

**BENEWAH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**May 11, 2026**

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

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Robert Short</b>	<b>Chairman</b>
	<b>Mark Reynolds</b>	<b>Commissioner</b>
	<b>Scott Manes</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 8:03 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 Manes. Motion carried.
2. Approve Monthly Claims (ACTION): Discussion and clarification over Extension Office employee salary reimbursement, Sheriff civil service fees, Panhandle weed spray, & fairgrounds building repair. Discussion on CAF building electric bill, & rental fee increase.
3. Expenditure Requests:
  - a) Building Department Printer Purchase – Building Inspector Tina Thomson (ACTION) Jim Roletto introduced the purchase and the need. A motion to approve purchas of the printer was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes. Motion carried.
  - b) Federal Building Reader Upgrade & Replacement Fobs – Sheriff Anthony Eells (ACTION) Discussion over the upgrade. A motion to approve this item was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes. Motion carried.
4. BC Board Appointment – Panhandle Health District Board of Health (ACTION): Discussion over Peggy holding the current position. A motion to approve Peggy Cuvala moving forward in that position was made by Commissioner Manes, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried.
5. Amendment to County Personnel Policy – Direct Deposit – Resolution 2026-08 (ACTION): Clerk LeWan introduced the Resolution, an updated version was given to the Commissioners during the discussion. Reviewed this was to adopt adding direct deposit into the personnel policy. A motion to accept Resolution number 2026-08 was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes.  
Roll call vote: Manes – aye, Short – aye, Reynolds – aye. Motion carried unanimously.
6. District 1 Federally Funded Projects in Construction Phase – Quarterly Update Jan – Mar 2026: Discussion with Public Works Director Roletto, over the Road & Curve project that will take place in Benewah County. Also discussed other smaller projects in conjunction with this report.
7. Termination Letter, Collections Contract (ACTION): Requested by the TCA & Judge to terminate the current contract, to then renegotiate the terms more agreeable with other county contracts currently in place. A motion to terminate the contract was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes. Motion carried.

8. Senate Bill 1222 Domestic Wells/Subdivisions: Discussion was held regarding new legislation passed this session affecting domestic wells and subdivision development requirements. Attorney Dunham indicated the matter will be evaluated further by the Planning and Zoning Commission to determine whether any recommendations or updates to current county processes or regulations are needed.
9. Parcel Division Regulations:
  - a) Consider Planning and Zoning Recommendations: Discussion was held and introduced by Public Works Director Jim Roletto regarding the process for completing research related to property divisions and split determinations. Proposed revisions to the current process and associated requirements were reviewed, including the option for county staff to complete the research packet for the established fee. Liability considerations and prior practices were also discussed. It was noted that the county retains final authority on all split determinations.
  - b) Amending Ordinance (ACTION): A motion to adopt the proposed ordinance was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes. Roll call vote: Manes – aye, Short – aye, Reynolds – aye. Motion carried unanimously.
10. 2026 Southlake Solid Waste Independent Contractor Agreement (ACTION): Discussion with Public Works Director Roletto regarding the proposed solid waste service agreement and negotiations on contract terms. A draft agreement reflecting compromises between the parties was reviewed. Key discussion points included maintaining a five-year agreement term, and inclusion of a fuel surcharge provision. Proposed service and equipment changes were also reviewed, including potential updates to dumpsters and additional service enhancements. Commissioners discussed the importance of retaining flexibility to renegotiate rates and contract terms in future years.
11. Current 2021 Western States CAT Lease Agreement (ACTION): Discussion was held regarding the proposed deferral of the \$180,000 payoff obligation. Commissioners discussed formally foregoing the payoff requirement for a period of three years. A motion that they release the first grader purchase in 2021 was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes. Motion carried.
12. FY2025 Audit Update: An update was provided by Clerk LeWan regarding the FY25 single audit requirements and the status of the county’s annual audit. It was reported that the annual audit process is progressing well, and preparations for the FY25 single audit are underway.
13. Dust Abatement Program 2026 (ACTION): Discussion was held regarding the development of a potential dust abatement program, including proposed fees, application procedures, operational requirements, and implementation timelines. Commissioners reviewed considerations related to cost recovery, road preparation responsibilities, material delivery and storage, scheduling, and public hearing requirements. Discussion of public interest in the program and ongoing development of draft policies and procedures for future consideration.
14. Mowing Services Agreement (ACTION): Discussion was held regarding a proposed agreement and associated insurance requirements related to mowing services. Commissioners reviewed the necessity of obtaining the services, potential liability considerations, and the possibility of waiving the insurance requirement. Jim discussed Wayne assisting with mowing until the county can find someone. A motion to table this item was made by Commissioner Manes, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried.
15. Railroad Grade Easements – Discussion per Commissioner Reynolds: Discussion was held regarding property ownership and roadway interests associated with portions of the former

