

BENEWAH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF MEETING
November 10, 2025

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

Present:	Philip R. Lampert	Chairman
	Robert Short	Commissioner
	Mark Reynolds	Commissioner
	Janeen LeWan	Clerk
	Mariah Dunham	Attorney (via Zoom)

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): Chairman Lampert checked the status of a few invoices. A motion to approve the claims was made by Commissioner Reynolds and seconded by Commissioner Short. Motion carried unanimously.
3. Canvass November 4, 2025 Election Results (ACTION): A motion was made to approve the canvass as presented by Commissioner Short, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried unanimously.
4. State of Idaho Dept. of Ag – Animal Damage Control Board Funding Request (ACTION): Commissioner Reynolds acknowledged that this was not a budgeted item. The Clerk confirmed that the Commissioners have approved this service in some years and not in others. Commissioner Short stated that the service was not worth the cost. Commissioner Reynolds agreed and added that they can revisit the matter in the future if needed. A motion to deny the funding request from the Animal Damage Control Board was made by Commissioner Short, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried unanimously.
5. Rock ‘N’ Road, LLC Addendum & Extension to Storage Lease Agreement (ACTION): Commissioners Short and Reynolds confirmed that the extension is valid through December 31, 2026. Maureen Hodgson was present during the discussion of the agreement and stated that it worked for her. She reported that the rock crushing had been completed and that both rock and chips were stockpiled. Commissioner Reynolds noted that his crew was unable to locate any chips. He added that the only material they found was a smaller, dirty product that was unusable for sanding. A motion to approve the agreement was made by Commissioner Short, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried unanimously.
6. LHTAC Quarterly Progress Report – Chairman Lampert noted that the report listed one project for Benewah County. Clerk LeWan mentioned the recent legislation discussions at the last IAC meeting and emphasized the importance of LHTAC’s feedback for the upcoming legislative sessions. Chairman Lampert confirmed that LHTAC reports will now be sent directly to the Clerk’s office, and the Clerk will forward them to the commissioners upon receipt.

At this time Chairman Lampert asked Commissioner Short to take over facilitating the meeting.

7. Public Defender's Office Lease Agreement (ACTION): Attorney Dunham noted that the agreement is dated October 1, 2025. Commissioner Reynolds asked for confirmation that this is a five-year agreement, which Attorney Dunham affirmed. The rent amount was reviewed. Attorney Dunham stated that the county could request a one-year agreement instead of a five-year term; however, it was determined that they would not renegotiate the price since it was the amount the county originally proposed to the state. A motion was made to offer a one-year agreement to the State of Idaho at this time by Chairman Lampert, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried unanimously.
8. Request to close Benewah County Prosecutor's Office on Nov. 28th, 2025 (ACTION): A motion to approve this item was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Chairman Lampert. Motion carried unanimously.
9. Benewah County Finance Guidance (ACTION): Attorney Dunham noted that this item was not an action item at the last meeting. She explained that the Clerk does not have the authority to implement spending guidelines; that authority rests with the Commissioners. Chairman Lampert stated that his crew is down to two employees. Commissioner Short added that his crew will be assisting further on Sanders Road. Treasurer Sexton clarified that the hiring freeze does not apply to essential positions, but does apply to new positions. Commissioner Short agreed. Commissioner Short also confirmed that capital expenditures do not include repairs to existing capital assets. Commissioner Reynolds noted the importance of keeping purchases local. He requested that credit cards be made available to the maintenance departments. Treasurer Sexton recommended that each commissioner have their own charge card rather than the foremen, and stated she could set the accounts up accordingly. A motion to approve the item as presented was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Chairman Lampert. Motion carried unanimously.
10. Benewah County Credit Card Usage Policy (ACTION): Treasurer Sexton explained the policy and the reasons behind it. Attorney Dunham offered to prepare a resolution and attach the policy to it. A motion to approve the policy and a resolution to be created was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Chairman Lampert. Motion carried unanimously.
11. Benewah County Purchasing Policy (ACTION): The wrong policy was included in the packet. Attorney Dunham noted that the purpose of this item was to circulate the policy to department heads and review whether any updates are needed. A motion to table this item was made by Chairman Lampert, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried unanimously.
12. Benewah County Budget Workshop (ACTION): A motion to meet in the Federal Building Conference room was made by Chairman Lampert, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried unanimously.
13. University of Idaho Extension Cooperative Agreement FY26 (ACTION): Lauren King presented the agreement, describing it as a standard MOU. Treasurer Sexton noted the increase in salary for one position over the past several years. Lauren explained that this salary is determined by the University of Idaho and that she does not yet have the final salary figure for Madison. She added that the agreement includes a clause allowing for future salary negotiations. Commissioners Reynolds and Short stated that the 4-H program is valuable to the county and expressed interest in identifying cuts elsewhere. Attorney Dunham noted that the agreement she reviewed is structured as a five-year agreement for this year, compared to last year's one-year agreement. She offered for her office to conduct a comparison of the two agreements before moving forward. A motion to table this agreement was made by Chairman Lampert, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried unanimously.

