

March 16, 2021

The Board of County Commissioners met at 8:30 a.m. in a regular session of the Safety Committee in the Commission Office of the Granite County Courthouse with Chairperson Charles Hinkle, Commissioner Blanche McLure and Commissioner Scott Adler attending. Also attending were County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw and Assistant Billie Ann Kulaski. 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 internet-based program available for the public to view the session and comment, and the public was also allowed to attend in person and provide comment.

Scott Sylvester, reporter with the *Philipsburg Mail* joined the session in-person as well as Jackie Bolster (Department of Emergency Services, DES, Coordinator), Rody Holman (Payne West Insurance, County's insurance agent), Sherriff Scott Dunkerson, and Dustin Muhly (Public Health Emergency Preparedness). Also joining the session by Zoom were Elena Gagliano.

**GRANITE COUNTY SAFETY COMMITTEE: REGULAR QUARTERLY MEETING:** Commissioner Hinkle moved to approve the minutes from the Granite County Safety Committee Meeting from December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020. There was no public comment. Commissioner McLure seconded the motion, and the motion carried. Rody Holman began the Safety meeting by reviewing the workers' compensation program with State Fund and discussing the loss run report with the Commissioners. Commissioner McLure asked for clarification on calculations and estimations, and Rody explained how the claims can vary. Rody then reviewed and discussed the PCT Member Loss Run with the Commissioners and Sherriff Dunkerson, it was later recognized that the document provided included incorrect information that was irrelevant to Granite County. Rody Holman stated that he would go back to MACo to request and obtain the correct information and send the updated report to Billie Ann Kulaski and Jackie Bolster to be presented to the Commissioners. Commissioner Hinkle, then responded by asking Rody Holman to return to the Commissioners' regular session on March 23<sup>rd</sup> with the correct report to discuss with the Commissioners. Sherriff Dunkerson was asked about safety concerns for his department and responded that he has no safety issues to report. Jackie Bolster followed up stating that she ordered safety supplies for the Solid Waste Department and has distributed them to Paul Alt (Superintendent of Roads / Solid Waste). She added that we have new Emergency Response Guidebooks and she will provide one to the Commission, additionally she said that Safety Fest will be virtual event on March 29<sup>th</sup> through April 2<sup>nd</sup> and would be beneficial for the new Assistant to the Commission, Billie Ann Kulaski to attend. Commissioner Adler moved to make the next meeting June 15<sup>th</sup>. No Public Comment. Commissioner McLure seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The regular session convened at 9:02 AM with the pledge of allegiance.

**ROAD AND BRIDGE SUPERINTENDENT/SOLID WASTE MANAGER WEEKLY REPORT:** Paul Alt joined the session by phone. The road crew is currently grading roads

