

**BENEWAH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF MEETING
April 13, 2026**

Be it remembered that at this time the Board of County Commissioners met in regular session. The meeting was opened by Commissioner Short.

Present:	Robert Short	Commissioner
	Mark Reynolds	Commissioner
	Janeen LeWan	Clerk
	Mariah Dunham	Attorney – via Zoom
	Jim Roletto	Public Works Director

The Board met at 8:00 a.m., whereupon the following proceedings were had to-wit.

1. Approve the minutes of the previous meeting(s) (ACTION): A motion to approve this item was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion carried.
2. Approve Monthly Claims (ACTION): Commissioner Reynolds noted we will receive the weed control invoices differently this year. We will receive the product then the labor as there will be some cost savings for the product. Clerk mention two claims received later that were not in the claims list and would like included for approval. One for the Sheriff’s computers, and the other was for IT monthly services, noting there were some added costs due to system conversions in multiple departments. A motion to approve the claims was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion carried.
3. Expenditure Requests (ACTION):
 - a. Prosecutor’s Office Training Request (ACTION): Clerk LeWan gave context to the training and associated expenses. A motion to approve this item was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion carried.
 - b. Clerk’s Office Training Request (ACTION): Clerk LeWan noted this was a request for the training cost only and she will cover traveling expenses. A motion to approve this item was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion carried.
 - c. EMS AED & Associate Items w/ Grant Acceptance Approval (ACTION): Clerk LeWan explained the request and the association to grant funding and approval. A motion to approve accepting the grant and purchasing the equipment was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion carried.
4. BCRCC Candidate for Benewah County Commissioner Resolution: Commissioners reviewed the resolution, noted confusion on why the running candidate did not make the list. He could have used the time and experience to prepare more for the position.
5. Benewah Community Hospital Agenda, Minutes, & Financial Report – Review: Reviewed the Cigna increase of 35% more revenue for these claims. Negotiations have started with Blue Cross. In April & May there should be improvements financially, hospital is working to bring in more people, numbers were down during the winter, one reason may have been the mild winter.
6. Hospital Budget Submission Request Letter: Clerk LeWan reviewed the letter & reason for sending the letter.
7. EMS Mutual Aid Agreement w/ Plummer (ACTION): Clerk Lewan note this was the same agreement presented at the last meeting by EMS Director Kristin Compton. A motion to

approve this item was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion carried.

8. Coeur d' Alene Tribe Water Rights Settlement Agreement Letter – Review: Attorney Dunham reviewed the letter, settlement agreement, and proposed decree were filed with the court & the public record now available online and in the Clerk's office. The settlement is still working through the system and she will continue to monitor as it progresses.
9. Proposed Website Transition (ACTION): Clerk LeWan reviewed the request with the Commissioners. A motion to approve this item was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion carried.
10. Timber Plus Annual Funding Request (ACTION): Commissioners invited Aaron Nelson of Timber Plus to speak about the request. Aaron reviewed the support Timber Plus provides to the county. Noted the cash match for the grant has increased this year however his ask of the county has not. Commissioners agreed Timber Plus is vital to the area. A motion to approve this item was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion Carried.
11. Approve Catering Permit – Two Saints Brewing (ACTION): A motion to approve this item was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion carried.
12. Dust Abatement Plans – Commissioner Reynolds: Discussion how the road crew has the equipment and training, discussed looking into the process if someone purchased the product how the county can assist in the application. Jim Roletto noted Idaho County has done this practice in the past and he will reach out to learn more.
13. Chaisson Petition Denial of Road Validation Update: Attorney Dunham reviewed the petition, public hearing, and appeal. Attorney Dunham noted the appeal had been heard and the judge found in favor of the county commissioner's decision.

8:45 AM JIM ROLETTO, BENEWAH COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR:

Emergency Management	Road Projects	Public Works	Solid Waste
	Sewer System	Airport	Planning & Zoning

EM: Met with a group for the all hazardous plan, still in progress. Noted last meeting Kenny Osier & Potlatch contributed \$1,000, and the city of St. Maries \$2,000 to assist in reviving the rain gauge. Ordered the sign for the ambulance bay in Emida.

Roads: Coeur d' Alene tribe has a couple of culverts to replace as a joint project. They purchased materials, county will assist in the installation. Training for road crew regarding grading is in progress and will be scheduled. Charlie Creek Bridge at the intermediate stage review for the plans. Old County bridge in final review. Grants are funding both bridge replacements. Commissioner Reynolds requested an estimate for replacing the culvert that crosses the Forest Service road and Meadowhurst Road.

