

**BENEWAH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF MEETING
April 27, 2026**

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

Present:	Robert Short	Chairman
	Mark Reynolds	Commissioner
	Scott Manes	Commissioner
	Janeen LeWan	Clerk
	Mariah Dunham	Attorney
	Jim Roletto	Public Works Director

The Board met at 8:03 a.m., whereupon the following proceedings were had to-wit.

1. Introduction of Commissioner Manes – Chairman Short conducted the introduction.
2. Approve the minutes of the previous meeting(s) (ACTION): A motion to approve this item was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes. Motion carried.
3. Clerk Quarterly Report: Clerk discussed the current road fund balance, and current expense fund balance noting they are low at the end of quarter two and expenditures still need to be watched carefully.
4. Expenditure Requests (ACTION):
 - a. ITD Mobilizations (Swet) Grant Acceptance & Purchase Request – Sheriff Anthony Eells (ACTION): Discussed this purchase is 100% reimbursed by grant funds. A motion to approve this item was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes. Motion carried.
 - b. Commissioner Training Request – Clerk Janeen LeWan (ACTION) – Discussion of who all has been approved to go to the same training. A motion to approve this item was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes. Motion carried.
 - c. Right! Systems Inc – License Agreement – Clerk Janeen LeWan (ACTION): This is a system we already use. We are adding more licenses for the remaining computers. A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes. Motion carried.
 - d. Extension Office Travel Request – BC Extension Educator Lauren King (ACTION): Discussion about the expenditure details, Clerk LeWan noted for travel costs for any department the Assessor’s office may have a vehicle available depending on timing. A motion to approve the travel request was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes. Motion carried.
 - e. Rock for the Districts – Commissioner Reynolds (ACTION): Discussion over past rock purchase procedures, review of the road budget revenues, current budget reduction for rock, expenditures already made for the line item, and current stock of rock. No action taken on this item.
 - f. Quote Request for Hazard Trees on County Owned Lots – Commissioner Reynolds (ACTION): Discussion on hazard trees on county owned property off Park & Cedar Drive area. Public Works noted we could ask for FEMA reimbursement due to the windstorm event in December 2025. A motion to

approve a quote was made by Commissioner Manes, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried.

5. Benewah Community Hospital Agenda, Minutes, & Financial Report – Review: Tabled for later during Burt Keltner’s update at 9:00.
6. Approve Alcohol Beverage License – Big Cat Golf Inc (ACTION): A motion to approve this item was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes.
7. Shoshone County Notice of Public Hearing – Conditional Use Permit for Commercial Resort Facility in the Natural Resource Zone: Commissioners discussed the location; no response needed at this time.
8. Idaho Wool Growers Association Commission Consideration Request (ACTION): A motion to reappoint Rod Halverson to the commission was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes. Motion carried.
9. SOI Dept of Ag. ID Animal Damage Control Board Funding Request FY27 (ACTION): Commissioners discussed if there was a benefit to the program, they have not funded the program the past couple of years. Motion to deny this request was made by Commissioner Manes, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried.
10. Set FY27 Budget Public Hearing Date (ACTION): A motion to approve the August 24, 2026 at 1:00 pm hearing date was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes. Motion carried.
11. Payroll Procedures Modification
 - a) Payroll Date Change Analysis (ACTION) – Clerk LeWan requested this item to be tabled so more research and analysis could be completed.
 - b) Direct Deposit Implementation Process (ACTION) – Clerk LeWan reviewed the request and process. A motion to approve this item was made by Commissioner Reynolds and seconded by Commissioner Manes. Motion carried.
 - c) WebTime Sheets, Time & Attendance Software Module CAI (ACTION): Clerk LeWan discussed the system and benefits. More logistics will need to be worked out before implementation A motion to table this item was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes. Motion carried.
12. Scope of Executive Session to Discuss Personnel Matters: Attorney Dunham reviewed with the commissioners the discussion of personnel matters in open versus closed session, including when each is appropriate and who should participate.
13. Silfvast Subdivision Final Plat Order (ACTION): Introduced at the last commissioner meeting and they considered recommendations for approval of the subdivision. Noted bonding is not compliant. A motion to approve the final plat for the Silfvast Subdivision was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes. Motion carried.
14. Current 2021 Western States CAT Lease Agreement – Discussion: Discussion over the budget restraints, and the options for payment on the lease. Discussion that the same situation is set for next year as another lease is coming to an end. Requested this item as an action item at the next meeting.
15. FY2025 Beginning Governance Letter & SKE Letter from Hayden Ross – Clerk LeWan introduced this item, informed the commissioners the auditors would be here the week of May 4th.
16. Participation in National Fallen Firefighters Foundation - Light the Night for Fallen Firefighters: Clerk LeWan introduced the program, and that the courthouse would be red in the evenings in participation of the program.