on Rock Creek and Willow Creek Roads. Paul discussed that a 1999 water truck is in the shop to fix the transmission which will cost between \$7K and \$8K, he commented that this is a really good truck that he would like to get fixed. Commissioner Adler added that he is in favor of putting the money into the truck. Paul stated that a new water truck would cost upwards of \$50K. Commissioner McLure moved to put a new transmission into the 1999 water truck for no more than \$8K. There was no public comment. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Paul Alt located a used snow plow that is critically needed by Granite County, and he submitted a video of a used plow truck that he is interested in purchasing to each of the Commissioners. This snow plow truck is located in Colorado, and was not placed on the Agenda because this was a last minute, emergent item. This snow plow is listed for \$29K, and Commissioner Hinkle is interested in getting it for closer to \$25K. Granite County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw confirmed that the cost of the vehicle is below the bidding requirements under the law. Commissioner Hinkle commented that we should take the funds out of PILT and potentially repay with relief funds coming in. Blaine Bradshaw added that the Commission could also budget in the next fiscal year for PILT to be paid back the funds in the next fiscal year, if the Commission so chooses. Commissioner Adler moved to send Paul to Colorado to look at the truck and have authority to purchase (send with a blank check; maximum amount \$29,500 out of PILT). Public comment was made by Elena Gagliano via Zoom, she questioned if this item was on the agenda, Commissioner Hinkle responded that no it was not, but that it is an emergent issue as the County crew is down one plow truck. All the Commissioners concurred it was an emergent necessity to purchase the snow plow truck. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**GEORGETOWN LAKE LEVEL OUTFLOW:** The lake level was reported at 6428.57 feet according to the USGHS lake level gage and the dam tender's report. The lake is approximately 11.16 inches below full pool. The outflow has been set at 30 CFS over the past week. County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw commented that the agencies (agencies being MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Forest Service, and US Fish & Wildlife Services) didn't have any issues with an increase of 30 CFS, but that if we increase to 35 CFS we may need to reach out for agency consent if 35 CFS was greater than the current inflow into the reservoir. Commissioner Adler recommended increasing the outflow since it is going to warm up over the next couple of days, and described how that will balance out the inflow and outflow. The email correspondence and phone conversations that both Blaine and the Commissioners had with Brad Liermann, Fisheries Biologist with the MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks, over the last week was also discussed. Brad has explained that he isn't able to make it to every meeting but that he will try to come in at critical times to support the decision-making process. Commissioner Adler moved to increase the outflow to 35 CFS due to the warm weather forecasted and that there will be more runoff coming. There was no public comment. Commissioner McLure seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**PROJECT MONTANA WORKERS & LOCAL DECISIONS; HOUSE BILL 137 IMPACTS (CLEAN AIR ACTS PROTECTIONS) LETTER;** Ross Prosperi (Montana Kids Vs Big Tobacco) joined the session via Zoom to discuss House Bill 137. House Bill 137

retroactively overturns community clean indoor air protections supported by citizens and approved by local leaders in 11 Montana localities, including Granite County. The legislation gives the e-Cigarettes Board special status in Montana law during a youth e-cigarette use epidemic and a COVID 19 outbreak by repealing the restrictions on vaping. Montana Kids Vs. Big Tobacco is requesting our Board of Health (Granite County Commissioners) to sign on individually to their letter in hopes of being a unified voice of opposition and kill HB 137. Commissioner Hinkle voiced his supports to sign onto this letter. Ross followed up by stating that this is currently being heard before a legislative health and safety committee in Helena, but that if the Commissioner decide to proceed, he would add our County to their list of supporters to oppose the bill and that we could also submit comment to the Committee. Commissioner Hinkle motioned to add our County to those in opposition to House Bill 137, with Montana Kids Vs Big Tobacco, and to have Blaine Bradshaw draft an email voicing our opposition to House Bill 137 to send to the Committee. Public Comment via Zoom from Elena Gagliano, stating she agrees with the opposition to House Bill 137, and thinks they should do the same thing with (?; audio on Zoom cut out) mandates. Scott Sylvester, of the *Philipsburg Mail* asked for clarification on House Bill 137, to which Blaine responded. Commissioner McLure seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**COVID-19 UPDATE; PHEP REPORT;** Dustin Muhly joined the session in person to present his PHEP (Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program) report. There are currently zero COVID cases in Granite County and nationally Montana is doing well with 151 cases in the state. They have found 5 cases of the UK variant in the state of Montana. Currently we are in phase 1B+, hopefully we will be moving into phase C+ (general population). Dustin stated that he has been working on disbursing hand sanitizer since we are still sitting on so much of it. Currently we are storing this in the Road Department Building, however he is going to touch base with the Weed Shop on the hill to relocate some of the extra hand sanitizer storage. The State is starting to get some of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, there is some in Anaconda so there should be some in Granite County soon. Public Comment: Scott Sylvester, of the *Philipsburg Mail*, asked Dustin if studies have been done on the effects of vaccine on children. Dustin responded that there haven't been a lot of studies, because they only really targeted the older generations, however they have talked about having vaccines available for children before the next school year. Scott had an additional question for Dustin regarding fully vaccinated people getting together in public groups. Dustin responded that if everyone is fully vaccinated the State is saying you can get together in small groups without worrying too much. Scott followed up with "Why would someone opt to get J&J vaccine?" Dustin stated that most people are choosing the Johnson & Johnson variety because of the make-up of their vaccine, and that it only requires one shot. He added that the Moderna and Pfizer react a bit differently than the Johnson & Johnson, which is more like a regular flu shot with almost a 100% efficacy for preventing severe disease and death. Blaine Bradshaw, Granite County Attorney, asked Dustin about the AstraZeneca vaccine and the issues that have arisen with blood clots. Dustin Muhly responded by stating that AstraZeneca hasn't really been used in the United States, which is why we probably haven't heard a lot about the issues that they are having overseas. Elena Gagliano commented via

