

**OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF BLAINE COUNTY
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE MARCH 2022 SESSION**

Second Day

Monday, May 9, 2022

Pursuant to Statutory Provisions, the Board of Blaine County Commissioners (BCC) met this day at 9:00 a.m. Present were Chairman Dick Fosbury, Vice-Chair Angenie McCleary, and Commissioner Muffy Davis; Recording Secretary Sunny Grant and Deputy Clerk-Auditor-Recorder Joana Guerrero, Human Resources Generalist Justin Highhouse; County Attorney Tim Graves, County Prosecuting Attorney Matt Fredback, Sustainability Manager Lynne Barker, County Land Use Director Tom Bergin, Chief Deputy Clerk of the District Court Andrea Logan, IT Enterprise Architect Ben Parker, IT Security/Network Engineer Jon Eaton, County Assessor Jim Williams, Deputy Assessor Melissa Fry, Noxious Weeds Department Head John Cenarrusa, Road and Bridge Manager Steve Thompson, Chief Deputy Sheriff Will Fruehling, County Treasurer John David Davidson, Certified Building Official Jeff Giese, GIS Manager Sam Young, Chief Deputy Clerk/Auditor/ Recorder Leslie Londos, Accounts Payable Clerk Gretchen Stinnett, Administrative Services Support Specialist Kay Draper, Appraiser David Vanderpool, Appraiser Tammy Robison, Communications Director Robin Stellers, Payroll/Recorder Clerk Breana Harshbarger, Appraiser Alyssa Cenarrusa, Grants, Elections and County Services Specialist Deidre Dolce, LU&BS Deputy Director Kathy Grotto, Administrative Assistant Morgan DeWitt, Appraiser Erin Swanson, Disaster Services Coordinator Chris Corwin, Administrative Services Manager Stephanie Carlson, County Administrator Mandy Pomeroy and County Clerk Stephen McDougall Graham.

Some participants in this meeting were by web conference or teleconference.

Chairman Fosbury called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

DISCUSSION REGARDING 40 HOUR WORK WEEK POLICY

The Blaine County Commissioners are open to discuss 40-hour policy and the impacts. There is an ongoing increase in activity and growth in population throughout Blaine County. Facilities Manager Pat Boyle is working with a local architect consultant to study how to get the most efficiency out of all Blaine County buildings.

County Administrator Mandy Pomeroy is making it clear to all attendees that this is not an intent to transform Blaine County to a 5-day work week. In 2019 the BCC stated they desired to transition to a 40-hour work week. All new full-time positions should be hired at a 40-hour work week schedule. Vacant positions should be filled at a 40-hour work week.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for FY2022 increased by 9-10%, thus effecting labor costs and cost of goods. Blaine County benefits program will increase by 9% in FY2023. The Budget Officer and the County Administrator may recommend to the BCC to increase employee wages to match the increased CPI.

The county court house and Clerk's Department is currently open five-days a week. The BCC suggested that any new fulltime employees or vacancy be hired at the 40-hour work week.

The Blaine County handbook states in section 2.3.3 work hour section "*Standard work week is 40 hours; standard work day is 10 hours for hourly workers. Some employees may work an alternative work schedule depending on the needs of the position.*" The Blaine County handbook will be updated with revised verbiage regarding work week expectations.

In 2019 Blaine County had 178 employees; in 2021 to 2022 Blaine County has hired 11 new full-time employees. There are currently six different work schedules within Blaine County; 40 hours a week, 37.5 hours a week, 35 hours a week, 34 hours a week, 32 hours a week and 23 hours a week. Pomeroy did an analysis that by transitioning to a 40-hour work week it would provide 156.5-hours per week of staff time that is equivalent to 3 full time employees without the additional cost of benefits.

