

JEROME COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Tuesday, July 21, 2020

PRESENT: Charles Howell, Chairman
Ben Crouch, Vice Chairman
John Crozier, Commissioner
Jane White, Deputy Clerk

Meeting convened at 9 A.M.

LARRY HALL—TAX EXEMPTION FOR TRUE WEST BEEF

Present was Treasurer Tevian Ekren-Kober. Also present were Joe Davidson, North Side Journal; and Jerome 20/20 representatives Larry Hall (executive director), Randy King, Arlen Crouch, and Jack Nelsen.

True West Beef, a company planning to locate in Jerome County, was seeking a tax exemption according to Idaho Code 63-602NN.

Commissioner Howell said numbers from the assessor's office indicated that the County would lose approximately \$2,344,588 from granting a 100 percent tax exemption on a \$195 million investment.

Commissioner Howell then questioned whether True West Beef would be interested in forgiveness of taxes for five years if it paid to tie into Jerome water and sewer lines, thus negating the need to use well water.

Larry Hall gave the Board some written information about a tax exemption for the company. He told the Board the business would fill a market gap and would be the largest and perhaps the best economic development attraction project in Jerome County.

Hall said True West Beef would need a commitment of support from the County. He added that True West Beef supports local events and had already committed to donating to the Jerome County Fair and Rodeo.

Commissioner Howell said the company would help the food supply chain and that he favored an exemption. Commissioner Crozier applauded the project as sensible and balanced growth for Jerome County.

Arlen Crouch stated that the County would experience much more loss of revenue for a longer period of time if True West Beef requested to be in an Urban Renewal District.

Commissioner Crouch suggested decreasing the percentage of tax exemption each year for five years.

❖ A Motion was made by Commissioner Crouch to extend a property tax exemption to True West Beef at 90 percent for the first year, 80 for the second, 70 for the third, 60 for the

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fourth, and 50 for the fifth, based on the application and County requirements. It was seconded, followed by discussion that the Board would be willing to reconsider its decision with new facts from the company. The Motion carried with unanimous ayes.

BUDGET WORKSHOP

Present were Clerk/Auditor/Recorder Michelle Emerson and Chief Deputy Clerk Tracee McKim.

Tracee McKim stated new construction in the County amounted to \$99,000. She said she had increased the U/A Kits line in Adult Probation to \$20,000 in the proposed FY 2020-21 budget to represent more closely the use of the line in 2020. She said she had also allowed \$65,000 for a digital case management system for the prosecutor’s office in Capital Outlay in the Justice Fund.

McKim said the proposed budget would include three percent wage increases for all County employees. She told the Board that new positions added would be a patrolman, two detention deputies, and an assistant for driver’s licenses.

The Board debated whether to raise the amount taken from taxes by three percent, as allowed by State statute. McKim illustrated on a white board how the budget is balanced by considering the balance forward and the amount expected from revenue and taxes.

➤ The Board determined not to take an additional three percent from taxes (amounting to \$225,459), with the possibility of increasing taxes by six percent in FY 2021-22.

➤ It was also determined that Commissioner Crouch would meet with McKim that afternoon to consider where more dollars could be cut from “B” budgets.

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 P.M.

Respectively submitted:

Jane White, Deputy Clerk

Charles M. Howell, Chairman

A. Ben Crouch, Vice Chairman

John Crozier, Commissioner