meeting standards provided by the state.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to approve the Public Defense Agreement. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jensen. The motion carried.

GOLF COURSE MOWER

Commissioner Rasmussen said the Montpelier Golf Course had asked if the county could provide any monetary assistance in its purchase of a new commercial lawn mower. He said the golf course has some donated funds that would cover the total cost of the new mower — about \$46,000 — but that would leave no more money in its coffers to be available for additional improvements projects.

Clerk Amy Bishop said there is a balance in the County Parks and Rec fund. It would be possible to take half the total cost from the golf course's donated funds and the second half from the Commissioners' Contingency Fund. This would allow the board to come back and consider any future requests for project assistance — such as in the event of a landscaping effort — from the golf course if additional funding should be needed.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to approve a contribution of 50 percent of the total cost of the new Montpelier Golf Course lawn mower, with the second half being paid through the golf course's donated funds. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jensen. The motion carried.

ASSESSOR REQUEST FOR EMPLOYEE RAISE

Assessor Heber Dunford told the board he had an employee in his office who had met certain certification requirements. He asked that, with the board's approval, this employee be considered for a pay raise.

The matter was tabled because it was on the agenda to be discussed further in executive session.

ROAD AND BRIDGE HIRING

County Superintendent Todd Boehme requested an additional Road and Bridge Department employee be hired due to a high workload. He said that during the winter months, the department has 11 snow plowing routes and only 10 employees to do the plowing, when fully staffed. There are additional duties for which a full-time employee can be utilized, he said.

Clerk Amy Bishop said the position had been budgeted for with received road funding. The funding is available now.

MOTION: Commissioner Jensen made a motion to approve the posting of the job position, with the caveat that the application process have no set end date. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Payne. The motion carried.

FINAL APPROVAL OF BUDGET AND CERTIFY LEVIES

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to approve the budget and certify levies for fiscal year 2023. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jensen. The motion carried.

RE-SET ROAD MEETING

Commissioner Rasmussen said the Road Map work meeting set in the board's August meeting for September 8 had been cancelled due to a need for more preparation.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to reschedule the work meeting for 7 p.m. on October 27, with Commissioner Payne presiding. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jensen. The motion carried.

WAYNE DAVIDSON – BUILDING INSPECTOR REPORT

County Building Inspector Wayne Davidson was unable to attend the meeting but had left a report to be provided to the board with Clerk Amy Bishop.

Bishop told the board that Davidson was requesting Naaman Dolence, mapper in the Assessor's Office, work with him to address and complete a 9-11 emergency mapping project that had been ongoing for

some time. Assessor Heber Dunford said he would work with Dolence and the other Assessor's Office staff, and he would coordinate with Davidson to determine what would be required to accomplish this goal.

JUSTIN HATCH – PRESENTATION AND U OF I COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT PROPOSAL – ACTION ITEM

Commissioner Payne said he had received a proposal from the University of Idaho (U of I) advertising the extension educator/associate extension educator position at the Bear Lake County Extension Office, with the hope being to attract local applicants.

University of Idaho Eastern District Extension Director Marnie Spencer, who could not be present at the meeting but made herself available via telephone, said the hired associate would spend three days a week at the Bear Lake County Extension Office and two days in Caribou County. Additionally, Justin Hatch — who serves as the U of I extension educator in Caribou County, would travel to Bear Lake County two days a week, switching locations with the hired associate during their time at the Caribou County Extension Office.

Spencer said the extension program had been having a difficult time keeping livestock educators in Bear Lake County. The proposed plan would allow Hatch to cover livestock and agriculture extension programming for Bear Lake County while allowing the new hire to handle Family and Consumer Sciences. The new hire also would be able to assist existing Bear Lake County Extension Office employees with duties associated with management of the local 4-H program. Spencer said Caribou County already had approved the proposal for its extension program. Pending Bear Lake County's approval, Spencer said she would meet with the U of I Extension Committee within a couple of weeks to finalize the breakdown of position duties. The position description then will be written and sent to the U of I campus for approval. Following that, the position will be advertised and is required to be posted for a month, she said.

