

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

**Tuesday**

January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022

8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Met in Commissioner's Chambers

**Meeting Called to Order:**

Chair Townsend called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

**Commissioners Present:**

Chair Herb Townsend, Vice Chair Rod Brewer, and Commissioner Ben Hurwitz were present for the meeting.

**Minutes:**

**ACTION #1**

Commissioner Brewer moved to approve the Minutes from December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Chair Townsend seconded the motion. A vote was taken and minutes were approved.

**Road Report—Jake Kusek:**

Road Supervisor Jake Kusek entered the chambers at 9:00 a.m.

Kusek updated the Commissioners on snow plowing and the incident that took place in Ringling that damaged a vehicle. Kusek then presented the Commissioners with two (2) quotes for a new plow apparatus for plowing at the airport. The first quote was from John Deere for a fourteen (14) foot plow costing \$6,500 and the second was CAT for a fifteen (15) foot plow costing \$23,000. Commissioners and Kusek discussed the quotes, airport funding options for the capital purchases given to him by Airport Manager Kurt Burns, and how the road crew would install the equipment.

**Sheriff Report – Sheriff Jon Lopp:**

Sheriff Jon Lopp entered the chambers at 9:30 a.m.

Lopp presented the Commissioners with the Complaint Report for December 2021. Lopp updated the Commissioners on the training occurring at the Sheriff's Office with the new Records Software and the K9 training Deputy Wilson will be attending for four (4) weeks in March 2022. Lopp and the Commissioners discussed the complaint report and the higher number of vehicle accident reports near the end of December 2021.

### **Rural Addressing Concerns – Planning Board & Jerry Grebenc:**

Jerry Grebenc, Matt Blassic, County Attorney Burt Hurwitz, Deputy Clerk & Recorder Liv West, Chief Financial Officer Dayna Ogle, Planning Board Members Nancy Schlepp, and Jess Secrest entered the chambers at 10:00 a.m. Craig Erickson and Planning Board member Terry Taylor attended via ZOOM Teleconferencing.

Erickson opened discussion about how ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding could be used towards the Next Generation E911 Addressing Project. Blassic explained the statewide projection to have the Next Generation E911 system in use no later than 2025 and grant opportunities through E911 and the Montana State Library. Blassic also explained how the project would be completed in about three (3) phases and take about two (2) to three (3) years to complete. Commissioners and all present discussed the timeline of the project phases, funding, the positive utilizations of the program throughout multiple county departments, and possible impacts for residents. After discussion, Commissioners made the following decision on the Next Generation E911 Addressing Project.

### **ACTION #2**

#### **Resolution Fiscal Year 21.22 - #42**

Commissioner Hurwitz moves that Great West Engineering pursue the state grant funding options for the Next Generation E911 Addressing Project and have the Chairman of the board execute all formal documents for signature. Commissioner Brewer seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed.

Blassic will compile a draft grant application for the Clerk and Recorder's office to review and edit. Final draft of the application will then be given to Chief Financial Officer Ogle for signature and submittal through Great West Engineering.

### **Meagher County Subdivision Regulations – Jerry Grebenc:**

Grebenc then updated the Commissioners on the presented Draft Meagher County Subdivision Regulations from the Consolidated Planning Board. Grebenc stated that the document has current 2021 Legislative requirements and edits by the board in the design and improvement section to best suit Meagher County. Grebenc and the Commissioners discussed allowing the

document to be available to public for review for a month and hold a public hearing for final adoption near the end of February 2022. Commissioners decided to hold a special meeting on Tuesday February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. on the subdivision regulations and accept public comments on the document until February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022 by 4:00 p.m. Grebenc stated that he would provide Clerk Rebekah Luchterhand with the public hearing notice and a newspaper article for submittal to Meagher County News for further notification to the public.

### **Public Hearing – Budget Amendment – Dayna Ogle:**

Chief Financial Officer Dayna Ogle entered the chambers at 11:00 a.m.

Ogle presented the Commissioners with a budget amendment for the Ambulance Fund 2230 for Fiscal Year 20.21 and the Cemetery Fund 2240 for Fiscal Year 21.22 for signature.

### **ACTION #3**

*Image in the Minutes filed in the Clerk & Recorder's Office*

### **Lunch**

### **New Year's Resolutions:**

### **ACTION #4**

### **Gypsum Mine Presentation – Ryder Juntunen:**

County Attorney Burt Hurwitz and Chief Financial Officer Dayna Ogle entered the chambers at 1:30 p.m. Ryder Juntunen and Nathan Allen attended via ZOOM Teleconferencing.

