



Livestock Loss Board Members Present:

Seth Wilson – Chairperson
Jim Cross
Doreen Gillespie
Karli Johnson
Patricia Quisno

Staff: George Edwards – Executive Director
Brian Simonson – Centralized Services Administrator

Guests: Tim Reuter – Guest Speaker, Alberta Provincial Government
Linda Owens – Madison Valley Ranchlands
Kim Johnson – People & Carnivores
Tana Nulph – Big Hole Watershed Committee
Kyrán Kunkel
Nick Gevock – Wildlife Federation/Griz Council
Elaine Allestad – former LLB Chair
Dr Doug Young – Madison County Health Board Chair
Steve Primm
Cora Helm – LC Compost Solutions
Kraig Glazier – USDA Wildlife Services
Trina Jo Bradley – Griz Council
Heather Stokes – Griz Council
Shawn Johnson – Griz Council
Jon Bowler – Griz Council
Michele Dietrich – Griz Council
Bret Barney – Griz Council
Sara Drake – Centennial Valley Association
Rae Nickerson – Colorado State University
Jim Brown – Montana Woolgrowers Association
Alex Few – Western Landowners Alliance
Cole Mannix – Western Landowners Alliance
Senator Butch Gillespie

Chair Seth Wilson called the meeting to order.

Introductions:

- Each board member and board staff introduced themselves. Due to the essence of time, guests introduced themselves only if speaking on an agenda item.

Board Minutes

Board members reviewed the September 19, 2019 minutes.

Motion: Doreen Gillespie made a motion to approve the minutes. Karli Johnson seconded the motion. **Discussion:** None. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Board members reviewed the January 3, 2020 minutes.

Motion: Doreen Gillespie made a motion to approve the minutes. Karli Johnson seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Karli Johnson noted her name was misspelled and need to be corrected **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Carcass Compositing Discussion

Mr. Wilson explained that the board is holding an informational discussion about domestic livestock composting and wildlife composting. He invited Dr. Tim Reuter from the Alberta Provincial Government to speak as he has conducted research experiments and studies on this topic. Dr. Reuter is a molecular biologist by training and very generously given some of his time for this meeting.

Mr. Reuter said he is a German scientist who came to Alberta for a sabbatical in 2004. He has a master's degree in food microbiology. He did his PhD in molecular physiology. Shortly after a bird flu outbreak, he was asked if he could take care of several projects related to carcass mortality composting. Since 2005 they have ran several approaches to deal with the issues on wildlife carcasses. They did research based on a number of large-scale composting, up to 30 fully grown cattle. They also composted sheep. They also looked at the degradation of the stability of human and animal pathogens. This included prions from BSE. They looked at and tracked the speed of the degradation. They built compost piles to look how it effects the environment and looked at a gas coming out of a compost pile. They tried to look at every angle of composting.

At this point Mr. Wilson said we also have Cora Helm who's been involved in composting for many years through the Montana Department of Transportation. He asked if there are questions for Tim and Cora and would like to start off with

questions on CWD. What is the Canadian Research on that? Mr. Reuter said the prion structure is similar to BSE, it's just as a different target. If you want to know about the degradation, we investigated this in large-scale composting, but we also had a level three facility where we had small-scale composter. We looked at the degradation in many ways. One was that prion proteins have high affinity to stainless steel. We came up with this idea to use stainless steel bullets less than one millimeter and coated them with those prions and composted them up to 250 days. Then we got them out of the composting pile again and looked at them. They also drilled a hole in hamster's brains and implanted those little bullets. Then they looked at the mortality rates. So, in short after roughly 200 days our infectivity was gone. Our hamsters died of old age, but not of any disease. We can assume composting would degrade prion proteins by at least by 90 to 95% at a minimum. Cora Helm asked if Mr. Reuter would send his references for his research. Ms. Helm said since she left her job with the Department of Transportation, she has had some difficulty accessing information because of pay walls so anything on prion diseases would be helpful. Mr. Reuter said he would share some research papers with Mr. Wilson and Mr. Edwards to pass on.

