

**April 13, 2021**

**The Board of County Commissioners met at 9:00 a.m. in a regular session in the Commission Office of the Granite County Courthouse with Chairperson Charles Hinkle, Commissioner Blanche McLure and Commissioner Scott Adler attending. Also attending were Granite County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw, who attended a portion of the agenda items set for the day, 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). The session was livestreamed through the Zoom internet-based program available for the public to view the session and comment. The public was also allowed to attend in person and provide comment. The session convened with the pledge of allegiance.**

**The following attended all or a portion of the regular meeting agenda items: Scott Sylvester, reporter with the *Philipsburg Mail* joined the session in-person as well as Public Health Director of Anaconda-Deer Lodge County, Leigh Ann Holmes; Powell County Tobacco Prevention Specialist & PHEP Coordinator, Jennifer Robinson; Granite County PHEP Coordinator Dustin Muhly; Drummond Mayor Gail Leeper; Principle Engineer with Triple Tree Engineer, Brad Koon; Regional Director for United States Senator, Jon Tester's Office, Deborah Frandsen; Local Contractor, Dave Kesler; and Granite County Courthouse Custodian Janeen Bonney. Attending via Zoom were; Granite County Medical Center Chief Executive Officer / DON, Maria Stoppler; Attorney Julie R. Sirrs, Shareholder & Attorney at Law with Boone Karlberg PC and her Client Jo Durgin; As well as members of the general public which included Elena Gagliano and Jordan White.**

**ROAD AND BRIDGE SUPERINTENDENT/SOLID WASTE MANAGER WEEKLY REPORT:** Paul Alt joined the Commission by phone. The Road Crew has been moving across the County to work on various projects until the weather is more accommodating. They have been completing work on Lower Rock Creek Road and Travelers Road but still have more to do when it warms up. The Road Crew has also been working in the Drummond area to do some cold patch work. Commissioner Hinkle stated that a homeowner in East Fork called him and was concerned about an area where millings were placed last year. The area is now covered in washboards and Commissioner Hinkle wants to know what we are going to do. Paul Alt responded that the crew will grind it off once the weather warms up, then it will be chip sealed.

**Commissioner McLure raised concerns that were brought to her attention by a resident in the Drummond area about the condition of the dump. Paul Alt stated that he has followed up with solid waste personnel to get the issue rectified. Commissioner McLure stated that we need to have consistent requirements across our Solid Waste Department, since our Philipsburg dump is pristine and our Drummond dump site is not maintaining the same standards. Commissioner McLure also raised concerns over recycling in the County and mentioned a program that was previously running through Granite Garbage Disposal. Commissioner Adler stated that the program became too expensive and they were no longer able to support it. There was no public comment for this section.**

**DRUMMOND MAYOR GAIL LEEPER & BRAD KOON FROM TRIPLE TREE ENGINEERING TO DISCUSS ROAD MAINTENANCE, SOUTH MAINSTREET IN DRUMMOND:** Drummond Mayor, Gail Leeper and Triple Tree, P.E., Brad Koon joined the session to discuss the issues with Mainstreet in Drummond. The County maintains the bridge to MT Highway 1 and the Town maintains the road from Town to the bridge over the Clark Fork. Brad Koon prepared a preliminary cost estimate to improve South Main Street from its intersection with Front Street to the bridge over the Clark Fork River, since the street is in very poor condition and continues to deteriorate. The recommended improvements include rehabilitation of the existing asphalt and subgrade, re-compaction of the rehabilitated asphalt and subgrade, and replacement of 3 inches of asphalt surfacing. The estimated cost to complete this project is approximately \$350K. Mayor Leeper explained that she is coming to the County to see if the Commissioners would be willing to help with the cost of repairing this road since it serves as an access point into and out of the County. Commissioner Hinkle asked the Mayor if she had explored grant opportunities and she responded that she has in addition to working with both Senator Daines and Senator Tester's Offices. Commissioner Hinkle asked Mayor Leeper for the specific amount she is asking for and she replied that they are still in the preliminary stages, however after further probes for a figure, stated \$150K. Commissioner McLure declared that she thinks this is a reasonable amount and is something that the CARES Act money can be utilized for. She continued by saying, she would be prepared to give this money to the Town of Drummond to fix their road. Commissioner Hinkle responded he would not be in favor of this because this is in Drummond and he would like to utilize this money elsewhere, such as for an Ambulance Coordinator. Commissioner McLure restated her position and followed up by saying that "the Town of Drummond is included in Granite County". Commissioner Adler deferred to Granite County Road Superintendent, Paul Alt to explain their stance on what could be done to assist in the time being. Paul Alt agreed with both the Mayor and Brad Koon that the road needs to be completely replaced, but offered his assistance in the interim. Paul Alt is going to provide an update on how the Granite County Road Department is going to assist The Town of Drummond with this Road until the project can be fully funded. The funding request will be placed on an upcoming agenda for decision. There was no public comment for this section.

