**Bear Lake County Commissioners' Special Meeting**
**November 20, 2025**
**Commissioners' Chambers – Paris, Idaho**

The Board of Bear Lake County Commissioners met for a special meeting at 3 p.m. Thursday, November 20, 2025. Because the Commissioners' Chambers were closed for a department training, the meeting was held in the Bear Lake County Courtroom in Paris, Idaho. Members present were Chairman Rex L. Payne, Commissioner Wynn S. Olsen, Commissioner Alan P. Eborn and Clerk of the Board Amy Bishop. Also in attendance were Deputy Clerk Paul Christiansen and several members of the public.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION: Commissioner Eborn made a motion to adopt the agenda for the November 20, 2025, Special Meeting of the Board of Bear Lake County Commissioners. The motion received a second from Commissioner Olsen. The motion carried.**

**OPEN AND REVIEW PROSECUTOR PROPOSALS**

Commissioner Payne advised the only remaining agenda item for the commissioners to address concerned the opening, reading and evaluation of parties who had submitted proposals to serve as Bear Lake County Prosecutor after they were solicited by the Board. He asked that Bear Lake County Clerk Amy Bishop read the solicitation statement provided by the Board, which at the time of release advised the county was requesting statements of qualification and experience to be used in selecting a prosecuting attorney under Idaho Code 59-907. Upon selection, the attorney will serve Bear Lake County under Idaho Code Title 31, Chapter 26, in the capacities of court proceedings, Board of County Commissioners meetings and Bear Lake County Planning and Zoning Commission meetings.

Furthermore, to be considered, attorneys needed to be licensed to practice law in Idaho for five years or more and must not be currently serving as counsel in any civil action against Bear Lake County. Proposals were required to include resumes for key attorneys; three professional references; a letter of interest consisting of no more than two pages; and a cost proposal. Four copies of all requested materials were required to be provided in a sealed envelope marked "Statement of Qualifications" and submitted no later than 5 p.m. on November 17, 2025, to Bishop at the Bear Lake County Clerk's Office. The proposals were to be opened at a special meeting of the Board of Bear Lake County Commissioners on November 20, 2025, at the Bear Lake County Courthouse.

At this point, Commissioner Payne advised the county had received some legal papers at the start of the meeting. However, because those had not been present on the meeting agenda, no further discussion would take place. Additionally, the paperwork appeared to be invalid because it had not been signed by a judge.

Concerning solicitations, Bishop advised the county had sent the request for proposals out to five attorneys, had provided it to the Idaho Prosecuting Attorneys Association (IPAA) and had posted it to the county website. Two full proposals – one from Ronnie Jayce Keller, who since October had served as Bear Lake County Deputy Prosecutor, and a second from Fuller & Fuller, PLLC of Preston – had been received

before the deadline. Additionally, four emails had been received from parties who had not followed the instructions of the solicitation, she said.

The commissioners proceeded to open the two proposals before them. After the proposal contents were opened, Commissioner Payne asked that Bishop read into the public record the first proposal, as provided by Lyle J. Fuller of Fuller & Fuller, PLLC. The attached letter expressed the firm's interest in providing legal services to Bear Lake County through the duties expressed within the county's solicitation request.

The firm indicated the attorneys most directly involved in its proposed representation of the county would be Preston Olsen and Ethan Rawlings. Olsen, who joined Fuller & Fuller, PLLC in 2024, has more than 20 years' experience as an attorney – much of that work related to local governments. Rawlings had practiced law for more than four years, with his primary focus on criminal law. In his previous practice in the State of Utah, Fuller had for a period of time served as prosecuting attorney for the City of Mapleton. However, the letter indicated that Rawlings's criminal law experience – which includes work for the Bannock County Public Defender's Office – is more extensive than that of Fuller.

Fuller & Fuller, PLLC has served as contracted county attorneys for Oneida County since January 2024 and presently serves as city attorneys for the Idaho cities of Preston, Lava Hot Springs, Dayton, Clifton, Downey and Bancroft.

Fuller & Fuller, PLLC's letter indicated the firm anticipated one of its attorneys will attend in person all Bear Lake County Commissioner meetings, while P&Z meetings will be attended either in person or via Zoom. Furthermore, the firm anticipated criminal hearings being attended either in person or via zoom – depending largely on the nature of the respective hearing.

The firm advised its attorneys will alternate duties, and it anticipated it would be able to cover Bear Lake County's criminal court docket by assigning an attorney to magistrate court on Wednesday and to district court on two Thursdays each month. While either Rawlings or Olsen will be required to handle Oneida County's magistrate court requirements on Thursdays, whomever is not handling those magistrate duties will attend Bear Lake County's district court responsibilities.