- Employee A: 40-hours a week is 2,080 hours a year. \$20.36 per hour plus benefits compensation equals to \$29.58 per hour with an annual total amount of \$61,526.40.
- Employee B: 35-hours a week is 1,820 hours a year at \$20.36 per hour plus benefits compensation equals \$33.81 per hour with an annual total amount of \$61,534.20.

Total compensation is equal to an employee's full salary plus the cost of their benefits. Blaine County considers a 20-hour week as full time, the federal government considers 30-hour week full time. Blaine County covers all full-time employee's medical, dental and vision insurance 100%; employees have the option to include family members at an extra cost. County Administrator Mandy Pomeroy explained that Blaine County chooses to fully cover all full-time employees' benefits package.

One standard practice of other employers is to prorate the benefits cost for employees who work less than 40 hours per week to help offset the inequities between staff. For example, a 30-hour work week is 75% of the standard 40-hour work week. The employer would then only cover 75% of the benefits package and the employee would cover the remaining 25%. Employees who work over 40 hours a week

would be paid overtime or accrue comp-time off.

Pomeroy explained different options; a two-year transition phase to 40-hour work weeks; proration of benefits; or, to leave things as they are.

McCleary is in favor for a 40-hour work week, she believes it's conventional, efficient, and would maximize the capacity of employees while minimizing overhead. McCleary shared she does not wish to transition to prorating benefits packages. She is in favor of transitioning employees to 40 hours a week and all new FTEs be hired at 40-hours a week. She suggested departments cross train employees and/or have a floating employee.

Davis explained that she has worked in the private sector and has witnessed firsthand how costly private insurance is. She believes the benefits package Blaine County provides is extremely beneficial. She did favor the prorated benefits plan Pomeroy presented. She liked the idea McCleary suggested of cross training employees. As a commissioner she does feel it is their responsibility to keep cost low while remaining efficient and effective.

- **Clerk's Office**

The Clerk's Department is open five days a week. County Clerk Stephen McDougall Graham is reluctant to force his employees to transition to 40 hours a week. When he was appointed, he was advised that all new FTE will be hired at 40 hours a week. He did advise that any changes being made should be clearly stated in the handbook to avoid confusion.

- **Prosecutors' Office**

Prosecuting Attorney Matt Fredback doesn't believe he has enough traffic to keep his employees occupied for 10 hours a day 4 days a week. He is not in favor of having an employee sitting at a desk with nothing to do just to meet the 40-hour work week policy.

County Attorney Tim Graves stated that his office is currently stable. He doesn't believe they need to transition at this point in time.

Graves explained that the 40-hours a week is the maximum full time by Federal Law. If the BCC transitioned to a 40-hour work week structure; he thinks it would be best to have some type of voluntary plan. Graves did suggest that before any department requests to hire a FTE at 35-hours a week they should bump their current employees to 40-hours a week.

- **Treasurer Office**

County John David Davidson expressed his support in having a floating employee. Davidson did ask the commissioners not to change the benefits plan for employees. His explained his department has changed from years before. In the past he needed more employees but with the technology available today, he doesn't see his department needing anymore full-time employees. Davidson stated that it should be up to elected officials and/or department head to decide what their department needs.

- **Assessor's Office**

County Assessor Jim Williams is 100% in disagreement with the BCC changing anything regarding hours in his department. He quoted a previous Blaine County Commissioner that stated that the commissioners should not overstep the elected officials.

He explained that flexibility makes hiring for his department more appealing. If his office transitioned to 40 hours a week, they would need to work 7:00 am too 6:00 pm Monday through Friday. He mentioned that his employees enjoy the home life balance. He explained that his employees would not be able to drop children off at daycare before 7:00 and children in school earliest drop off is 7:30. By changing the work week hours it would disrupt their home life. All his employees stated they do not want to work 40 hours a week. His employees are willing to write letters to the BCC explaining why they don't want to work 40 hours a week.

Williams explained that the IRS considers 30 hours per week 'full time'. He believes that if an employee is full time, they should receive full benefits.

