

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

Fifth Day

Thursday, May 12, 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-Chairman Angenie McCleary, Commissioner Muffy Davis; County Budget Officer Stephen McDougall Graham; Chief Deputy County Clerk Leslie Londos; County Administrator Mandy Pomeroy; Administrative Assistant Morgan DeWitt; and Recording Secretary Sunny Grant.

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

RECYCLE CENTER TOUR

Blaine County Administrator Mandy Pomeroy and Sustainability Manager Lynne Barker; Blaine County Recycle Center Supervisor Lamar Waters, and Recycle Center Equipment Operators Tim Zweimiller, Nick Cahuana, and Cody Michal.

Recycle Center staff led a tour of the Recycle Center facility, and presented facility and equipment needs, and maintenance issues, that were indicated in an infrastructure needs assessment. Staff pointed out that the 1998 loader requires significant maintenance costs to keep it operating; and the 1994 truck used for plastic film collection is overdue for replacement. Recycle Center asphalt is cracked and needs repair. The facility roof leaks in places, and concrete posts and metal siding are damaged.

The Commissioners discussed adding satellite service to improve internet connectivity and allow staff to access the County's network.

After the tour, today's special meeting resumed in the Old Courthouse Commissioners' Meeting Room at 1:00 p.m.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS PRESENTED THEIR FY2023 FUNDING REQUESTS
TO THE BLAINE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Region IV Development

Request: \$2,424.00.

Also present: Region IV Development Community Development Planner Dr. Michele McFarlane.

Region IV President and CEO Jeff McCurdy said Region IV Development Association, Inc. works with eight counties and 34 cities to find grant funding for infrastructure, revitalization projects, etc. McCurdy said Region IV uses its member counties' annual contributions as grant matches.

- At the beginning of the COVID pandemic, Region IV Development found \$3 million in federal funding that is being used to help small businessowners throughout the region.
- Region IV received a grant for Brownfields Assessments Phase I and Phase II last year; and just received a \$750,000 grant award to create a new revolving loan program to actually clean up Brownfield sites.
- Region IV is recognized by the Economic Development Administration as a "regional planning district", and has developed a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy to use their resources.

Fosbury said Blaine County's biggest need is for housing. Small businesses can't find staffing, so the County is using some of its American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to provide emergency housing, and improve indoor air quality in older buildings.

Blaine Soil Conservation District

Request: \$18,000.00.

Blaine Soil Conservation District (BSCD) Administrative Assistant Kelsey Barg said the BSCD is trying to reach out to the public a little more, including:

- The Spring Tree Sale helps to provide scholarships to youth that are interested in Natural Resource Camp environmental health camps, including water quality workshops.
- Three scholarships to high school seniors to continue their college educations.
- SNOTEL sites are up and reporting winter snow data.
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is in the BSCD office weekly, encouraging irrigation improvements in the Bellevue Triangle.

KH Counseling and Health Center

Request: \$30,000.00.

Also present: Blaine County Prosecuting Attorney Matt Fredback; County Deputy Public Defender Cheri Hicks; and Men's Second Chance Living House Manager John Inman.

KH Counseling and Health Center owner/clinician Kim Hayes LCSW requested funding to allow her to continue to provide Blaine County citizens with affordable substance abuse treatment locally in the Wood River Valley. The clinic is structured to incorporate treatment with all state-funded insurance and Medicaid requirements.

Public Comments:

- Blaine County Prosecutor Matt Fredback said the majority of the County’s criminal caseload is directly involved with substance abuse. KH Counseling offers stable, consistent treatment in an easily accessible mid-valley location, on the bus route.
- Deputy Public Defender Cheri Hicks said Clinician Kim Hayes is in court for several hours every week for DUI and Drug Court. Hayes knows many of the clients individually, and is able to provide information to better help offenders. Her clinic will provide room for DUI and Drug Court group sessions, classes and individual counseling. Hicks said the County is extremely short on psychiatrists, psychologists, and counselors.
- KH Counseling provides testing for pre-conditions of jail release.
- John Inman has master’s degrees in Adult Education and Human Services Counseling. He interned at KH Counseling last year, working individually and in groups with people dealing with substance abuse. He is now on the Court’s DUI team, and, as a person in recovery himself, he understands the stress people go through, and their transformation when someone believes in them. Inman said the community benefits from the service as well, even if they don’t realize it.

Hunger Coalition

Request: \$20,000.00.

The Hunger Coalition Director of Philanthropy Krista Felton said March was their second busiest month on record.

Their mission is to build community through access to food, and address the root causes of food insecurity through collaboration with key partners. They are working to develop their traditional emergency food assistance program into a more self-sustaining model that provides actual solutions, including The Hope Garden and Bloom Community Farm, and Community Meals.

The Hunger Coalition’s new two-year work plan will help guide the goals for these programs:

- centering voices of those they serve in decision making, both within the organization and in the broader community;
- creating organizational sustainability;
- building community through regular engagement opportunities; and
- addressing the root causes of hunger.

Senior Connection

Request: \$72,000.00.

Also present: Senior Connection Board member Rick Allington.

Executive Associate Jovita Piña said The Senior Connection raised \$2.3 million last year, earmarked for specific programs, including parking, a housing stipend for qualified employees, and new technology required by Medicaid. Most of the Senior Connection services are free; so 72% of their revenue comes from contributions. Piña conceded The Senior Connection may need more private pay clients to sustain their current programs.

In 2021, The Senior Connection was closed much of the year, due to COVID, so the following statistics are from June to December 2021:

- Nutrition: Meals on Wheels –17,172 meals – Raw food and packaging costs have greatly increased in the last year.
- Homecare and memory care: 7,200 caregiving hours – Some clients can pay the actual costs and overhead; but The Senior Connection also provides Medicaid services and the state reimburses them for actual costs.
- Health and wellness: 142 fitness classes – \$60 annual fee buys five classes every week.
- Transportation - 614 rides – Purchasing the right van for the Wood River Valley increased the budgeted price from \$80,000 to \$100,000.