Clerk Amy Bishop said that, while the salary of the new associate would be paid by U of I, Bear Lake County is being asked to pay the mileage costs — totaling about \$3,300 a year — to cover the new hire's travel costs for two trips a week to and from Caribou County. This total cost could possibly be lowered, depending on the availability of a county vehicle for use.

MOTION: Commissioner Jensen made a motion the board accept the University of Idaho Extension Program proposal, with Commissioner Payne being the point of contact. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Payne. The motion carried.

JOSHUA WISCOMBE – SUBDIVISION UP MINNETONKA CAVE ROAD / DISCUSS WINTER MAINTENANCE – ACTION ITEM

Joshua Wiscombe, a county resident who lives at 675 Jericho Loop in St. Charles, said he had been party to ongoing discussions with Commissioner Jensen and County Superintendent Todd Boehme about his desire for the implementation of a snowmobile turnaround on Minnetonka Cave Road.

Commissioner Jensen said the potential change of snowmobile parking in the area would be aimed at improving the existing turnaround, much of which is just along the side of the existing roadway.

Wiscombe said the proposed parking turnaround design is 100 feet by 523 feet, which would provide ample room for full truck and trailer turnaround rather than just backing down the roadway. The parking area also would be on lands under the designation of the Idaho Department of Lands, he said.

County Attorney Adam McKenzie advised that Wiscombe needs to continue his discussions with the Department of Lands and then get them in touch with McKenzie's office so a better Bear Lake County/Idaho Department of Lands agreement could be finalized in the event a lease on the land to be used was needed. If there are no issues encountered with cost or ability to maintain, it will only be a matter of working with the Department of Lands to work out an agreement, McKenzie said.

KNUTE SANDAHL AND MARK PARKER – DISCUSSION WITH STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Bear Lake County Fire Chief Mark Parker said that Knute Sandahl, Idaho State Fire Marshal, was supposed to attend the meeting but was unavailable due to the fire load across the state.

County Attorney Adam McKenzie said that, since the board's August regular meeting, he had examined the state's adoption of the international fire code. One provision of that international code says that it does not invalidate or render illegal any other local or state ordinances, he said.

McKenzie said he believes the international code only provides a general regulation and thus allows Parker as Bear Lake County Fire Chief to work with the commissioners to decide what works best for the local area. He added that the existing county ordinance allows Parker to issue a burn ban in an emergency measure, but, if implemented, it needs to be discussed and approved by the board at a subsequent meeting.

Commissioner Rasmussen said these types of situations would warrant an emergency meeting of the board in which a fire ban could be discussed fully and in a timely manner.

Parker said that, in addition to emergency meetings and working closely with the commissioners, the formation of any specific local ordinances also would be beneficial because they hold more impact locally than the international fire code. These types of provisions make it clear where the Bear Lake County law stands, he said.

BILL PETTIS – SENIOR CENTER VEHICLE – ACTION ITEM

Bill Pettis, from the Bear Lake Senior Center, said the organization has been dealing with maintenance issues with one of its meal delivery vehicle's computer systems. He said the center has spent about three months searching for the reasonable provision of or opportunity to purchase a used vehicle to replace the vehicle in question. Used vehicles that would fill the center's needs are not available at this time, he said, but it may be an option to go through the county's leasing agent to contract a new vehicle.

Clerk Amy Bishop said the annual leasing fee for a new vehicle would be \$2,500, and the county would take over payment of the vehicle's insurance. This would make the vehicle a county vehicle that would be classified as a donation to the center, she said.

Commissioner Jensen said funds provided to the center in the upcoming fiscal year had been budgeted at \$8,000 — up from \$6,000 budgeted the previous year. He suggested the county pay the \$2,500 leasing fee from the \$8,000 and provide the center with the remaining \$5,500 donation for the year.

Whereas the Bear Lake Senior Center is not an entity of the county, the issue comes to insuring the vehicle through the county's vehicular insurance policy, Attorney Adam McKenzie said. With the lease done through the county leasing agent, insuring it would not be an issue.

MOTION: Commissioner Payne made a motion to lease the Bear Lake Senior Center replacement vehicle through the county's leasing agent and use the existing Bear Lake Senior Center donation to pay for the cost, adjusting the center's budget accordingly to reflect that payment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jensen. The motion carried.