He explained that not everything is fair across the board. He brought up Stephanie Carlson's department is allowed to work from home would be considered unfair to Pat Boyles, facilities department because they are required to be here. He thinks it's outrageous to ding employees on their benefits because they are only working 35-hours a week.

Williams quoted ex-Blaine County employee Derek Voss "The Blaine County Commissioners authority is to fund a full-time employee; the elected official decides the hours for that employee." Williams spoke with other Idaho county commissioners.

Minidoka County Commissioner Wayne Schenk stated that "they let elected officials decide what hours they need from their people, they know what their department needs."

Bonneville Commissioner Jonathan D. Walker stated that "why would the commissioners want to micromanage at that level. In this work environment the commissioners need to allow elected officials all the resources to attract workers."

Payette County Commissioner Reece Hrizuk stated that he believes "it's up to elected officials to

determine what they need. They were elected to run their office and commissioner should let them do it.” ICRMP Risk Management Specialist Jim McNall did not make public comment but asked if anyone had questions of concerns regarding the issue, they can reach him at 208-246-8222. He did say he advised against a policy that was so restricted.

- **Sheriff’s Office**

Chief Deputy Sheriff Will Fruehling stated that the Sheriff’s office has one employee working a 35-hour work week. He did say that it is frustrating that departments hire full time employees when they have full time employees only working 35-hours a week. He doesn’t see the justification of hiring another FTE when the department can transition to 40-hours a week.

- **Land Use and Building Services Department**

County Land Use Director Tom Bergin stated that two employees who were hired in the early 2000 were transitioned to 37.5/35-hour work week. Employees in his department enjoy the flexibility. In the summer one employee works less hours to spend time with children and when children go back to school, they work the full 40-hours. He is not supportive of a prorated benefits plan.

- **Administrative Services Department**

Administrative Services Manager Stephanie Carlson doesn’t believe it’s a big issue in her department. They have one employee who works less hours than the managers. During certain seasons managers work overtime. She does think this may create an issue with employees wanting to work less hours during the slack seasons.

- **Human Resources**

Human Resources Generalist Justin Highhouse will explore possible models to cross train employees.

- **Sustainability Department**

Sustainability Manager Lynne Barker commented on accrued vacation time. In the past she has had four to five weeks paid vacations due to her expertise. She doesn’t believe that someone with her experience should only receive two weeks paid vacation a year. For an employee who is just starting their career two weeks is sufficient but employees with more experience and expertise should be rewarded with more time off.

She believes if Blaine County is revising the Blaine County handbook, they should revise their vacation time policy to be competitive for professionals that work for Blaine County. Fosbury mentioned that two weeks paid vacation is standard in most places of employment.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

LU&BS Deputy Director Kathy Grotto commented that they advertised locally, state-wide, and on national level. They received two applications; one applicant was a ‘no show’ the other applicant was very pleased with the flexibility that Blaine County offered. Grotto mentioned that flexibility has aided them in being able to hiring the best they can find.

Fosbury favors the adjustment phase to transition to prorated benefits plans and all new FTE be hired at 40 hours a week or prorated plan. He believes Blaine County offers a competitive compensation plan and employees are aware of how great the plan is.

Davis questioned elected officials if they would prefer to offer new employees 40 hours with full benefits or have the flexibility to hire at lesser hours with a prorated benefits plan. McDougall Graham stated that he would prefer to have the flexibility to hire the best qualified person. Davis would like to see Blaine County shift to a prorated benefits model.

County Attorney Tim Graves investigated the County Commissioners and Elected Officials authorities. The commissioners are authorized to determine employee, office and building hours. They may also decide if a department will hire full time or part time employees.

McCleary asked Human Resources Generalist Justin Highhouse to conduct a survey regarding the 40 hour-work week and paid vacation. She would like for Highhouse to gather feedback on benefits plan and current work schedules.

