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The Board of County Commissioners of Washington County, Idaho, does hereby meet this 9th day of February, 2026.

IN THE MATTER OF ROLL CALL)

Donna White, Clerk, called roll call: Gordon Wilkerson, present; Jim Harberd, present; and Nate Marvin, present via Zoom.

Jim Harberd opened the meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Gordon Wilkerson gave the invocation.

IN THE MATTER OF CORRESPONDENCE/MEETINGS AND REPORTS)

Correspondence received by the Board was reviewed and disseminated as required. The Board reviewed a January 28, 2026, letter for LHTAC (Local Highway Technical Assistance Council) regarding the LHTAC Quarterly Progress Report.

Gordon Wilkerson reported he attended the SREDA (Snake River Economic Development Alliance) meeting last week and provided an update to the Board. Wilkerson discussed the pending development agreement with Steel National. Wilkerson stated the agreement needs to be finalized. Wilkerson discussed transportation of mine materials via railroad.

Nate Marvin discussed the heating and cooling unit at the fairgrounds. Marvin stated the unit was purchased in 1999. Marvin said he had requested an additional quote for a heating and cooling unit. Marvin stated he would like to invite ~~Gayle~~ Dale Barton to provide an update on the Lost Valley Reservoir Project.

Jim Harberd stated a report on the Lost Valley Reservoir Project was provided last week at the Water District #67 Annual meeting.

IN THE MATTER OF MINUTES)

The minutes of the Board not heretofore approved of February 2, 2026, were approved as written.

IN THE MATTER OF CLAIMS)

The Auditor was authorized to issue warrants totaling \$321,876.00 for general expenses by a motion of Jim Harberd, seconded by Gordon Wilkerson. Motion carried unanimous.

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IN THE MATTER OF ROAD & BRIDGE/SOLID WASTE)

Jerod Odoms, Road and Bridge/Solid Waste Supervisor, met with the Board. Odoms reviewed changes made to the proposed plaque for Cove Road Bridge with the Board. Odoms stated the cost of the plaque is \$3,939.99 plus a tariff.

Marvin expressed concerns regarding the cost of the tariff.

Wilkerson suggested the matter be discussed with legal counsel.

Marvin suggested requesting another quote.

Harberd stated the tariff could be 25% or more of the cost of the proposed plaque.

Odoms will reach out to LHTAC (Local Highway Technical Assistance Council) Bridge Division on the matter.

Odoms provided an update on Beaver Creek Bridge and Cove Road Bridge to the Board. Odoms stated he hopes to have a draft of the final design on Unity Bridge in the near future with construction to begin late summer 2026. Odoms reported cattle guards have been installed on South Crane Road. Odoms provided a department update to the Board.

Wilkerson discussed the new Solid Waste fee schedule. Wilkerson clarified that household waste is free of charge.

Odoms stated fee schedules are provided to customers at the Solid Waste sites. Covered/secured loads were discussed. Odoms clarified that the County Ordinance referring to covered/secured loads that is posted on the county website along with the \$300.00 fine. Odoms stated that fine is enforced by law enforcement, not the Solid Waste employees.

Odoms discussed roads for possible validation or abandonment. Odoms reported that he had met with Prosecutor Pearce concerning road validation/vacation. Odoms further stated that he plans to reach out to the previous landowner regarding Seid Creek Road. Odoms informed the Board he is working with Prosecutor Pearce regarding Denney Lane. Odoms told the Board that there are not a lot of roads in the county that he feels should be abandoned. Odoms stated the County receives revenue from the State of Idaho based on county road miles and does not feel this would be a wise move at this point.

Wilkerson asked how the previous landowner has an effect on the validation of Seid Creek Road.

Odoms stated the landowner has the right to object to the validation of the road.

Marvin questioned Bruce Lane.

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Odoms stated Bruce Lane is not an all-weather road with limited maintenance. A section of the road was abandoned in the 1940's.

IN THE MATTER OF BOARD OF COMMUNITY GUARDIANS)

Jana Hill and Ronda Bradshaw met with the Board. Hill discussed a reimbursement claim in the amount of \$99.00 for a post office box, a background check, and finger printing. Hill discussed Board Memberships and the need for new members to be appointed.

Jim Harberd moved, seconded by Gordon Wilkerson, to approve the appointments of Jana Hill, Vanessa Turrentine, Layna Hafer, Ronda Bradshaw, John Aegerter, Karin Hoffer, Denny Field and Minda Hovland to the Board of Community Guardians. Motion carried.

IN THE MATTER OF CITY OF CAMBRIDGE)

Sandra McKee, Cambridge City Clerk, met with the Board. McKee stated SREDA (Snake River Economic Development Alliance) had previously discussed the County sponsoring an Idaho Community Development Block Grant on behalf of the Weiser and Cambridge Senior Centers. McKee explained that the County could not sponsor a grant for both the Weiser and Cambridge Senior Citizens Centers and stated that the Weiser Senior Center is not requesting grant funds at this time. McKee requested the Board sign a Letter of Support for the Cambridge Senior Citizens Center. The City of Cambridge will sponsor the grant. McKee stated the grant is to help fund improvements to the Cambridge Senior Center. The total grant is \$245,000.00.