TODD BOEHME – COUNTY SUPERINTDENT

Superintendent Todd Boehme said the county should have a new dump truck in its possession. The truck originally was ordered three years ago, he said, and production had been slowed due to supply chain issues. Boehme said the county's dust guard truck currently is broken down, so areas in need of service have been put on the backburner until a solution can be found.

Boehme said he and Commissioner Payne had met with Tom Brown from the United States Forest Service to discuss the county's agreement for road maintenance on certain forest service roads.

One area of road maintenance concern in the county is Early Lane, Boehme said. Over the past 30 years that roadway has seen extreme wear due to continual use by heavy state project vehicles traveling to and from the gravel pit in that area. The high weights of those vehicles cause the extra wear, with increased use of camping areas up that roadway also contributing to the damage, he said.

Commissioner Rasmussen said that, at one time, Oneida County had a roadway rototiller. This piece of equipment essentially chops up the existing road, wherein oil can be re-added and then the mix can be laid back down and smoothed. Whereas the area in question is roughly just $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile long, it's possible Oneida might allow Bear Lake County to use the equipment for the small road improvement project.

Boehme reported he had been provided a cooperative agreement from the state that will help to provide funding to areas in need of extreme improvements. This will be an ongoing effort.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Michelle Fillion of Fish Haven asked if the board had made any decisions or updates to its process in providing for or restricting short-term rental properties in the county, specifically in Fish Haven.

Commissioner Rasmussen said the county had put its evaluation of this issue on a temporary hold until an attorney could be brought on board to help navigate the matter. An attorney had been consulted and the board will be returning to its review, he said.

Bill Pettis of Paris praised the county and City of Paris for the erection of the veterans memorial on the southwest section of the Bear Lake County Courthouse grounds. He said it was a fitting tribute. He did, however, ask that all county employees and building overseers take extra notice of the flags outside their locations. He requested Bear Lake County make an effort to always follow the lowering and raising guidelines for the flags, as well as regular replacement of flags as they begin to show wear.

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)(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; (d) To consider records that are exempt from disclosure as provided in chapter 1, title 74, Idaho Code; The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jensen. Roll Call Vote. Commissioner Jensen, Aye. Commissioner Payne, Aye. Commissioner Rasmussen, Aye.

The board entered executive session at 11:56 a.m. and left executive session at 12:46 p.m.

From 12:10 p.m. to 12:30 p.m. the commissioners discussed an employee evaluation.

From 12:30 p.m. to 12:46 p.m. the commissioners discussed complaints made against a county employee.

Following lunch, the commissioners reconvened their regular meeting at 12:46 p.m.

TAX DEED AUCTION – ACTION ITEM

Commissioner Rasmussen said, pursuant to Idaho Code 31-808, the board would auction, to the highest bidder, a 25 percent interest in mineral rights only for six parcels — 05173.00, 05191.00, 05193.00, 05196.00, 05206.00 and 05209.00 — located at or near the junction of Border Road and US Highway 30, near the Wyoming State line.

The property in question was acquired by tax deed and sold as is, with all parcels sold together. The name of the taxpayer as it appears in the delinquent tax certificate upon which the tax deed was issued is Gerald Johnson, Rasmussen said.

James Bethers, who was the only bidder, won the auction with a minimum bid of \$450, which included all property taxes owing, late charges, interest, fees and costs, including costs associated with or related to encumbrances on the property as well as fees and costs associated with the advertising, sale and transfer of the property.

STEVE LIECHTY – ROCKY MOUNTAIN POWER UPDATE AND FAIRGROUND LIGHTS – ACTION ITEM

Commissioner Rasmussen said Steve Liechty with Rocky Mountain Power would be unable to attend the meeting due to another commitment, but he will be available for the board's October meeting.

Commissioner Rasmussen said he and Republican Party Commissioner Nominee Wynn Olsen had met with Rocky Mountain Power representatives and walked through the Bear Lake County Fairgrounds to discuss an update to LED lighting. The total project cost will be about \$8,000, he said.

Olsen reported he would bring the gathered info to the Bear Lake County Fair Board at its September 22 meeting.