Ms. Gillespie said this sounds like good news if we can get these animals off the landscape and get them into composting these prions won't be going down into the ground. She has heard when they lay there it comes up through the plants which isn't a good idea.

Mr. Reuter said the solution for pollution is dilution. If you think about it, even if we have a few carcasses and maybe one of them has the disease. Then you dilute this out and you also need an infectious dose. Once it is diluted and even if an animal comes in contact, it is unlikely are not enough pre-molecules left to be infectious.

Mr. Edwards asked about antibiotics and drugs used to euthanize animals related to composting. Mr. Reuter said they looked at such things from different angles which received antibiotics. We used their feces in manure and then we looked at naturally shed amounts of antibiotics on the degradation. Most of the antibiotics are not very stable except those in some bones. They are stable for a longer time in a composting pile. On the other hand, what I will also try to explain is that we have antibiotics in all of our environments because they are also produced by bacterial or microorganisms. There is great breakdown of those molecules, but it's not below the detectable level. Composting is at over 140 degrees Fahrenheit. This high temperature phase can last up to five, six, or seven weeks so all those pathogens usually don't have a turbo resistance. If you think about a fully cooked hamburger it's considered safe. Now if you imagine a compost pile, they are exposed to those temperatures over a time frame of five weeks. We didn't find any pathogen which can survive this. On the other hand, we still could identify a DNA fragment from those antibiotic resistant genes. This doesn't mean the entire gene is available and can be transmitted. You also need to consider that DNA is one of the most stable biological molecules we have so it is hard to break down. Some fractions of the DNA remain.

Nick Gevock with the Montana Wildlife Federation asked if they have any research about brucella and composting. Mr. Reuter responded no as there is only so much money available for research. He did use them as indicator bacteria. None of them survived after a week or two. What you need to keep an eye on if you do composting are spore forming bacteria. Because as soon as a spore's form, they are very resistant or persistent to everything. They composted anthrax spores. In the end we saw a large degradation of anthrax spores, but a few survived. After 200 days we still had a few viable spores. You need an infectious dose. If they are not in enough around to cause infection, then it doesn't matter so much anymore because of a reduced risk. Steve Primm did some investigations that show heat kills brucella. Needed heat is around 140 degrees.

Senator Butch Gillespie asked how helpful would it be or necessary if the deer population or whatever species is running let's just say five percent CWD on the ones that are getting tested and maybe 10 percent to have them all need to go to a compost pile? How much would that reduce the burden on the landscape of spreading it even further? Mr. Reuter said we do not test any animals less than 30 months of age so in the entire young population there's no need for it. We have to look for the older animals and let's say if we take them out of the equation then at a certain point, we are reducing the possibility it gets reintroduced into our population. If livestock and wildlife road kills or whatsoever, you have a dedicated compost for potentially infectious animal and after the composting period, they would need a dedicated spot to put a compost layer into landfills. It appears to me, that's safe to dispose compost and then we cannot start or help to break the infectious chain. Mr. Wilson added in the Blackfoot Valley we've been composting with Montana Department of Transportation for more than a decade now for both roadkill deer and elk and livestock. The current procedure for all the composted by-product for wild deer and elk is to keep all of that composted byproduct on a fenced site and it never leaves that site. As a precaution we are actually sending in deer heads this year to the state lab for testing. We see it as a good way of keeping it all contained and a way to potentially detect CWD.

Cora Helm said when she worked for the Department of Transportation (DOT), they separated wildlife carcasses from livestock carcasses. Since she retired, she was unsure if that is still happening. CWD occurred after she had retired. It's very encouraging research. When I left DOT, we were separating the carcasses for ungulates from the domestic animals. I believe they are still doing that. I haven't worked at DOT since chronic wasting disease really hit the deer population, so I don't know how that has limited the DOT facilities. We were composting them separately. Mr. Reuter said he doesn't know if he has the right answer. If you have enough volume to keep them separate and still keep the compost piles going, I would say yes keep them separate. If you don't then I think it may be better to put them together and have a combination which heats up and stays at high temperatures for a long time with high microbial activity because

there is better destruction. On the other hand, if you can separate them, you get a byproduct with a value because it could be used as a natural fertilizer.