Nate Marvin moved, seconded by Gordon Wilkerson, to sign the Letter of Support for the City of Cambridge and the Cambridge Senior Center Building Project.

Wilkerson stated he would be in favor of signing the Letter of Support as presented by McKee. Motion carried.

IN THE MATTER OF PLANNING AND ZONING)

Bridget Felmley, Planning and Zoning Administrator, met with the Board. Felmley informed the Board that she has received five building permit applications and is working on seven lot split reports. Felmley stated she had a request for a Special Use Permit Application for a gravel permit north of Cambridge with access off of Highway 95. Felmley stated she had instructed the applicant to reach out to the State and the Transportation Department first. The applicant will also need to contact the Idaho Department of Lands.

Wilkerson discussed the development agreement with Steel National. Wilkerson stated he would like to discuss the matter next week. Wilkerson stated turn lanes, acceleration lanes, and lighting need to be addressed in the development agreement.

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Marvin stated he would like to go into executive session and discuss the applicants that were received for the planning and zoning positions. Marvin requested that Bridget Felmley remain in the room for executive session. Marvin also requested that Clerk White stay in the room since she's our HR person.

Gordon Wilkerson moved, seconded by Nate Marvin, to go into executive session at 10:51 a.m. in accordance with I.C. 74-206(1) (a) to consider hiring a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent. This paragraph does not apply to filling a vacancy in an elective office. Motion carried unanimous. Gordon Wilkerson, Aye; Jim Harberd, Aye; Nate Marvin, Aye.

Jim Harberd stated they were out of executive session at 11:58 a.m. "No final action or decision was made in executive session. We will now return to the regular agenda."

#### IN THE MATTER OF PROSECUTING ATTORNEY)

True Pearce, Prosecuting Attorney, met with the Board. No matters were brought forward for discussion.

#### IN THE MATTER OF PUBLIC LANDS DISCUSSION)

Heather Eastman Executive Director with Idaho Business of the Outdoors met with the Board. Eastman stated, "I'm here today to have a discussion on public lands. So, last year, in June, during the budget reconciliation process, there was a proposal to sell millions of acres of federal public lands and Idaho came out in opposition to that and managed to get that provision removed. But that provision scared organizations like mine, because we do want to keep public lands public. And we decided that the best way to move forward was to reach out to every county in Idaho and listen to what's happening with public lands in your county. The idea being that if we understand what's happening at the county level, we can make better decisions at the state level, and maybe even make better decisions at the federal level. So, I'm here today to just ask a couple of questions about public lands, have a discussion, you can ask me questions as well if you have questions for me. But it's very much just a discussion. We're doing something very simple, but something that maybe gets forgotten this day and age with Zoom and email, and that's having a face-to-face conversation. And the idea is to open up the relationship and start working together and see if we can find new ways to do things. So, the first question I have for you is, what's the role of public lands in Washington County? What role does it serve?"

Harberd, "There's a lot of them. The public lands, what role does it play in Washington County?"

Wilkerson, "Our, our county, our mass is probably, this is embarrassing, I should know. The amount of our county is... 70%, 47%, well, close to 50% between BLM and Forest Service. The role that they play is the management of that land for us. Then we get into the issues of how they've been managing the public lands for us."

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Eastman, "That's my next question. Are there issues with public land management in your county?"

Wilkerson, "Have we got an hour?"

Eastman, "We do."

Harberd, "An agent for us and the public's best interest."

Eastman, "And are you alright with me taking notes?"

Harberd, "Yeah, if you want to. A lot of our, we receive income from them. Which is a big part of our, not a big part of our operations, but it all adds up pretty fast. Recreation, water recreation, logging, minerals, more recreation. I don't..."

Wilkerson, "Nate, do you have questions?"

Marvon, "No, I'm just listening. So, yeah. No, I don't have any questions at this time."

Wilkerson, "I'm on the Public Lands Committee for the Idaho Association of Counties. Uh, also a landowner. Uh, a recreationalist. Jim's correct in the fact that we take revenue in from public lands through grazing permits, Logging, harvesting of timber. The major issue that we see is the management practices of our federal lands has slid considerably to a direction that's, uh... non-productive."

Eastman, "How long would you say that's been going on?"