Juntunen and Allen presented the Commissioners with information and maps on a gypsum mine that GCC Trident Plant is looking to start on private land out in the Lingshire area to replace their mine in Geysers, Montana. Allen and Juntunen stated that this operation, if permitted, would take place from May to November or as weather permitted. The site would have three (3) to five (5) workers loading trucks that will haul to the Trident Plant near Three Forks. Exploration for the mine was completed in the Summer of 2021 and will be submitting their application to DEQ during January 2022. The permitting process of the mine would take between two (2) to three (3) years depending on public comments and required environmental studies. Commissioners brought up concerns about road maintenance and the truck traffic on the road. Commissioners, Juntunen, and Allen discussed the road maintenance and how an agreement could be drafted between GCC and the County for compensation. County Attorney Hurwitz requested that

Juntunen send the Commissioners a copy of their permit application for review once it is submitted to DEQ. Discussion concluded on the topic of tax revenue from the mine through Hard Rock Mining laws or Metal Mines taxing. It was unclear if any revenue would be seen from a gypsum mine.

**Public Comment:**

Cemetery Board members Jerami West and Mike Wofford entered the chambers at 2:30 p.m.

West and Wofford updated the Commissioners about the clutch issue with the Cemetery Truck and deferred maintenance of various equipment. Commissioners, West, and Wofford discussed contracting snow removal for the 2022 winter season, locations that the Sexton plowed for the county, and snow removal equipment for to purchase in the Fiscal Year 22.23 budget. Discussion ended with the decision to place a call for bid in the Meagher County News for plowing of various county location for the 2022 winter. Bids are to be opened at the Commissioner's schedule meeting on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 4:00p.m.

**Claims Approved:**

Commissioners were presented with Check #58738 through Check #58765 totaling \$25,590.33. All Checks were signed as presented.

**Meeting Adjourned:**

Meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

**Next Meeting:**

Commissioners are scheduled to meet Tuesday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

**Tuesday**  
January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.  
Met in Commissioner's Chambers

**Meeting Called to Order:**

Chair Townsend called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

**Commissioners Present:**

Chair Herb Townsend, Vice Chair Rod Brewer, and Commissioner Ben Hurwitz were present for the meeting.

**Minutes:**

**ACTION #1**

Commissioner Brewer moved to approve the Minutes from December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Chair Townsend seconded the motion. A vote was taken and minutes were approved.

**County Attorney Report – Burt Hurwitz:**

County Attorney Burt Hurwitz entered the chambers at 9:00 a.m.

County Attorney Hurwitz presented the Commissioners with a December 2021 report. County Attorney Hurwitz then updated the Commissioners on civil and criminal matters within the County. County Attorney Hurwitz updated the Commissioners on the Catlin Ranch Minor Subdivision Application and the review to take place in front of the Consolidated Planning Board on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The board will formally review the application January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 2:30 p.m. Commissioners and County Attorney Hurwitz discussed the County's ARPA funding and meetings with Great West about the grants for the addressing project.

**Health Nurse Report – Eva Kerr R.N.:**

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

Kerr presented the Commissioners with a Health Nurse Report for December 2021. Kerr updated the Commissioners on vaccination clinics for both Flu and COVID19, daily COVID19 testing availability, and the resignation of Tara Wilson from the Disease Intervention Specialist position. Kerr stated that the job has been posted and applications are due on Friday January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Commissioners and Kerr discussed the current increase in COVID19 cases and the differences in the variant effects.

### **Board of Health:**

Health Nurse Eva Kerr R.N., Sandy Harris, Commissioners, and County Attorney Burt Hurwitz were present in the chambers. Sanitarian Sean Hill attended via ZOOM Teleconferencing.

Kerr presented the Disease Reporting from October 2021 through December 2021 and new CDC guidelines regarding quarantine and isolation. Kerr stated that there were three (3) Influenza Type A, zero (0) Influenza Type B with no Influenza hospitalizations. She also stated that for calendar year 2021 Meagher County had 168 cases of COVID19, zero (0) Influenza A or B cases, twelve (12) animal bites, three (3) cases of Campylobacteriosis, and three (3) cases of Chlamydia. All presented reviewed the new CDC guidelines for isolation and quarantine. Discussion took place about the new guidelines, how the Health Department will post the information to the public, how supply chains are affecting the availability of supplies, and the daily testing for COVID19.