Per the Board of Bear Lake County Commissioners' solicitation, Fuller & Fuller, PLLC provided professional references from Bill Lewis, chairman of the Oneida County Board of County Commissioners; Oneida County Clerk M. Lon Colton; and Dan Keller, mayor of the City of Preston. Additionally, the firm provided resume copies for attorneys Fuller, Olsen and Rawlings for the commissioners' review.

Fuller & Fuller, PLLC proposed a flat fee arrangement under which Bear Lake County would pay a fixed amount per month which would cover the cost of both civil and criminal legal matters. If the county opted to have the firm take on significant civil litigation, or should an unusually time-sensitive criminal prosecution be required – for example, a murder case or some other high-profile need – the firm reserved the right to bill the county on an hourly basis for those matters in addition to the proposed monthly flat fee. In those instances, Fuller & Fuller, PLLC may advise the commissioners it would be appropriate to involve other attorneys or law firms to help represent the county.

The firm believed its existing arrangement with Oneida County would serve as a guide in terms of setting

the flat rate compensation. However, it had calculated Bear Lake County's felony filings to be about double that of Oneida. With that considered, Fuller & Fuller, PLLC proposed a flat compensation rate of $12,500 per month as the base pay during the initial contract period. Additionally, it proposed the county reimburse mileage at the current federal rate. No extra charge for photocopies, postage or computerized legal reserve services would be included.

The firm advised it will provide its own benefits package to the employees assigned to serve Bear Lake County.

Bishop next read the proposal packet that had been submitted by Keller.

Keller prefaced his letter of interest by saying that early in his life he had chosen to use his professional capacity as a means to serve and protect his community. As an attorney, he had dedicated his career to being counsel for government entities close to his home in Franklin County.

After two years working for a law firm based in Preston as he completed his Bachelor's Degree studies in Law & Constitutional Studies, another Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice-Sociology and an Area Studies Certificate in Law & Society, Keller enrolled in law school. While he originally had been set to attend the University of Idaho College of Law's Boise campus, he received notice he had been accepted into the S.J. Quinney College of Law at the University of Utah. Although Keller advised he is an Idahoan, through and through, his allegiances are to Southeastern Idaho. He opted to enroll with the University of Utah because it was closer to that part of Idaho and he was able to commute daily.

During his first year of law school, Keller applied for and was offered a position with the Idaho Attorney General's Special Prosecution Unit – despite this position being reserved for second- and third-year law student applicants – to assist with aggravated felonies, homicides, domestic violence, sex crimes, communication fraud, forgery and public corruption. Shortly thereafter, he was admitted to practice law in Idaho in June of 2020 and began providing assistance to a law office in Preston while also continuing to aid the Special Prosecution Unit. He also won the National Crimes Victims' Rights Writing Competition with his submission that outlined Idaho's history of integrating victims' rights in criminal proceedings and which provided suggestion for future changes.

After receiving his Juris Doctor and Area Study Certificates in both Criminal Law and Litigation, Keller – who had been working as an extern with the Cache County Attorney's Office – applied for an entry-level prosecuting position with that agency. Despite not having taken the Bar Exam, he was selected over several other candidates who had years of experience practicing law. Keller was immediately handed more than 100 cases involving victims of sexual assault and abuse, domestic violence or stalking, with more than a dozen felony trial dates already set.

Keller's steady work at the Cache County Attorney's Office began immediately. In October 2021, Cache County held its first trial following the COVID-19 pandemic. Keller presented a felony domestic violence case to the jury and the defendant was convicted on all counts. Keller had been admitted to the Utah Bar just two weeks prior to that trial commencing, and a mere two weeks later he again successfully served as prosecutor in a sexual assault case jury trial.

Concerning age and experience, Keller was the junior to all other attorneys at the Cache County

Attorney's Office; yet he soon became senior in regards to his position and substance of experience. In 2022, he was named Trial Attorney of the Year for his office, and the following year he was promoted to Special Victim Unit Chief Deputy. In 2024, he again was promoted to Chief Prosecutor for the agency and has served as Cache County Attorney's Office Chief Deputy since May. In that capacity, he leads the office under direction of the elected county attorney and supervises more than 30 individuals – 12 attorneys, across civil and criminal divisions; six legal assistants; two sworn officers within the special investigations unit; seven victim coordinators in the victim services unit; and four employees in the Children's Justice Center.

Keller reminded the commissioners that he was appointed to serve as Bear Lake County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney in March and had, since that time, handled all felony offenses committed within that jurisdiction. He reported he had been very engaged in that role while simultaneously handling all civil and criminal responsibilities as Cache County Chief Deputy Attorney. Additionally, as it corresponds to local governments, Keller advised he had provided legal counsel to the City of Weston, Idaho, for several years. On behalf of the United States Department of Justice, Keller is certified under the Child Abduction Response Team program.