Wilkerson, "It probably started back in the late 70s, early 80s, when it really started ramping up. We started, started witnessing it back in the, in the late 60s, early 70s, but it ramped up considerably by the 80s. The management practices in our forests, in our federal forest lands, uh, Forest Service lands. Logging practices have dwindled to the point where, uh, availability of marketing the product is gone, the, uh, lack of forestry has brought down Sawmills. Just in our county, just in our region, our close region right here between Midvale, and Riggins, every town when I was growing up had a sawmill in it. Some of them had two sawmills in it. Now there's two sawmills between here and Grangeville. Transportation costs are a major factor and getting those timber products to market. The forestry management practices of the federal government have, have greatly diminished. On the BLM side of issues, I'm dealing with one right now, there's two rivers that come together just north of here, a main tributary and a smaller tributary runs into it. At that confluence, the smaller tributary is, is depositing a huge gravel bar creating excessive pressure on riverbanks. That happens to be in the middle of BLM ground. Been in discussion with BLM for over two and a half years, trying to get the availability of a permitting process to remove that gravel bar from the river with great resistance. We about get the permit attained and then the people that are in charge at that time retire or transfer. So, you start with a new crew. So, you basically start all over again. And they find a new set of rules that you've got to comply with. The last report we got from BLM

is, we don't know the exact, we don't, we don't. It's not that they don't believe. They want us to explain what the importance of removing that gravel bar is, who's gonna benefit from it, and how are we gonna benefit from that gravel bar being removed? What are you doing for us for nothing? Step up and let's, it's your, it's yours to manage. It's not, it's not private ground. It's public lands, and you're managing this public lands and we're watching. When we are faced with the issue of TMDLs, federal government doesn't seem to be. That's, that's a huge problem. It's a huge conflict. They're walking away from responsibility. The other issue we see bouncing back over to our federal forest lands that are managed. We see forest management practices using fire, prescribed burn. When the, when the Forest Service has a prescribed burn, and it happens to get away from them, it's 'oops.' But if a private landholder, a landowner, is executing a prescribed fire on his property, and it gets away from him on the forest land, he's subject to huge penalties and huge fines. Somewhere you need to have a level playing field. Everybody plays by the same rules. There's a huge problem there."

Eastman, "And the time frame for all of this, would you say it's the same timeframe that you outlined before the late 70s, early 80s, or have problems been getting worse over the last few years, better, staying about the same?"

Wilkerson, "I'm, uh, I'm going to try and hold a positive mindset. And the fact that it's progressed in the, it's deteriorated over the last few years. The last 10 years. Up to now, at least, it appears that these federal agencies are at least listening to us. Whether they're listening to us just to let us know that they're listening, or willing to work with us is two different things. That's yet to be proven. There's an administration in office at the federal government level right now that has placed people in important positions that we out here feel are going to be a positive change. And that's what we're hoping for."

Eastman, "That leads nicely into my next question, which is my favorite question."

Harberd, "I'd like to make one comment on Gordan's time frame. I agree along the same time, but I, I've been of the feeling that a lot of the worst practices that were implemented all stemmed from the time of the spotted owl. When they brought the spotted owl in and brought that in. It seemed like it was a toehold right there for them to, to start backing everything off from what it was. And now we're suffering the consequences when we have these wildfires or these 'oopses'. There's all the dead trees and stuff in there that should have been cleaned out, logged out years ago. And it's just more loss of potential revenue for the industry."

Wilkerson, "I'm glad Chairman Harberd uh, clarified that. I did state that it's been years ago, and he is correct. It was back when, what we saw here was when the spotted owl was introduced as a problem. Um, it was just a toehold. He is 100% correct."

Harberd, "If you look at it realistically, that amount of time has been 50-plus years. From that time trees, the trees would have been planted back then like they used to go in and reforest everything. It would be up close, probably close to salvageable, salvage or harvested timber by now. Not all of it, but a lot of it, so there would be some more

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additional income. My father was a logger for a lot of years. He worked for Boise Cascade Corporation, and he ran all the logging operations from Council, clear over to uh, Idaho City and that way and when the fires broke out over in your country 5, 6 years ago, and burned all that up. My dad had logged that a long time ago, and he told me, he said, Jim, if I would have known they were just going to let it burn up, I would have logged it harder back then, but I didn't. They left, they always left stuff. Due to the climate of the government, it's just a little more waste."

Marvin, "Could I make a comment? But another to add to what Jim's saying is, the environmental groups can sue and have all their legal fees paid by the taxpayers. And that's a real bone of contention with me. We need to get that legislation changed."

Wilkerson, "I'm glad you brought that up, Nate, and my train derailed. That act is what?"

Marvin, "I can't remember Gordon, um, been, too many, too many months since I looked at that."

Unknown, "Equal access to Justice Law."

Wilkerson, "That's it. Equal Access to Justice needs to be remodeled."

Marvin, "Yes."

Wilkerson, "What happens is, the way it's structured, the way I understand it, it gives access to taxpayer funds. It gives the environmental groups access to taxpayer funds to fight timber member management practices. Serious problem."

Eastman, "Do you know about when that was passed?"

Wilkerson, "1970, late 60s or 70s? 71 or 2-ish."

Unknown, "Right near the end of the Vietnam War."