Hill had no update but that he would be in White Sulphur Springs to asses a new restaurant establishment.

Mayor Nelson updated the board on the hiring of Great West Engineering for the City of White Sulphur Springs.

### **Cemetery Board Update – Amanda Clayton & Jerami West:**

*Cancelled until January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022*

### **LEPC Lunch**

### **Quarterly Budget Review – Dayna Ogle:**

Chief Financial Officer Dayna Ogle entered the chambers at 1:00 p.m.

Ogle presented the Commissioners with budget reports for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of Fiscal Year 21.22. Commissioners and Ogle discussed the expenditure budgets that were 50% or more spent and the revenues of budgets that were less than 50% received at this time.

**Public Comment:**

No Public Comment.

**Claims Approved:**

Commissioners were presented with Check #58766 through Check #58776 totaling \$7,700.75.  
All Checks were signed as presented.

**Meeting Adjourned:**

Meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

**Next Meeting:**

Commissioners are scheduled to meet Tuesday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

**Tuesday**  
January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Met in Commissioner's Chambers

**Meeting Called to Order:**

Chair Townsend called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

**Commissioners Present:**

Chair Herb Townsend and Vice Chair Rod Brewer were present for the meeting. Commissioner Ben Hurwitz was absent due to illness.

**Minutes:**

**ACTION #1**

Commissioner Brewer moved to approve the Minutes from January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Chair Townsend seconded the motion. A vote was taken and minutes were approved.

**Library Report – Jessica Ketola:**

Librarian Jessica Ketola entered the chambers at 9:00 a.m.

Ketola updated that during December 2021 the library donated ninety-four (94) pounds to the foodbank, host story-times, had nineteen (19) public uses of the meeting room, host vendors and had holiday crafts during the Christmas Stroll, and held their annual Gingerbread party. Ketola also stated that the library recently held a bookmark contest and brought out the guessing jar for the community. She then updated that the Library Board had completed edits to the current Library Policy Book and presented the Commissioners with a resignation letter. Commissioner and Ketola discussed her resignation from her position; Ketola's last day would be March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

**Action #2**

**Resolution Fiscal Year 21.22 - #51**

Commissioner Brewer moved to post the job opening for a Meagher County Library Director/Librarian in the Meagher County News and on the county website. Chair Townsend seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed.

**Road Report – Jake Kusek:**

Road Supervisor Jake Kusek entered the chambers at 9:30 a.m.

Kusek updated the Commissioners on snow plowing and equipment maintenance.

**Fire Report – Chad Evans & Jake Kusek:**

Kusek updated the Commissioners that the department would like to apply for a Bair Grant and would like permission to reach out to Craig Erickson at Great West Engineering to help write the grant. Commissioners and Kusek discussed the two main ideas that the department has to apply for funding. Commissioners and Kusek then discussed the Polaris Ranger Unit that the Fire would loan the Cemetery for snow plowing in the winter. Kusek stated that he would be willing to allow the Cemetery to utilize the machine year-round with an agreement that fire could take the machine as needed during the fire season.

**Extension Report – Makayla Paul:**

Extension Agent Makayla Paul entered the chambers at 10:30 a.m.

Paul presented the Commissioners with a January 2022 Report. Paul updated the Commissioners on the 4H Council's recent work to update the Meagher County 4H Fair Book, the beef nutrition class and weigh-in that took place on Sunday January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 4H Camp planning, and how the council so far has raised \$15,384 towards the new beef building. Commissioners and Paul discussed the main changes to the fair book, her opportunity to attend Western 4-H Institute in Colorado, and the council's goal for fundraising in the next year.

Paul then updated them on various agricultural based training she has attended throughout late December 2021 until now. Paul stated that she is working on meeting producers by attending local events and directly contacting producers. Commissioners and Paul discussed private applicator pesticide training in March/April of 2022 and hosting a reproduction pre-breeding roundtable for Meagher County producers in the late Spring of 2022.

**Treasurer Report – Shannon Graham:**

Treasurer Shannon Graham entered the chambers at 11:00 a.m.

Graham presented the commissioners with the Cash Report for November 2021 and December 2021 for signature and the quarterly Harmon Trust Reports. Graham and the Commissioners discussed the cash reports and daily balancing tools used in the Treasurer's Office.