**GEORGETOWN LAKE LEVEL OUTFLOW:** The lake level was reported at 6428.37 feet according to the USGS lake level gage and the dam tender's report. The lake is approximately 13.56 inches below full pool. Commissioner Adler stated that he would like to get Surface Water Hydrologist, Dave Amman to come give a report to the Commissioners soon. Commissioner Adler moved to increase the lake level to 40 CFS. Commissioner McLure seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion passed unanimously.

**GRANITE COUNTY MAINTENANCE PROJECTS UPDATE WITH DAVE KESLER;** Local Contractor, Dave Kesler joined the Commissioners with Granite County Courthouse Custodian, Janeen Bonney to discuss various maintenance projects around the Courthouse. The upstairs bathroom floor had been swollen up recently, but has come back down, Janeen

has been working to get a plumber out to the courthouse to see what is going on in the pipes so the Commissioners can decide their next move. Dave Kesler discussed that he has worked with an engineer from AFCO and they had discussed the ADA project for the courthouse to update the bathrooms as well as design an elevator and staircase. He explained what he thought the best approach would be, which included relocating or removing the Judges private dressing room. Kesler then provided his thoughts on fixing the Courthouse dome that has been leaking, explaining that it would be a smarter option to fix it with copper as opposed to tin, however by doing so some of the more ornate work may need to be excluded. Commissioner Adler commented that he thinks we need to put the ADA stuff on hold and focus on getting the dome fixed. Commissioner Hinkle explained that he thinks the ADA compliance is very important and that we need to keep moving forward on it, but that we need to go ahead and get the dome fixed as it has priority. Commissioner Adler motioned to move forward with getting estimates to fix the dome. Commissioner McLure seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion passed unanimously.

**COVID-19 UPDATE; INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM – DUSTIN MUHLY PHEP REPORT:** PHEP Coordinator, Dustin Muhly began his discussion by announcing that the CDC has recommended Johnson & Johnson pause the administering of its Covid-19 vaccine due to a rare blood clot that developed in certain people in the U.S. Johnson & Johnson agreed and has paused the administering of the vaccine for now so the issue can be examined. More than 6.8 million doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine have been administered in the U.S. CDC and FDA are reviewing data involving six reported U.S. cases of a rare and severe type of blood clot. All six cases occurred among women between the ages of 18 and 48, and symptoms occurred 6 to 13 days after vaccination. There are currently no new cases in Granite County and are 70 new COVID cases in Montana. There are also 56 cases of the variant strain in the State. Dustin also stated that the vaccine roll-out is going well and that right now the demand is fairly low. He followed up by stating that most people who wanted the vaccine have already received it in the County, with 960 people receiving their first shot and 660 people having been fully vaccinated. If someone wants a vaccine they can contact The Pharmacy, Granite County Medical Center, or Granite County Disaster & Emergency Management Coordinator, Jackie Bolster. Public comment was received via Zoom from Elena Gagliano stating she was having a difficult time hearing Dustin. Commissioner Hinkle responded that he would provide a microphone to Dustin in the future.

**COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH UPDATES:** There are currently two new applicants to join the County Board of Health, Michael A. Kalarchik of Philipsburg, and Lisa Souba of Philipsburg. Both individuals have a strong medical background. Commissioner Adler moved to accept both applicants to serve on the County Board of Health contingent upon if Dr. Reiter wants to continue serving on the County Board of Health. Public Comment was received by Elena Gagliano via Zoom where she voiced concern over the handling of the process. She recommended that the Commissioners hold interviews to select who they would like to serve on the County Board of Health. Commissioner Hinkle agreed with Elena Gagliano and decided to hold interviews with the applicants. This issue has been tabled until next week, when interviews will be held to decide who will serve on the County Board of Health.

**MONTHLY CLAIMS:** The Commissioners reviewed the monthly claims, Commissioner Adler recused himself from a claim for Adler Towing, because he has a business interest in this company. A claim for Philipsburg Marketing Group has been disallowed until the new County website is fully launched. Commissioner Adler motioned to accept the monthly claims. Commissioner McLure seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion passed unanimously.

