

**BENEWAH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**December 8, 2025**

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

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Philip R. Lampert</b>	<b>Chairman</b>
	<b>Robert Short</b>	<b>Commissioner</b>
	<b>Mark Reynolds</b>	<b>Commissioner</b>
	<b>Janeen LeWan</b>	<b>Clerk</b>
	<b>Mariah Dunham</b>	<b>Attorney</b>
	<b>Jim Roletto</b>	<b>Public Works Director</b>

**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 unanimously.
2. Approve Monthly Claims (ACTION): Commissioner Reynolds inquired about a housekeeping cost, reviewed the new report format to see claim, vs spent, vs budget. A motion to approve this item was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion carried unanimously.
3. Commissioner Meeting Schedule for 2026 (ACTION): Commissioner Reynolds noted if any adjustments are needed, they can make them throughout the year. A motion to approve this item was made by Commissioner Short, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried unanimously.
4. Benewah Community Hospital Agenda & Minutes – Review: Commissioner Short noted there were no issues indicated.
5. Benewah Community Hospital Financial Report – Review: Commissioner Reynolds said the hospital has been doing well and is getting creative to bring in revenue and meet the bond requirements.
6. Benewah County FY24 Audit Report – Review: Commissioner Reynolds said there was a lot to review. Some items that stuck out were fund balances that were spent, and the timely manner of getting the information to the auditor to complete on time.
7. Approve 2026 Alcohol Beverage License Applications (ACTION): A motion to approve this item was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion carried unanimously.
8. Chamber of Commerce – Chamber Bucks Request (ACTION): Commissioner Reynolds noted this item was not considered in the budget and we are too tight on finances. A motion to deny this item was made by Commissioner Short, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried unanimously.
9. New Hire Procedures – per Clerk LeWan: Clerk LeWan clarified they are a support when hiring personnel to the departments. Specifically, the need to help facilitate drug testing and Clearinghouse checks when hiring CDL and safety sensitive positions. Commissioner Reynolds asked if drug testing could be done at the hospital. Clerk LeWan said she would reach out to our drug testing facility to see what the agreement and process is.

10. Plummer Dumpsters – per Chairman Lampert: Chairman Lampert reported that dumpsters being filled. Jim explained Wayne has had limited ability to be onsite due to snow plowing, Chairman Lampert reviewed dumpster costs, Commissioner Reynolds suggested implementing a single flat fee for everyone to reduce local dumping concerns and they could focus on the out of state issues. Treasurer Sara Sexton clarified that city residents pay both a levy and a city fee that go into the same fund and noted the budget constraints around separating funds.
11. Review Road and Bridge Finances – per Chairman Lampert: Chairman Lampert expressed frustration following the last meeting, noting that roads were being asked to cut 42% of their budget. He explained that the organization receives four payments per year from the state and two from taxes, with monthly expenditures of approximately \$330,000. While finances should remain stable, it was noted that funds may need to be temporarily drawn from the general fund to cover costs. Clerk LeWan noted that this was not an option as the general fund has been utilized and there is no expected revenue to cover any overage on roads. The Commissioners also discussed overall budget constraints, and incoming revenue timing. Commissioners committed to reviewing the budget and making more cuts.
12. Republic Services Disposal Contract (ACTION): Attorney Dunham reported that two pricing schedules have been offered and noted that the contract terms will require negotiation, as they are not consistent with Idaho government contracts. Commissioners decided to put Jim Roletto as the point of contact for negotiations, with agreement that both pricing schedules and contract terms need to be vetted while the agreement Clerk LeWan will request another extension. Jim shared that he can look into the Ritzville landfill as an option in the future, following Commissioner Short’s request, and Commissioner Reynolds noted that pricing has been increasing. Attorney Dunham recommended negotiating term limits, along with minimums and maximums. A motion to table this item pending negotiations was made by Commissioner Short, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried unanimously.
13. United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service Lease Amendment (ACTION): Commissioner Reynolds questioned whether the rental amount is sufficient to cover expenditures for the federal building and asked legal counsel if the lease terms could be renegotiated. Clerk LeWan reviewed the Federal Building budget and determined the rent revenue is covering expenses at this time. Attorney Dunham clarified that there is no current contract to negotiate and that while negotiations occurred in the past, the Forest Service holds the right to renew the lease. A motion to approve this item was made by Commissioner Short, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried unanimously.
14. Ziplly Fiber Cable on Hells Gulch (ACTION)– per Commissioner Short: Jim reported that the unidentified cable is not believed to belong to Ziplly Fiber or Avista, as neither utility has claimed it, and confirmed it is not a power cable or connected to anything. The cable has repeatedly been moved to the side but remains an issue and is likely to be hit in the future due to improper placement. It was also noted that county permits specify required burial depths for cables, and that any improper billing from utilities related to such issues are being returned.

## **JIM ROLETTO, BENEWAH COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR:**

**Emergency Management:** Emida Ambulance doors delivery is the 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Road Projects:** Santa Shed – two beams have been ordered - \$300-400 per beams, they have been ordered and will be reimbursed by ICRMP.

A road study is underway, involving new mapping and additional data collection, and is expected to take approximately five to six months to complete. The effort is being coordinated in collaboration with ITD and LHTAC.

A seal coat application was submitted for a grant that requires a zero local match.

Most bridge needs are along the Benewah and, overall, there are no immediate safety concerns with current bridge conditions. This summer, the bridge deck on Railroad Grade will need to be replaced. Charlie Creek Bridge and Old Mills Road bridges were also discussed.

**Sewer System:** One pump has been installed, with one remaining to be completed.

**Airport:** Chairman Lampert asked about airport equipment, and Jim reported that he is sending the paperwork back and will bring the updated information to the next meeting. It was noted that the agreement must be processed before any purchase can be made, and the dealer will be contacted to hold current pricing in the meantime.