No action was taken on this matter at this time.

WYNN OLSEN – BENNINGTON WATER SYSTEM

Wynn Olsen, president of the Bennington Water District, said an improvements project for Bennington's water system will begin this fall and only affect three landowners. Olsen said he had worked with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality to procure \$2.4 million in grant money that requires no matching funds.

When completed, the project will feature two springs, two wells, a required chlorinator building, and a 100-gallon storage tank to be used in conjunction with Bennington's existing 50-gallon tank, he said, and will progress in steps.

First, the springs must be rejuvenated. Then, construction on the tank and chlorinator building will be done. Finally, two new water lines will be laid for better water delivery, Olsen said.

The Town of Bennington currently is looking to replace old and obsolete water meters currently in use throughout the community, he said. Monthly residential water utility bills now are \$40 a month per household for use of up to 30,000 gallons. When the improvements project is completed, residential utility costs will remain constant with use of up to 30,000 gallons per month. There will be an additional cost of \$1 per 1,000 gallons of additional use.

HUGH MOURITSEN – BYPASS OF PUBLIC ACCESS ROAD TO ORCHARD ABOVE BENNINGTON

Hugh Mouritsen and his sister, Alicia Wiser, came before the board to discuss the possibility of Bear Lake County vacating a roadway that goes through their family property, located in the hills to the east of Bennington. Mouritsen said a former throughway bisecting the property and continuing Bennington Canyon Road had been closed years ago by the county. This effectively made his family's property, as well as a neighboring property owned by Clay Morgan, the end of Bennington Home Canyon Road, he said. Although irrigation companies had been granted access to the property via the roadway previously, Mouritsen said a turnaround spot would need to be implemented in the area.

If the county chose to not vacate the roadway, Mouritsen said a second option would be to bypass a

section of the roadway through the property that leads to Morgan's land. This effort would aid in the preservation of two historical trees planted 130 years ago by Mouritsen's great-grandfather. The trees' roots run under the existing roadway but have become exposed in areas that have seen extreme use by public vehicles, he said.

Commissioner Payne said the proper procedure for addressing the county's vacation of a roadway would require a public hearing.

Following county policy, if Mouritsen petitions Bear Lake County for roadway vacation and the issue is brought to the next board meeting, a public hearing likely wouldn't be held until December, Commissioner Rasmussen said. In addition, he said, because that roadway is considered a right-of-way, the county doesn't maintain it during winter months — something Mouritsen had expressed interest in having done.

LANCE FITZSIMMONS – TRANSPARENCY SUGGESTIONS

Lance Fitzsimmons of Geneva thanked the Board for ensuring a Zoom link is posted to the Bear Lake County government website before each of the board's meetings. While this certainly helps to better inform the public of county activity, Fitzsimmons said more can be done.

Bear Lake should strive to be more transparent like Kootenai County, he said. The Kootenai County Board of Commissioners records each meeting and then posts the video to YouTube where it can be viewed at any time following the meeting. If Bear Lake County followed suit, Fitzsimmons said this would be helpful for a lot of people who are unable to attend or unable to watch the live Zoom linked meetings.

Fitzsimmons said it is necessary that the board be more forthright in regards to tax forgiveness and new assessments. He requested those details be made less vague at meetings so that the public is able to understand who and what is being forgiven when those choices are made.

Steps like these would be beneficial to the local government, too, he said, as it would allow the reducing and halting of rumors — such as those that were rampant in the local community during the resignation of and investigation into the conduct of former Bear Lake County Prosecutor Joe Hayes, Fitzsimmons said.

Commissioner Rasmussen said it is difficult to diffuse all public rumors in a community like Bear Lake County, but he also agreed it is important the board be trusted by the public. He advised the commissioners, in conjunction with Clerk Amy Bishop, would look into options to implement some new transparency measures, specifically when related to recording and sharing of video meetings.

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

The Meeting adjourned at 2:12 P.M.

Vaughn N. Rasmussen

VAUGHN N. RASMUSSEN, Chairman

11-9-22

Date Approved

ATTEST: *Amy Bishop*
Amy Bishop, Clerk