## **Lunch**

### **Northwestern Energy Update – Howard Skjervem:**

Northwestern Energy (NWE) Communications Area Manager Howard Skjervem, Operations Manager Charlie Smith, Electric Supervisor Steve Rock, and area Small Town Manager Sean Dafferner entered the chambers at 1:00 p.m. Barry Hedrich, Ron Sorg, Brenda Nelson, Mayor Rick Nelson, Chief Financial Officer Dayna Ogle entered the chambers at 1:00 p.m.

Skjervem presented the Commissioners with packets of information. Skjervem opened discussion by introducing Operations Manager Charlie Smith, Electric Supervisor Steve Rock, and area Small Town Manager Sean Dafferner. Skjervem then gave an overview of what Northwestern Energy has completed in Meagher County since their last meeting with the Commissioner in 2018. Smith and Rock gave specific updates to structure replacements that took place on multiple KV lines located within the county. Structure replacement is either a pole, teo poles, and transformers. Total Structures replaced from 2018-2021 was 195 totaling a cost of \$2,114,632. A \$22,000,000 project was also completed on the transmission line from Great Falls to Two Dot Montana.

Sorg and Hedrich both questioned the stability of the power being provided to White Sulphur Springs and Meagher County. Both stated that the increase in power fluctuations as negatively impacted their businesses and the community with power outages. Smith and Dafferner responded to the concerns and offered tracking devices to help NWE address the situation. Chair Townsend requested that Northwestern Energy please place a serviceman back within the Meagher County borders to help with response time for outages. Mayor Nelson also requested the same. Smith responded with information of workload requirements and how the company defends their decision for the serviceman to remain in Townsend Montana.

Discussion ended on the proposed question from Hedrich about Northwestern Energy's future plans for providing power when Coal Strip is no longer a viable option. Skjervem updated that the company is looking into natural gas power within Yellowstone County, hydropower, and other renewable sources. Chair Townsend proposed the question if nuclear power was an option or being explored. Smith and Rock stated that currently smaller nuclear power options are being tested within Idaho that could become a valid option in the future.

### **Catlin Ranch Minor Subdivision Review:**

Jerry Grebenc, Ray Center, and Terri Taylor attended via ZOOM Teleconferencing.

Grebenc updated the Commissioners that at the January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Consolidated Planning Board meeting the board moved to present the Catlin Ranch Minor Subdivision for preliminary plat approval with the addition that language be provided on the plat or in a plat supplement document about a dumpsite that used to be on the property. Grebenc suggested to the Commissioners that the language about the dumpsite be place in a supplemental document that would be filed along side the final plat document. Discussion took place about the old ranch dumpsite and the Commissioners made the following decision.

**ACTION #3**

**Resolution Fiscal Year 21.22 - #52**

Chair Townsend moved to accept the Preliminary Plat of the Catlin Ranch Minor Subdivision with plain language added about an old ranch dumpsite on the property for future buyer disclosure. Commissioner Brewer seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed. The issue is hereby resolved.

**Opening Sealed Bids – Snow Removal:**

Cemetery Board members Penny Plachy and Mike Wofford entered the chambers at 4:00 p.m. Cemetery Sexton Amanda Clayton and Cemetery Board Member Jerami West attended via ZOOM Teleconferencing.

No bids were received.

**Cemetery Board Update – Amanda Clayton & Jerami West:**

Plachy presented the Commissioners with a quote from Lewistown Honda for the purchase of a snow plow blade and winch. Plachy stated that labor would be billed at \$94.00 per hour for the installation. All present discussed the quote and how effective the unit would for plowing the County Courthouse, Library, Ambulance Building, and the Cemetery. Commissioners decided the following and requested that the board make contingency plans for snow removal in the meantime.

**ACTION #4**

**Resolution Fiscal Year 21.22 - #53**

Commissioner Brewer moved to purchase a blade and winch from Lewistown Honda for 1499.00 and pay for labor to install. Chair Townsend seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed.

Clayton then updated the Commissioners that the records update is digitally complete and being compared to the large plat books within the Clerk & Recorder's Office. Discrepancies are still

being found but she has reached out to Sandy Harris, previous Sexton Harris's wife, for assistance with those questions.

**Public Comment:**

No Public Comment.

**Claims Approved:**

Commissioners were presented with Check #58777 through Check #58800 totaling \$22,141.82. All Checks were signed as presented.

**Meeting Adjourned:**

Meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

**Next Meeting:**

Commissioners are scheduled to meet Tuesday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.