

**THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF THE COMMISSIONERS**  
**MEAGHER COUNTY, MONTANA**

**Tuesday**

February 13<sup>TH</sup>, 2024

9:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Met in Commissioner's Chambers

**Meeting Called to Order:**

Chairman Brewer called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

**Commissioners Present:**

Chairman Rod Brewer, Vice Chair Ben Hurwitz and Commissioner Errol Galt were present for the meeting.

**Minutes:**

**ACTION #1**

Commissioner Galt moved to approve the minutes from January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024. Commissioner Hurwitz seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the minutes were approved.

**County Attorney Report – Burt Hurwitz:**

County Attorney Hurwitz and Victim Witness Advocate Laura Taylor entered the chambers at 9:07 a.m.

Taylor presented the Commissioners with a copy of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Grant that she applied for through the Montana Board of Crime Control. The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) annually provides grants from the Crime Victims Fund to support eligible Crime Victim Assistance Programs. Taylor stated they anticipate receiving notification regarding the grant status by June. Taylor stated that she, along with Attorney Hurwitz, worked diligently with Chief Finance Officer Dayna Ogle and several other counties to ensure that the application was comprehensive and met all necessary requirements.

Hurwitz stated that Taylor worked very carefully with several agencies and a network of people in White Sulphur Springs to assist a resident in need during the extreme cold that we experienced in January.

Taylor is still transitioning out of the Sheriff's office, keeping in communication with the Sheriff's dispatchers making sure the transition is smooth.

Hurwitz stated the Declaration of Emergency for the Willow Creek drainage will be discussed at the Planning Board meeting scheduled for March 13<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, the Planning Board will address proposed updates to the County and City Subdivision Regulations.

Hurwitz stated he had a discussion with Cal Moore regarding the possibility of passing on the housing discussions work to a resident that is experiencing the same housing issues we have been discussing. Commissioner Galt stated he thinks there is a need for someone to get compensated for doing the work and provide regular updates to the Commissions. Hurwitz mentioned additional opportunities to secure funding for workforce housing through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs. These grants are expected to be due in March.

Hurwitz stated Marilee Duncan will be here on Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> to mediate between the Sexton and the Cemetery Board. The goal is to develop a plan or policy for the efficient operation of the cemetery and establish effective communication practices.

Hurwitz informed the Commissioners there were 2 open seats on the Grassy Mountain Fire District Board and that Tony Perone filed to renew his position on the GMFD. There is still one seat vacant.



Commissioners asked Attorney Hurwitz about providing mileage reimbursement for employees who work outside of normal work hours. Hurwitz noted that the County must follow Montana Code for wage and hour policies, and there are provisions in the code for first responders that are provided vehicles. The Commission may determine to provide mileage, and/or take-home vehicles, or a fleet vehicle, but the policy should as near as possible be equal for all County employees.

**Health Nurse Report – Eva Kerr:**

Health Nurse Eva Kerr entered the chambers at 10:00 a.m.

County Health Nurse Kerr presented a Bair Grant Application to Chairman Brewer for signature. She is asking for \$9,000.00 to support the Child Immunization program. Kerr has finished the year-end reporting for last year's Bair Grant. Kerr has completed the 4 Quarter IAP report and the yearly Vaccines for Children (VFC) agreement is approved.

Kerr attended the DUI Task force meeting, where they planned for the Teen Super bowl Party February 11, 2024 at the White Sulphur Springs School. This event aims to keep kids out of trouble. Approximately 45 kids attended and the event was successful.

Kerr stated she is still seeing Covid and Influenza in the community. These illnesses seem to be increasing again as hospital beds around the state are full.

Kerr stated Emergency Services had a “Hotwash” after the extreme cold and power outage on January 31<sup>st</sup> to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the response. Kerr attended the meeting with Public Health and Emergency Services in Lewiston on January 25<sup>th</sup>. Kerr stated Kim Frisbie’s position is going well, she is assisting with various tasks at Public Health.

**Building Report – Bill Dutton:**

Building Maintenance Bill Dutton entered the chambers at 10:30 a.m.

Bill informed the Commissioners there was a complaint about the boiler pipes getting extremely hot and there is a fear of someone getting burned. Dutton is looking for something to cover the pipes to keep that from happening. Dutton stated this spring he will have Paddock Heating and Cooling install tin around the chimney at the courthouse as it is starting to show some cracking.

Dutton inquired about an emergency stipend for work he did during the extreme cold in January. The Commission declined.

Dutton stated that he is using a new chemical process this year to keep the lines and pipes and boiler from corroding. The Courthouse boiler is a steam system with a boiler water treatment. The Courthouse and Sheriff's office have steam boilers, while the Ambulance Hall and Library have stand-alone boilers.

Dutton stated he has completed all the equipment maintenance and will be working on the 4-wheeler next.

Dutton stated he is looking into a gas generator to keep the boiler running if the power goes out to ensure the courthouse stays warm so the pipes don't freeze and cause damage.

**Sheriff Report – Jon Lopp:**

Meagher County Sheriff Jon Lopp and Clerk and Recorder Liv West entered the chambers at 11:00 a.m.

Sheriff Lopp presented the Commissioners with statistics for the month of January. The Sheriff's office received 362 calls, 17 9-1-1 calls, and 240 people came into the Sheriff's office for a total of 619 people who contacted the Sheriff's Office in January.

Lopp stated that he will be exploring the possibility of applying for a Homeland Security Grant to acquire a generator for the Sheriff's Office and potentially one for the Courthouse. Lopp and West stated that a concern during a power outage is maintaining functionality for critical areas such as



emergency services, and the cameras and server room for election security. Lopp stated that a concern with the current system at the Sheriff's Office during the extreme weather and power outage in January was the propane turned to liquid and the generator would not start. If approved a Homeland Security Grant would cover the entire cost of the generator including expenses related to an underground propane tank.

West highlighted that if there was a power outage on a work day, it would necessitate declaring an emergency and sending employees home. The Commissioners inquired about the ambulance barn during a power outage, Lopp assured that the ambulance barn doors operate on batteries ensuring continued functionality during an outage.

Commissioners inquired about the Sheriff's Office opinion regarding IT support through DIS. Lopp stated that he contacted Fergus County Sheriff's Office about MCT IT support and was informed that they are still with DIS but will eventually be migrating to MCT. Lopp stated that the biggest concern with DIS is getting quick response for service calls and being able to facilitate timely transfer of files with the County Attorney for trials. Commissioner Hurwitz stated that he was very impressed with Garrett Johnson from DIS and his knowledge of the county's IT infrastructure. Commissioners tabled any decision until February 20th when they have more information.

**Public Comment:**

No Public Comment.

**Claims Approved:**

Commissioners were presented with Check # 61100 through Check # 61143 totaling \$74,278.25. Electronic Check #-99982 through #-99985 totaling \$3,146.66. All Checks were signed as presented.

**Meeting Adjourned:**

Meeting was adjourned at 11:45a.m.

**Next Meeting:**

Commissioners are scheduled to meet Tuesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

  
CLERK & RECORDER



CHAIRMAN

  
VICE-CHAIRMAN

  
COMMISSIONER

Note: Minutes taken by Clerk to the Commission Jennifer Deems  
Distributed February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024 to Chairman Brewer, Vice Chair Hurwitz, and Commissioner Galt, and Clerk & Recorder Liv A. West.

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