

COMMISSIONER MEETING OF March 16, 2020

The Caribou County Commissioners met for a special meeting on March 16, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. to discuss the COVID-19 virus effecting the State of Idaho, canvass the votes from the March 10, 2020 election and an issue concerning Afton's Way Subdivision. Those in attendance were Commissioner Chairman Phil Christensen, Commissioner Bryce Somsen, Commissioner Mark Mathews, Caribou County Clerk Denise Horsley, Deputy Clerk Jessica Zander, Caribou County Prosecutor Doug Wood, Caribou County Building Inspector Blake Poulsen, Rikki Wood, Shannon Whitney, Ward Whitney, Tiffany Smith, Dan Smith, Melissa Beardall, Tyler Beardall, Caribou County Road and Bridge Supervisor Kim Spencer, Caribou County Planning and Zoning Director JoAnna Ashley, Caribou County Sheriff Kelly Wells, Sharlene Simons, Caribou County Solid Waste Manager Jayson Lower, Caribou County Probation Supervisor Justin Steele, Caribou County Assessor Aaron Cook, Public Safety Director Eric Hobson, District Judge Mitchell W. Brown, Caribou County GIS/IT Director Jacob Farnes, Paul Gritton, Jim Stoor, Soda Springs Police Chief Scott Shaw, and Caribou County Treasurer Angie Mendenhall.

JoAnna Ashley, Planning and Zoning:

- Commissioner Somsen was not in attendance for this part of the meeting.
- JoAnna explained that an issue has come up regarding Afton's Way Subdivision. In the rules set forth for the subdivision it states that homeowners are required to have nitrate reducing septic tanks. Some current residents and possible future residents are wondering if this is something the Commissioners would be willing to do a variance on. Several established lots are currently not meeting this requirement.
- JoAnna explained that there are currently 6 lots that are not developed. She would like all 6 lots to have a waiver for this requirement.
- Doug Wood said he wants Tyler and Melissa Beardall protected, but he also wants to make sure they realize the potential risks involving nitrates.
- JoAnna explained that if you look at maps that indicate nitrate contamination, Afton's Way is no longer an area of concern.
- Commissioner Mathews asked if the county would be held harmless if they proceed with the requested waiver. Doug can draft a waiver that future landowners will sign stating that the county will not be held liable.
- Rikki Wood said that her understanding is the nitrate levels will decrease if someone is residing in the home. She further explained that she tested their system about a year and half ago and again just recently and the nitrate levels had dropped.

- Commissioner Mathews motioned the approval to have Doug Wood draft a waiver on the existing lots in the Afton's Way subdivision and the nitrate reducing contamination component. Commissioner Christensen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Canvassing votes from the 03-10-20 presidential primary and school districts election:

- Commissioner Somsen was not in attendance for this part of the meeting.
- Commissioner Mathews motioned to accept the votes for the presidential primary election and local school districts that was held on March 10, 2020 as presented. Commissioner Christensen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

District Judge Mitchell W. Brown

- Judge Brown explained that the Supreme Court issued an order last Friday to scale back the court calendar significantly due to the COVID-19 virus.
- The courtroom will only be utilized for emergencies only such as protection orders, guardianships, etc... Everything else would be conducted by phone or video conference.
- Drug court proceedings will be discontinued for now. They will be addressing individuals as needed. They are following the recommendations to avoid congregations of people as much as possible.
- They are asking that only essential people be present in the courtroom when proceedings have to take place. Basically, parties and witnesses to the case are the only individuals allowed besides the courtroom personnel.
- They will be utilizing video conferencing with inmates to avoid transporting and having inmates together in a holding cell.
- Judge Brown explained that he expects that they will have a tremendous backlog once the order is lifted.
- The probation department will not be performing any drug testing at this time.
- Commissioner Mathews explained that Bear Lake County has placed restrictions on entering the Courthouse. Judge Brown said the notice from the Supreme Court has already been placed on the doors at this Courthouse. Judge Brown asked if the staff from the Probation Department can monitor the front door. Justin Steele asked if we can limit authorized access into the Courthouse through the main front door only. Justin feels that monitoring who is coming into the Courthouse is necessary at this point in time.

- Doug Wood explained that the best option is to lock the door and encourage telephone conversations and online transactions as much as possible.
- Angie Mendenhall suggested that we make a plan when and if Caribou County has a confirmed COVID-19 test.
- Kim Spencer said his staff will only congregate outside when necessary and no carpooling will be allowed in county owned vehicles.
- Commissioner Mathews said employees that believe that they may have been exposed or experiencing symptoms need to stay home.
- Eric Hobson asked the Commissioners if they would like to declare an emergency at this point. Hobson further explained that this would allow access to federal funding. Doug Wood asked if we can declare an emergency without a confirmed test in Caribou County. Hobson said that we can go forward if we choose to. Justin Steele said if we know the circumstances are coming then why not declare an emergency.
- The Commissioners asked Eric to draft the declaration, odds are they will be going forward with the process at the next meeting.
- Passports will not be processed in the Clerk's Office until further notice.
- Commissioner Somsen motioned to accept County Order 2020-01 which restricts entering the Courthouse until further notice. Patrons will be asked to conduct business online or over the telephone if possible. The Probation Department has the authority to refuse access into the Courthouse. Commissioner Mathews seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Signed: Phil Christensen, Commissioner Chairman

Attested: Denise Horsley


