

December 22, 2020

The Board of County Commissioners met at 8:30 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 (by Zoom) attending. 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. The session convened with the pledge of allegiance.

Scott Sylvester, reporter with the *Philipsburg Mail* newspaper, attended the majority of the session.

The bid opening was held for hourly rates for a standard dump truck, a belly dump truck and a side dump truck for periodic work throughout the calendar year 2021. The “Notice To Bid” was published in the December 10 and 17, 2020 issues of the *Philipsburg Mail* newspaper. The bids were opened by Executive Assistant Mike Kahoe in the order they were received as follow:

Bob Weaver Const.	2 Belly Dumps	\$115.00 per hour per truck
	2 Dump Trucks	\$95.00 per hour per truck
Shed Horn Hauling (Fuel surcharge if \$3 per gal. +)	2 Belly Dumps	\$115.00 per hour per truck
	1 Dump Truck with Dump Trailer	\$115.00 per hour per truck
L&L Trucking	12 Yard Dump Truck	\$90.00 per hour
	20 Yard Belly Dump	\$115.00 per hour

All trucks come with a properly licensed driver, for the per hour price noted. Commissioner Hinkle moved to accept all three belly dump bids and initially draw for the belly dumps rotation. Dump truck bids were also accepted with lowest bid (L&L Trucking) receiving priority and other dump trucks to be called out using call-down list if priority bidder does not have a dump truck available. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. The Board noted that if bids are submitted later, they will be added to the list as a lower priority to call (called on call-down list only if others are all unavailable). The motion carried unanimously.

Road and Bridge Superintendent Paul Alt met with the Board and gave his report. The report included that Pavement Management Solutions would like to know, for staging purposes, which eight miles of roads will be chip sealed this summer. The Board agreed that the roads would be: Philipsburg Dump Road, 1.1 miles; West Mullan Road, 1.5 miles; Georgetown Lake Road, 1.1 miles; East Fork Road, 1 mile; Verlanic Road (county road), 2 miles; County Road Behind State Shop in Drummond, ½ mile; Highway One to Rodeo

Grounds on Old Highway 10A, 1 mile. Commissioner Adler moved to accept the listed roads on Paul Alt's recommendation. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion carried unanimously. Paul Alt noted that the road crews are putting down sand on black ice today. Commissioner Adler indicated that he had a request from Bob Nylund to close and put up a locked gate at Bear Town on the Bear Gulch Road. Commissioner Adler said that he is opposed to the idea and he noted that people live above that area. Commissioner Adler moved to that the commission send Rob Nylund a letter that the Bear Gulch Road will not be shut down. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion carried unanimously. Paul Alt noted that some wood garage doors need to be replaced on a building at the Hall Shop and one is a safety hazard. Commissioner Adler moved to replace the large wooden door at the Hall Shop as soon as possible as a safety measure. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion carried unanimously. Paul Alt noted that the stakes for a road project on the East Fork Road had been removed by an unknown party. Paul Alt also noted that the weight limit is being reduced by the state on the bridge near Drummond at the slough. Also, the state noted that the bridge deck at the Stony Creek Bridge needs repair.

The Board reviewed the Lease Purchase Agreement No. 35809 with BMO Harris Investment Company LLC for the 2020 International HV613 truck (Serial Number 3HAESTZTXLL864684) with dump box and snow plow for the county Road Department. County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw noted that he has reviewed the documents and they are acceptable. This purchase is through a Sourcewell vendor and the truck pricing has already been publicly bid by the government purchasing cooperative (Sourcewell) so additional public bidding was not required of the county. Commissioner Hinkle moved to approve the Lease Purchase Agreement No. 35809 for the 2020 International plow truck. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion carried unanimously.

Georgetown Lake level was reported at 6,428.54 feet according to the USGS lake level gage. The lake is approximately 11.52 inches below full pool. The outflow is estimated at approximately 30 cfs. Commissioner Hinkle expressed concern about dropping the lake level any further and moved to reduce the outflow to 25 cfs and Commissioner Slaughter seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion carried with Commissioners Slaughter and Hinkle voting in favor of the motion and Commissioner Adler voting to oppose the motion. Commissioner Slaughter telephoned Paul Tallon with Flint Creek Hydro to make the reduction in outflow.

The Board reviewed the AIP (Airport Improvement Program) Grant Oversight Risk Assessment, which will be returned to the FAA in Helena. Airport Engineer Steve Brown with KLJ Engineering met with the Board and explained the purpose of the form. He noted that the form is required by the FAA for all AIP projects as assurance that Granite County has the ability to account for the federal funds, which it does. Commissioner Adler moved to approve and sign the form. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There was no

**public comment. The motion carried unanimously. Steve Brown reported that the airport project is proceeding as planned and he will send an updated project schedule.**

**The Board noted receipt of four copies of the Final Construction Report for the Spillway and Dam Face Rehabilitation Project at Flint Creek Dam. Commissioner Adler moved to send the Final Construction Report for the Spillway and Dam Face Rehabilitation Project at Flint Creek Dam dated December 15, 2020 to the FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) Portland Regional Office. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion carried unanimously. Great West Engineering will send the report electronically to the FERC. Each Board member received a copy of the report.**

**Public Comment: Elena Gagliano discussed the recently appointed member of the Granite County Board of Health, Jeremy Aal, and noted that she is pleased with the appointment.**

**Correspondence:**

**The Board noted the receipt of a letter and attachments from the Georgetown Lake Fire Service Area requesting to increase the annual fee. The letter was forwarded to County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw to advise the Board on the proper process.**

**The Board received correspondence from Airport Board Chairman Vince Reece that a second courtesy vehicle, a 2005 Honda Pilot, has been purchased through a \$5,000.00 grant from Montana Aeronautics. The vehicle will be used at Riddick Field Airport.**

**County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw read a letter from Dr. Mark Ransford, Dr. William Reiter, Maria Stoppler, Dustin Muhly, Eddie Amberg, Ashley Westphal, Jackie Bolster and Debbie Robinson regarding the importance of wearing face masks during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board agreed to put the letter in the minutes.**

Masks help to prevent infected people from spreading the Covid-19 virus. Period.

