

**OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF BLAINE COUNTY  
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE JULY 2023 SESSION**

**Fourth Day**

**Thursday, July 13, 2023**

Pursuant to Statutory Provisions, the Board of Blaine County Commissioners (BCC) met this day at 9:00 a.m. Present were Chair Muffy Davis, Vice-Chairman Angenie McCleary, Commissioner Lindsay Mollineaux; County Budget Officer Stephen McDougall Graham; Budget and Finance Analyst Ozzie Gripenrog; County Administrator Mandy Pomeroy, County Administrative Services Director Kristy Heitzman, Administrative Assistant Morgan Baird; Chief Deputy Clerk Barbie Royal, County Payroll Clerk Breana Harshbarger, Deputy Clerk-Auditor-Recorder Brooke Baird, Blaine County Elections Supervisor Hayleigh Simpson, Blaine County Sheriff Steve Harkins, Chief Deputy Sheriff Will Fruehling, Emergency Communications Director Robin Stellers; Chief Deputy Clerk of the District Court Andrea Logan; Court Operations Specialist Yessenia Lopez; Blaine County Assessor Jim Williams, Deputy Assessor Melissa Fry, GIS/Certified Mapper/Roll Clerk Joanne Freeman, Appraiser Gretchen Stinnett, Appraiser Alyssa Cenarrusa, Appraiser Erin Swanson, Blaine County Treasurer John David Davidson, Deputy Treasurer Jessica Baird, Deputy Treasurer Morgan Drage; Human Resources Generalist Justin Highhouse, Blaine County Disaster Services Chris Corwin, IT Security/Network Engineer Jon Eaton, IT Enterprise Architect Ben Parker, Land Use Planner Allison Kennedy, Land Use Services Office Manager Tina Lewis, Zoning Specialist I Rachel Martin, Larry Shoen, *Idaho Mountain Express* staff writer Kari Dequine Harden and Deputy Clerk-Auditor-Recorder Joana Guerrero.

Chair Davis called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET DELIBERATIONS**

The Blaine County Commissioners are prioritizing and focused on incorporating the County's five strategic goals: Sustainability, Community Wellbeing, Organizational Development, Transportation and Housing to the FY24 budgets.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – NONE

**CLERK/BUDGET OFFICER UPDATE**

Blaine County Clerk Stephen McDougall Graham requested the Blaine County Commissioners to decide the market rate increase, prioritize one time budget requests, and ARPA SLFRF fund allocations, and cost efficiencies.

FY24 assumptions: Take the max allowed property tax revenue increase of 3%, plus new construction revenue, making the FY23 temporary 4% market rate increase permanent, 0-4% FY24 market rate increase, 9.5% increased medical insurance costs, keep M&O budget flat, and potential savings from unspent capital and under-spent department budgets.

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

- County Administrator Mandy Pomeroy prepared a list of internal one-time requests.
- The Blaine County Commissioners are supportive of reserving funds for a Road and Bridge Levy consultant and providing the additional \$5,000 for the Waterway Boat patrol program. This item will be added to the following agenda for approval.
- Blaine County Sheriff Steve Harkins submitted a request for a Drivers Licenses FTE position.

**Community Service Organizations**

The Blaine County Commissioners deliberated community services funding requests.

- The Opioid Task Force recommended using Opioid funds, KH Counseling and Men's Second Chance Living budget requests.
- Several community service organizations requested the same amount requested for FY23.
- The Blaine County Commissioners are supportive of NAMI's funding request to cover the cost of a new full-time employee.
- Davis will contact Sun Valley Economic regarding their budget request.
- Mollineaux will contact the Crisis Hotline for their budget request.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** –

- Former County Commissioner Larry Schoen shared his concern with the public hearing process the Blaine County Commissioners discussed during another open meeting. Schoen suggested the Opioid Task Force invite the public to their meetings. Schoen urged the County to begin looking at long term strategies to construct additional County buildings to accommodate the growing population.

**BREAK**

**FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET DELIBERATIONS, CONTINUED**

**PUBLIC COMMENT –**

- Former County Commissioner Larry Schoen believes that FY24 budget can support a 4% market rate increase. Schoen asked the Blaine County Budget Officer Stephen McDougall Graham to clarify the Indigent fund and Public Defense budget.

Idaho Legislature passed a law prohibiting funding the Public Defense Office with property tax dollars and eliminated the County Medical Indigent Program. The State is providing funding for the County’s Public Defense Department sufficient to fund FY24.

County Administrator Mandy Pomeroy clarified that the Budget and Finance Analyst was requested by the Blaine County Commissioners and the Clerk to provide future budget assumptions and recommendations to achieve a sustainable budget.

McCleary shared that past budgets have predicted a high deficit and ultimately ended with a positive budget. McCleary is supportive of keeping \$500,000 in the Contingency fund and compensating staff appropriately. McCleary is supportive of a 2 - 3% market rate increase but is strongly against a 0 – 1% market rate increase.

Mollineaux and Davis are supportive of a 0% market increase and making the FY23 temporary 4% market rate increase permanent. They would like to review budget predictions with a 0%, 1% and 3% market rate increase scenarios.

The Blaine County Commissioners are supportive in having a compensation analysis performed. The last analysis performed was five years ago. County Administrator Mandy Pomeroy will discuss with Elected Officials and Department Heads regarding the five-day work week. Currently only the 5th District Court, Records Office, and Elections Office under the Clerk is open five days per week.

The Blaine County Commissioners are supportive of the Sheriff’s FTE request and eliminating the floater position from the Administrative Services Department and one FTE position from the Clerk’s Department.

**PUBLIC COMMENT –**

- Former County Commissioner Larry Schoen wanted to clarify that the tentative budget is a not to exceed’ budget, not the final budget. Schoen spoke against the County having a Budget and Finance Analyst and claimed those responsibilities belong to the Clerk.
- IT Security/Network Engineer Jon Eaton is supportive of a 2% - 4% market rate increase. He is concerned that a low market rate increase or a zero-market rate increase could result in the loss of personnel. The IT Department took 9 months to fill their vacancies. Eaton stated that he could not afford to continue living in Blaine County with one income plus his navy pension. Eaton relocated south of Blaine County and commutes 8 hours per week.
- Blaine County Assessor Jim Williams is supportive of Eaton’s comment. Williams reminded the Blaine County Commissioners that staff did not receive a market rate increase in FY22 during the pandemic. Williams is not supportive of zero market rate increase and suggested staff checks may be less due to insurance rate increases.
- Emergency Communications Director Robin Stellers is supportive of both Eaton’s and Williams’ comments. Stellers suggested having the County research other potential revenue to support personnel costs. Stellers mentioned that she has also received complaints regarding County offices being closed on Fridays.

McCleary encouraged County staff, and public, to submit public comments for the Board of County Commissioners to consider prior to setting the tentative budget in late August.

**ADJOURN**

At the hour of 3:32 p.m., the Blaine County Commissioners finding no more business before them adjourned.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
 Stephen McDougall Graham Muffy Davis  
 County Clerk Chair