**Zoom chat where she posted a YouTube link of a story where a woman in Galveston, Texas who was arrested in a bank for not wearing a mask.**

**COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH UPDATES, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND DECISIONS ON BOARD POSITION OPENING, INFECTION CONTROL POLICES & OTHER DECISIONS ON COVID-19 HEALTH ISSUES;** Currently the County Health Board is still looking for a new Board Member. Blaine Bradshaw recommended advertising the position in the paper and commented that Dr. Reiter has been working with Jackie Bolster a lot. Commissioner Adler moved to advertise the Health Board Position in the local newspaper for two weeks. There was no public comment. Commissioner McLure seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**PHEP (PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS) TASK ORDER NUMBER TWO:** The Commissioners discussed whether the County should continue the PHEP agreement with the MT DPHHS in which the County would provide certain services for \$28,674 annually; annual amount to paid by MT DPHHS through June 2024, if the County agrees. Commissioner Hinkle does not want to support PHEP, and began the discussion to say he will not support PHEP. County Attorney, Blaine Bradshaw joined the conversation to explain PHEP Task Order Number Two, and that continuing these services is very important Commissioner McLure stated that she thinks we should continue the PHEP program since this is a federally funded grant for Emergency Preparedness. Commissioner Adler asked for public comments, and there were none. Then Blaine explained that by signing this document the County would be accepting the funds for the program, however we could then put the position out for proposals again for interested subcontractors to submit. Dustin Muhly (Current PHEP Coordinator and Subcontractor) then stated that if we didn't do this, we would be the only County in the state who doesn't accept the funds to continue this program. He also stated he does a tremendous amount of work and recapped his duties and the importance of his role, including distributing HAN notices as well as developing protocols and programs.

Commissioner McLure raised questions about Dustin Muhly's role in conjunction with Jackie Bolster's role and various circumstances and instances, as well as the incorporating PHEP into the Public Health Fund. Blaine Bradshaw then excused himself to get clarification between PHEP and the ability to qualify for FEMA funds. During the county attorney's absence Sherriff Dunkerson joined the conversation and explained how he works with Dustin for emergency planning and how supportive Dustin has been in his agency. Blaine later returned to inform the Commissioners he was able to speak with the State DES Coordinator and discovered that if we did not accept PHEP we would not lose FEMA funding. He followed up by expanding on how different counties across the state implement this program; i.e. independent contractors, combine into DES, etc. Blaine Bradshaw then ended his comments by stating he would advise signing, but it is the Commission's decision. Commissioner McLure moved to sign the PHEP Task order Number Two. No public comment. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. The motion passed two to one, with Commissioner Hinkle dissenting.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR THE SOUTHWEST DRUG TASK FORCE;** Sherriff Scott Dunkerson, presented the Memorandum of Understanding for the SW Drug Task Force to the Commissioners. He stated that Granite County contributes \$4K annually and that this is a multi-jurisdictional task-force. Sherriff Dunkerson thinks this is a good idea, he said the County doesn't usually get to see the benefits of this program, unless they are working with task force on a regular basis like he is. Commissioner Adler moved to sign the Memorandum of Understanding for the Southwest Drug Task Force. Public Comment was received via Zoom from Elena Gagliano, where she stated that Sherriff Scott Dunkerson is a Godsend and Granite County is lucky to have him. Commissioner McLure seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**ALLOWANCE OF AUDIO RECORDING FOR COMMISSION MEETINGS;** Commissioners' Assistant Billie Ann Kulaski read the proposal for the allowance of audio recordings to Commissioners. Commissioner McLure moved to allow the audio recording of meetings by the Assistant (or designee) so the actual written minutes could be typed the following day. Public comment was received by Elena Gagliano concerned about Zoom trainings for Commissioners. Billie Kulaski responded and let her know this coming up on a future Agenda, and since it is a future agenda it hasn't been released to the public yet. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**COUNTY CLAIMS;** Commissioner Adler moved to accept the County claims. No public comment. Commissioner McLure seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**ROAD NAME CHANGE REQUEST;** Commissioner McLure moved to change Johnny's Place to Mountain Springs Way. This is a private lane, not a county road. Public Comment was received via Zoom from Elena Gagliano asking if Commissioner Adler was at the afternoon session. Commissioner Hinkle responded that he was not, that he had been excused. Blaine Bradshaw followed up by stating that Commissioner Adler had added at the last meeting that not attending all afternoon sessions would be a temporary thing. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**DRUMMOND LIBRARY DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER RESIGNATION;** Commissioner McLure moved to accept the resignation of Jenna Buxbaum and is thankful for her hard work, and would like to advertise for a new board member for the Drummond School & Community Library in the Philipsburg Mail for two weeks. No Public Comment. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**PUBIC COMMENT:**