City & County Meeting #2 Update – Jim updated the meeting went well with himself and Commissioner Short attending with other city officials.

Sewer: Switched out a pump the other day.

Airport: Equipment has arrived; next phase of the taxi lane is progressing.

Solid Waste: No update on Washington permit. Met with Representative Hawkins on the waste energy front, learning what his support would be.

Planning & Zoning: Public Hearing coming up to update process to add the county to options for split research. Preliminary Plat on LOLO and should move forward to a public hearing.

Noted the bonding process will need review in urban subdivisions. Ziply permits are starting to come in, Wayne has been utilized to track them down and help with coordination.

RFP Update: Three bids were received. Commissioner Short, Don Mueller, & Jim will review and evaluate them. Next meeting he will have recommendation to move forward. First street area getting ready to consolidate dumpsters. Contractors who placed bids also had ideas on consolidation. Commissioner Reynolds requested a date when they need to move them. Jim noted they are a couple of weeks out.

Roads: Culverts off Sanders in district 2 side, have to do with soil loss between the bridges, discussed looking at another that needs to be replaced per Commissioner Short.

8:47 a.m.: Break at this time until the 9:00 Public Hearing

9:00 AM Public Hearing Re: Benewah County Fee Changes (ACTION):

Tim Grubham – Asked for clarification of the need for the changes. Couple of items that did not exist, asked for cost justification. Commissioners clarified that the changes are to cover costs. Also included that Parks & Rec are now funded by fees and not tax dollars.

Wayne Glassman - Questions how the cost of the road validation can be justified. None of the expenses explained to him seemed justifiable. Feels he shouldn't have to pay for costs caused by others. Does not have an issue with small increases, but believes these fees are making it harder for property owners to do anything with their land.

Waylon Newton - Notes that one fee change he is familiar with—the property status report—was previously \$25, but now requires hiring a title company or surveyor, making it a clunky process. In this case, he is in favor of the county increasing the fee, recognizing that the research involved is significant and the cost is justified.

Ali Huffman - Regarding the CAF building—she has used it over 50 times for personal and community events. Notes the building must be heated to 55 degrees when in use, adding to electrical costs. Plans to continue using it and recognizes others will as well. Suggests a \$25 deposit, refundable after cleaning and key return. Willing to act as liaison, managing keys and doing monthly check-ins to ensure the building is maintained.

Judith Storck - Regarding CAF building fees—questions the costs given the ambulance and food bank operate there and may contribute. Notes the building is a well-maintained community asset, especially for an older, lower-income population. Asks about actual heating costs and feels increasing the fee to \$50 is too much.

Hearing ended at 9:16 AM

Jim explained the cost of road validation, outlining the required process and associated expenses.

Wayne Glassman clarified that he had been mistaken about the type of fee being discussed.

Attorney Dunham provided additional context, explaining that road validation determines whether a road is public or county-owned and involves a complex legal process, including publications, hearings, and written decisions. She noted that the fee is comparable to a road vacation due to the similarly extensive and infrequent nature of both processes. Jim added that handling split research in-house is a cost-effective approach. The Clerk also referenced CAF building revenues and expenditures, with Commissioner Short noting other maintenance expenditures.

9:20 A.M. Public Comment:

Doug Pratt – Inquired about the overtime issue ever getting resolved for District 1.

Tyce Huffman - As it relates to the CAF building utilities—notes that turning the heat down when the building is not in use does not significantly reduce costs, as most expenses occur during periods of active use.

William Morrow - Stated he purchased property at the end of Highland Springs and clarified that, contrary to a prior comment, he does have all required building permits. Noted the road is a closed logging road and has been extensively researched as private property, not a public right-of-way, and that all actions taken are legal.

Amy Boe - Acknowledged concerns regarding the hospital and encouraged the public to stay informed. Noted that some members have not supported Jen Izzarelli. Read a statement promoting public education and describing the behavior of certain hospital board members.

Waylon Newton - Regarding Subdivision Ordinance 2022–2023—noted this is the first urban subdivision application under the updated rules. Stated the current process is not working well and suggested commissioners collaborate with the P&Z Board to review and improve it.

Cheryl Blake – signed up to make a comment but passed when called upon.

Rebecca Szalaski - Lives in Benewah and operates a salon. Expressed concerns about transparency, stating a misrepresentation was brought to the board and questioning why it was not reviewed when offered. Also questioned why community members feel dismissed when raising concerns. Is seeking to better understand past decisions made prior to her moving to the area, including the hospital bond.