New and resuming programs:

- The Senior Connection Vision and Hearing Center will open in the Lupine Building on Second Ave in Ketchum.
- Partnership with a geriatric psychologist for seniors and family members who need counseling.
- The Senior Connection is hoping to have a canopy erected to cover their parking area so staff don’t have to sweep winter snow off the Senior Connection fleet, some of which are tall vehicles.
- The Senior Connection will resume field trips to Craters of the Moon, Jackpot, “glamping” in Smiley Creek, ballet, symphony, etc.
- Navigating Longevity Summit in the fall for seniors and family members.

Public Comment: Board member Rick Allington said The Senior Connection provides a very valuable resource for Blaine County seniors, particularly those on low to middle income.

Central Idaho Dark Sky Reserve

Request: \$3,500.00.

Idaho Conservation League Central Idaho Director Betsy Mizell said the Central Idaho Dark Sky Reserve's goals for 2023 are:

- Increase understanding and appreciation of the night sky and the Central Idaho Dark Sky Reserve (CIDSR) through educational presentations, outreach efforts and interpretive signage.
- Conduct sky quality monitoring and lighting inventory to reduce levels of light pollution
- In 2022, UCLA students will begin to help train local volunteer night sky monitoring groups, including local teachers, students and other interested residents, to assist with ongoing monitoring needs.

In 2022, the Central Idaho Dark Sky Reserve collaborated with BSU to submit a multi-year funding request through NASA's Science Activation Program to provide STEM outreach and education opportunities.

- Provided astronomy information, dark sky friendly lighting displays and telescope viewing at Solstice Celebrations at Ketchum Town Square.
- Assisted a local WRV observing group, the Central Idaho Night Sky Seekers, to host stargazing nights in Croy Canyon.
- Worked with County staff to determine options for evaluating lighting quality as related to the county dark sky ordinance and to maintain Dark Sky Reserve status for CIDSR.
- Presentations by the CIDSR Astronomer in Residence and BSU AstroTAC students at locations throughout WRV will begin in June 2022.

CIDSR and County Objectives:

- Reduce levels of light pollution
- Reducing artificial light will lower energy costs, and benefit wildlife and human health.
- Blaine County can benefit from growing astro tourism.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

Request: \$40,000.

Also present: St. Luke's Wood River Community Engagement Director Erin Pfaeffle.

National Alliance on Mental Illness Wood River (NAMI) Executive Director Brittany Shipley said NAMI offered 380 support group meetings last year to a monthly average of 220 adults, 250 adolescents and 64 families (where one member or caregiver needs mental health support). One in five adults and one in four children in America have a diagnosable mental health condition. All NAMI services are free.

- Shipley showed a fun photo of kids painting pumpkins, but explained that the kids are painting the pumpkins to express something difficult in their life in order to let go of it.
- NAMI has adult and family support groups, adolescent programming, and community outreach.
- NAMI provides jail diversion and Crisis Intervention police Training (CIT); and
- encourages Police Officer Standards and Training (POST) certification.
- Bluebird adolescent programming, including summer and queer programs, and "Soul Support" Connection help fill in the time gap until a counseling slot is available.

NAMI has just hired a 5B Suicide Prevention Coordinator, and \$20,000 of their request is for the 5B Suicide Prevention Alliance coordinator.

Wood River Wolf Project

Request: \$5,000.00

Also present: Sarah Michael.

Disclosure: Chairman Fosbury is on the Wood River Wolf Project Steering Committee

Wood River Wolf Project Field Manager Logan Miller said the Wood River Wolf Project works with five sheep producers to mitigate conflict between wolves and some 20,000 sheep in the 300,000 acres of public lands surrounding the Wood River Valley. Wood River Wolf Project collaborates with the Environmental Resource Center, US Forest Service, Idaho Fish & Game, and members of the community.

Miller said WRWP is constantly getting feedback from ranchers and herders on what passive non-lethal methods and tools work and what don't. Miller said herders know the tools work and are glad to have them. Miller said they are looking into non-lethal deterrents with other livestock as well.

Miller said field workers have used their personal vehicles the last couple years, and drive hundreds of miles. The County's contribution will be used to get a truck this year, or at least offset the cost of mileage in personal vehicles.

Commissioner Davis said she hopes these results will convince the Idaho Wolf Depredation Board's to consider non-lethal control.

University of Idaho Extension Office

Request: \$140,502.50.

Administrative Assistant Sarah Busdon said the University of Idaho Blaine County Extension is requesting about \$5,000 more than last year, to factor in salaries, promotion and increase in travel expense.

- The 2021 Blaine County Fair market animal sale took in over \$330,000.
- Over 500 students and 4-H youth participated in afterschool programs and sessions learning about art, robotics, rockets, archery, yoga, etc., in the past year.

Crisis Hotline

Request: \$20,000.00

Executive Director Tammy Davis said The Crisis Hotline is now handling over 100 calls a month, including overflow from the State. The Hotline will begin to train more responders as soon as their new Hotline Operation executive assistant is able to enhance the operation to answer more calls. Davis said it's crucial that every caller gets an answer.

- The Hotline is working to set up a recycle center to intercept usable items at the transfer station.
- The Hotline is building collaborative relationships with other local and regional organizations.
- Hotline staff are involved with students to build trust. All Hotline responders are trained to speak to youth, and will notify resources if there is a safety concern.
Hotline would like to start a youth peer-led text service in the afternoons.

ADJOURN

At the hour of 4:24 p.m., the BCC, finding no more business before them, adjourned.

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