14. Cash Basis Resolution No. 2025-11 (ACTION): Clerk LeWan reviewed the differences between FY2024 and FY2025. It was noted that the cash basis includes all funds, including restricted and dedicated funds. Further discussion followed regarding what the cash basis represents and why the county maintains it. Treasurer Sexton reported that she calculated the total of the ARPA funds along with the tax deed sale proceeds disbursed to the county and taxing districts, which amounted to \$3 million. A motion to approve the resolution was made by Chairman Lampert, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried unanimously.
15. Budget Increases for FY25 (ACTION): Clerk LeWan reviewed each budget increase and identified the funding sources used to cover those increases. Commissioner Reynolds noted that the chiller purchase was funded from money originally set aside for replacement of the courthouse front steps. He stated that the county ultimately did not move forward with replacing the steps and instead used those funds for the chiller. Commissioner Reynolds also mentioned that the tree removal project was funded with grant money from the waterways program. A motion to approve this item was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Chairman Lampert. Motion carried unanimously.
16. Clearwater Power Estimate for service install to Emida Ambulance Shed (ACTION): Discussion took place regarding the estimate, the shared costs through Clearwater, and the rebate checks issued by Clearwater to users of the service. A motion to approve this item was made by Commissioner Short, seconded by Chairman Lampert. Motion carried unanimously.
17. Equipment Purchase Plan – *per Commissioner Reynolds* (ACTION): Commissioner Reynolds presented four equipment options that would remain within the budget. The options included making balloon payments; signing another lease to reduce monthly payments; releasing the current machine with a commitment to purchase both a new and an older machine; or releasing the current machine and purchasing a new one with a commitment to acquire another the following year. Commissioner Reynolds also asked whether the road districts could postpone equipment purchases this year. It was noted that each district has equipment from 1970 or earlier that requires repairs. No action was taken on this matter.
18. Invoice Approval Procedure – *per Commissioner Reynolds*: Commissioner Reynolds noted the ongoing difficulty in determining which districts or departments the invoices belong to. He explained that during recent invoice approvals, it was challenging to match purchases to the correct department. He stated that crews need to provide clearer information identifying the district and the individual making the purchase. The claims process was discussed in relation to these concerns.
19. Ziplly Easement Update – *per Commissioner Reynolds*: Commissioner Reynolds discussed uncertainty over ownership of the Garden Tracts Road. Although records indicate the county as the owner, nearby property owners dispute this. The Commissioner Reynolds noted that if the road is not county-owned, the county should not be maintaining it. The issue resurfaced after a request from Ziplly to conduct boring work in the area. Attorney Dunham noted that she has not previously been asked to research this area and, as a result, has not yet reviewed the ownership question. She stated she can do so once the specific road segments and questions are clearly identified. Commissioner Reynolds will ask Jim to coordinate with her. It was noted that right of use, right of control, and right of ownership are separate issues that need clarification.
20. Plummer Dumpsters – *per Chairman Lampert* (ACTION): Chairman Lampert stated that discussions with the City of Plummer have been repetitive and unresolved. He noted that Tolley Road is being offered as an option for the city to place its own dumpsters, as the mayor has not identified a suitable location. Having someone on-site to monitor the dumpsters has been helpful. He added that other cities in Idaho manage their own dumpsters.

Commissioner Reynolds noted Wayne has other tasks and asked if there are other staff that can assist. Commissioner Short noted while other solid waste staff are willing to assist, it would push them into overtime.

Wendy Stansbury reported safety concerns at the dumpster site after her husband witnessed hostile behavior toward Wayne. She commended Wayne's professionalism, questioned whether city residents are paying for dumpster use, and expressed appreciation for the Commissioners' work on the issue.

Treasurer Sexton explained that all revenue currently goes into the same fund, so it is not possible to determine whether city residents are contributing differently than others. She noted that the system was structured differently in the past, but under the current structure, everyone pays into the same system. A fee-based system would clear up any confusion.