Wilkerson, "How that got structured, it, what I was told, how it was structured, it was brought in after the Vietnam War because of the issues that the soldiers were coming out of from that war, and what the Federal Government had done during that war. It gave people the opportunity to funds to fight the Federal Government to recover from personal injury. The way it's structured, the intent was fine. The way it's structured, there was loopholes given that too many people can get a hold of that money. That needs to be fixed."

Harberd, "Go ahead."

Eastman, "Well, I was just making sure. Okay. That is still a good lead-in to my favorite question, which is the next question. If you were Emperor of the United States. So, we're pretending that we're not dealing with bureaucracies, we're not dealing with things that.

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we feel can never change. We're pretending we can do anything we want. What would you like to see happen?"

Harberd, "As far as the lands go?"

Eastman, "Yes?"

Harberd, "I would like to utilize our own minerals, forest products, energy., or some of them."

Eastman, "What legislation would you like to see changed?"

Harberd, "Well, I don't know the precise... reading of it, or enforcement. I just, I'd like to see things opened back up to allow this stuff. Um, not a land grab or whatever to speak of, but the availability to access these, all our minerals that we have and our natural resources. So we're not so dependent on other, other countries in a lot of this stuff, that we can get it from our own home."

Wilkerson, "I, again, I'm trying to be a... to hold a positive attitude. There happens to be a gentleman in the room sitting right behind you that knows about as much about all of this as you can stuff in a box. This guy is on it. Uh, I've been a very... I've been in several committee meetings with him. What, and back to the positive side of this, we have administration in place now that appears to be doing what needs to be done. And what, what we feel out here needs to be done is a lot of the regulations need to be loosened up so that work can get done in a timely fashion. If you have a catastrophe, like a example, we had a fire a couple years ago called the Lava Fire. 92,000 acres, torched. Prime hunting ground. Prime agricultural ground, timber ground. It's black. It looks like the moon. We couldn't get 200 acres of it harvested in a timely fashion to take advantage of the destruction. It is wasted fiber. Wasted revenue. Because of all of the restrictions put on it, they're afraid of this and that and the other, the fact of the matter is, without, without active harvesting you're gonna have greater catastrophe in the next 10 to 15 years than you would have had if you'd have managed that and taken that revenue out in a timely fashion when it happened. Am I correct, Frank? It's, it's the restrictions that's been put on it to save everything. There has got to be Common sense put back into the management of our Federal managed lands."

Eastman, "Sorry, I write slow."

Wilkerson, "Take all the time you need. In our area here, we have had great discussion about prescribed fire as a management tool. Anytime you play with fire you're subject to failure. I feel that our Forest Service Management is not looking at the failure rate, at the, at the opportunity of failure. If we light this fire, and if it gets away from us, are we going to be able to take revenue from what we did wrong? In our region right here, and you, have you been to Adams County yet?"

Eastman, "No, but I'm going next month."

Wilkerson, "They're the ones that are impacted the heaviest. Washington County, not so much. We've got timbered land here, I consider us the red-headed stepchild. They kind of forget we're here and that's, that's, we suffer from that, because it's genuine needed revenue for our schools and our roads. But Adams County, I'm not going to speak for them long, but they've been devastated with some of the, the poor timber management practices. Here, we're inundated more with BLM than we are with the Forest Service. And we've got our own special issues with BLM, but I will take the problems we've had with BLM before I'll take the problems they're having with the Forest Service."

Harberd, "I'll follow on what Gordon said about the fires. We consider it mismanagement, but I don't know about the organizations that are involved in it, because after a good fire, then they spend hundreds of thousands of millions of dollars doing studies on the riparian zones that don't exist anymore, because they got burned up. And, uh, grasses, you know, forage stuff, they just keep going on and on. So, they're, they're literally still fanning the fire by taking money, just spending all this money on this stuff. If the fire had been prevented or hadn't even been lit. We wouldn't have that. There would be, because then the grazing allotments that are lost due to this fire, you know, the different fires, it's, sometimes they say 2 years, but I'm pretty sure it's a lot longer than that before they ever get back in there, and that involves a lot more studies. So they are. The fire is devastating for us, but it kind of fuels the action for a lot of them, the different government entities."

Wilkerson, "That's where those big fires have, have directly involved, or brought Washington County, and we have permit holders that are, that, base out of Washington County that go into Adams County that are impacted by these fires. Having to remove animal, remove AUMs, uh, move them, shift them. Uh, some of them sold because of it. Um, the impact has been devastating to some of these people."

Eastman, "What would need to change to avoid these issues in the future or rectify the situation?"

Marvin, "Allow more grazing on public lands would help. It would definitely help with the fires, that's been proven time and time again. Wherever there's been grazing there, the fires seem to lay down, do very little damage and the trees are not damaged forever, or burnt up. So, I think that would be one of the first things."

Wilkerson, "It's been said, it's amazing how a 3-wire barbed wire fence can stop a fire."

