

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

May 12, 2020

A special meeting of the Board of County Commissioners of Gilpin County was held on May 12, 2020, in an online format; no physical meeting was held. Chair Gail Watson called the meeting to order at 9:14 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.

**Moment of Silence for William Burch.** Commissioner Watson called for a moment of silence for William Burch, Commissioner Isenhart's uncle who passed away from COVID-19.

**Agenda Review.** Commissioner Watson added the need to receive legal advice on the US Forest Service during Executive Session. Commissioner Engels added a discussion of the County's option to allow State Parks within the County to open.

**COVID-19 Update.** Public Health Coordinator Bonnie Albrecht said she has been working on information for contact tracing and has the assistance of many volunteers now. She is also working on safety guidelines for campgrounds and will send information to County Attorney Bradford Benning. In response to a question from Charles Smith, Board Chair for Timberline Fire Protection District, Coordinator Albrecht said there still has been only one confirmed case of COVID-19 in the County, though two people tested positive for antibodies. These should not be included in the confirmed case count. This information was incorrectly added to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment website over weekend. The two people have not been confirmed as having COVID-19.

Emergency Manager Nathan Whittington said he continues to work with the Department of Homeland Security on recovery measures, and has been looking at the FEMA grant process. FEMA assigned a recovery specialist to Gilpin County last week; the specialist and Manager Whittington then worked together to consolidate the County, Central City and Black Hawk under one disaster specialist. He will also be ready soon to start a recovery task force that will include County staff, and is working on a test site plan.

**May is Mental Health Month Proclamation.** Commissioner Engels read aloud a Proclamation—May is Mental Health Month—proposed annually by the Jefferson Center for Mental Health (JCMH). Commissioner Isenhart serves on the JCMH Board of Directors and said at their May 11 meeting, there was discussion of JCMH and similar services being hit hard by budget cutbacks due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, because of unemployment, there is an increased need for mental health care and the Gilpin County Board works to elevate awareness of information on mental health services. Commissioner Isenhart moved to adopt the 2020 May is Mental Health Proclamation. Commissioner Engels seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Update on Soft Reopening of Some Gilpin County Offices.** In observance of Public Service Recognition Week, County Manager Montoya gave a "shout out" and a thank you to employees and others who serve in the public sector. He then reported on the first phase of reopening the Clerk and Recorder, Assessor and Treasurer's offices at the Courthouse, and listed the numerous health safety measures in place. Business Analyst Jaime Tirado demonstrated how to navigate from the County's website home page to the page for requesting an appointment in one of the offices, and said he would post information about connecting to the Board's Zoom meetings on the home page as well. County Manager Montoya said the Facilities Maintenance staff is preparing for a soft opening in other building by installing plexiglass guards, as the material becomes available. Information on opening these buildings will also be posted on the website.

**Legal Status Report.** County Attorney Bradford Benning informed the Board that he has been working on the following tasks and legal issues:

- the Courthouse soft opening as it relates to the Safer at Home Order
- primary election questions for June, and the status of volunteer election judges
- responding to records requests from other attorneys
- Sheriff's Office function of process serving during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Possible, limited opening of the Library

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

Emergency Summer Meals. Human Services Director Laura Solomon requested the Board's approval to submit a grant application to Food Bank of the Rockies for emergency summer meals for children during the COVID-19 pandemic. The first application was denied, but Director Solomon's second request emphasized Gilpin County's isolated population and high unemployment rate, so they reconsidered and are now willing to support the summer meals for children program. Delivery of meals will begin tomorrow. Commissioner Engels moved to approve the application to the Food Bank of the Rockies for emergency summer meals for children. Commissioner Isenhart seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

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

Notice of Public Meetings. The Board's upcoming public meetings will include: May 19 and 26, June 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30.

Counties' Decisions on Public Campgrounds. Commissioner Watson said the Governor has announced that beginning today, counties can begin to decide if they will allow camping reservations at public campgrounds within their jurisdiction. The Board agreed they would need to discuss this option with Todd Farrow, Park Manager at the Golden Gate Canyon State Park, and Scott Haas, Ranger for the US Forest Service, Clear Creek Ranger District. Also, Commissioner Watson will contact the Ranger for the Boulder Ranger District for an update on their public campgrounds.

**Discussion of Reopening Casinos.** Commissioner Engels reported on a meeting to discuss the reopening of casinos in Gilpin County, which was attended by: County Manager Montoya; County Attorney Bradford Benning; County Public Health Coordinator Bonnie Albrecht; Central City Manager Daniel Miera; Black Hawk City Manager Steve Cole; Jefferson County Public Health Director Dr. Mark Johnson; some casino general managers; and a representative from the Colorado Gaming Association. The group will write a request for a variance from the State's Safer at Home public health order to reopen casinos in Gilpin County earlier than has been anticipated. Two committees will be formed to work on this effort, which Commissioner Watson termed "the heaviest lift she has seen so far."

**Public / Press Comment.** Resident Sandy Hollingsworth thanked Public Health Coordinator Bonnie Albrecht and Emergency Manager Nathan Whittington for communications to the public, so they know what to expect. She also asked County Attorney Bradford Benning about the possible reopening of the Library. This operation will also be guided by the State's Safer at Home Order.

**Minutes.** Commissioner Engels moved to approve the Board of County Commissioners Meeting Minutes for May 5, 2020, as presented. Commissioner Isenhart seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

**Adjourn to Executive Session.** Commissioner Isenhart moved to adjourn 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 regarding the proposed Timberline Fire Protection District Impact Fees. Commissioner Engels seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 3 to 0. There being no further business to come before the Board, they adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Signed this 19<sup>th</sup> day of May 2020.