Michael Moore - Asked how to address a complaint with commissioners regarding a specific employee, citing multiple concerns and incidents. Also called for the resignation of the current commissioners, alleging a lack of governance and oversight.

Attorney Dunham advised that complaints regarding a specific county employee should be addressed in executive session. Public comment is allowed, but speakers were asked not to discuss specific employees in that setting.

Jennifer Izzareli - Commented on hospital matters, referencing the recent candidate search, including a CFO from a nearby hospital. Encouraged selecting qualified candidates and emphasized the importance of due diligence. Requested that concerns about misrepresentation be taken seriously in the future, stating that previous issues raised were not adequately addressed and that she did not feel she was treated appropriately during those discussions.

Tim Grubham - Noted that upcoming discussion on the subdivision ordinance is expected. Tim attended a recent P&Z meeting and expressed concern that efforts to follow the process have negatively impacted an individual. Suggested the need to distinguish between large-scale developers and one-time private applicants. Also pointed out a bonding requirement that may not be feasible under current county standards, and asked commissioners to review and reconsider the process.

Jim Bennett - Thanked the commissioners for not moving the dumpsters at this time and acknowledged the planned consolidation on 1st Street, expressing hope it will not create issues. Raised concerns regarding E. Highland Springs Road, noting that lot splits included legal descriptions for ingress and egress and that he has documentation. Described the road history, including portions becoming Nuthatch Lane, possibly for emergency access, and noted the road was originally built by Bob Russell for logging purposes. Stated that Highland Springs Road remains the legal ingress and egress, and that all property owners have legal right-of-way access. Attorney Dunham stated that private road disputes are not within the commissioners' authority to resolve. If there is a question about whether a road is public, the appropriate process is to apply for a road validation, which allows the matter to be presented to the commissioners for determination of county road status. Noted this may be an option as questions about the road continue.

9:50 A.M. Sara Silfvast – Subdivision Challenges

Sara requested review of the subdivision process, explaining the project was intended to cover medical expenses and that bond requirements have made it difficult to proceed. She worked with staff to pursue a bond, but it was denied, and multiple companies were unable to meet the requirements. P&Z recommended approval with a variance, noting the process may not work well for individual applicants. Jim clarified the bond option was provided in lieu of installing utilities, while Attorney Dunham explained bonds are typically used to guarantee infrastructure completion and that an exception would require formal approval. Commissioners acknowledged the intent of the requirements but recognized the need to revisit the process if it creates hardship. A motion to approve the final plat was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion carried.

10:00 A.M. Benewah Community Hospital Board Update – Suzy Epler & Dan Hammes

Suzy Epler read a letter explaining her decision to serve on the hospital board, encouraging public questions and feedback while emphasizing a shared goal of long-term sustainability and access to care, including support through community events. As the Board Chair she addressed the resignation of a member, noting prior public discussion with staff and outlining meeting procedures, including public comment policy and agenda processes. She also highlighted recent progress, including securing grants, fully staffing departments, and improving billing processes. Dan Hammes acknowledged ongoing financial concerns, reviewed revenue versus reimbursement challenges, and noted efforts to address insurance-related issues and improve reimbursements.

10:15 A.M. Benewah County Treasurer

Not yet present next item discussed.

10:30 A.M. Consider Exempt Property – New Applications (Action)

Exemption under Idaho Code 63-602B, 63-602C, 63-602E –

Church of the Indwelling God – RPA00900110001A, RPA00400100010

Discussion was held regarding a religious exemption request, noting that exemptions are specific to religious use and that the manufactured home and property are currently being rented. A legal memo was included in the packet. Commissioners indicated additional information is needed. Attorney Mariah Dunham recommended denial unless further documentation could be provided, with the option to appeal during BOE if denied. Commissioner Reynolds made a motion to table the item pending receipt of additional information, seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion carried.

Exemption under Idaho Code 63-602E

Benewah Humane Society-Red Barn Thrift Store- RPA0120200014A

Discussion of the Red Barn Thrift Store exemption noted that it does not meet legal criteria, as the exempt use applies to the Humane Society rather than the retail store itself. Assessor Spier and Attorney Dunham both recommended denial of the exemption based on applicable law and case precedent.

A motion to deny the application was made by Commissioner Short, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried.

10:40 A.M. Consider Exempt Property Application Renewal (Action)

Full Exemption under Idaho Code 63-602B:

Plummer Assembly of God Inc. - RP46N04W062550 & RP46N04W062500

A motion to approve this item was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion carried.

