

**September 1, 2020**

**The Board of County Commissioners met at 9:00 a.m. in regular session in the Commission Office of the Granite County Courthouse with Chairperson Bill Slaughter and Commissioners Scott Adler and Charles Hinkle attending. Also attending was County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw and Executive Assistant Mike Kahoe. The session convened with the pledge of allegiance. The Board is practicing the recommended social distancing (keeping people at least 6-feet apart) in order to slow or stop the spread of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Masks were worn by many people in attendance. The session was livestreamed through the Zoom computer program available to the public to view the session and comment, and the public was also allowed to attend in person and provide comment.**

**The Board held a budget work session. Public Comment: Elena Gagliano stated that she does not think that PILT should be used for the Flint Creek Project.**

**Georgetown Lake level was reported at 6,429.05 feet, according to the USGS gage. The lake is approximately 5.52 inches below full pool. The outflow is estimated at approximately 32.1 cfs according to the USGS outflow gauge. Commissioner Hinkle moved to make no change in the outflow. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion carried unanimously.**

**As an administrative matter, Gregory Cook met with the Board to discuss the Bear Gulch Road. The Board informed him that it could not be discussed as the matter is in litigation.**

**Foreman Jacob Pierson with Battle Ridge Builders and engineer Jonathan Weaver with Great West Engineering met with the Board and gave an update on the Flint Creek Dam, Dam Face and Spillway Rehabilitation Project. Jonathan Weaver presented a Construction Progress Meeting Agenda dated 9-1-2020. One concrete pour is complete and one to go. Partial road closure (one lane) on Friday for final concrete pour. They will try to get a look at the wood cover on the 24" by-pass line if coffer dam can be dewatered to that level. Jonathan Weaver and the Board scheduled the annual dam inspection, which the FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) is not doing this year, for Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. The inspection will begin at the power house. Jonathan Weaver will coordinate with Ben Singer and Paul Tallon with Flint Creek Hydro to attend.**

**The Board convened the public hearings on the 2020-2021 fiscal year budgets at 10:30 a.m. Public comment was received regarding the budget. Elena Gagliano stated that she is against the County requesting that Congress provide funding for the dam project. Elena Gagliano said let the license lapse and let Flint Creek Hydro apply, then lease property to him. Elena Gagliano is against using PILT funds for the Flint Creek Project. County had others interested in generating power other than Flint Creek Hydro (fka Hydrodynamics). She further said that the other company interested knew that Hydrodynamics was not acting in good faith. Elena Gagliano pointed out that the wooden pilings within the dam are old and may need replaced soon. The dam is not in Granite County and she is surprised that Anaconda-Deer Lodge County is not involved. It is the county's license and it could be**

rescinded and Flint Creek Hydro could apply for the license. She has the history going all the way back. Commissioner Slaughter brought up having a public meeting, laying out the options and listening to the public's opinion of what to do. Elena Gagliano noted the cost of maintaining the dam and Flint Creek Hydro is getting 90% of the revenue, why would they be interested in changing the contract. Possibly the Georgetown Lake Homeowners' would be involved. Commissioner Slaughter noted that this is the first time that the county has used public funds to support the dam and it leaves a bad taste in each of the Commissioners' mouths. There was no further public comment. The budget hearings were recessed at noon to be continued on Wednesday, September 2, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

Maria Stoppler, CEO/DON of Granite County Hospital District, met with the Board and presented a written financial update. The report included a financial report dated 9-1-2020 with projected cash available \$548,000, projected deposits of \$283,000, accounts payable \$(175,000) for projected cash reserves \$656,000 (57 days of operation). Also included was an administrator's report dated 8-25-2020, a utilization report and a balance sheet. She highlighted items in the administrator's report and noted that 18 CT scans were done in July; also, a second CT scan technician has been hired. She noted that the x-ray room will be updated using COVID relief funds. As public comment, Scott Sylvester noted that the Philipsburg Ambulance is having trouble making its calls and Maria Stoppler reported that the facility donates the time for EMT's that work at the facility when they are on ambulance calls. She also noted that there may be legislation that allows ambulance personnel to be paid. Maria Stoppler noted that the COVID relief funds have put the district in good shape financially, otherwise it would have been buried in debt.

The Granite County Airport Board, Vince Reece and Ernie Fulk co-chairmen, met with the Board regarding the independent fee estimate, Task Order #1 and a letter to the FAA. Steve Brown with KLJ Engineering participated. Ernie Fulk presented a financial projection and Steve Brown noted that the FAA is committed to the funding of the master plan and the improvements to the Riddick Field runway, taxiway and apron; the federal share would be \$3.8 million. He noted that Task Order #1 and the FAA letter are to comply with FAA guidance. He also noted that for a five year estimate there is an anticipated funding shortfall of \$87,605 for projects totaling \$4,750,100; although state aeronautics may fund a larger portion of the costs. Vince Reece noted that looking at the project as a whole financially, they want the Board to be aware of the projections. Public comment: Does usage of the airport support the use of the funds? Ernie Fulk noted that emergency aircraft will be able to land and take off in deteriorated weather conditions and that there is increased usage for tourism. Steve Brown noted that the county is getting a new airport for ten cents on the dollar and that the airport is in such a deteriorated condition that it will not last much longer without attention. Commissioner Slaughter noted that the county is seriously considering purchasing a large mower, which could be used at the Drummond Airport, so the airport would not need to purchase one. Steve Brown indicated that FAA guidance requires that the Aeronautical Survey be done while the leaves are on the trees. Vince Reece indicated that the current airport budget of \$100,000 will be at least 90% reimbursed through grants. Steve Brown noted that with current supplemental funding for airports, it may be reimbursed at 100%. Public comment: Charge for landings? No. Income? Leases for hangars and state and federal grants. Would rather see money go to ambulance. The Board

