

October 20, 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 Commissioner Scott Adler attending in person and Charles Hinkle attending through Zoom. Also attending were 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.

Road and Bridge Superintendent/Solid Waste Manager Paul Alt met with the Board and gave his report. The report included that blading is being done (upper valley currently) where it is not too wet, hauling barriers and putting millings behind the jail. Also, mowing of the edges of county roads continues on East Fork Road, then move to Georgetown Lake. The Board agreed that the Fish and Game should take care of their own deer and elk which are killed or injured on the highways or county roads. The Board reviewed the road budgets with Paul Alt.

Lisa Bohrsen met with the Board to thank them for putting up signage so quickly on a curve on Upper Rock Creek Road where a fatality recently occurred. Some signs are up and she requested that the chevron signs be put up also and Paul Alt agreed to order them and put them up. Lisa Bohrsen thanked Paul Alt and the Board for their quick response.

Matt Pearce with Mapping and Planning Services (MaPS) met with the Board and gave an update on the addressing service he performs under contract for Granite County. He noted that he had recently worked with John Figueroa on his property at East Fork regarding addressing issues, where he plans to put two structures. County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw indicated that there may be an agreement for the widening of East Fork Road in the future, but there is not one now. Matt Pearce said that construction is booming and he is assigning 10 or 12 addresses a month in the county. Many people are building off-grid and do not have expectations of receiving county services in an emergency. Commissioner Slaughter encouraged Matt Pearce to continue to have frank conversations with these people who want to build in a remote area that the sheriff's department or ambulance may have great difficulty in getting to them, if they can get there at all. Matt Pearce noted that mapping has been delayed due to the COVID pandemic situation and limitations on travel. He covers the entire county when he is here and he is here until October 31, 2020 this trip. He is in contact with Sheriff Dunkerson every time he is in the county and he updates current address information to the sheriff, deputies and dispatch on every trip. He noted that there are many errors in Google Maps and he has been able to make some corrections in Granite County; he does what he can, but often it is not enough to fix the sometimes many errors on Google maps. He has worked with some county residents when Google maps directs people to the wrong area or to a dead-end road. He predicts that these road issues will continue to come up. He noted that road data sets have been sold a couple of times in the past, but he does not

believe that Google Maps will pay because it is such a large world-wide organization. The Board agreed to have Matt Pearce contact Google Maps regarding paying for the information. David Kesler III noted that a couple of search and rescue operations that he has been involved with have involved people who followed inaccurate computer maps.

In an administrative matter, David Kesler III reported that the concrete caps for the wall around the jail are completed, but are on hold for installation due to the cold weather. He plans to install them when the weather improves, likely next spring. The Board agreed that would be acceptable. David Kesler III informed the Board that a gutter is needed above the main entrance to the sheriff's office to eliminate water freezing at the entryway. Commissioner Adler moved to have David Kesler III put a gutter above the main entrance to the jail and Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Georgetown Lake level was reported at 6,428.91 feet according to the USGS lake level gage. The lake is approximately 7.08 inches below full pool. The outflow is estimated at approximately 31.0 cfs according to the USGS outflow gage and the dam tender's report. Commissioner Hinkle moved to make no change in the outflow. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion carried unanimously.

Dustin Muhly, PHEP (Public Health Emergency Planning) Coordinator, met with the Board and gave a COVID-19 update. There are 15 active cases in the county, 35 people in quarantine, one active case had 20 contacts, and two cases are hospitalized (5 total have been hospitalized, but only two people currently). Montana had 706 cases reported yesterday. Many spikes reported in certain parts of the country. Drummond Schools are on remote school most of this week. Also, there is an outbreak at the Montana State Prison. Another grant is available to the county Health Department of \$38,000.00 through DPHHS, which he would like to apply for. Commissioner Adler moved to have Dustin Muhly submit the grant application and he requested a detailed list of planned expenditures. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion carried unanimously. Dustin Muhly noted that the state is doing a draft plan for when a COVID vaccine is available; health care workers and other critical workers will be first, then people over 65 or with compromising conditions, and then the public. He noted that the vaccine must be held in special freezers and it will be a two-dose vaccine, one month apart. Scott Sylvester with the *Philipsburg Mail* newspaper attended.