railroad grade corridor. Discussion on questions related to county-owned property, maintenance responsibilities, and potential property status or ownership considerations. It was noted that the matter is complex due to historical acquisition methods and overlapping property interests. This item needs further legal and property review.

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

<b>Emergency Management</b>	<b>Road Projects</b>	<b>Public Works</b>	<b>Solid Waste</b>
	<b>Sewer System</b>	<b>Airport</b>	<b>Planning &amp; Zoning</b>

**Airport:** Construction on the taxi lane project is moving forward, with pricing coming in favorably enough to potentially complete Phase 3 this year. Fuel prices at the airport will be increased to \$7.00 per gallon.

**Emergency Management:** A FEMA kick-off meeting was held, and staff are gathering payroll and related documentation in preparation for the reimbursement portal opening.

**Roads:** Discussion was held regarding the beginning of a surplus property list for online auction. Departments were asked to further refine and complete their lists prior to formal approval at a future meeting. Equipment at the golf course noted for the sale. Tina is helping work through the road study and it is progressing. Discussed bridge projects, detours, and contracts needed.

**Public Works:** Updates were provided regarding ongoing efforts to address boiler exhaust concerns through modifications to the exhaust system at the federal building.

**Planning & Zoning:** County has adopted the international fire code. Discussion on coordination with Ziply Fiber on permits continuing, and scheduling of the LoLo preliminary plat hearing.

**Solid Waste:** Updates were provided regarding continued development of a waste-to-energy and ongoing coordination with DEQ and other stakeholders regarding permitting considerations. On hold waiting for Washington permits for the landfill.

**Sewer:** Staff reported no current issues with lift stations and noted that routine monitoring and maintenance activities are continuing.

**9:00 AM Upriver Saddle Club Lease (ACTION):**

Discussion was held with Debra Schnitzmeier regarding the proposed lease agreement and property boundaries associated with the Saddle Club and future gun club lease areas. Concerns were raised regarding the exhibit attached to the lease agreement, including preference for a legal description and clearly defined lease boundaries rather than aerial imagery excerpts.

Additional discussion included future gun range development, access restrictions during shooting activities, and insurance coverage considerations. It was noted that the club’s insurance coverage has historically relied upon use of the entire parcel. The Attorney Dunham noted that the proposed lease does not encompass the entire parcel and that definitive descriptions and boundaries for the areas to be leased by each group will need to be established.

Discussion also included the proposed lease term, with the current draft reflecting a three-year lease while the club had anticipated a longer term. Commissioners noted the shorter term was proposed due to multiple future tenants and the desire to revisit the arrangement after an initial period.

The matter was tabled until definitive maps and lease boundaries for both the Saddle Club and proposed gun club areas can be developed and reviewed. Commissioner Short will provide mapping of the proposed areas for future discussion.

### **9:15 A.M. Public Comment**

Wayne Glassman- Inquired if the county is involved with the tribe in regards to the water adjudication, affecting private wells, and water rights. Attorney Dunham noted that the county along with many other entities have been involved since 2010, and the agreement is primarily settled at this time. Documents have been issued and are available for review in the Clerk's office.

Jennifer Izzareli- Three candidates submitted letters of interest directly to Commissioner Short. It was noted that nomination through the hospital was not required. Discussion was held regarding the qualifications of the candidates, and it was expressed that the candidates could help fill gaps in qualifications on the current board. Commissioners also expressed concern that two of the three candidates chose not to apply through the hospital board process, noting that the hospital board is in the best position to review applicants.

