

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

Tuesday
July 15th, 2025
9:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Commissioner Chambers

Meeting Called to Order:

Chairman Hurwitz called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Commissioners Present:

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

Minutes:

ACTION #1

Commissioner Brewer moved to approve the minutes from July 8th, 2025. Vice-Chairman Galt seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the minutes were approved.

ACTION #2

Resolution FY 25.26 #4

Vice-Chairman Galt moved to approve the publication for the Extension Agent position. Commissioner Brewer seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion was passed. The issue is hereby resolved.

Monthly Library Report-Rachel Wahlstrom

Library Co-Director Rachel Wahlstrom entered the chambers at 8:58 a.m.

A new Lego Club has been initiated by Emma Hensley, who is a recent addition to the Friends of the Library. The Lego Club is currently in the planning stages, determining whether meetings will be held weekly, bi-weekly or monthly, free play versus constructive building, as well as finalizing the appropriate age range for participants. The Friends of the Library are also gearing up for the Red Ants Pants book sale.

Wahlstrom said that the library did receive the \$1000 Town Pump Summer Reading Grant.

Wahlstrom stated the summer reading program is going well. They are averaging over 50-60 kids with adults it is close to mid-70 in total. Most Summer Programs go for only six weeks; however, our summer reading program goes eight weeks until the end of July. Wahlstrom mentioned that throughout the summer, they offer reading charts children can use to track the books they read and earn a prize once the chart is full, with the challenge running until school starts. Story time will start then with the start of the school year.

Monthly Treasurer Report-Dayna Ogle

County Treasurer Dayna Ogle entered the chambers at 9:33 a.m.

Ogle stated that we are not quite balanced yet but she also found an error in last month's balancing so she will be bringing up May and June for signature when completed. Eve Lomax is doing great at the Motor Vehicle counter and Dayna Ogle is almost through training.

Appoint new Rural Fire Chief

County Attorney Burt Hurwitz, Crime Victim Advocate Laura Taylor, Road Supervisor Jake Kusek, Secrest Fire Solutions Jess Secrest, Undersheriff Jerami West, City Council Member Ron Frisbie, and Signe Freeze entered the chambers at 10:00 a.m.

ACTION #3

Resolution FY 25.26 #5

Vice-Chairman Galt moved to appoint Ronald Teig, Jr. as the Rural Fire Chief. Chairman Hurwitz seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed. The issue is hereby resolved.

A discussion on the Meagher County Fire reorganization is set for Tuesday, July 22, 2025 at 8:30 a.m.

Jake Kusek and the Commissioners briefly discussed road work and the road millings for Martinsdale. The tentative date to start the millings is the 29th of July. They will need approximately 4,000 yards in Martinsdale.

Planning Board-Jess Secrest

City County Consolidated Planning Board Chair Jess Secrest entered the chambers at 10:30 a.m.

Secrest asked the Commissioners for input on potential candidates to fill the upcoming vacancy on the Planning Board, as Mike Rhynard will not be renewing his term.

Vice-Chairman Galt inquired about the number of committee members, the frequency of their meetings, and the meeting location. Secrest responded that the committee consists of seven members: himself, Vice Chair Dan Rooney, Kathy Hochstrat, Terry Taylor, TJ Paulson, Otto Ohlson and one position that is currently vacant. They are programmed to meet monthly; however, due to limited agenda items, they have convened only about three or four times this year. Secrest noted that the meetings are held at the courthouse and also accessible via Zoom. Secrest emphasized the importance of selecting a candidate with strong interpersonal skills.

ACTION #4

Resolution FY 25.26 #6

Vice-Chairman Galt moved to approve Kathy Hochstrat for another 2-year term as City County Consolidated Planning Board Committee Member. Commissioner Brewer seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed. The issue is hereby resolved.

Sanitation-Southwest Montana Consulting, INC

Registered Sanitarian Van Puckett entered the chambers at 10:49 a.m.

County Attorney Burt Hurwitz, County Health Nurse Eva Kerr R.N., and County Clerk and Recorder Liv West entered the chambers 10:56 a.m.

Registered Sanitarian Zach Kozicky attended VIA ZOOM Teleconferencing at 10:58 a.m.

Puckett stated that Southwest Montana Consulting, INC. (SMCI) is currently servicing two active contracts-one with the Central Montana Health District and another with Fergus County. Although Fergus County has recently hired a Sanitarian, they continue to retain SMCI on an on-call, as-needed basis. This flexible, responsive approach is consistent across all SMCI's contracts.

Commissioner Brewer inquired whether SMCI manages all aspects of the work. Puckett confirmed that they do, explaining that their responsibilities include licensing establishments, overseeing land use for septic systems, and handling various other small tasks- most of which are managed through phone or email communication. For counties with fewer than 100 licenses, the majority of the work involves conducting inspections, typically once per year for most establishments and twice annually for schools. SMCI also serves as a liaison with public health entities and addresses any related concerns.

County Attorney Burt Hurwitz inquired about SMCI's policy regarding inter-office communication. Puckett explained that communication is handled flexibly between Kozicky and Puckett with texting and email being very effective methods.

Commissioner Brewer asked about the typical structure of SMCI's contracts.

Puckett clarified that billing is based on hours worked. SMCI travels to designated locations and, when necessary, stays overnight. They typically work twelve-hour shifts and aim to complete all necessary tasks during that timeframe.

Vice-Chairman Galt inquired whether their current setup would be effective during the Red Ants Pants Music Festival, noting that it's a particularly busy time for the town. Puckett responded that they already have a plan in place for the Festival and have secured campground reservations in town for the upcoming event.

County Attorney Burt Hurwitz recommended executing the one-year contract that SMCI provided which addresses establishment to cover the Red Ants Pants Music Festival. After the Festival, County Clerk and Recorder Liv West and County Attorney Hurwitz will contact Septic installers and draft a RFP to address all services.

Puckett emphasized that SMCI can continue to provide support on the side, even if the county hires a full-time Sanitarian in the future. He reiterated that SMCI remains available day and night to support their clients.

ACTION #5

Resolution FY 25.26 #7

Vice-Chairman Galt moved to approve the Southwest Montana Consulting, INC service project. Chairman Hurwitz seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed. The issue is hereby resolved.

Budget Workshop-Jennifer Deems

Chief Finance Officer Jennifer Deems and County Treasurer Dayna Ogle entered the chambers at 11:30 a.m.

Finance Officer Deems, County Treasurer Ogle and the Commissioners reviewed the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 proposed budget.

Budget workshop will continue on July 22, 2025.

Public Comment:

No public comment

Claims Approved:

Commissioners were presented with Check #62656 through Check #62684 and #062711, #062712, and #062713 totaling \$343946.24. Electronic Check #-99529 through #-99526 totaling \$1001.04. All Checks were signed as presented.

Meeting Adjourned:

Meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Next Meeting:


Commissioners are scheduled to meet Tuesday, July 22th, 2025.


CLERK & RECORDER

SEAL




CHAIRMAN


VICE-CHAIRMAN


COMMISSIONER

Note: Minutes taken by Clerk to the Commission Briana Frasier
Distributed July 22th, 2025 to Chairman Hurwitz, Vice Chair Galt, and Commissioner Brewer, and Clerk & Recorder Liv A. West.