The County Board of Health met with Dr. Mark Ransford and Commissioners Slaughter, Adler and Hinkle present, constituting a quorum of the Board. Dr. William Reiter was unable to attend. Dr. Ransford expressed that Public Health Nurse Debbie Robinson and assistant Jackie Bolster are doing a fantastic job, especially with contact tracing. He recommends that grant funds be utilized for contact tracing, which is very valuable in the fight against COVID-19 by getting people into quarantine and away from uninfected people. The MHSA (Montana High School Association) has come up with good safe guidelines for school sports playoffs, and those plans are acceptable with him for any playoff games in Granite County this fall. Dr. Ransford feels that the county is still in an outbreak and encouraged people to wear a mask and social distance. Discussion was held on why the state

numbers are different than those reported at these meetings. Dr. Ransford said that tests are going to many different laboratories with different response times to get results, so the numbers vary for many reasons. Scott Sylvester inquired if the county is keeping up with contact tracing and Dr. Ransford responded that it is being done at current staff levels, but if cases increase more help may be needed and there are several professional people who have volunteered to assist with contact tracing but their services haven't been needed yet. Zoom question: Where does the county get results of tests? Dr. Ransford reported that the numbers come from the laboratories which do the test directly to the county health department. He emphasized that quarantining is very important in stopping the virus. Zoom question: Which laboratories are used for testing? Dustin Muhly responded that the state laboratory is used, a lab at MSU, Rocky Mountain Lab in Hamilton and some are outsourced to Spokane and Sale Lake City when the Montana labs are beyond capacity. Scott Sylvester with the *Philipsburg Mail* newspaper attended.

The Board met regarding Philipsburg Cemetery District issues. County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw indicated (was told by a Philipsburg Cemetery Board member) that the Philipsburg Cemetery Board is not running effectively or meeting regularly, although he had done bylaws for them and encouraged them to meet regularly. The Board agreed to recruit an experienced person to fill a vacancy on the Cemetery Board on the motion of Commissioner Slaughter and second by Commissioner Hinkle. There was no public comment. The motion carried unanimously. County Attorney Bradshaw noted that the Cemetery District is not the Commission's responsibility and that it should be run very much like a school district; the Commission's only responsibility is to appoint Cemetery Board members.

There were no applications for the annual appointments to county boards. The Board agreed to advertise the current board vacancies for two weeks in the local newspaper.

The Board held the first reading of Resolution 2020-16 "A Granite County Resolution Requesting Distribution Of Bridge And Road Safety And Accountability (BaRSAA) Program Funds." The Resolution provides for the distribution of the county's BaRSAA allocation, a total of \$63,597.00, for the placement of asphalt millings on multiple Granite County Roads in 2020. There was discussion that future BaRSAA funds may need to be used on the FLAP project for a road at Georgetown Lake. There was no public comment.

Clerk and Recorder Sarah Graham met with the Board regarding the purchase of equipment for the "Continuation of Operations Plan" (COOP) for the courthouse. County DES and Safety Coordinator Jackie Bolster participated through Zoom. Sarah Graham explained that the plan is designed to continue the operations of county government if something happened to the courthouse building or if for medical reasons everyone in the building had to work from home. She estimated that the cost for a unit of equipment (laptop, printer, etc.) for each person to continue operation from home is approximately \$3,100.00, which could be purchased with CARES ACT funds. Commissioner Slaughter inquired about the security of information if people are working from home and Sarah Graham responded that most programs are in the cloud, which makes them secure. Commissioner Slaughter inquired about making sure that the equipment is exercised so that it works when it's needed. Jackie

Bolster suggested that a possibility would be to have people work from home occasionally to make certain that the equipment will function when needed. Sarah Graham agreed to return next week with a firm figure on how many units of equipment would be needed.