Noting some of his accomplishments, Keller advised in the previous summer he was one of just 24 prosecutors across the nation to complete the Advanced Digital Evidence for Prosecutors course at the National Computer Forensics Institute in Alabama in partnership with the United States Secret Service. He also completed the Force Science Certification Course that had been hosted by the Nampa Police Department and had earned the designation of "Force Science Analyst" to better assist during officer-involved critical incidents. In fall 2024, Keller had been one of just 24 attorneys from across the nation to have attended the National Judicial College's Judicial Academy in Reno, Nevada, and had completed a course aimed at aspiring judges. Furthermore, he had given a presentation, entitled "Stalking: A Collaborative Approach," at the third annual Northern Utah Conference to End Violence, which featured nationally recognized speakers.

Keller regularly has been asked to teach classes for Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) requirements, and he is a current member of the 2025-26 class of the Idaho Academy of Leadership for Lawyers – a highly selective and well-regarded leadership training program that each year involves just more than a dozen lawyers from across Idaho and teaches them leadership skills aimed at bettering the legal profession and Idaho communities.

Keller closed his letter by advising that he has experienced both success and failure in his law career, but through it all he has shown devotion and gained the experience that bolsters his capabilities to serve Bear Lake County.

Per the Board of Bear Lake County Commissioners' solicitation, Keller provided professional references from Cache County Attorney K. Taylor Sorensen; Jeris Kendall, the chief civil deputy with the Cache County Attorney's Office; and Dane Murray, the chief criminal deputy for the Cache County Attorney's Office. Additionally, Keller provided copies of his resume for the Board's review.

Keller proposed an annual salary of $82,500 for himself, with no benefits package. For his deputy, he proposed an annual salary of $36,500 and a package to include insurance and benefits, waivable upon deputy's request.

Commissioner Eborn asked Bishop if she could provide the total cost of the benefits package that the county pays its employees. Bishop advised that total varies, depending on a tier contingent on the employee's number of dependents. However, after calculating, she advised the top end of the county insurance benefit totaled about $34,600 this year. If Keller envisioned his deputy to serve in a full-time position, the county's annual contribution to the Public Employee Retirement System of Idaho (PERSI) would be $4,300.

Each of the commissioners had a rating sheet in front of them. Commissioner Payne asked that each commissioner score both candidates based on several categories – criminal law experience; civil experience; professional reputation, integrity and competence; and capability to meet schedules and deadlines – in order to determine their top choice. Each commissioner had one vote and need not express their scoring total, as simply adding the scores up could sway the vote a different way than was intended, he said.

Commissioner Eborn said both candidates were extremely well qualified and observed both had extensive backgrounds in criminal prosecution. He liked that Fuller & Fuller would provide a team of lawyers to cover Bear Lake County's law needs. On the other hand, he said, Keller's proposal included a deputy, and that too would help with the county's requirements.

In order to attract a qualified candidate for its prosecuting attorney position, Lincoln County, Wyoming, pays a salary of $140,000, he said, though he did not know if that included a benefits package. Oneida County pays its attorney a similar figure. Because of that, Commissioner Eborn advised he did not feel either candidate was out of line with what they had proposed.

Ultimately, Commissioner Eborn cast a vote for Keller, based on his experience working for Bear Lake County as its current deputy prosecutor and for showing a high degree of competence in that capacity. On a personal note, he said he would never hesitate to hire either Keller or Fuller & Fuller PLLC to represent himself or any of his family if and when legal services were needed. He expressed the decision was a hard one to make.

Commissioner Payne asked Keller if he had a deputy prosecutor in mind. Keller advised he wanted to keep things fair and would post the position and make the judgment based on applicants' qualifications.

Commissioner Olsen advised he had been impressed by both proposals. Both candidates showed lots of experience and esteemed qualifications. However, the Board of County Commissioners has to evaluate the monetary factor in their choices – though that should not always determine the outcome of a decision. He advised he would err in favor of contracting with Keller based on the fact that he had been willing to step up in the county's current time of need.

Commissioner Payne said his ratings for the candidates had been nearly dead even. However, weighing that with the monetary issue, he opted to vote for Keller.

The commissioners expressed their gratefulness for Fuller & Fuller, PLLC's interest and willingness to submit a proposal.

**MOTION: Commissioner Eborn made a motion to contract with Ronnie Keller to fill the role of Bear Lake County Prosecuting Attorney through a new elected prosecutor's takeover in January 2029, following the November 2028 election. The motion received a second from Commissioner Olsen. The motion carried.**

**MOTION: Commissioner Eborn made a motion to allow Commissioner Rex Payne to work with Attorney S. Doug Wood to draw up a contract for Keller's prosecutorial service and to have it ready for the Board's review and approval at its next meeting, on Monday, November 24, 2025. The motion received a second from Commissioner Olsen. The motion carried.**

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

The meeting ended at 3:45 p.m.

Rex L. Payne, Chairman

12/8/25
Date Approved

ATTEST: Amy Bishop, Clerk