There is near unanimous agreement throughout the healthcare profession that when used in association with other recommended pandemic control measures, facemasks decrease the transmission of COVID-19 infection. \*

Although non-medical grade masks may offer the wearer some amount of protection from becoming infected, the principal benefit of wearing masks is to reduce the risk of infecting others. Masks trap droplets containing virus that would otherwise be released when the wearer talks, coughs, sneezes or just breaths heavily after any exertion.

When people with symptoms who know that they are infected with COVID-19 are requested to quarantine, most will do so to avoid infecting others. However, the best information we have indicates that at least 40% of people with active, highly contagious infections have no symptoms at all. We know that that can be hard to grasp, but it is the truth. People who do not know that they are infected and contagious are just as likely to infect others as are people with identified infection.

There is an open question about by how much masks will reduce the spread of the infection. Some studies suggest that it is only by a small amount while others show a significant benefit. Some people evidently do not believe that small reductions in infecting other people are worth the effort. In addition to the benefit of not making more of one's neighbors sick, even small reductions help to ease the burden on our overloaded healthcare system and so prevent unnecessary deaths. Our hospitals and emergency

services personnel are already overloaded with COVID-19 patients and they are increasingly unable to adequately respond to other healthcare needs.

More than 16,000,000 people in our country have contracted COVID-19 infection as of today and more than 300,000 have died from causes related to that infection. There were more than 3,600 deaths reported in just one day last week! In Granite County there have been more than 150 confirmed cases, with around a dozen seriously ill people who needed transport to larger facilities, and at least 2 COVID-19 related deaths. How many infections, and more deaths, will it take in our community to make people take this seriously enough to wear masks? Except for people with defined exclusions, for instance those with respiratory disease, there is no harm done to the wearer by using a mask. It certainly does not take any undue effort to wear one.

For those who decline to wear masks as recommended by medical authorities worldwide, why are you willing to risk infecting someone's child, perhaps killing their grandmother, or infecting friends, colleagues, and strangers? The undersigned all believe that there is no moral or medical justification for refusing to wear a mask when there is a clear risk that you can infect others.

Mark Ransford, DVM

Maria Stoppler, RN, CEO - Granite County Medical Center

William M. Reiter, MD, FACP, Medical Director - Granite County Medical Center

Ashley Westphal, RN, FNP – Granite County Medical Center

Edward Amberg, PA-C, MPH – Granite County Medical Center

Debra Robinson, RN – Public Health Nurse

Dustin Muhly - Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

Jackie Bolster – Disaster Emergency Services Coordinator

\*For concise references, see the *New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/article/coronavirus-masks.html> and *Patient Care* <https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2020/06/417906/still-confused-about-masks-heres-science-behind-how-face-masks-prevent>.

**Dr. Mark Ransford, outgoing Board of Health Chair, was called by the Commission and expressed his concern with Mr. Jeremy Aal (appointed to the Granite County Board of Health as of January 1, 2021) and his position regarding face coverings. Dr. Ransford said the Granite County Public Health Department was very concerned that Mr. Aal is against face coverings during this serious pandemic.**

**The Board reviewed the draft minutes for the December 15, 2020 regular session. The minutes were approved as presented on the motion of Commissioner Hinkle and second by Commissioner Adler. There was no public comment. The motion carried unanimously.**

**The Board held the public hearing at 11:00 a.m. on the proposed increase of the base solid waste annual unit fees of \$10 per unit, from \$125.00 per year to \$135.00 per year. Notice of the hearing was published in the *Philipsburg Mail* newspaper on December 10 and 17, 2020. County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw and Paul Alt, Road and Bridge Superintendent and Solid Waste Manager, attended. Commissioner Slaughter explained that the Solid Waste Fund**

needed to be supplemented by about \$40,000 last year and he noted that the costs of tipping fees, hauling and insurance have increased. He noted that a question from a local resident landowner was how many tons Robinson (Granite Disposal) hauls and it is below the number of units he services. Commissioner Slaughter noted that Mr. Robinson assisted in increasing some business units, because he knows how much he hauls from each business. Scott Sylvester of the *Philipsburg Mail* noted that there was no viable alternative to this increase. The Board noted that there is no alternative but to increase the base unit fee. No other written or verbal public comments were received. Commissioner Adler moved to increase the solid waste basic fee by \$10 annually and Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion carried unanimously. Paul Alt suggested getting the county's own trucks and containers. The Board noted that there have been preliminary discussions with Powell County, which is planning on opening a landfill area.

The Board considered Resolution 2020-20 "A Granite County Resolution Increasing The Annual Base Unit Fee Of The Granite County Solid Waste District Imposed On Property Tax Statements." Commissioner Adler moved to adopt Resolution 2020-20 and Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion carried unanimously.

The Board noted that the Granite County Board of Health meeting scheduled for today has been canceled and will be rescheduled in two weeks when the new Commissioner will be on the Board. Board of Health members were notified of the meeting change.

Commissioner Slaughter, whose term on the Board will end December 31, 2020, stated that he has enjoyed working with Commissioners Adler and Hinkle and he has learned a lot from each of them. Also, he said County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw has been an excellent county attorney who can get things done. He said that he especially appreciated Mike Kahoe, who brought a wealth of knowledge to the position and was a great help to all the Commissioners for many years!

The session adjourned at 11:50 a.m.