Eastman, "I have a feeling it's not the fence. So, we've, we've talked a lot about challenges. What is working? Whether it's here just at the county level, or relationships that you do have with the Federal Agencies or the State Agencies."

Wilkerson, "I guess I'm going to chime in and say, I don't know that I've seen it work. Yet. I see, again, I see changes in language, changes in conversation, I see people put in place, I see a potential for it to work. But we are in a very fledgling state right now, very beginning state, to see if it actually comes to fruition. I'm hopeful. Hopeful."

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Harberd, "I think one of the things that we've been exposed to here in the last year or so, um, through the, with the Forest Service is some of the people, the allotment holders now, there's a few of them that have started running their cattle with the invisible electric fence. That's, I believe it's very expensive to do. But it's, from what little I've heard of it, it's worked pretty good, being able to move them around, keep them, you know, put them back up where you want them. The cow isn't happy, she's not going to stay there no matter what you got. But, um, if you get the group of them, and then they get managed properly, which there, that, throws everything back on the permittee, the landowner, or whatever. It's kind of another government circle if they all throw back on the permittees, taxpayers, or whatever. Um, that's probably one of the brighter spots."

Wilkerson, "Jim's correct. It, that, I've watched that work. And there's advantages to it. The issue with that is, that's an after-the-fact. That's not preventing anything. It's not, it's not improving anything. It's management practices to improve what's been destroyed. I see huge benefits to it. I've been a part of looking into that. I've been on range tours where they've used it. Um, it's a valuable tool after the destruction's happened. Uh, it's a very expensive tool for preventative maintenance in some respects. I could see benefits for it, preventative-wise, if you've got an area that's heavy in what you consider ladder fuel or ground uh, heavy grass that needs to be harvested by the cow. You can put those cattle in those locations to, to manage that area more, more correctly."

Eastman, "Then what's preventing that from happening now?"

Wilkerson, "What's been happening now?"

Eastman, "What's preventing that from happening now?"

Wilkerson, "Money. Like Jim said, that, that particular tool is pretty expensive. Towers are, the tower itself to put out the perimeter is \$10,000 to \$15,000. And then each collar that the cow wears is \$5 a piece, or \$15 a piece? \$20? \$50? I can't remember what that was."

Harberd, "I thought I read somewhere it was higher than that per cow. Like, \$100 and some."

Wilkerson, "So, it's about the money."

Eastman, "Are there policy solutions that you're working on right now at the county level?"

Harberd, "We're right here. Having this discussion."

Eastman, "Sorry, it does feel like an interrogation when I'm just asking question after question."

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Harberd, "One thing I wanted to add on the previous deal too, is that once these fires go through, it's amazing the different types of weeds that can show up. That have never really been noticed, probably since a lot of the, and they're allowed to come in there because all the vegetation's been burned off, so that's another problem, too. But if they don't want you in there on the burns, some of the weeds could be consumed. Um, they're just gonna prosper. And a weed can do far better than anything else."

Eastman, "And is it primarily a breakdown of these Federal Agencies just not allowing you on the land, or not having the personnel? What have you seen?"

Harberd, "I'm out of the circuit on that nowadays, but I think from in the past, it was just a jumping through the hoops by the time you're over here, and you have to go over to this other one. I'm back and forth, and then you gotta stop because somebody else hasn't, wants some input on what's going to happen, and that throws another wrench in the deal. And it's gone round and round, and I think we even saw some of this up where the latest fires were by the time they decided that some of this stuff could be salvaged, it was too late on it."

Wilkerson, "Well, one of the things that, we were in a, at an Idaho Association of Counties conference last week, two weeks ago? And met with the Lands Board. We met with the Idaho Department of Lands. And one of the positive things that's going on now is getting with the, and this is with the State. We're having better, better management practices with the State of Idaho. Getting with the State and drafting uh, a MOA, or a memorandum of agreement, working with the State. And the state then joins with the Federal Government and Good Neighbor Authority which has proven to be a way better tool, a very well, I'm going to say a positive tool. If it wasn't for the Good Neighbor Authority, the big fire that I discussed earlier, the Lava Fire, there would have been very little salvage on that, had it not been for the State of Idaho and the Good Neighbor Authority. So... We're working around the Federal Government to get the job done. And Jim touched on it a little bit, and I'll try and elaborate a little more. Start using our own products first. Quit importin' over the top of us. They're talking about increasing timber sales in this State, 25 million board feet in the next short period of time, up to 50 million feet in the next 10 years. My concern with that is, the loggers, it's a production thing. The loggers have got to make money to stay in the business. If they put that much more volume on top of the market and still import over the top of us, you're going to suppress the market to where no one's going to make any money. I have a real issue when you import timber products from a country like Russia that's in a war that we're funding the other side of. That's counterproductive. I do not understand that a bit."

Harberd, "I wanted to go back to the topic when you mentioned, someone mentioned common sense, and there is a saying nowadays that common sense is not very common a lot of the time. I think there's a great deficiency of it."