Commissioner Reynolds stated that moving toward a clearer, more uniform structure is necessary to eliminate ongoing confusion and that this should be addressed in April or May.

Commissioner Short added that the transfer station will be closed on holidays to avoid incurring double-time costs and help manage the budget.

A motion to approve Plummer using the dumpster site at Totley Road was made by Chairman Lampert, seconded by Commissioner Reynolds. Motion carried unanimously.

9:00 A.M. BCH BOARD'S RECOMMENDATION FOR BOARD VACANCY (ACTION):

The commissioners discussed the historical practice of following the hospital board's recommendations and whether they should consider deviating from that approach. They agreed that maintaining continuity is important and decided to continue following the hospital board's recommendation. A motion to approve Wendy Stansbury as the board recommendation and to appoint her in the vacancy of Gary Coats was made by Commissioner Reynolds, seconded by Chairman Lampert. Motion carried unanimously.

9:15 A.M. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mike Stoltey appeared before the board, sharing he supports Wendy but stated that, given the hospital's current situation, the board should interview future candidates rather than relying solely on the hospital board's recommendations. He noted the hospital board has had some shortcomings and agreed with several points raised by Jen Izzarelli that still need attention. Regarding 4H, he said Madison Sotin is an excellent choice but expressed concern about salary competitiveness, as the county cannot keep pace with others. He emphasized the hospital is still not out of the woods and that residents must continue using it to ensure a reliable local hospital.

Commissioner Lampert noted that the that the hospital is caught up on all their payments. Treasurer Sexton reaffirmed this information.

Wendy Stansbury appeared before the board to express her appreciation for the appointment. She asked whether the upcoming budget workshop would be open to the public and inquired about the date of the workshop and whether public comment would be allowed.

Jim Alderson questioned why all county trash is hauled to Missoula, MT, stating that there should be a location within Benewah County to handle waste locally. He expressed concern about the significant cost this practice imposes on the county. Commissioner Short noted previous studies have shown there is too much ground water in the area. Commissioner Short also shared they have a meeting on December 3rd to tour an incinerator.

Doug Pratt reported that a plastic-coated metal line came off a stump and has remained in the roadway. He questioned why it has not been removed and expressed concern about the danger it poses to drivers. Jim is reportedly set to investigate the issue.

Mike Stoltey reported that a vacancy on the school board for Zone 5 has remained unfilled for more than 90 days. He noted that qualified individuals have applied but no appointment was made as of October 14th. He encouraged the Commissioners to take a hands-on approach if the appointment process is transferred to them.

Maureen Hodgson requested a list of personnel for each district and asked that a tally sheet be used. She also inquired whether a loader would be on the property. Commissioner Reynolds expressed at this time there would not be a loader on the property.

Jen Izzarelli questioned the selection process for the finance committee position previously held by Gary Coats, asking whether financial expertise and credibility were key factors. She raised concerns that Wendy may have misrepresented herself as a CPA and stated she had evidence to support this, though Commissioner Reynolds noted that others dispute the claim. Jen also expressed broader concerns about unresolved hospital issues and the findings of the recent audit. Commissioner Lampert stated he was not worried about the audit, noting it identified areas for improvement. Commissioner Reynolds added that the county cannot afford another costly audit. Jen noted they should have someone on the board to help fix these processes.

9:30 A.M. HUGHES HOUSE HISTORICAL SOCIETY UPDATE – Priscilla Derry and Jeanne Johnson requested permission to tear down the small white house behind the main building. They are not asking for funding—only approval to proceed. They explained that they need to install a handicapped-accessible bathroom and are applying for a grant to support the project. Andrew Galloway provided a rendering of a proposed 40x40 structure that would include a walkway connecting it to the main house. Removing the small house would also create additional parking space, and existing water and sewer hookups are already in place for the site. The Commissioners noted that this was not listed as an action item and requested that it be added to the next meeting agenda for approval.

10:00 A.M. BENEWAH COUNTY TREASURER (ACTION)

- Tax bills went out on Friday. Will accept residents through the 22nd.
- Financial Update – Treasurer Sexton provided an update on account balances and noted that additional tax revenue information, along with ideas and suggestions for addressing revenue decreases, will be presented at the upcoming budget workshop. She reported that the hospital is current on all payments and must continue making the required \$130,000 monthly payments. Bond payments and interest are handled by Sara, and any requests for extensions should be directed at her. Clerk LeWan noted six funds running in the red, noting we still have two months before tax bills are reflecting in

