



# Cassia County Board of Commissioners

## SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

### Thursday, May 18, 2023

Cassia County Courthouse • Commission Chambers  
1459 Overland Ave • Room 206 • Burley ID 83318

10:00 AM

The Cassia County Board of Commissioners met today at the place and time as posted by agenda pursuant to Idaho Code § 74-204 for Open Meetings Law.

#### **ACTION AGENDA ITEMS**

- 1) 10:04 AM Call to order
- 2) Pledge of Allegiance and prayer
- 3) 10:06 AM Roll call

#### **Roll Call.**

**Present:** Leonard M. Beck - Chair, Kent R. Searle - Member, Bob Kunau - Member, Cally Velasquez - Deputy Clerk (Not voting).

- 4) 10:06 AM Amendment of agenda

10:06 AM **Motion and Action:** Amend the agenda for this meeting pursuant to Idaho Code § 74-204 (4) (c) to include details on the afternoon meeting with Minidoka, **Moved by** Bob Kunau - Member, **Seconded by** Kent R. Searle - Member. Motion passed unanimously.

- 5) 10:07 AM Calendar, meetings, committee reports, and correspondence
  - a) Beck reported on his visit to a recycling facility in Utah yesterday.
    - i) A previous presentation showed that our current footprint of solid waste could be diminished by as much as 50% if implemented.
    - ii) Another meeting between the Solid Waste Board and the recycling group is being planned.
- 6) 10:11 AM Personnel Matters - Change of Status Requests
  - a) Weed & Pest - Eric Boden - Seasonal Weed Sprayer - new hire
  - b) MCCJC - Melanie Carter - Jail Tech part time - new hire
  - c) MCCJC - Jireh Seamons - Reserve Deputy part time - new hire
  - d) MCCJC - McKenna Cleverley - Detention Deputy - voluntary resignation

10:14 AM **Motion and Action:** Approve Change of Status Requests as presented **Moved by** Bob Kunau - Member, **Seconded by** Kent R. Searle - Member.  
Motion passed unanimously.

10:13 AM Prosecutor Larsen entered the meeting.

CASSIA COUNTY COMMISSION  
SPECIAL SESSION  
Thursday, May 18, 2023

**Instrument # 2023001621**

BURLEY, CASSIA, IDAHO

6-5-2023 12:57:12 PM No. of Pages: 7

Recorded for : CASSIA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

JOSEPH LARSEN

Fee: 0.00

Ex-Officio Recorder Deputy

Index to: COMMISSIONERS MINUTES

A handwritten signature, likely of Joseph Larsen, is written over the "Ex-Officio Recorder Deputy" line.

7) 11:21 AM Executive Sessions

11:21 AM **Motion and Action:** Enter Executive Session pursuant to Idaho Code § 74-206 (1) (b) to consider personnel issues, **Moved by** Bob Kunau - Member, **Seconded by** Kent R. Searle - Member.

**Vote:** Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote (**summary:** Yes = 3).

**Yes:** Kent R. Searle - Member, Bob Kunau - Member, Leonard M. Beck - Chair.

11:30 AM Upon exit of Executive Session, the board took the matter under advisement.

8) 10:15 AM FY2024 Budget matters discussion with Auditor's Office

- a) Clerk Larsen provided an introduction to the materials being reviewed in preparation for meeting with Minidoka County Commissioners.
- b) Auditor's Office Director Heather Evans reviewed selected items of the proposed FY2024 budget. There is an expectation that for FY2024 there will be some moderate increases in the County health plan administration and claim costs due to inflation. Some claims related to stop loss are going to carry over to the next fiscal year. That plan reimburses the County for claims paid above our deductible.
- c) The Extension Office is requesting an additional \$10,000.00 outside of the MOU for the purchase of a new vehicle.
- d) Appropriate budgeting, accounting, and reporting of County Fair Board capital improvements was discussed. Capital improvement expenditures must be reported in the County accounting for County-owned buildings and grounds improvements per our independent outside auditor. They will provide written guidance for the County and the Fair in meeting those requirements.