**Solid Waste:** Bob and Jim reported on an incinerator tour, outlining both benefits and challenges of the technology. Key considerations include the need for roughly 10 acres of land, participation from multiple counties to make the project viable, disposal of the remaining 10% waste byproduct, and significant upfront installation costs. The facility toured cost approximately \$110 million, was built in 1992, is about three times larger than what would likely be needed locally, operates very cleanly with no smoke or odor, requires six staff to run, and would take about two years to construct. Before moving forward, costs need further vetting, and Bob plans to contact a commissioner from each district to gauge interest. It was noted that Bonner County currently sends waste to Ritzville, and that timing for any new approach may be constrained by existing contracts with Republic Services.

**Planning & Zoning:** Planning a public hearing next week. Chapter 7 language to be modified, and the preliminary plat hearing for Silfvast subdivision.

### **9:15 A.M. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Maureen Hodgson noted that it has been some time since rock has been produced or loaded at the site and expressed concern that no one has been maintaining the area. She reported a series of potholes near her home and that the schoolhouse light is out and requested that the road be graded and available rock used to fill the potholes if possible.

### **9:30 A.M. CITIZENS FOR THE BENEWAH ROAD - JUNK LOCATED ON BENEWAH PRIVATE & STATE LAND**

Citizen comments raised ongoing safety and right-of-way concerns along Benewah Road near the 1.5-mile marker, where a hoard has been growing for approximately 30 years within the 66-foot county road easement, extending onto Idaho Department of Lands property and a turnaround area. Commissioners were asked to work with IDL and the Sheriff's Office to address the issue, with the reporting individual requesting anonymity due to fear of retaliation. Additional concerns included loose animals (chickens, cows, horses, goats) and numerous vehicles creating hazardous conditions, particularly near a helicopter pad and when large vehicles pass. Tony Brady from IDL reported multiple complaints over the past two years, noted that the situation has

temporarily improved but continues to recur, and emphasized that parking on state land is not allowed. Discussion clarified that county action is limited to the road right-of-way due to the absence of junkyard regulations, though options such as verifying right-of-way width and potential mitigation measures were discussed.

**9:45 A.M. DRAKE RURAL SUBDIVISION PRELIMINARY PLAT APPLICATION – REVIEW APPLICATION AND PLANNING AND ZONING RECOMMENDATION, CONSIDER ORDER APPROVING PRELIMINARY PLAT (ACTION)**

Rand Wichman the representative was introduced by Jim and explained that the proposal began as a one-lot subdivision but evolved into a two-lot split, creating a 5-acre parcel from an original 30-acre property. The representative was brought in mid-process due to confusion over requirements, and issues were identified with existing CC&Rs that restricted the split; while the county does not regulate CC&Rs, Planning and Zoning noted them during the August 28 hearing and required a note on the plat acknowledging their existence while the owner works to remove them. The county surveyor identified technical survey adjustments, which have since been resolved, though the process has taken nearly a year. Jim stated that Planning and Zoning recommended approval provided the application reflects a two-lot split, all revisions have been reviewed, and the application is moving forward, with water and septic vetted. In response to questions, it was clarified that any future division would be required to follow standard subdivision rules and the same approval process. A motion to approve the order presented as is was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion carried unanimously.

**10:00 A.M. RAGAN ESTATES RURAL SUBDIVISION PRELIMINARY PLAT APPLICATION – REVIEW APPLICATION AND PLANNING AND ZONING RECOMMENDATION, CONSIDER ORDER APPROVING PRELIMINARY PLAT (ACTION)**

Sam and Charyl Ragan presented the subdivision that is located south of Plummer off Underpass Road on Butte Lane and involves three parcels intended for residential development. The property was originally a 40-acre parcel, with a lot line adjustment creating one additional parcel, and the applicant is now seeking to complete the process before selling Lots 2 and 3. The water report has been completed, Gateway Highway District has been maintaining the road in coordination with Sam, and an easement will be established at the time of sale. An approach permit has already been issued by the Gateway Highway District. A motion to approve the order presented as is was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion carried unanimously.

**10:30 A.M. BENEWAH COUNTY TREASURER (ACTION)**

Treasurer Sexton reported cancellations related to solid waste accounts due to double charging over the past two years, where customers were billed for both land-based and mobile accounts. A cancellation for 2025 taxes will be applied and a refund for the 2024 tax year will be applied as credits towards the 2025 tax year. A motion to approve the cancellation was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion carried unanimously.

The hospital is current on all bond payments.

It was noted that while cash balances are currently in the bank, outstanding checks are higher than usual and recommends working with the clerk to determine accurate balances by fund. Revenue may be lower than expected, so expenditures must be deferred until funds are received, ensuring each fund has sufficient balance before spending. Commissioner Reynolds added that there are no capital projects currently scheduled, only services.

**11:15 A.M. BENEWAH COUNTY ASSESSOR (ACTION)**

A request to cancel taxes for the Veterans Outreach which had been approved for an exemption, but the status was not updated, was presented. A motion to approve the cancellation was made by Commissioner Short, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried unanimously.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Reynolds to enter executive session @ 10:20 am pursuant to Idaho Code Section 74-206(1)(a)(b); to consider items exempt from disclosure; seconded by Chairman Short. Motion carried unanimously. Present: Commissioners Lampert, Reynolds, and Short, Clerk Janeen LeWan, Attorney Mariah Dunham, Public Works Director Jim Roletto.

Exited executive session & meeting adjourned at 10:59 am.

A motion to approve the closure of the Assessor’s office on December 12<sup>th</sup> was made by Commissioner Short, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion to approve the release of lien as presented was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes read and approved this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of December, 2025.

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