Steve Primm asked a question for Mr. Wilson about the volume of wildlife compost produced the Clear Water Junction site. Concerns have been expressed in Madison County about what's going to happen with the compost and the feasibility of keeping wildlife compost on site long term. Mr. Wilson said their site is pretty large It's at least a couple of acres, so we have not had an issue with storage. They achieve almost a 50% reduction and it is well fenced. Mr. Primm asked Mr. Reuter about a paper he had written in 2014 regarding hamsters. Mr. Reuter's paper is regarding animals injected with prions. It was one of their experiments using biochemical reactions to detect those prions. They found that at least 99% of the prions we are gone. After fifty days we are not able to detect anything anymore. There are two more papers around this topic besides the one with the hamsters. Dr. Young, a private practice veterinarian and chairman of the Madison County Board of Public Health asked if there were any animal challenge study studies done on the initial CWD material or just at the conclusion ran as a control. and other published studies. Mr. Reuter said they had run out of money to continue with his work. With that in mind, it is a non-statistically significant study outcome. Dr. Young said based on one out of five hamsters still had prions, it is still twenty percent in carcass composting waste with potential twenty percent infection rate based on that study. Mr. Reuter responded; you have to think about the procedure. Prions were placed on stainless steel. It was sticking to the stainless steel and then they put the stainless-steel right into the brain. This does not happen in nature so in order to follow what you just said, prions would have to bypass the intestinal tract. What we showed is in the worst-case scenario that a brain gets exposed to prions. Dr. Young asked is there any way or do you have data on what detectable limits or equivalent with infectious dose regarding biomass? This is one of the problems. If we compare scientific literature everyone has slightly different protocols. Mr. Reuter said he can't pinpoint this and probably nobody can because lab methods differ across labs.

Cora Helm with LC Compost Solutions had a question about euthanasia drugs in addition to the antibiotics. Have you got any papers out on how those remain in composting or how they're broken down? Mr. Reuter said they did research this, but he is aware of two other groups in the US who investigated it. There is some other very good literature out there. Ms. Helm said she has another question about your composting piles. Do they generate a lot of leachate and are you collecting that leachate? Mr. Reuter said he will share his work so people can see it in more detail. He said if you have materials underneath which can absorb those leachates from the animals, it usually more or less stays there. We also use a barrier old straw bales around the site. You wouldn't have to line the site as the straw would have absorbed it. We didn't find any difference between the leachate and the compost material. Mr. Wilson thanked Mr. Reuter for his expertise and time informing the board.

Proposed Legislation

A few members of the governor's Grizzly Bear Advisory Council had joined the meeting. Because some of their efforts may lead to legislative proposals, Mr. Wilson asked about their discussions on a secondary grant program and what it means. We don't know if it's for humans or if there's a possibility they're looking at a secondary grant program for livestock. Mr. Gevock said he had written that piece and obviously this it is a very early draft of their report. We are very committed to prevention work. It would take legislation to create a separate fund that doesn't detract whatsoever from what this board does but to provide more funding for livestock loss prevention. Mr. Wilson asked if that would be within this board or some other entity? Mr. Gevock responded; those kinds of details would be something that any type of legislation would have to work out. We all see the dramatic need to increase these efforts as grizzly bears expand in both numbers and range. He went on to say it's basically about funding. Let's get you more funding but let's have designated funding just for prevention work. Mr. Edwards said a good avenue to do this is via the board's trust fund in law 81-1-111, MCA. It is a trust fund that can contain up to five million dollars. He then read the law:

81-1-111. Livestock loss reduction and mitigation trust fund. (1) The legislature shall provide for a fund, to be known as the livestock loss reduction and mitigation trust fund, to be funded with gifts, grants, reimbursements, appropriations, or allocations from any source.

(2) The principal of the livestock loss reduction and mitigation trust fund shall forever remain inviolate in an amount of \$5 million unless appropriated by a vote of three-fourths of the members of each house of the legislature.