- **Road and Bridge Department**

Road and Bridge Manager Steve Thompson stated that his department is 40 hours per week. They are also on call 24/7 365 days a year. When he hires new employees, he makes it clear that his department works 40 hours a week. He noted that not everything is going to be fair in every department. An employee can choose to find another career that better fits their lifestyle.

BREAK

ARPA SPENDING ANALYSIS, YTD ARPA FUNDING REQUESTS REVIEW

Also Present, Blaine County Clerk Stephen McDougall Graham, Administrative Services Manager Mandy Pomeroy, Administrative Services Support Specialist Kay Draper, GIS Manager Sam Young, Chief

Deputy Sheriff Will Fruehling, Picabo Homeowner Nick Purdy, Carey-Picabo Chamber of Commerce President Mike Higgs, HigherGround Executive Director Kate Dobbie, YMCA Chief Executive Officer Jason Shearer, Ketchum Urban Renewal Agency Commissioner Gary Lipton, KURA Chair Susan Scovell, KURA Executive Director Suzanne Frick, Blaine County Housing Authority Board Chair Sarah Michael, Ketchum City Administrator Jade Riley, Galena Engineering Sean Flynn, Tidwell Idaho Foundation Gary Poole, TIF Kiki Tidwell, Boise State Public Radio News Reporter George Prentice, Elise Lufkin was present for the afternoon session.

Blaine County Clerk Stephen McDougall Graham updated the BCC with a year-to-date break down of the ARPA fund requests.

McCleary suggested changing ARPA funding request considerations. She suggested if the BCC would be open to listening to all the requests before approvals. She would prefer presentations to be divided between amounts and time sensitive requests. Request over \$500,000 that are not immediate or emergencies be postponed until July. Requests under \$500,000 and/or time sensitive requests should be presented before July.

Davis questioned how the monies for community services contract were decided? Community services contracts are contracts between Blaine County and organizations that can better performed services on Blaine County's behalf. For example, The Hunger Coalition replaced Blaine County's food pantry and gets paid for the services they provide to the community.

- **GIS**

GIS Department's ARPA fund request is for a 3D aerial photography program. This program would benefit the GIS Department, Assessor's Department, Sheriff's Department and possibly the Noxious Weeds Department. Blaine County Assessor Jim Williams shared he would cost share the expense with GIS. The imagery is 3in resolution & 3D current imaging is 1.8 Ft resolution & 2D images provided at no cost by the government.

The program would assist the Assessor's Department by providing up-close images of properties and surroundings. Using this program, they would be able to view properties without leaving the office.

Chief Deputy Sheriff Will Fruehling shared the Sheriff's and Emergency Communication's department could possibly use these images in search and rescue situations.

McCleary asked if the images would be able to assist Noxious Weeds Department by providing images of plant life around Blaine County and if it could be used to tracking wildlife.

Land Use and Building Services was not present during meeting but made a comment online that this program would also assist their department.

McCleary suggested that this program be funded by the GIS budget. Fosbury suggested it may come from contingency. McDougall Graham explained that this request would not be eligible for contingency.

Young alerted that the City of Sun Valley and City of Hailey were also interested in funding this program.

- **Sheriff's Office**

Chief Deputy Sheriff Will Fruehling explained that they are prepared to begin the second phase in the radio upgrade plan. They upgraded the mobile unit radios last year. This year they are requesting to replace twenty-five mobile vehicle radios. The radios are \$149,870. The installation of the radios is \$17,500 and the total is \$167,370. Chief Deputy Sheriff Will Fruehling stated that if this is not approved through ARPA the Sheriff's Office will include this in their FY2023 capital request.

The current radios the Sheriffs have now are fourteen years old and have reached their end of life. Fruehling expressed they are eager to get these ordered due to manufacture delays. The radios they currently have are no longer viable and the manufacture no longer services them. The Sheriff's applied for a radio grant through Motorola and were denied in the past. McCleary asked if the Sheriff's department would research if there are any other grants available to fund this request.