Marvin, "Can I interject?"

Eastman, "Please do."

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Marvin, “Well, one of the things that was mentioned, you said local policies. The problem is bigger than that. It's at the State level, the Federal level, as Gordon and Jim have both said. And our problem is, we've had 4 or 5 district rangers in the last 7 or 8 years. So just when we think we got, get some continuity going, where we have somebody we can work with, we can talk to then they transfer or retire and move on. Um, you know, we can enact all the local policies we want, but until we get people at the State level and Federal level. And, and then we all know that there's a shortage of people in these jobs. They don't have enough people to fill all these jobs, because right now, the District Ranger's covering Weiser and Council. They don't have a full staff to do timber sales and stuff. So, they're... they're, like Gordon said, the Good Neighbor Policy, they're, they're having Idaho Department of Lands help them with that. Um, you know, part of me thinks we'd be better off if the State would take over the public forest but I know the State doesn't have the money to do it, and First big fire or two, the state'd be broke. So, that's not the simple answer, but, but I just think that. And then the other thing that causes problems is, you know, every four years, we get a different president, or potential different president. And the pendulum can swing way left, or way right, and right now, it's swinging to the right, and we're getting things done in a positive manner, but we don't know what's gonna happen the next election. We might be fighting these same battles again in 10 years. I don't know. Just, just some thoughts.”

Wilkerson, “I'm gonna try and keep this in the scope and describe the difference between State-managed lands and Federal managed lands. And what a lot of people probably don't realize is State lands are not public lands. They're not ours. That is State-owned, State-managed, State controls it, they can buy it, they can sell it, they can do whatever they want to with it, and they don't have to comply with the public. Where the Forest Service has their hands tied behind their back, they have got to cover everybody's interest from the person that wants to watch a tweety bird to the person that wants to see that big fat pine go to the sawmill and everybody in between. The Federal Government, unfortunately, has a disadvantage. And I'm not going to be very popular when I say this, but at some point in time, society's gonna have to realize what's important. The tweety bird, or that timber going to market? You have somehow got to be able to fund the public lands to keep them healthy, or nobody is going to have them. The big fire that I mentioned, that started in Gem County and ended up in Adams County of 92,000 acres, went through my playground. A place that I call home. And because of poor practice, it's not there. That hurts. That makes me mad. So, you gotta make a choice. You're gonna have to give up something to have it. And again, the regulations to manage our Federally public managed lands, there's gonna be some choices made to have them that's gonna upset some people. But you've got to be able to afford to fund them to manage them. And some of these more heavily timbered counties than even Washington County, you get into Valley County, and Idaho County, and Adams County. Those timber receipts, it's life and death to them. Whether the schools and the roads are put together. It's very, very important that they get those receipts put in.”

Harberd, “It's almost as if, um, and I think this is a way a lot of it works a lot of times here in the State of Idaho and Washington County, but in the big picture, the state of

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Idaho is, we're becoming more and more the nation's playground. You know, for recreation. A guy told me 30 years ago, I asked him, you know, what could a guy do to make some money? And he said Jim, 'if it involves recreation, it will work.' And it's been so true. I know there's failures out there, but with this recreation, I think, once again, the burden is put back upon us. Maybe not directly, but even indirectly because of the people coming to watch the tweety birds. They don't want to see the cutting of that tree down where the tweety bird was a year or two ago when I was here. So, then they need to have some legislation or some laws put into effect to do that, and that just hamstring us again as a County or a State. There's a lot of it, and they'll only going to be more, because there are more and more people coming here all the time.”

Eastman, “Is that something that's impacted Washington County, the increase in recreational visitors or tourism?”

Harberd, “I think there's an impact both ways. Positive, um, there was a very positive. But a lot of the laws that get passed down, it's my understanding, weren't really maybe intended for us right here. But it's a byproduct of it, because of the legislation and the process. They don't want to, they don't want to walk on a trail if a cow's walked down it, and something fell out of the back end of her, you know, they...”

Eastman, “Well, that's part of the charm.”

Harberd, “Yeah, it is, but that's a violation to them, probably.”

Eastman, “Like I said at the beginning, my goal here is to listen, to hear what's happening at the county level, because I want to understand, my organization wants to understand. Um, so going back to my favorite question again. What are some things that you'd like to see change? Just snap your fingers and we change it.”

Harberd, “Mine would be logging or the minerals.”

Eastman, “Mm-hmm, logging and minerals.”

Harberd, “Any of our resources. They're not a free-for-all, but... That would be one of the biggest things for me. I mean, we're always going to have recreation. But it's going to learn to, it's going to have to fit in. One thing I see is McCall up there, we spend a lot of time up there, and uh, the recreation on that main Payette Lake is just phenomenal. But it's taken a toll on the beaches. It's washing the, it's washing the beaches, the sand on the beaches, there's so much turmoil out in the lake with all the boats and everything, that's, that's just one of them. Fisherman can't hardly even stay in their boat on a weekend.”