(3) The interest and income generated from the livestock loss reduction and mitigation trust fund must be deposited in the livestock loss reduction and mitigation state special revenue account provided for in **81-1-110**. The interest and income may be appropriated by a majority vote of each house of the legislature and may be used only to fund the livestock loss reduction program and the livestock loss mitigation program as provided in **2-15-3111** and **2-15-3112**.

Mr. Edwards said this is a good avenue to take for loss prevention funding and it is already in place by law. If the trust was funded the board would have perpetual funding for prevention programs. The problem is that no one has ever been able to find a funding source for it. Mr. Wilson said prevention has been a cornerstone of our programs over all these years. We would like the support from the council and from others as many of you who are on our call today have been supportive all these years.

Mr. Wilson said there is a lot of discussion about a multiplier for those suspected but unconfirmed losses to both grizzly bears and wolves. He said let me preface this by saying no we're not going to solve the multiplier problem here today on this call. Obviously, the Livestock Loss Board is keenly interested in this. Mr. Edwards added there have been many discussions at multiple meetings with

different groups all stating a desire for the board to pay a multiplier. Mr. Wilson said we would like to have a seat at the table in these discussions. We want to have these discussions with all stakeholders out there at the state level. We may need some clarification of existing statutes for those who are thinking about how we can provide additional economic relief to livestock producers. He asked Mr. Edwards what a proposal could look like and asked if there are board members here that may want to propose legislation.

Mr. Edwards said as far as possible legislation, the board has always been able to pay a multiplier if money was available. The wolf advisory council developed the legislation that became our board and they inserted a clause in many sections of the law stating, "as to determine by the board". Specifically, 2-15-3112(3) states; "Other losses may be reimbursed at rates determined by the board" which is somewhat ambiguous. The board may want to propose something like livestock lost board may pay a multiplier as determined by the board. That would be specific language which would help clarify the questions about the board's ability to pay a multiplier. This would leave it less ambiguous than the current statute. In the future the board could develop administrative rules that would state what a multiplier ratio would be set at. Because of the variable landscapes in Montana, the Wyoming model would not apply. The ability to locate carcasses will vary between the mountains and the plains. Using Mr. Edwards suggestion would allow the board to make determinations on a multiplier with public input via administrative rules.

Mr. Wilson ask for thoughts from the board. Mr. Cross said regarding the present point of a multiplier, at one time and not too long ago the range for the multiplier was fairly wide. He didn't know if there is any more research that would pin that down or if that becomes an issue of regional geography. Mr. Edwards said that is why he suggested the board pay a multiplier as determined by the board. This would allow board members to take in geography and other factors. Mr. Cross asked do we have to be concerned about the multiplier utilizing funds that we normally use for other things like prevention. Mr. Edwards said current law restricts how the money is used. He added the compensation fund is restricted to paying direct death loss for confirmed and probable loss. If at the end of the state budget year we have money left over, it then rolls over to the board's loss prevention fund. Current law does not allow the money to be used for a multiplier. He said it would currently be up to other organizations to come up with funding for the multiplier. Ms. Gillespie added that is going to be the heavy lift out there. Trina Jo Bradley said she is on the Grizzly Council and has been having conversations with Rich Harris with FWP. Mr. Harris is working on a paper about different compensation programs around the country. Cole Mannix from Western Landowners Alliance said they have a meeting coming up to talk about Mr. Harris's information May 6th. Mr. Wilson said if we can get multiple folks within agencies, groups and other interests all on the same page and look at what makes sense for Montana, that will be helpful as we head into the legislative session. Elaine Allestad asked would a proposal be able to be amended, is it flexible? Mr. Edwards said that is something the board could do through

administrative rules depending upon the legislation. Administrative rules along with public comment can be amended down the line.