noted that the proposed levy for the airport is 2.28 mills. The Board agreed that the preliminary airport budget will be finalized before moving forward on the Airport Board's requests.

The Board considered the request of the DUI Task Force for the appointment of the Sergeant of the Montana Highway Patrol over Granite County be appointed to the Granite County DUI Task Force. Commissioner Adler moved to make the appointment of the Sergeant of the Montana Highway Patrol over Granite County as a voting member of the Granite County DUI Task Force. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion carried unanimously. The Board noted that the current sergeant over Granite County is Dave Oliverson, but that will change when the sergeant over Granite County changes.

**Public Comment:** None.

The Board discussed draft Resolution 2020-17 "A Granite County Resolution Amending County Resolution 2019-6 And Authorizing An Extension To The Loan Repayment Schedule For The Philipsburg Volunteer Ambulance Association." Commissioner Hinkle inquired if this same thing will be done next year. County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw noted that unless the Philipsburg Ambulance makes more runs, there is no alternative but to extend the payments or pay the loan for the Philipsburg Ambulance.

The Board discussed the use of Zoom for Commission meetings. Commissioner Hinkle inquired about when the use of Zoom will be concluded. County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw noted that it keeps fewer people in the Commission Office, which is good for social distancing. Commissioner Hinkle reviewed that last week several people were talking and yelling at once on Zoom, which makes it very difficult to understand. Commissioner Hinkle moved that Zoom be considered on a month-to-month basis and not be made permanent, but use it in an emergency when necessary. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. As public discussion, Scott Sylvester noted that school starts this week which may have an effect on the COVID-19 infection rate. The motion carried unanimously. Scott Sylvester with the *Philipsburg Mail* newspaper attended.

Dustin Muhly, county PHEP (Public Health Emergency Planning) Coordinator, met with the Board and reported that there is two (2) active COVID-19 cases in Granite County, with one hospitalized. There are six (6) people in quarantine. He noted that one case had two dogs and there is no policy on how to handle pets. The Board noted that Deer Lodge is the nearest dog pound, which has been used in the past or there is a local woman interested in rescuing dogs. There are 7,509 total cases in Montana, Yellowstone County is active hot spot. Dustin Muhly said he will have the Truck and Train Wreck Protocol next week, following a webinar on the subject this week. He is taking three on-line classes this month and he presented information on those. The state has released additional funds for an epidemiologist or an additional sanitarian for one year. He noted that the Dr. Mark Ransford and Public Health Nurse Debbie Robinson agreed that the positions are not needed.

The Granite County Board of Health met with Dr. Mark Ransford, Commissioners Bill Slaughter, Scott Adler and Charles Hinkle present. Dr. William Reiter was absent. A quorum of the Board of Health was present. Dr. Ransford reported that there is not a documented case of an animal to person transmission of COVID-19. Commissioner Slaughter noted that an unintended consequence of requiring masks occurred in Cascade County when a juror was removed by a district judge for not wearing a mask and placed in the Cascade County Jail where there were 53 cases of positive COVID. He noted that the Board made the right decision by requiring masks but not actively enforcing it. Dr. Ransford reported that Drummond and Hall schools have opened and both have good plans to protect the whole population; and if a COVID case occurs it will not be necessary to close the entire school. Commissioner Adler inquired what good wearing a mask is when they are removed for eating and physical exercise. Dr. Ransford responded that the more time a mask is worn in a closed environment the less chance of being exposed to COVID. Public comment: Will the football season be cancelled. Dr. Ransford responded that the season will go on unless there is an outbreak of COVID. Dr. Ransford noted that there is an IMT (Incident Management Team) meeting scheduled for tomorrow.

Road and Bridge Superintendent/Solid Waste Manager Paul Alt met with the Board and gave his report. He presented two proposals for a tractor with mower: 1) RDO Equipment for a 2020 John Deere 6110M with boom and rear mower for \$171,077.35 2) Normont for a John Deere 6110M with rear flail mower and boom for \$168,630.60. Paul Alt noted that RDO's machine is available now and the Normont machine is not available for several weeks. The Board agreed to put a decision on next week's agenda for the tractor/mower and to put a larger excavator on the agenda next week for a decision. Commissioner Adler noted that the Stony Creek Bridge needs work on the deck and Paul Alt indicated that he will put a piece of steel on it. Also, Paul Alt noted that he is awaiting further information on the East Fork Road private improvement.