Wilkerson, “I believe that in order to make things change, and I see it, or I hear it is going to happen. There's people out here to do the job. There's people out here willing to do the job if they could get it done. Again, I don't think you can stress hard enough, the regulations have got to be re, have got to be looked at again. They have got to be put in place so that management practices create revenue to support it and, as bad as it's gonna

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sound, there's gonna be some give and take. There's gonna be some things we're gonna have to give up and understand that it's gonna have to support itself.”

Marvin, “Yeah, and Gordon, I agree with you there, because we get a lot of our money in PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) funds and if we don't have something to replace that funding, this county's gonna be in dire straits. And there again, if we could get some timber sales going on, some mineral mining, etc. Generate some revenue from some other sources because we can't depend on the taxpayers to pick up that shortfall from that PILT money. So we do need some changes in the process, it shouldn't take 5 years to do a timber sale.”

Wilkerson, “The other funding source that they secured, and I don't think it's going to be long-term, I think it's short-term is our SRS (secure Rural Schools) funds. I don't know that we get a great deal of SRS funds here. But I know that they're important here. They're more important than other counties. But again that's it that's actually Monopoly money, because it comes from where? Nothing generated that money. I'm not gonna say nothing generated the money. There was revenue to be had if our Federal Lands were managed more productively. Those SRS funds and the PILT funds wouldn't need to necessarily be there, especially not an extent that they are.”

Harberd, “Do you recall how much it said that, uh, we were, the county will get out of the SRS funds, Donna? Do you have any idea when they, they just approved of, what, a month or so ago?”

Eastman, “In December.”

Harberd, “I'm just curious to see what it was.”

Wilkerson, “On the legislation that was passed, it's gonna be for how long? A year or five years? I never got clarity on that.”

Eastman, “I think it goes to the end of 2027, but don't quote me on that. Um, I do know that it also had a provision to back pay because the SRS has been on hold since fiscal year 2023.”

Harberd, “Like Nate said, I believe our PILT funds is a pretty good, pretty good shot in the arm for the county. But there's a...”

White, “As long as it's fully funded.”

Harberd, “Pardon me?”

White, “As long as it is always fully funded, which you never know.”

Harberd, “Nope. Pretty good idea now, the way things are getting trimmed.”

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Wilkerson, "I didn't background this, but I saw where there are some counties that are well in favor of the PILT and SRS because they get more funding through that process than they do if they were actively managed, their, their areas. Oh, wow. Okay. We're coming up short, and they're getting more!"

Eastman, "Yep, PILT and SRS comes up in every discussion at some point. Some people are really happy with it, some aren't."

Harberd, "Anything else?"

Eastman, "No, I think you've covered most of my questions. Do you have any questions for me?"

Wilkerson, "Yeah, when are you gonna fix it?"

Eastman, "I get that question, too. So, like I said, we're doing something kind of basic, but also kind of unusual. We're trying to actually meet face-to-face and have these discussions. Talk about what's really happening, where the real frustrations are, where the potential opportunities are. The goal is we gather all this information from all 44 counties and then look at what the patterns are. I don't want to prescribe a solution. I want to work with the counties on a solution. So, the next phase is probably we will come back to the counties, probably at, like, an IAC conference, just so, because it's a little more efficient, and we'll talk about what we saw in terms of patterns, what everyone's saying. And we'll discuss what might be the best path moving forward. Some ideas for legislation at the State level, some ideas for how we could lobby at the Federal level. But the whole goal of this is, I wanted to get out and meet with everybody and start talking, because if I don't understand what's at the, what's happening at the county level, it doesn't make me effective when I lobby at the State level, and it doesn't make me effective when I lobby at the Federal level."

Wilkerson, "Okay, two questions for you. Are our answers and our questions any different than what you've heard in the other counties that you visited?"

Eastman, "Not terribly different."

Wilkerson, "All the same. Repeat. Rinse, ring out, put back on."

Eastman. "Some, I will say, some counties are very happy with either the BLM or the Forest Service, and very happy, very unhappy with either the BLM or the Forest Service. Most counties recognize that management has gone downhill in the last few years. That's why I asked the question of, kind of, what's the time frame that you feel that it has been subpar. And most everybody sees the need for improvement. For greater and better management of our resources here in the State. So, yeah, it's not a hard pattern to spot, but it's, it takes work and it takes talking to folks. And, and that's why I asked the Emperor a question, because sometimes you'll get a solution out of a crazy idea that no

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one thinks is possible. But if we all kind of start working on it, who's to say it's possible or not.”

Harberd, “Better management for our resources, but better access to our resources. The availability.”

Wilkerson, “Question for you. We're here at the county level. About as close to the people as you can get. You're closer to the Federal Government than we are, in some respects. What do you see happening to make these changes that you're hearing about?”

