

Valley County Board of County Commissioners  
219 N Main Street  
PO Box 1350  
Cascade, Idaho 83611

March 2, 2024

Subject: Valley County Road Advisory Board

Valley County Board of Commissioners,

The Valley County Road Advisory Board (VCRAB), served by citizen volunteers, was formed by members the Valley County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). The VCRAB mission was to examine existing systems, work practices of the Valley County Road Department (VCRD) and provide written recommendations for improvement to the BOCC. All reports and recommendations for improvements can be found in the minutes of the BOCC

Our volunteer citizen group was formed in good faith to objectively function as a neutral 3-party representing members in our community. We actively engaged with the Valley County Road Department management to better understand scope of work, global funding resources, capital asset maintenance and acquisition processes, existing and future project needs, community engagement, and underlying issues resulting in citizen complaints of unacceptable performance.

For nearly three years our group of volunteers spent countless hours working under the mandate of providing recommendations for improvements in the VCRD directly to the BOCC. BOCC adopted all formal recommendations from the VCRAB. Recommendations included VCRD management tools to streamline work efficiencies and formalize equipment maintenance record keeping and inventory. A communication plan was established to inform citizens of projects undertaken by VCRD to improve transparency and public engagement. Members of the VCRAB assisted VCRD and BOCC in engagement with our US Congressional members to resolve delayed recovery of County funds from FEMA. We created a written road maintenance priority list, formally adopted by BOCC, to better focus management on measurable essential and urgent tasks. The priority list was presented to BOCC as a tool for Commissioners to measure VCRD performance and hold management accountable for measurable failures. We also provided recommendations to reduce inefficiencies, once discovered, in a good faith effort to assist in creating a higher functioning civil service department. Despite adoption by BOCC, most recommendations provided the VCRAB were only partially implemented. Many of the issues that prompted formation of the Valley County Road Advisory Board remain unresolved. Accountability for improvement related to adopted recommendations falls to members of the BOCC as they, collectively, are responsible for oversight and success of the VCRD.

Members of the VCRAB specifically engaged in discussions related to physical facility requirements and related planning for the future location of the VCRD. Made aware that BOCC members were considering changes, the VCRAB requested that Commissioners engage with VCRAB members as part of that planning. Publicly available minutes of the VCRAB meetings reflect those discussions. Actions taken by BOCC to commit significant taxpayer funds for construction of a new facility without engaging VCRAB, particularly given the additional demands on the VCRD general budget which Commissioners identify as strained, is indicative of the ongoing failure of the BOCC members to adequately engage the VCRAB and the community they represent in large funding decisions. It is also noted that the BOCC elected to not engage the VCRAB in review of the recently adopted transportation plan.

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Letter to Valley County Board of Commissioners

Members of the Valley County Road Advisory Board have come to a unanimous conclusion that we have successfully identified the weaknesses and inefficiencies in the VCRD. Our conclusions confirm these department failures were not related to lack of funds. Rather, we identified underperforming administration and leadership within VCRD as to the reason the department is experiencing persistent performance and customer service failures. We provided specific recommendations for improvement that were adopted by the BOCC. The Valley County Road Citizen Advisory Board was not formed as an oversight committee, nor does it have authority to resolve internal conflicts or poor performance issues. We collectively assert that the BOCC members have failed to adequately perform their oversight function via full implementation of the recommendations they adopted and continue to enable VCRD performance failures through inaction.

We feel we have served our community successfully at the behest of the BOCC. However, our findings and recommendations have been left to languish with limited implementation that could help guide and improve the VCRD now and into the foreseeable future. BOCC has demonstrated limited interest in ongoing engagement with constituents and stakeholders represented by the VCRAB members as evidenced by their failure to engage in input related to recent facility planning and funding and traffic plan adoption.

We, the Valley County Road Advisory Board members, feel that ongoing failure of VCRD management and BOCC members to make effective use of our work product and volunteer hours no longer warrants use of our personal time and continuation as an Advisory Board. By the signing of this letter below by our president, Paul Hefner, we collectively resign from our positions on this Board effective on the date above and request that this letter be made part of the public record at the next available Board of County Commissioners meeting.

Respectfully,

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Paul Hefner – President

CC:

Steven Hull

Lorraine Munn

Jerry Robinson

Gary Swain

Kirby Robertson