Motion: Jim Cross made a motion to seek legislation for multiplier language. Further the board may pay a multiplier of up to 7:1 for wolf caused loss and up to 3.5:1 for grizzly cause loss as determined by the board. No second to the motion was offered. Because of this further discussion about a multiplier occurred. Mr. Edwards said he and Mr. Wilson had discussed a multiplier prior to the board meeting. He said the talk of putting numbers into the legislative proposal at this point might be premature. Board members may decide that a multiplier on the prairie may look totally different than a multiplier in mountainous areas where it is more difficult to locate kill sites. The board could develop administrative rules based on further public input for each area. Mr. Cross said he is amenable to change.

Jim Cross said he could propose a motion that should additional funds be available, the board may pay a multiplier for confirmed livestock death from predation. As a point of clarification, Mr. Edwards said a multiplier is typically paid for livestock that are not confirmed. In the chat box for this meeting, Kraig Glazier asked if probable loss would be factored in. Ms. Johnson said the board would need to call the first motion dead as a matter of process. The proper process is to ask for a second and if none is offered, the chair would call the motion dead. Mr. Wilson again asked for a second to the motion. None was offered so the motion was declared dead. He then said including probable could be included as something to start with for a motion.

Motion: Karli Johnson made a motion, I move that should additional funds become available, the Livestock Loss Board may pay a multiplier based on confirmed and probable loss due to predation. Doreen Gillespie seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Ms. Gillespie offered a friendly amendment to restrict this to just wolf and grizzly predation. Mr. Cross supported this concept. Ms. Johnson said she could not accept this as a friendly amendment under Roberts Rules of Order. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Motion: Doreen Gillespie made a motion to amend the previous motion to say, I move that should additional funds become available, the Livestock Loss Board may pay a multiplier based on confirmed and probable loss due to grizzly bear and wolf predation. Jim Cross seconded the motion. **Discussion:** None **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Mr. Wilson asked the board and Mr. Edwards if there were any further legislative proposals being offered for discussion. Mr. Edwards suggested the board may want to seek legislation to modify current laws related to tribal agreements. This would be to simplify the process for paying claims to ranchers on tribal grounds. The current law says that the board must have a tribal agreement based on management plans. Many of the tribes, especially in the case of mountain lions do not have a tribal management plan. His suggestion is to seek an amendment

to that law that would allow the board to pay ranchers themselves without a tribal agreement, however any money going to a tribal government would still come under the current law. This would help the ranchers for example in Patty's area if a mountain lion kills a calf because we do not have a tribal agreement there. If the board proposes something like this, I would still be able to pay a rancher for a loss. If a tribe wanted to seek a loss prevention grant, they would still fall under the needs to have the tribal agreement in place.

Ms. Quisno asked if losses occur on other reservations. Mr. Edwards said the only reservations the board has had tribal agreements with have been the CSKT and the Blackfeet. He reached out to other tribal governments seeking agreements but none of them ever responded. He said the major problem with the current law is a section where the tribal government must have management plans equivalent to the state management plans. He clarified his suggestion in that the board would be paying ranchers themselves rather than a tribal government. He said it would be hard to refuse a payment to a rancher for a death loss just because it was on tribal owned land rather than fee land.

Motion: Doreen Gillespie made a motion to seek legislation to remove the requirement of a tribal agreement to pay a rancher a death loss claim while keeping in place the requirement of the current law for any payment made to a tribal government. Jim Cross seconded the motion. **Discussion:** None **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Trina Bradley asked Mr. Edwards if the current law only applies to tribal members or if it applies to anyone else. Mr. Edwards said it applies to anyone grazing on tribally owned lands with the reservation. A claim can only be paid if the loss occurs on fee land within the reservation boundaries. (note: this was a legal opinion by attorney Andrew Huff from the governor's office) Mr. Edwards said he will need to work with legal counsel to develop exact wording. Right now, it just needs to be conceptual legislation. The way is board legislation works is that this board's legislation is added to the Department of Livestock proposals and are independent of the Board of Livestock or the Milk Board proposals.

