

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
GILPIN COUNTY, COLORADO

April 21, 2020

A regular meeting of the Board of County Commissioners of Gilpin County was held on April 21, 2020, in an online format; no physical meeting was held. Chair Gail Watson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. In attendance were Chair Watson, Commissioner Linda Isenhart, Commissioner Ron Engels, County Manager Abel Montoya, County Attorney Bradford Benning, and Deputy Clerk to the Board Sharon Cate.

**Agenda Review.** Commissioner Watson added a discussion of possible furloughs following the Board's Executive Session.

**COVID-19 Update.** Public Health Coordinator Bonnie Albrecht cited COVID-19 statistics for Colorado and said there is still only one confirmed case in Gilpin County. She is working on new messaging for the Governor's Safer at Home phase, and on testing possibilities.

Emergency Manager Nathan Whittington said the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is awaiting clarification on the Governor's phased approach to recovery, termed Safer at Home. The EOC is working on messaging, a testing plan, where to find resources and supplies, and beginning the recovery component of COVID-19. Manager Whittington is also making sure first responders are aware there will be a larger call volume as people return to the County. He is in contact with the State Public Information Officer and as soon as he receives good guidance, the EOC will put together a comprehensive campaign.

**Clerk and Recorder's Monthly Report.** Clerk and Recorder Sahari McCormick reported on operations in her office for the months of January, February and March 2020. Commissioner Engels asked her how March compared to the first two months of the year, how much business is not being done, and if there has been a loss in Motor Vehicle revenue. Clerk and Recorder McCormick explained that the second half of March was down some, and April too, and that vehicle registrations that are submitted online or through the mail are still generating the County portion of this funding. She added that a temporary employee will start soon to assist with the monthly reports, but it is unclear if the County will receive funding for the difference between 2018 and 2019.

**Legal Status Report.** County Attorney Bradford Benning advised the Commissioners on the following legal issues:

FAA—Denver Metroplex. The Board will receive a draft of Gilpin County's issues in challenging the Denver Metroplex Record of Decision. County Attorney Bradford Benning will meet on April 23 with co-filers—the City of Greenwood, Mountain Aviation, and Arapahoe Airport Authority—to work on the documents. After May 8, a briefing schedule will be set for this case.

Vehicle Purchase / Cancellation Status. Work continues with the vendors of vehicles or large equipment ordered by the County. There has been a delay on cancelling the contract to purchase some law enforcement SUVs. On the large loader for Public Works, Wagner came back with a proposal that is not acceptable; Gilpin County will likely cancel the contract due to financial circumstances.

Annual Lease of Church Ditch Inches. Years ago, Gilpin County purchased eight (8) inches of water rights in the Church Ditch in Golden as part of its water rights portfolio. Annually, the County leases four (4) inches of water to a group in Golden for irrigation purposes. Using this water protects the County's rights. This year the total assessment amount is \$680.00, which is billed to the lessee. The lease will be presented at a future Board meeting.

**County Manager Status Report.** County Manager Abel Montoya updated the Board of County Commissioners on the following items:

Town Hall, April 20. In the County-hosted Town Hall online public forum yesterday, 159 participants joined, for a total of 425 people reached through the three Town Halls so far. State and federal representatives who spoke were: State Senator Tammy Story; Colorado House Speaker KC Becker; US Senator Michael Bennet, a representative for US Senator Cory Gardner; and Congressman Joe Neguse. County Manager Montoya thanked the employees who create the Town Hall forums, the next of which is scheduled for Monday, May 4, at 6:00 p.m. Information will be posted on the Gilpin County website, [gilpincounty.org](http://gilpincounty.org).

Public Input on Comprehensive Plan. On May 5, a virtual public meeting will be held for public input on the County's Comprehensive Plan. Information will be posted soon on the County website and under Essential Services, Community Development Department. Commissioner Isenhart thanked County Manager Montoya for encouraging attendees of last night's Town Hall to participate in the public input element of the Comprehensive Plan.

## **Board of County Commissioners Status Reports.**

Notice of Public Meetings. The Board's public meetings will include:

- April 23, 28, 30, and May 5 and 19. Commissioner Watson noted that the Board is considering moving to a schedule of one meeting per week plus one work session per week.
- Commissioner Engels said the Wall Street Journal's designation of Gilpin County as one of the most economically impacted areas has generated press interest. Commissioner Engels recently participated in an interview on CBS, Denver Channel 4, and now other media outlets are picking it up and spreading the word about our financial damage, and to say counties and cities need help. Commissioner Watson said our area's senators and Congressional representative recognize Gilpin County's unique situation. She had read that the next CARES Act would provide assistance to counties and cities over 50,000 in population, so Gilpin County has to make the point that funding can't be tied to COVID-19 expenses and our loss of revenue. Commissioner Engels said Congressman Joe Neguse understands the circumstances of counties and cities and his bill, co-sponsored by US Senator Michael Bennet, will hopefully provide assistance in an amount that will help small jurisdictions.

**Minutes.** Commissioner Engels moved to approve the Board of County Commissioners Meeting Minutes for April 16, 2020, as presented. Commissioner Isenhart seconded the motion, which passed by a vote 3 to 0.

**Recess to Executive Session.** Commissioner Engels moved to recess into Executive Session in accordance with C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(b) for a conference with the County Attorney for the purpose of receiving legal advice on specific legal questions, and C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(e) for the purpose of determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations, developing strategy for negotiations, and/or instructing negotiators. Commissioner Isenhart seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Parks and Recreation Employee Furloughs.** County Manager Montoya stated that Gilpin County is in a financial crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as the County relies heavily on one industry, gaming, for approximately half of its revenue. Due to the closure of casinos, he and the Board have had to consider some difficult options. They began by reviewing the County's statutory responsibilities and providing essential services. Recreation is not in this category and the projected revenue shortfalls will not cover the Parks and Recreation Department's annual budget of \$1.4 million. The second step the Board has had to take is a reduction in expenditures, starting with the cancellation of contracts for large vehicles and heavy equipment, for approximately \$1 million in cuts. The Board also discussed furloughs of the Parks and Recreation Department employees, 23 current, plus 29 seasonal. The furloughs will begin May 2 and will continue through July 10, 2020. A fourth stimulus bill currently before Congress might help backfill the County's revenue and help to determine if in one or two months the Community Center can reopen. A small staff will remain to work on planning, programming and building and pool maintenance.

Commissioner Watson thanked County Manager Montoya for articulating these difficult decisions. Commissioner Isenhart moved to accept the furloughs as presented by County Manager Montoya. Commissioner Engels seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

County Manager Montoya said this is a hard time for all, and the County wants to make sure that each impacted employee knows they will be contacted in person by Parks and Recreation Department Director Kyle Benedict and Human Resources Director Lori Schrayner to provide information on assistance that may be available to them. Some furloughed employees might be eligible for unemployment insurance in an additional amount of \$600.00 per week. County Manager Montoya can also talk to employees about these options.

**Adjourn.** There being no further business to come before the Board, they adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

Signed this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of April 2020.