Kevin Larsen, Liaison Officer with the Forest Service (Northern Rockies Incident Management Team), met with the Board and gave a report on the Cinnabar Fire of approximately 2,144 acres burning in the Welcome Creek Wilderness Area in the Lolo National Forest in Granite County. He presented a map of the fire area which is full suppression due to extended smoke in the air which is unhealthy in view of COVID-19. The entire Welcome Creek Wilderness is closed and the Rock Creek Road corridor and recreation access remains open. He noted that the Rock Creek area is of the most concern if conditions change. There are 5 divisions on the fire with 300 people. Access is in the Stevensville area. Interesting challenges with COVID this year and there have been no accidents or COVID cases on this fire. There is one road closure on the Bitterroot Side. John Thompson, Incident Commander, and Stan Benes, Lead Liaison Officer, both with the Northern Rockies Incident Management Team 7, attended.

- Correspondence: Email from Kayla Sanders, Network Director for Healthy Granite County Network, regarding a grant award in partnership with Intermountain Health to provide telehealth 24/7 for Granite, Powell and Ravalli Counties with a full-time psych nurse practitioner solely for this project. Letter from the Georgetown Lake

**Volunteer Fire Department regarding the Lakeside at Georgetown Subdivision Fire Protection Plan, which may be out of compliance. The matter was referred to the Planning Board. A copy of a letter from attorney Wade Dahood regarding the Rising Sun Subdivision fire suppression system and potential future mediation. A press release from the Forest Service regarding work being done on the bridge across the East Fork Reservoir spillway.**

**Commissioner Hinkle moved to approve the August 25, 2020 minutes and Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion carried unanimously.**

**The session adjourned at 3:25 p.m.**

**September 2, 2020**

**The Board of County Commissioners met at 9:00 a.m. in special session in the Commission Office of the Granite County Courthouse with Chairperson Bill Slaughter and Commissioners Scott Adler and Charles Hinkle attending. Also attending was County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw and Executive Assistant Mike Kahoe. The session convened with the pledge of allegiance. The Board is practicing the recommended social distancing (keeping people at least 6-feet apart) in order to slow or stop the spread of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Masks were worn by many people in attendance. The session was livestreamed through the Zoom computer program available to the public to view the session and comment, and the public was also allowed to attend in person and provide comment.**

**The Board reconvened the public hearings for the 2020-20201 fiscal year budgets at 9:00 a.m. Clerk and Recorder Sarah Graham attended and participated. Commissioner Slaughter noted that most issues with the budgets have been resolved.**

**Commissioner Hinkle moved to budget for the new John Deere tractor/mower for \$171,077.35 with \$149,077.35 from PILT and \$22,000.00 from the Airport Budget. Commissioner Adler reminded the Board that the Road Department is in serious need of another dump/plow truck. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion carried. The purchase of the excavator was discussed**

**The Board discussed the Flint Creek Project budget, which is short of revenue and contractors and engineers need to be paid; there are some funds coming from the DNRC grant and from power generation, but there is still a shortfall. Commissioner Adler moved to take \$100,000.00 from PILT to balance the Flint Creek Project budget. Commissioner Slaughter seconded the motion. Commissioner Hinkle commented that he knows that this must be done but he does not want to use public money on the project. Commissioner Slaughter commented that he does not want to vote for it either, but he also does not want to go against the contracts with the engineers and contractor, which could lead to expensive legal proceedings; also, county budgets are fluid and at times these decisions are extremely difficult. He said he is going to support the motion as the only alternative at this time.**

**Commissioner Adler commented that none of the Commissioners want to do this, but it is the only way at this time to balance this budget. There was no public comment. Commissioners Slaughter and Adler voted in favor of the motion and Commissioner Hinkle voted to oppose the motion.**

**The Board discussed the Solid Waste Fund budget, which is projected to be \$29,332 in the red due to increased tipping and trucking fees. County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw advised that funds budgeted for Capital Improvement must be used for that purpose, but solid waste rates could be raised in the future following public hearings. Commissioner Adler commented that there is no choice but to support the solid waste. Commissioner Slaughter moved to put \$30,000 from PILT into the Solid Waste budget. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion carried unanimously.**

**The Victim/Witness Advocate budget was discussed with County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw and he indicated that it is satisfactory.**

**The television districts funds were discussed and the request for \$5,000 each for Philipsburg and Drummond TV Districts. Commissioner Adler noted that the engineer is working on improvements and upgrades, possibly including coverage to Georgetown Lake, to both districts and many people use the free television; this is something good that the county does for its citizens. Commissioner Adler moved to put \$5,000 from PILT in each of the two television district budgets. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion carried unanimously.**

**The budget hearing concluded at 10:00 a.m. The Board adopted the final 2020-2021 fiscal year budgets on the motion of Commissioner Adler and second by Commissioner Hinkle. There was no public comment. The motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Slaughter expressed appreciation to Clerk and Recorder Sarah Graham on the work she and her office have done during the budget process.**

**Public Comment: None.**

**The session adjourned at 10:00 a.m.**