Mr. Wilson said he and Mr. Edwards had talked about loss prevention funding for this upcoming legislature. He asked Mr. Edwards to explain what has happened in the past and clarify a onetime appropriation vs. a statutory appropriation for loss prevention funding. He said asking for an appropriation typically is just for a biennium but if you ask for a statutory appropriation it is good for six years. A statutory appropriation would provide secure funding to get more projects off the ground because people would know a project would be able to continue. In the past Montana Woolgrowers had sought loss prevention funding bills in the legislature but neither of them became law. Mr. Edwards suggested the board may want to seek \$100,000 at this point as the Woolgrowers bills had asked for more than that. If the board were to ask for too much, the legislation request may not be approved by the governor's office. Mr. Wilson said he thinks what Mr.

Edwards proposed by going for a statutory appropriation would help maintain long term prevention funding.

Motion: Seth Wilson made a motion to secure a statutory appropriation of 100,000 per year for loss prevention. Doreen Gillespie seconded the motion.

Discussion: Jim Cross called for the question. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Mr. Wilson asked the board if there were any additional proposals. Mr. Edwards said this is not necessarily a legislative proposal, but he is bringing up the bill from the past session. SB166 would have allowed the board to hire their own personnel because of vacancy savings reducing the board's budget. This bill did not originate with this board and the governor's office did not support it because it had not gone through the proper process. The reason for bringing this up is that if the board wishes to support a bill, it needs to go through the process done on the prior proposals. The board had voted to support this bill so if the board still wishes to move forward with it this session, they would need to include it in new proposals.

Motion: Doreen Gillespie made a motion to seek legislation the same as SB 166 from the 2019 session. Jim Cross seconded the motion for the purpose of discussion. **Discussion:** Mr. Cross asked Mr. Edwards to read the portion of the law in question. 2-15-121(2)(d) reads "provide staff for the agency. Unless otherwise indicated in this chapter, the agency may not hire its own personnel". This is the section where the Department of Livestock provides staff for the board. The motion would be to seek legislation allowing the board to hire their own personnel. Mr. Edwards explained that during the 2019 session the board voted to support SB166 but because the law did not go through the process that board's normally take as a position, the board was not allowed to testify during the hearing. (Note: SB166 was not a board bill but support was voted on during a board meeting.) Ms. Johnson said she is not in favor of the board hiring their own staff. She said it takes a fair amount of time and it takes a high level of engagement. She prefers the board to be able to focus on board goals and objectives rather than day-to-day employee management. Ms. Gillespie said she thinks having one employee is not going to be an overload. She thinks we are a very intelligent group of people that can handle this, and this is absolutely the best way to go. Mr. Cross said he would like to share with the group that he likes the way this board has been run since its inception and would hope that we could straighten out the process and procedures with the Department of Livestock. We have had a lot of success and he would not be willing or to train somebody from off the street or take over the board. George has done well for us and would like to see if processes can be smoothed out into the future. Ms. Gillespie said it wouldn't feel like there is as much pressure or putting your thumb on someone and we would be able to run even better. It would give us some autonomy and she believes we handle ourselves quite well. When we make a decision, it should be our decision and should not be looked over by the Board of Livestock. We should have the right to have an idea of where we want to go with being told you

are not going to do this, or you are going to do that. She would like to see the board be more independent. Mr. Cross said we should address this with the administration rather than go around it. He didn't know if that's ever been possible or if the board has ever had the opportunity to stand up to the department and its broader concepts. There are some rules that guide our operations and that that we don't have any room for a second opinion on that. In other words, tell them that is our business not their business. We are doing well within the guidelines that are presented to us and we just don't need their input as the conceivable solution. Ms. Johnson said it should be easily overcome and thinks part of this is that as a board could see growth opportunities. A strategic plan in place along with our goals and objectives spelled out would allow the board to challenge situations from an administrative standpoint. Taking something like this forward could just throw fuel on the fire rather than address what we need to address. Ms. Gillespie said this sounds like you are suggesting that we are the children and if we do something wrong, we're sent to our room. That is the way she feels, and she thinks we should be able to if we decide. As it stands right now, if we as a board vote they can overrule us, and she does not think that is the way we need to be as a board. Otherwise, why are we even a board. We need to be able to make decisions and our decisions stand. Right now, that doesn't happen, so this is why she proposed this. It moves us into more of a position where we can control what we vote on and how we do things. Mr. Edwards was asked how things work. He responded that he is a Department of Livestock employee. He answers to both the Board of Livestock as well as the Livestock Loss Board. In prior years with a different Centralized Services Administrator there were problems as he would not acknowledge the Livestock Loss Board's autonomy. It did cause problems during that period. The administrator felt the Board of Livestock did control the Livestock Loss Board. Mr. Edwards said it is like having to answer to two masters because he must answer to both boards which don't always agree. Mr. Wilson said maybe the board should go with Mr. Cross's suggestion and if we are not satisfied with that, we could then approach what Ms. Gillespie is suggesting. The board could have an additional internal discussion and if needed, approach it in a future legislative session. He wouldn't mind having some more discussion among our board in terms of the pros and cons and how best to maintain our autonomy. Ms. Johnson said let's table this for now and bring it up during a future meeting. She suggested coming up with an administrative document between the board and the Department of Livestock to spell out what our expectations are for them. We can agree or not agree with them to discuss it that way. Mr. Wilson said that appears to be a solution at this point with the motion being tabled. **Motion Tabled.**