Jordan White joined via Zoom to provide public comment regarding a Paid Director Position in the County for MT Emergency Services. He stated that he had talked to Lisa Mitchell in Baker, Montana (Paid Coordinator for Baker Ambulance), which is a service with nine volunteers, a population with 3K people, an area of miles that is similar to Granite County, and an average 200 calls annually. He stated that a Director's starting salary is \$52K and he believes this includes benefits, but he will continue to look into it. He said that the Baker area feels similar to Granite County and he just wanted to bring this information to the

Commissioners attention today. Commissioner McLure added that at \$52K annually this would average out to \$25.35 / hour, and followed up by asking Jordan if he is pursuing this as a self-interest or a County interest. Jordan White responded that he is interested more so for the County, but he would also be interested in applying for the role; however, he understands that this would have to be a fair application process and he wants it to benefit the people of the area. Commissioner Hinkle requested that this item be placed on the Agenda for the following week (March 23, 2021).

Philipsburg Mayor, Dan Reddish joined the session in person to discuss money coming in through the recent stimulus package. He stated that he talked to state senator Mark Sweeney (State Representative) the other day to find out about money coming in from the Rescue America Plan (recent federal stimulus package) because the Town has needs for infrastructure projects. Senator Sweeney responded that projects that are pre-planned / engineered would fare better. Mayor Reddish wants to partner with County to make sure funds are applied to help everyone and is concerned about drainage and sink holes within Town.

Drummond Mayor, Gail Leaper attended via Zoom, wanting to let the Commissioners know that she recently reached out to Senator Daines' Office, and heard nothing. Then she reached out to Senator Tester's Office and heard back concerning monies coming in. She is going to be meeting with some people from Tester's Office to assist her sort through things and hopefully get the road redone on South Main Street in Drummond which turns into a road the County maintains (from bridge to Montana Highway 1). Commissioner Hinkle stated that we will add this discussion to the Agenda for the following Tuesday (March 23, 2021).

#### **CORRESPONDENCE:**

**BOARD MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 23, 2021:** Commissioner McLure moved to approve the March, 9, 2021 minutes. For informational purposes, there was an inadvertent error in the March 16, 2021 Commission Meeting Agenda in which the March 9, 2021 minutes were referenced as the February 23, 2021 minutes so the March 9, 2021 minutes will be placed on the March 23, 2021 agenda along with the current minutes for approval. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion to approve the said minutes. There was no public comment. The motion passed unanimously.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The session adjourned at 1:43 PM