9:00 AM Benewah Community Hospital Financial Update – Burt Keltner –

CEO Keltner appeared before the commissioners discussing financial challenges experienced from December through March related to Medicare software and policy issues that delayed claims and impacted reserves. The issue has since been resolved, revenue recovery is underway, and leadership remains confident in future financial obligations and operational stability. Additional discussion included strategic planning initiatives, budget development, contract and payer negotiations, potential rural hospital funding opportunities, and ongoing evaluation of the swing bed program and related Medicare reimbursement impacts.

9:15 A.M. Public Comment

Jennifer Izzareli - concern was expressed regarding being directed into executive session when discussing employees, elected officials, hospital board members, and administrators. Concerns of her First Amendment rights and limits public input from taxpayers. A recommendation was made to seek an additional legal opinion on the matter.

Michael Moore- noted Road maintenance and rock inventory management, including concerns about material left along roadways and a recommendation for additional operator training to improve efficiency. Support was also expressed for prior public comment regarding the use of names during meetings. Encouraged consideration of out-of-county applicants for the upcoming hospital board position and raised concerns regarding the ethics and credibility of a current board member, with a request for the board to review the matter.

Amy Boe- regarding Road paving and visibility concerns, including a suggestion to explore glow-in-the-dark roadway paint or reflective products used in other countries to improve nighttime visibility. Staff indicated they would research available roadway marking products and whether reflective beads are currently being used. Noted concerns about integrity and ethics related to the hospital board.

Kim Schwanz – Inquired if the grader will be covered by a bumper-to-bumper warranty. Commissioners noted it would not.

Doug Pratt – Noted when driving roads in D1 there are no ditches, some had substantial rock, 4-wheel drive needed. Recommended pulling gravel and installing ditches on the roads. Noted Hells Gulch in the best shape. Noted with gravel roads you are going to have dust.

9:30 a.m. University of Idaho Extension Office Update – Lauren King & Madison Sotin

Lauren King & Madison Sotin offered an update to the commissioners, highlighting youth participation growth, leadership development, educational programming, and upcoming events and activities. Discussion also included outreach efforts, student engagement opportunities, and statewide participation initiatives. Commissioners asked follow-up questions regarding program participation and community outreach methods. Played a video created by students in the program.

9:40 a.m. Consider Exempt Property Application Renewal (ACTION)

Full Exemption under Idaho Code 63-602B:

- **St. Maries Assembly of God – RP46N02W219400**

A motion to approve this exemption was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes. Motion carried.

Consider Exempt Property – New Applications (ACTION)

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

- **Church of the Indwelling God – RPA00900110001A, RPA00400100010**

Lisa Wrench met with the commissioners to discuss her church and the two parcels presented for consideration. Assessor Spier advised that any portion of the property being rented would qualify only for a partial exemption, and Attorney Dunham concurred that the rental parcel does not qualify for exemption at this time. Ms. Wrench was encouraged to report any changes in circumstances with next year's annual application. A motion to approve a partial exemption for the property was made by Commissioner Manes, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried.

9:45 a.m. Conservation Easement Request – John & Vicky Ross

John and Vicky Ross were present. Requesting the county consider selling a county-owned parcel for placement into a perpetual conservation easement to preserve the property from future development. Discussion included the county's ownership interest, the property's history as a tax deed parcel, legal requirements related to any future sale, and potential conservation options. Commissioners and Attorney Dunham discussed the need for additional research regarding available options, including research on the county owned interest in the property. John and Vicky Ross expressed concerns regarding potential future development impacts due to the property's connection to the St. Joe River and prior examples of wetland alteration in similar areas.

10:00 a.m. Forest Service Santa Creek & Charlie Creek Bridge Replacement Concerns – Tamara Boyce

Tamara Boyce appeared before the commissioners regarding the proposed replacement of the Charlie Creek Bridge near the rock pit, including project costs, timing, road closures, and the need for a project agreement. The replacement project is anticipated to occur in July 2027, with all project costs to be covered aside from county review of the agreement. Additional discussion involved the Emerald Creek "380 Bridge," including ownership determination between Benewah and Shoshone Counties based on updated survey information. Requests were made for continued bridge inspections if county ownership is confirmed.

10:15 a.m. Benewah County Treasurer (ACTION)

- **Possible Tax Cancellation/Hardship Request(s)**
- **Financial Review/Cash Balance Review** – Discussion included an update on hospital payment obligations, noting the hospital is currently behind on required monthly payments under the agreement. Financial reports, bank account uses, pending issues, and the tax due summary were reviewed, including discussion that approximately 10–20% of taxes are typically not collected in June.
- **Request for Travel** – The Treasurer provided an update on an upcoming August conference covering new rules, regulations, and reporting requirements. Noted she will apply for fund reimbursement for hotel costs. Commissioner Reynolds made a motion for all of it and to look into what decent county vehicles are available, seconded by Commissioner Manes. Motion carried. Additional discussion included attendance at District 1 meetings and bank-related travel, along with a request to submit travel reimbursement documentation.
- **Banking Service** – Discussion was held regarding available banking service options, associated costs, and current use of Vantage Services. The Treasurer reviewed the available processes and recommended that option one involving

the fewest individuals handling transactions as the best option. A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Manes, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried.