9) 11:30 AM Working Lunch

- a) 11:33 AM The Public Defender's budget was reviewed. Salary calculations included an additional payroll for FY2024 to culminate that program which will be taken over by the State of Idaho on October 1, 2024. The last payroll bridges between FY2024 and FY2025 and will be paid in October of 2024 as a FY2024 expense. Additionally, with the close of the Mini-Cassia Public Defender program, all accrued vacation and comp time must be paid out.
- b) It is expected that the Public Defense Commission will ask for funds that never have been allocated for an additional public defender to meet workload compliance to be returned to them.
- c) 11:46 AM The Misdemeanor Probation Office's budget was reviewed. Director Prewitt requested a 15% increase for her officers and a 5% increase for her clerical staff. Recommendations of the budget officer were reduced to meet the Board's motion to budget for a 4.5% cost of living increase and a \$1,500 bonus with \$500 bonus pay for part time employees.
- d) 11:52 AM The Mini-Cassia Criminal Justice Center's budget was reviewed. Increases in department requests included an amount for overtime for two added positions, needed repairs or upgrades to both the security, camera, and lock system and for a scanner to assist with mitigating drug possession with inmates. The Auditor's Office will clarify the actual amounts needed to cover overtime.
- e) The Auditor's Office will likely recommend about a 4% increase in insurance costs to be included in all Cassia County budgets. The Auditor's Office will clarify the actual amounts needed to cover increases in benefit allocations per full time employee.

10) 12:07 PM Traveled to Minidoka County Courthouse for the Joint FY2024 Budget Meeting

- a) 12:36 Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer

**CASSIA COUNTY COMMISSION**

**SPECIAL SESSION**

**Thursday, May 18, 2023**

- b) 12:37 Minidoka County Chair Wayne Schenk expressed concern about the large salary increases being requested by the department heads. He felt that circumvented discussions from the commissioners. He felt there had been some collusion between department heads to do that. He also questioned the decision of the Cassia County Board for an amount above what he felt had been agreed to.
- c) Chair Beck replied that they were taking into account the direction of the State of Idaho for increases with their employees as well as the needs of current county employees when Cassia County voted to approve a 4.5% increase with a bonus for their employees. He pointed out that the department heads communicate with each other and it would stand to reason that if one was going to submit a certain number, the others might be expected to do the same.
- d) 12:39 Mini-Cassia Public Defender's Office - Tim Schneider
  - i) Mini-Cassia Public Defender Tim Schneider presented the Public Defender's Office budget. He requested an increase for utilities and for contract services. Contract services are for hiring attorneys due to the inability to hire Deputy Public Defenders as there is a significant shortage of available attorneys.
  - ii) 12:59 PM Evans reviewed the county allocations projected for the Public Defender's Office budget, which is based on population census of both counties. Cassia's allocation of the budget is 53.29% and Minidoka's allocation is 46.71% of the budget.
  - iii) 1:10 PM Minidoka Commissioners deliberated on the presented budget. Minidoka Commissioners did not concur with the department request or the budget officer recommendations for increases in wage and salaries. They were only willing to agree to a 3% increase or \$0.75, whichever is greater, stating that the recommended increase agreed to by the Cassia Commissioners would cause Public Defender's salary to be above that of the Minidoka County Prosecutor.
  - iv) Prosecutor Larsen spoke in defense of Mr. Schneider's office and the requests, saying the numbers requested were justified. He stated the 3% they offered wasn't going to be enough for the amount of work and skill required to carry out the duties of that department. He also stated that some comments were not justified of needing in challenging amounts presented given the nature and responsibilities weighing on all attorneys in county government.
  - v) Chair Schenk stated the clerical staff in that office didn't warrant such a large increase. Prosecutor Larsen disagreed, saying that the clerical staff were the backbone of the office and the Public Defender nor his Deputy Defenders could not carry out their responsibilities without that critical legal assistant support.
  - vi) Prosecutors Larsen and Stevenson from Minidoka County attested, along with Schneider to the increasing case load they are handling.
  - vii) The Public Defender's Office will continue to be short staffed with attorneys as the passage rate for the Idaho Bar exam is only 35%.
  - viii) As both commissions were unable to concur on wages and salaries, the discussion was tabled.