Budget Proposals

Board members were sent a table from the 2019 legislative session for requests made at that time. Mr. Edwards said the number one priority was \$8,600 for board meetings so the board could resume the number of meetings held in the past. Vacancy savings over the years has reduced the board's budget preventing

this from occurring. The increased budget would allow the board to hold meetings around the state again which helped with public engagement. The board used to hold a listening session prior to each of these meetings so members of the public could get to know board members on an individual basis. Board members in turn gained knowledge of problems in each area.

Motion: Seth Wilson made a motion to request an additional \$8,600 for board meetings and travel to new meeting sites for more public engagement. Jim Cross seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Ms. Johnson said she would like it on record that during the September board meeting, we had public comment asking for more meetings. The additional funds are in part due to public comment. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Mr. Wilson asked about the \$2,000 request for travel. Mr. Edwards said this is to cover travel expenses for the board and himself. The board has in the past requested Mr. Edwards attend and represent the board at as many meetings as possible. Financial constraints have prevented him from doing so.

Motion: Doreen Gillespie made a motion to request an additional \$2,000 for travel expenses. Jim Cross seconded the motion. **Discussion:** None. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Mr. Wilson asked about the third item in the table. Mr. Edwards the third item requested from the last session was for \$12,000 in general operations. That is for those unforeseen expenses that come up in board operations as well as possibly buying supplies that can be applied more towards loss prevention and ancillary things that come up within our general operations. It is a catch-all category in case our rent goes up and other state caused expenses. Because of the new museum going in it is causing us to move, the rent at the new site may or may not be higher than it currently is the current base budget. Brian Simonson said their original path was to do some renovations within their building to consolidate both attached boards over there. Covid 19 has delayed this indefinitely for now. The viable interim would be a return to the pink house as we have called it in the past. He thinks that the square footage costs for a more modern facility would still be comparable. Mr. Edwards told the board this would mean also sacrificing your boardroom. Expenses are based on square footage. The board may not need \$12,000 depending upon future needs. Board members may want to choose a new figure. He will write up a general statement for each item depending upon whatever the board decides. Proposals are submitted to the governor's budget office for approval. This goes back to the earlier conversation we had about the former centralized services director who always prioritized our things with at the bottom of the Department of Livestock budget. Mr. Simonson said they are no longer in the priority ranking of the Department of Livestock, they stand separately.

Motion: Jim Cross made a motion to request an additional \$12,000 for board operation expenses. Seth Wilson seconded the motion. **Discussion:** Jim Cross

called for the question. Seth Wilson said let's pause for second to make sure Ms. Gillespie is still on the call. **Vote:** All in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Mr. Wilson asked for public comment for items not on the agenda today. No further public comment was offered.

Motion: Seth Wilson made a motion to adjourn. Jim Cross seconded the motion.
Adjourned

DATED this 11 day of August, 2020

Approved via Zoom Meeting

Seth Wilson, Chairman
Montana Livestock Loss Board