Independent auditor Donald N. Davies, CPA of Clinton, met with the Board and formally presented the Financial and Compliance Report for the year ended June 30, 2019. He noted that the report was late this year due to the COVID pandemic. He reported that the financials are fairly presented and there were no problems or issues with the audit and there were no contentious issues. He reviewed the management letter dated August 25, 2020 regarding the cash reconciliation and fund balance. He noted that the internet is great for transparency and helpful in doing the audit. He also noted that there is a portal through the state Department of Administration Local Government Division where all county audits, and many others like special districts, can be viewed by the public. He reported that his work is always reviewed by another auditor to be certain that he remains independent in his reporting. He noted that a new audit requirement for next year will include any leases the county has. Zoom question: The \$25,000.00 transfer of funds to Broadwater County to assist with a legal matter about two years ago. Commissioner Slaughter responded that it was a decision that the Commission at that time had the authority to make and it has been audited without question. Don Davies continued that it is always nice to see a county with minimal debt and good reserves. He felt that next year the Flint Creek Project will be a subject of the next fiscal audit. He noted that the county's insurance coverage has been reviewed and found to be more than adequate. Commissioner Slaughter noted that the county's insurance premium went up substantially this year, due to law suits and losses in other counties, not in Granite County. He noted that he is proud of the new and safe equipment that has been updated for the Road Department through lease-purchase plans. Don Davies said that each Board needs to look at what is best for each county regarding leased equipment. He noted that what is going to occur during the COVID pandemic is unknown, but it does not seem to have affected Granite County's operation very much at this time. County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw noted that there are some legal actions being taken against the county, and Powell County and Anaconda-Deer Lodge County, due to an accident during the demolition derby held at the Fairgrounds in Deer Lodge in 2019, but that there was event insurance coverage (required and obtained by the approved entity holding the event, Powell County Chamber of Commerce, at the Fairgrounds) with the said counties named as additional insureds.

Commissioner Slaughter gave his verbal proxy to Commissioner Adler to vote in favor of the Inmate Excess Medical Insurance Agreement and approval of the October 13, 2020 minutes. He excused himself from the session at noon.

Commissioner Adler was selected as temporary chairperson.

The Board considered the proposed 2020-2021 Inmate Excess Medical Insurance and/or Claims Administration Management Agreement which provides that prisoners held in the Granite County Jail are insured to protect the county from potentially huge medical costs. The program is offered through the Montana Association of Counties and Correctional Risk Services, Inc., and provides medical and mental health coverage (and for security costs while inmates are in-patients) with a high deductible (\$10,000). Even with the high deductible, the

County Attorney supported renewing this insurance coverage to protect the county against major medical bills of inmates for which the county is liable. The Board reviewed the premium plan from the 2019-2020 year and found the costs to be the same at \$1.08 per prisoner day. Commissioner Adler moved to approve the coverage from November 1, 2020 to October 31, 2021. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Slaughter's verbal proxy.

Public Comment: A Zoom question about how to participate in the meeting this evening regarding the Flint Creek Project. The response was that people can appear in person or use Zoom and the Zoom meeting number and pass code was given; also, that information is on the agenda for this evening's meeting, which is posted on the county's website. It is a different number for Zoom than for this meeting.

Correspondence: The Board received a copy of a letter dated October 12, 2020 from Paoli and Leisher, trial attorneys of Missoula, addressed to County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw, regarding a legal action by Janelle and Tim Policy versus Granite County and others. It is related to the demolition derby held at the Fairgrounds in Deer Lodge on August 18, 2019. County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw noted that the matter will be on next week's Commission agenda. The Board also received a copy of a letter from Planning Director Linda Bouck dated October 19, 2020 to Rolling Thunder regarding the channelization of Frost Creek.

The Board reviewed the draft minutes from the October 13, 2020 meeting. Commissioner Hinkle moved to approve the October 13, 2020 meeting minutes as presented and Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion carried unanimously, including Commissioner Slaughter's verbal proxy.

The Board took an afternoon break until 2:30 p.m.

The Board was scheduled to hold mediation at 2:30 p.m. with Mr. Jack McLeod on the Rising Sun Subdivision fire suppression system. This was the second round of mediation that was required by the District Court. Mr. Jack McLeod did not attend. County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw recommended that the Board move to direct him to file a motion with the District Court requesting a trial date. Chairperson Adler noted that Jack McLeod has been given many opportunities to settle the matter and he has not participated. **Zoom comment:** What is the problem? The response was that the fire suppression system has never worked properly and it freezes solid in the winter; it is a great concern to the Georgetown Lake Volunteer Fire Department, which would need to depend on having that water available to fight a fire in that subdivision. Commissioner Hinkle moved to direct the County Attorney to file a motion with the Court requesting the local District Court set the matter for trial and Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion carried.

The session adjourned at 2:40 p.m.