- **Disaster Services**

Disaster Services Coordinator Chris Corwin requested for a new 700MHz repeater site. The 700MHz repeater site that would improve radio coverage for law enforcement, Rural Carey Fire, Idaho State Police, County Road and Bridge Department and Idaho Transportation Department in the Carey and Craters of the Moon area. This would also provide coverage by the Little Wood River and Fish Creek. The closest repeater is 70 miles south and the new Wi-Fi in Carey has caused coverage interference. The repeaters are in a package of four, allowing different entities to communicate with each other at the same time.

BLM and Forest Service use a VHF system, if they purchased 700MHz radios, they could use the repeaters as well. Idaho State Police is budgeting to upgrade coverage in that area, and may agree to cost share.

McCleary would like for Fire District & Ambulance District to convert to 700MHz. Corwin stated that Wood River Fire & Rescue Department and Rural Carey Fire Department have 700MHz radio capabilities.

Corwin will perform a coverage analysis. In August they can review the study and decide how to improve communications within Blaine County.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Carey-Picabo Chamber of Commerce President Mike Higgs stated this is great idea and needs to be done. Higgs spoke with Carey Rural Fire Chief Richard Kimball and he has mentioned he would greatly appreciate better communication coverage. As a resident of the Little Wood Valley resident, he would appreciate increased communication.

Blaine County Resident Cindy Mann applauded the BCC and the process of how they approve ARPA funds request based on the level of importance.

Blaine County Housing Authority Board Chair Sarah Michael also applauded the BCC on how they are processing ARPA funds. She did state that any department requests made should be done through the department budgeting.

Tidwell Idaho Foundation Representative Gary Poole ask how they decided on internal and external numbers. Fosbury explained they received funds last year and the treasury rules and guidance were still in being developed. They sent out a request to all Blaine County Departments that are critical needs. They set allocated monies for community service contracts that serve on Blaine County behalf. They also took into consideration that the biggest need was the housing crisis. They created three funding buckets one is for county department the second is for county contracts for services and the third is primarily for housing but does include other related needs such as child care and mental health.

YMCA Chief Executive Officer Jason Shearer is pleased with how the BCC is spending ARPA funding. He stated that ARPA funding is American Recovery Dollars and should be spent within the county where they are most needed.

- **Tidwell Idaho Foundation**

Tidwell Idaho Foundation Representative Gary Poole presented The Tidwell Idaho Foundation plan to develop fifty family homes. It would have a community common area, a community garden, a community garage and a community guest house. It would be powered by solar energy. Poole is asking the BCC to approve the ARPA fund request that would fund the beginning stages development. The land would be leased from the Department of Lands the homes would be for sale at an affordable price.

BCC requested more details regarding the development. They asked that they schedule another presentation providing requested details.

Public Comment:

Blaine County Resident Cindy Mann stated that the state of Idaho could choose to build a cell phone tower on the land where Poole presented, they would build the community housing.

- **City of Ketchum - KURA**

The Ketchum Urban Renewal Agency (KURA) and the City of Ketchum is requesting \$1.5 million dollars to assist in the construction of a deed restricted workforce housing project in downtown Ketchum. This project will meet many needs in the Ketchum Action Plan. KURA Chair Susan Scovell explained that the KURA has three goals for this development. One is to provide local affordable workforce housing, provide public parking and final goal to provide active ground floor.

It will accommodate four stories and the goal is to maximize the development and potential providing 35-55 housing units. The housing will be deed restricted and dedicated for local work force. The Fourth floor will be market rate penthouses to aid the subsidizing of the other floors. Executive Director Suzanne Frick explained the penthouses on the fourth floor will be open market and may be for sale at the highest price possible.

Frick stated that they are not time restrained and July-August would be acceptable. KURA Chair Susan Scovell stated they are ready to move on this construction project now. She also mentioned that this project will have public parking to reduce vehicle emissions.