**LETTERS TO THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE & MACO REGARDING TABLED HB421:** Commissioner Hinkle began the discussion regarding a letter that was drafted to voice concern about the tabling of House Bill 421. Commissioner McLure voiced her concerns over Commissioner Hinkle not including MACo at the beginning of the process and emphasized the necessity to follow the process. She continued that we need to start by working with MACo to get things moving instead of working around MACo. Commissioner Hinkle responded that he doesn't agree with the protocols of MACo, and that he didn't have the time to go through MACo. County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw inserted that he agreed that the outcome would have been more positive if the County had worked with MACo directly, but County is not legally required to go through MACo. Commissioner McLure and Commissioner Adler initially stated that they didn't see the need for the letter and they preferred to focus on working with their district to move forward. The need for the letter was clarified by Commissioner Hinkle. Changing his mind, Commissioner Alder then moved to sign the letter. Commissioner McLure seconded the motion. Public Comment was received from Jordan White via Zoom stating that he would be willing to reach out to other volunteer systems across the state to get volunteers to come together to support bills like HB421. The motion passed unanimously.

**RESOLUTION 2021-6: "A GRANITE COUNTY RESOLUTION INCREASING THE FEE SCHEDULE FOR GEORGETOWN LAKE FIRE SERVICE IN GRANITE COUNTY";** **FIRST READING:** The first reading was held. There was no public comment received. The matter will be placed on the Board's agenda the following week for the second reading and decision.

**RECIPRICOL NPE TRANSFER WITH MINERAL COUNTY AIRPORT:** Riddick Field Airport needed an additional funds for its current airport planning project. It turns out, Mineral County has certain NPE funds (\$104,700) currently that they could give to Granite County for its current projects. NPE funds are non-primary entitlement funds that come from the FAA to certain qualifying airports--customarily given out on an annual basis. Granite County would then agree to give Mineral County the same amount of Granite County's NPE funds (\$104,700) for their FY2022. So it is trade for Granite County to receive funds now and give up right to NPE funds from the FAA during the next fiscal year. Essentially this is just a paperwork exercise to utilize available federal funds. An NPE Transfer Agreement was discussed that would effectuate this reciprocal transfer of funds. Commissioner Adler motioned to sign the Reciprocal NPE Transfer with Mineral County Airport. Commissioner McLure seconded the motion. Public Comment was received via Zoom from Elena Gagliano reiterated her understanding of the transfer between Riddick Field and Mineral County and voiced concerns over the Riddick Field Airport Project.

County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw responded to her concerns and clarified the transfer. Commissioner Hinkle explained that currently the project is in the planning process, and the Commission will need to approve the implementation of the project. The motion passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC HEALTH TAKING OVER CONTRACT MANAGEMENT & ACTIVITIES FOR PHEP:** Public Health Director of Anaconda-Deer Lodge County, Leigh Ann Holmes joined the Commissioners' meeting in-person to present a proposal to combine the PHEP role with the Public Health Contract. She explained that by combining Granite County PHEP with Public Health it would be more cost-effective to the County. She explained that Public Health has fully vaccinated over 400 people in the County for COVID and has taken over public-school vaccinations in Drummond. Additionally, they are currently working on getting the WIC program up and running in the area. Leigh Ann continued by stating they would like to continue that program that they have been offering and add the PHEP grant into the Public Health program. She explained that because they have the tools, the resources, and the staff already in place it would enable Granite County to utilize extra funds for Emergency Preparedness expenditures such as vaccine refrigerators, equipment, supplies, or possibly even a vehicle to utilize for vaccine clinics. Commissioner McLure voiced her support for this proposal as an opportunity to serve the County in a new way. Commissioner Adler recused himself from this Agenda item due to past conflict between himself and the current PHEP Coordinator, Dustin Muhly. Dustin provided public comment on this issue stating that this makes financial sense for the County and that this is what most other Counties across the State do. He continued by recommending that Granite County having their own Public Health Department, stating that Granite County should have a full-time nurse and assistant that could easily be funded with PHEP and other Public Health Grants already received, in addition to massive amounts of money that will be available this year from the Federal Government. He ended his statement by cautioning the Commissioners that by agreeing to this proposal Granite County will fall second to Anaconda-Deer Lodge, using the vaccine roll-out as a clear example. Scott Sylvester of the *Philipsburg Mail* followed up with public comment asking Leigh Ann to expound the vaccine roll-out, to which she explained that the vaccines were appropriated based on need and request per County. She then continued by stating that for some reason in Granite County the distribution of vaccines was very difficult, but that eventually they were able to work together. Scott then clarified his question by asking "Is there anything in this contract that binds you to deliver services to Anaconda-Deer Lodge prior to Granite County?" Leigh Ann explained that the contract does not state that and that the Public Health nurse spends time in Granite County every week, and in the proposal the PHEP Coordinator would spend 10 hours per week in Granite County. The Commissioners asked that this item be placed on the Agenda for the April 20<sup>th</sup> for a decision, since it was just on as a discussion for today.