- **Special Assessment** – Discussion was held regarding two tribal-owned parcels within Drainage District 3 that are tax exempt, resulting in drainage fees that cannot be collected. It was noted the uncollectible amounts can be recertified back to the taxing district, and that collection is difficult when charges appear on tax bills for exempt properties.
- **Tax Deed Hearing is set for 5/11 @ 10:00 a.m.** – Item not discussed during the meeting.
- **Hiring Personnel** – Discussion was held about increased workload in the office and the need for additional help. A part-time employee was discussed as the best option for now, while noting a full-time position may be beneficial in the future for training and office support. A motion to hire a part time employee for the busy season was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes. Motion carried.

10:30 a.m. Benewah County Assessor (ACTION)

- **Possible Tax Cancellation Request(s) none**
- **Federal Building Exhaust Fumes** – Discussion was held regarding the issue, effects on staff, and possible solutions moving forward.
- **DMV Schedule** – The commissioners were notified of the upcoming training schedule and related office closures.
- **Growing Benewah Workshop & 3B Community Resource Fair Update** – Discussion was held regarding the third annual workshop geared toward realtors, recognizing their role as an initial point of contact for new residents. Information was also provided regarding the associated resource fair.

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

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

- **Dept. of Water Resources – Declaration of Drought Emergency:** Information provided for the commissioners to be aware of.
- **Benewah County – Declaration of Emergency Windstorm March 11, 2026**
 - **Consider Recommendation to Approve Resolution 2026-07 (ACTION):** Jim explained the declaration of emergency, noting that while the county was not heavily impacted, the City of Plummer and local electrical companies experienced significant effects.
 - **Resolution 2026-07 Declaration of Emergency (ACTION):** A motion to approve Resolution 2026-07 was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes. Motion carried.
- **Solid Waste Consider Selection of Hauler (ACTION):** Discussion was held regarding three bids received for the project and the evaluation process completed by the review team. A unanimous recommendation was made to begin negotiations with Southlake

Services based on the bid and proposed approach, with clarification that negotiations would focus on project process details rather than pricing. A motion to allow Jim to move forward was made by Commissioner Manes, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried.

- **Memorandum of Agreement with Coeur d' Alene Tribe - Hangman Creek Fish Passage Project (ACTION):** Discussion was held regarding a cooperative culvert project with the Tribe. Under the proposed memorandum of agreement, the Tribe will purchase the materials and the county will complete the installation work. A motion to approve the agreement with the tribe was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes. Motion carried.

EM: An update was provided from the recent quarterly LEPC meeting, including discussion of the sheriff's app and its intended use as a public communication tool.

Roads: Updates were provided regarding Zipty utility work within county rights-of-way, with staff noting improved compliance and continued monitoring in District 3. Discussion also included MagCl application costs and bulk purchase pricing considerations, and creating process for residents to pay the county for application.

City & County Meeting #2 Update – It was reported that they worked with Charles Winter and Cindy Willard and addressed some primary concerns, with one additional meeting scheduled before moving forward to a public meeting process.

FEMA: Still working on reimbursement process for the windstorm.

Sewer: Reported that one pump was completed last week with assistance from Stillwater Electric.

Airport: It was reported that reimbursement could not be provided for the shed purchase because the invoice exceeded the allowable timeframe. Will continue to explore other options. All remaining equipment has been received.

Planning & Zoning: An update was provided on the recent Planning and Zoning hearing, including proposed wording changes related to parcel division research procedures. Discussion also included review of current bonding requirements and the potential for revisions, with additional recommendations expected following further Planning and Zoning review. Staff also discussed the need to formally adopt a fire code currently referenced by the county.

Roads: Discussion was held regarding grant opportunities for St. Joe River Road, and the potential for partnering with Shoshone County on future applications. Staff noted that a strong application will be important and that the grant does not require a local match. Additional discussion included ongoing work with LHTAC road reimbursement funding and the need to coordinate with Shoshone County regarding shared roadway responsibilities and reimbursement procedures, including a potential memorandum of understanding.

P&Z: Discussion was held regarding ongoing difficulties obtaining a quorum for Planning and Zoning meetings. Interest in filling the vacant seventh position was noted, and additional research and follow-up will be conducted.

Solid Waste: It was reported that the Washington permit was approved, and discussion followed regarding development of permit approval parameters and possible updates to signage. Additional review is also needed regarding permitting requirements across the state line.

A question was raised regarding whether these updates were still desired and beneficial, with confirmation sought from the commissioners. Consensus was yes.

Meeting adjourned for a break before executive session at 11:49 am