Cheryl Blake- Inquired on the selection process status. She was notified it has not yet begun as the timeline was extended by the hospital.

### **9:30 a.m. PHD FY2027 Budget Review – Erik Ketner, PHD District Director, Dr. Thomas Fletcher, PHD Board Chairman, Dr. Greg Pennock, PHD Medical Director**

Representatives from Panhandle Health District provided an update on the clinical services program and annual budget request. Discussion was held regarding efforts to reinvigorate clinical services due to declining clinic utilization, with the goal of expanding access to care and increasing services without requesting additional county funding.

Erik Ketner, Director of the Health District, reviewed the proposed budget and funding structure, including ongoing review by the finance subcommittee.

Dr. Greg Pennock discussed healthcare access needs within Benewah County, including chronic disease management and community education efforts. Additional discussion included current and planned service expansions, outreach efforts, and the expectation that the program will become budget neutral by the end of the next fiscal year.

### **9:45 A.M. BLM Public Lands/Land Management Update - Ray Pease, Coeur d'Alene Field Manager**

Ray provided updates regarding recent staffing and organizational changes within the agency, including leadership departures and consolidation of certain positions at the Boise level. It was noted that fire, law enforcement, and seasonal positions are still authorized to be filled, while other vacant positions remain subject to budget reduction limitations.

Discussion also included consolidation efforts related to dispatching and fire prevention operations, including potential coordination between the Department of Interior and Forest Service to streamline dispatch services.

Ray noted preparations are underway for what is anticipated to be a busy fire season, with continued monitoring of storm activity and moisture conditions. Additional updates were provided on ongoing projects, including the Huckleberry Recreation Area, and upcoming implementation of new day-use fees.

### **10:00 A.M. Tax Deed Hearing – Treasurer Sara Sexton**

Treasurer Sexton noted only one person came in to discuss an extension. She will be filing tax deed on two other properties. They started from eleven to twelve properties down to these two.

**10:15 A.M. Benewah County Treasurer:**

- Possible Tax Cancellation/Hardship Request(s) – Once cancellation was presented on a trailer in Riverdale. The roof has come off and has been moved to zero value for Annie Sines. Family is planning to demolish the trailer
- Financial Review/Cash Balance Review – Treasurer Sexton discussed the payments made by the hospital towards the bond refinance agreement with the county. She also discussed the bank balance. With Clerk LeWan they collectively discussed the need to reduce spending, and the estimated projections for the rest of FY2026.

**10:30 A.M. State of Idaho 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan – Mark Knudson, Nationwide**

Mark Knudson a financial planner with Nationwide, presented information regarding the State of Idaho Deferred Compensation Plan, a long-established 457 public sector retirement program that has been in place for approximately 40 years. The discussion included an overview of the plan's similarities to a traditional 401(k), along with its low-cost structure and available benefits. It was noted that participation in the program is voluntary. Mr. Knudson also highlighted that retirement specialists are available to meet individually with employees approaching retirement at no additional cost. Fees associated with the program are paid through the plan itself rather than directly by the county.

Meeting adjourned for a break before executive session at 11:06 am

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** A motion was made by Commissioner Manes to enter executive session @ 11:12 am for reasons listed on the agenda: 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)(f); possible litigation; seconded by Commissioner Reynolds.

Roll call vote: Manes – aye, Short – aye, Reynolds – aye. Motion carried unanimously.

Present from 11:12 am – 12:17 pm: Commissioner Reynolds, Commissioner Short, Commissioner Manes, Clerk Janeen LeWan, Attorney Mariah Dunham, Sheriff Anthony Eells, & Public Works Director Jim Roletto.

Present from 12:18 pm – 12:38 pm: Commissioner Reynolds, Commissioner Short, Commissioner Manes, Clerk Janeen LeWan, Attorney Mariah Dunham, & Public Works Director Jim Roletto.

Exited executive session & meeting adjourned at 12:38 pm.

Take Action on any executive session items:

- Legal Representation for HB 752 Litigation – (ACTION)

A motion to approve the Attorney General to represent the Prosecuting Attorney's office in the HB 752 Litigation was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Commissioner Manes. Motion carried.