Eastman, “That's a really good question, and I'm seeing the same thing you're seeing. I'm seeing folks being put into specific positions that have a lot of leverage in terms of what can be changed within these organizations. We have a lot of Idaho people that are getting into positions where they actually might be able to have some power and some influence. The biggest thing I'm seeing is I'm seeing a willingness to start talking about some changes that need to be made. And really reevaluating, just because we've done it for 50 years, is that the best way to do it? That's what I'm seeing, and that's why this feels like such a timely conversation, because based on what happened last year, based on what's happening, has been happening for the past several years, it seems like folks are actually starting to come around to the idea that maybe we need to have a bigger conversation. And it might not just be Idaho; it might be other states in the West. But that's what I'm seeing. I'm seeing that the time has come to get together and talk.”

Wilkerson, “So you feel a positive move?”

Eastman, “I do.”

Wilkerson, “The movement is going in a positive direction?”

Eastman, “I do. I'm hearing, I'm hearing better quality conversations than I was two years ago.”

Wilkerson, “That's good.”

Harberd, “Very good. Appreciate it.”

Eastman, “Well, I appreciate your time. I don't know if I used my full...”

Harberd, “You've got a little time left.”

Eastman, “I don't have anything else to say. Like I said, I'm here to listen. And then, of course, I don't know what the next phase looks like, it'll probably be, probably at an IAC conference, just because that's an easier way to get in front of everybody, but if there's an opportunity for me to come back and report back, I'll be happy to take it and, you know who I am now, and feel free to reach out if you have questions.”

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Harberd, "Would you say that your, uh, I don't know how many counties you've been through yet, but the support you're hearing and feeling for as far as the, uh, you know, improving methods of, um... agriculture-oriented products, comes from the smaller counties versus the support you feed the people say, they think everything's great is coming from the larger cities and stuff within our State?"

Eastman, "That's a good question. I don't know that I've seen it necessarily fall exactly on those lines. I think it really is different from county to county, but the big pattern that I'm seeing is I'm seeing a willingness to talk about what's happening, and to voice concerns and throw out possible solutions. Almost every single county will always mention what's happening in another county. You know, that's... that's really good, or what's happening in another county that's really bad. So, there's room to learn, there's room to cooperate and work together. And really, what I see at the State level is Idaho can be a leader in demonstrating better management practices. And I don't know what that's going to look like yet. But I do know that there's an appetite for that."

Wilkerson, "Um, probably backing up a long ways, and I missed it. Your organization, is it Government, or is it a private organization?"

Eastman, "We are a private non, well, we're a non-profit organization, a 501c3, so we're not strictly lobbying. Yep, we're completely independent, middle of the road. Nonpartisan. I say that my job is hard because I sit right in the middle, which means both sides are going to be a little bit mad at me at some point. But that's my goal, is to get everybody in the room talking to each other, and if they're ever not ready to get in the room yet, then I'll happily go and visit each side and report back."

Harberd, "Commissioner Marvin, do you have anything?"

Marvin, "No, I think my concern's been addressed and, thank you for coming in, and spending your time with us, and hopefully we can move forward."

Eastman, "Alright, well, thank you for having me."

Wilkerson, "Thank you very much."

Harberd, "Thank you."

Eastman, "It's my pleasure."

Harberd, "Please let us know what the results of your study are. Thank you."

#### IN THE MATTER OF PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS)

Jim Harberd discussed the process to appoint members to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Harberd stated it has become fully apparent that the Planning and Zoning

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Commission is a needed Board. Harberd stated approximately twenty interviews were conducted and there were a lot of very good interviews.

Wilkerson concurred.

Marvin agreed and stated there were some very good applicants. Marvin thanked those who applied for the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Jim Harberd stated he was prepared to appoint the following people to the Planning and Zoning Commission: Donna Lake, Seth Mathews, Bruce Nelson, Justin Roberts, Dan Carlson, Karen Wright, Karen Bailey, and Christina Stanley. Harberd stated one position remains open.

Gordon Wilkerson moved, seconded by Nate Marvin to approve those Harberd appointed.

Donna White, Clerk, called roll call: Gordon Wilkerson, Aye; Jim Harberd, Aye; and Nate Marvin, Aye, via Zoom.

Harberd stated training will be conducted by Idaho Association of Counties Director, Seth Grigg. Those invited to attend will be the Planning and Zoning Commission members, County Commissioners and the Planning and Zoning Administrator.

Marvin stated he would like to make sure that copies of Code books, the Comprehensive Plan, and any other pertinent documents be given to the members of the Commission.

The Board discussed the agenda for February 17, 2026.

Motion by Jim Harberd, seconded by Gordon Wilkerson, and unanimously carried to recess at 2:14 p.m. until February 17, 2026, at 8:45 a.m.

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Chairman, Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

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Clerk

A full audio recording of the Commissioner Meeting is available at the Clerk's Office upon request.