- e) 1:28 PM Mini-Cassia Veterans Service Office - Chuck Driscoll
  - i) Driscoll requested a 5% increase in his contract for FY2024 along with additional expenses to cover a needed large digitizing project. Additional requests were presented to cover the cost of an additional clerical staff, computer, scanner, a large capacity hard drive and a shredding service.
  - ii) Commissioner Beck stated that Cassia County may have a surplus computer that could be used.
  - iii) 1:47 PM The Chairman of the VSO offered his support and commendation for Driscoll.
- f) 1:49 PM Mini-Cassia Juvenile Detention Center - Trent Bodily
  - i) Bodily requested to increase the starting wages of his deputies from \$17.25 per hour to \$20.00 per hour. This jump would affect nine of the 14 deputies currently on staff. Their department continues to see an increase in residents as well as with mental health situations. That creates an increased burden to the Detention Center staff. Suicide watches require a 24-hour one-on-one supervision for each situation. Just last week they had three suicide watches.
  - ii) Bodily detailed the need for funding equipment replacement and additions. He also requested funding to pay for the relocation of residents when they are at their capacity of 16 detainees.
- g) 2:02 PM Mini-Cassia Juvenile Probation - Dixie Tate
  - i) Tate based her salary requests on an individual performance basis rather than a percentage across the board.
  - ii) She requested funding and provided bid details to purchase a midsize SUV. This vehicle would replace one of four currently in service. That request was based on continued repair costs.
  - iii) Chair Schenk requested that Tate adjust her calculations on salaries to account for a 4.5% increase across the board for a comparison. The Minidoka budget officer recommendations was a 5% increase.
- h) 2:13 PM Mini-Cassia Adult Misdemeanor Probation - Amber Prewitt
  - i) Prewitt explained her justification for the increase in department salaries was for both cost of living and also to help equalize pay with Juvenile Probation officers. She said their department probationer case load exceeds that of Juvenile and Felony Probation combined.
  - ii) She provided statistics on officer retention and case load and the effects those have of the current employees' ability to accomplish their jobs effectively.
- i) 2:28 PM Chair Schenk requested a five-minute break.
- j) 2:34 PM Chair Schenk thanked the Cassia Auditor's Office for the materials provided and appreciated the history included in the documents.
- k) 2:35 PM Mini Cassia Criminal Justice Center - Sheriff Warrell, Undersheriff Jarrod Thompson, and Lieutenant Shannon Taylor
  - i) Taylor requested a 12% increase in wages for jail employees. He stated that the Idaho Department of Corrections was providing a 10% increase to their employees with a starting wage was \$25.00 per hour.
  - ii) Clerk Larsen reported that risk management cases have been significant this past year statewide and ICRMP is warning of a large increase in insurance rates to their members.
  - iii) Clerk Larsen also suggested that with the conclusion of county indigent medical liability, the jail should consider seeking a pricing agreement with a local hospital for reduced rates since the jail will now be responsible for medical claim costs of inmates.


- iv) Taylor reported an increase of 15% with the food contract and their contract with Dr. Wright for dental services included a 4% increase for FY2024. He isn't expecting an increase with Sawtooth Medical until they renegotiate for FY2025.
- v) He also detailed their need for security and systems upgrades with accompanying costs. He reported on the upcoming building repairs and upgrades they are requesting.
- vi) 3:32 PM Deputy Auditor Evans reviewed calculations for allocations to both counties with the jail.
- l) 3:51 PM Chair Beck asked for an explanation of the medical insurance from the juvenile detention center versus the jail. Minidoka's insurance provider advised them to plan for a 9.5% increase in medical insurance costs. Cassia County is currently estimating a 4% increase in employee allocations for their health plan.
  - i) Clerk Page explained the budgeting process for their Gem Plan insurance was based on their highest premium rate option.
- m) 4:05 PM Commissioner Orton asked for further discussion on building upgrade needs of the Juvenile Detention Center. Chair Beck pointed out that facility has no shared ownership like the jail in Burley.

11) 4:09 PM Adjourn

4:09 PM **Motion and Action:** Adjourn, **Moved by** Bob Kunau - Member, **Seconded by** Kent R. Searle - Member. Motion passed unanimously.



APPROVED:



---

Leonard M. Beck, Chair

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD:



---

Cally Velasquez

# Cassia County Commissioner Meeting

## Attendance Log

Date: 5-18-2023

	NAME (Please Print)	TOWN	REPRESENTING
1.	Heather Whitehead-Evans	Burley	Auditor's
2.	JOE LARSEN	Burley	CLERK
3.	Jo Thompson		CCSO
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			
19.			
20.			
21.			
22.			
23.			
24.			