Public Comment:

Ketchum Urban Renewal Agency Commissioner Gary Lipton stated that he was very disappointed that the BCC did not wait to award monies until they had reviewed every application. He asked if the BCC could change how they review applications in the future.

McCleary response to public comment explaining that the BCC distributed funds how they saw fit. She explained that usually the speed of government moves rather slow and she prefers to move things fast and effectively. She stated that the BCC wanted to get the monies out to the community to assist Blaine County's recovery from the pandemic. She also stated that BCC has time to reconsider several requests.

Ketchum Urban Renewal Agency Commissioner Gary Lipton replied that he felt his presentation was a waste of time. He was under the impression that there were no more monies left to award and felt cheated.

YMCA Chief Executive Officer Jason Shearer stated that ARPA funds were awarded to the county to provide relief fast and he understood the rules regarding the funds were unclear. He does agree the application process could have been handled differently but also appreciates that they moved fast to provide relief to those who were impacted by the pandemic. He also believes if the BCC had known what they know now the process could have been different and possibly more efficient.

- **Picabo Water Systems**

Picabo Homeowner Nick Purdy presented his application for \$50,000 to install a new water system in Picabo. They want to install three new boosters and a control panel. The new water system would be up to DEQ code. The current system is thirty years old and does not meet fire code. Purdy explained this water system is crucial to the towns people of Picabo.

- **Wood River YMCA**

YMCA made a lot of improvements to keep their doors open to the public during the pandemic. They created education programs for children, and community health and recreational programs. This year they plan on working with Blaine County School District, I have Dream Idaho, Sun Valley Community School Teachers, and Teachers of America to create and provide more summer educational programs for Blaine County youth.

They installed an air filtration system that filters pollutants and comminated air particles. The air filtration system can reduce airborne particles that contain the virus. These air filtration systems were installed to keep employees and public safe while being indoors.

- **Higher Ground**

Higher Ground Executive Director Kate Dobbie explained that Higher Ground was deeply impacted by COVID. Their budget dropped by 50% and were unsure they would be able to provide their winter program for FY20 & FY21 at the Sun Valley Dollar Lodge. Fortunately, they were able to get funding to continue their winter program and purchased a yurt. They are asking if the BCC could help reimburse Higher Ground for the purchase of the yurt so they could use their funding for other crucial needs.

Public Comment:

YMCA Chief Executive Officer Jason Shearer expressed how proud he was of everyone who suited up to care for children and elderly.

- **Higher Ground**

McCleary moved, seconded by Davis, to initially approve ARPA fund request from Higher Ground in the amount \$47,500, and to direct staff to prepare a contract to consider at a later date finding that it meets criteria for ARPA Funding. Davis abstained.

- **Wood River YMCA**

McCleary moved, seconded by Davis, approve funding request from the Wood River YMCA for ARPA funding, finding that it meets the criteria for ARPA funds and to direct staff to prepare a contract for services in the amount of \$17,442.75 not to exceed \$18,000. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Picabo Water Systems**

McCleary moved, seconded by Davis, to approve the ARPA Funding request from Picabo Water Systems/Nick Purdy Manager in the amount of \$49,900 and to direct staff to prepare contract for services. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Tidwell Idaho Foundation request for \$990,000**

No action taken.

- **Blaine County Disaster Services Communication Request**

McCleary asked for a future meeting for Disaster Services to provide an ARPA fund request for a communications study.

- **Blaine County Sheriff's Office**

No action taken and BCC would like for department to present at their budget presentation.

- **Blaine County GIS Arial Imaging Program**

No action taken and BCC would like for department to present at their budget presentation.

ADJOURN

At the hour of 4:45 p.m., with no more business before them, the County Commissioners

adjourned.

Attest: _____ Approved _____
Stephen McDougall Graham Dick Fosbury
County Clerk Chairman