**DEBORAH FRANSDEN, REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR US SENATOR JON TESTER'S OFFICE; AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT & FUNDING:** Deborah Frandsen joined the Commissioners to discuss the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), including the \$362B Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund. This bill allocated \$65.1B in direct federal aid to all counties based on their share of the US population. Granite County is

expected to get approximately \$660K. Commissioner Hinkle asked Deborah if ARPA monies are eligible to be used on EMS services, and she replied that the ARPA money is not eligible to be used for that type of project; ARPA money is set aside to be used for Broadband, Water, and Wastewater projects. She went on to explain that they are still writing the regulations on this money. Earlier in the day Deborah had spoken with Philipsburg Mayor Daniel Reddish, the Town of Philipsburg is receiving approximately \$220K and he is eager to pursue some water and waste water projects; and that these should be looked at from an infrastructure point of view. Also, Seely Lake just turned down a bond levy to pay for a sewer system and gave back \$6.7M in grants to USDA-RD. Commissioner McLure asked Deborah about the ability to use this money to fix roads, and brought up the issues the Town of Drummond is facing on South Mainstreet. Deborah replied that the Infrastructure Bill that just came out of the White House can be used for this type of project. Deborah asked for the status of the County's Airport Project, and Commissioner Hinkle responded that we are currently doing a study. County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw joined the conversation to explain that we have Grant with the FAA and are in the planning process. She then followed up by asking about the broadband service in our area, to which the Commission explained we have sub-par broadband service across the County and she stated that this might be something we want to explore with the ARPA money. Public Comment was received from Scott Sylvester from the *Philipsburg Mail*, asking Deborah if the \$500K that the County has left over in CARES act money can be utilized to support our EMS issues, and create an Ambulance Program, to which she explained it absolutely could. Public Comment was received from Elena Gagliano via Zoom asking why Deborah was using a document from NACo, to which she replied the breakdown from NACo was so well-done that they didn't feel like they needed to redo one. Elena then asked if the regulations are still being written. To which Deborah explained that yes, the regulations are still being written by both federal and state agencies. Elena ended her comment by stating that this is just more federal money we don't need and that she doesn't agree with.

**COUNTY SHOP IN PHILIPSBURG ENCROACHMENT PROPOSAL; FINAL AGREEMENT:** Attorney, Julie R. Sirrs joined the session via Zoom, presenting the final agreement for the quiet title action, including the drafted survey that reflects the easement and additional exhibits as requested in the previous session on March 23, 2021. Granite County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw and County Planning Director, Linda Bouck, had no issues with the agreement. Commissioner McLure moved to approve the final agreement. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion passed unanimously.

**PUBIC COMMENT:**

Jordan White commented via Zoom to state that he has been looking through archives for Granite County and noticed that in 1991 the County wanted an EMS Coordinator because there was an issue with calls not being met, supplies not being stocked, etc.; and the County wanted to start over with a whole new crew. Commissioner Hinkle stated he is still working

on it. Jordan White welcomed people to reach out to him if they would like to discussed the issue further.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** There was a request from Crystal Langton asking to use the west side lawn of the Granite County Courthouse for a National Day of Prayer Event on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM. The Commissioners have no issue with and Crystal Langton's request is approved. The County Attorney will notify her of this approval.

A letter was received from Anaconda-Deer Lodge County Commission informing the Granite County Commissioners that the A-DLC Board of Commission acted on March 23, 2021 to remove affiliation with the Tri-County Fair Board.

A letter was received from International Union of Operating Engineers notifying the Commission that the negotiation period be opened between Granite County Road & Bridge Department and Solid Waste Department and the Operating Engineers, Local 400.

A published report "Emergency Medical Services in Montana: a Crisis on the Horizon" was received from Montana Chronic Disease Prevention & Health Promotion Bureau Public Health & Safety Division. The report also generated an emailed comment from Granite County Medical Center Chief Executive Officer / DON, Maria Stoppler, notifying the Commission that the Montana Hospital Association (MHA) will be participate in in a workgroup convened by the EMS and Trauma Systems Section, and as the program moves forward she will share their feedback and insights.

**BOARD MINUTES FOR APRIL 6, 2021:** Commissioner McLure moved to accept the minutes for April 6, 2021. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There was no public comment. The motion passed unanimously

**ADJOURNMENT:** The session adjourned at 2:35 PM