10:45 A.M. Benewah County Assessor (Action)

No tax cancellation requests.

An update was provided on assessment compliance, noting the required ratio is 90–110%. Commercial properties, which typically do not undergo compliance checks, failed this year, with sales ratios dropping below 50% and around 40% in the past year. The state indicated values must be adjusted or they will intervene. Commercial properties were at 62% overall. Lauren, the commercial appraiser and Chief Deputy, reviewed and updated all commercial parcels, identifying issues such as pole buildings previously classified as residential now being corrected to commercial. System training was conducted to support these updates, and a preliminary check was completed, resulting in some properties seeing significant value increases. The state’s review process was explained. Agricultural land compliance passed.

Benewah County Treasurer –

Treasurer Sexton noted that with assessment notices going out in June, reminder cards for tax payments will be sent at that time to reduce postage and supply costs. The hospital is currently behind on their \$130,000 monthly payments. Discussion was held on the process for a salvage equipment sale, with Treasurer Sexton advising coordination with legal counsel to ensure compliance. Attorney Dunham outlined that the first step is to compile a list of surplus items and pass a resolution declaring them as such, with the list to be reviewed by Clerk LeWan and Attorney Dunham. Jim will begin preparing the list.

11:00 a.m. County Risk – Jennifer Izzarelli

Ms. Izzarelli noted that several individuals had been told they could not use commissioners’ names during public comment. Concern was raised that there is no legal basis to restrict naming elected officials. Attorney Dunham agreed that addressing commissioners by name is appropriate in their role as elected officials.

Commissioners granted Wayne Glassman to speak. He expressed support for the new fees, noting they are minimal. He also commented that the issue of not naming individuals during public comment relates to free speech.

Consider Approval of the Proposed Fee Changes – Resolution 2026-06 (ACTION)

Discussion was held regarding CAF building fees and potential increases, along with other fee adjustments. Jennifer Bradshaw offered to assist with fundraising efforts and requested that Ali serve as the point of contact for building rentals, noting concern that increased fees may deter use. A question was raised about modifying a single fee rather than all fees; Attorney Mariah Dunham advised that the resolution could be amended without an additional public hearing. Commissioners discussed maintenance costs, and consideration for a different solution. A

motion to approve the increases as stated was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: A motion was made by Commissioner Reynolds to enter executive session @ 11:08 am pursuant to Idaho Code Section 74-206(1)(d); to consider items exempt from disclosure; Idaho Code Section 74-206(1)(a)(b); personnel; & Idaho Code Section 74-206(1)(c); real property; seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion carried. Present: Commissioner Reynolds, Commissioner Short, Clerk Janeen LeWan, Attorney Mariah Dunham via zoom, & Public Works Director Jim Roletto, Michael Moore, Amy Boe, Jennifer Izzareli, Cheryl Blake.

At 11:22 Amy Boe, Jennifer Izzareli, Cheryl Blake left the room leaving Commissioner Reynolds, Commissioner Short, Clerk Janeen LeWan, Attorney Mariah Dunham via zoom, & Public Works Director Jim Roletto, Michael Moore to enter back into executive at 11:23 am. Michael Moore left executive session at 11:47 am.

At 11:47 Cheryl Blake entered executive session with Commissioner Reynolds, Commissioner Short, Clerk Janeen LeWan, Attorney Mariah Dunham via zoom, & Public Works Director Jim Roletto, continuing executive. Cheryl Blake left executive session at 12:00 pm.

At 12:00 pm Amy Boe entered executive session with Commissioner Reynolds, Commissioner Short, Clerk Janeen LeWan, Attorney Mariah Dunham via zoom, & Public Works Director Jim Roletto. Amy Boe left executive session at 12:07 pm.

At 12:08 pm Jennifer Izzareli entered executive session with Commissioner Reynolds, Commissioner Short, Clerk Janeen LeWan, Attorney Mariah Dunham via zoom, & Public Works Director Jim Roletto. Jennifer Izzareli left executive session at 12:29 pm.

At 12:29 pm executive session continued with Commissioner Reynolds, Commissioner Short, Clerk Janeen LeWan, Attorney Mariah Dunham via zoom, & Public Works Director Jim Roletto. All parties exited executive session & meeting adjourned at 12:40 pm.

Minutes read and approved this 27th day of April, 2026.

By the Board of Benewah County Commissioners:

 /s/ /s/ /s/
Philip R. Lampert, Chairman Robert Short, Commissioner Mark Reynolds, Commissioner

Attest:

 /s/
Janeen LeWan, Clerk