

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

**Tuesday**

February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023

8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Met in Commissioner's Chambers

**Meeting Called to Order:**

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

**Commissioners Present:**

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

**Minutes:**

**ACTION #1**

Chair Brewer moved to approve the Minutes from January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Commissioner Galt seconded the motion. A vote was taken and minutes were approved.

Commissioner Hurwitz moved to approve the Minutes from January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023. Commissioner Galt seconded the motion. A vote was taken and minutes were approved. Commissioner Galt abstained from voting.

**Monthly Sheriff Report – Jon Lopp:**

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

Lopp presented the Commissioners with the January 2023 Complaint Report. Lopp and the Commissioners discussed the complaint report. Lopp stated that Dispatcher Ryan Lowe is attending training at the Law Enforcement Academy in Helena this week. Also, Deputy Wilson's patrol vehicle's transmission replacement has been completed and will be delivered to the Sheriff's Office by the end of today. Lopp updated Commissioner Galt on the Drone Unit that was approved for purchase at the January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023 meeting. Lopp and the Commissioners discussed the benefits of the drone unit and license requirements for operators.

**Sprinkler Maintenance/Service Contract Review & Decision – Bill Dutton:**

Commissioners reviewed the sprinkler service phone solicitation sheet and the proposals received proposal from Castle Mountain Sales and Ben Haugan. The following decision was made.

**ACTION #2**

**Resolution Fiscal Year 22.23 - #85**

Commissioner Hurwitz moved to accept the Sprinkler Maintenance/Service contract with Castle Mountain Sales. Commissioners Galt seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed. The issue is hereby resolved.

Clerk Luchterhand will notify Maintenance Supervisor Bill Dutton of the decision and have him contact Castle Mountain Sales.

**Open Sealed Bids – 2003 Sled Bed Trailer – Lee Zehntner:**

Chair Brewer was presented with the received sealed bid for the 2003 Sled Bed Trailer. Chair Brewer opened the one (1) sealed bid from Tanner Mitchell for \$607.00. the following decision was made.

**ACTION #3**

**Resolution Fiscal Year 22.23 - #86**

Chair Brewer moved to accept the bid from Tanner Mitchell in the amount of \$607.00 for the 2003 Sled Bed Trailer. Commissioner Galt seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed. The issue is hereby resolved.

Clerk Luchterhand will contact Tanner Mitchell about his winning bid.

**MACo Health Care Trust – Pam Walling:**

MACo Health Care Trust Representatives Pam Walling and Sandra Marks and Human Resource Officer Dayna Ogle entered the chambers at 11:00 a.m. Deputy Clerk & Recorder Penny Plachy entered the chambers at 11:15 a.m.

Walling and Marks introduced themselves and gave a brief history of the MACo Health Care Trust. Walling explained that the Health Care Trust rates are established by pooling participating counties. Policy pricing depends on the amount of claims received by monetary value within a given year.

Walling stated in order to prepare a quote for Meagher County she would need a census of eligible employees (number of employees and age) and the current health coverage plans. Walling would compare MACo Health Care Trust plans to the current Meagher County plans and note key differences. Once Walling receives information from the County, she would be able to have a package created within ten (10) days. Commissioners requested that Ogle, Clerk Luchterhand, and Walling work together to create a quote for Meagher County.

**Lunch**

**Monthly Road/Fire Report – Jake Kusek**

Road Supervisor/Volunteer Fire Chief Jake Kusek, City Fire Chief Sam Peeler, DNRC Don Popple, DRNC Chris Spliethof, DRNC Dan Miller, Treasurer Maura Kusek, Deputy Treasurer Shauna Porter, and Chief Financial Officer Dayna Ogle entered the chambers at 1:00 p.m.

Popple gave history of the Federal Fire Protection Assessment program. The program originated from the 1911 fires. Most landowners simply do not have the capability or financial resources to suppress wildfires on their land. Legislature authorized the DNRC to provide Wildfire Protection to private landowners for a minimum fee. Wildfire Fire Protection Districts were formed, all forest landowners in the District are protected and required to pay the fire protection fee. Later, Wildland Fire Affidavit Units were created. Landowners can voluntarily sign an affidavit requesting the protection. The wildfire assessment is a flat fee for each landowner in each protection district plus thirty (30) cents an acre for each acre over twenty (20) acres. Commissioners asked if the affidavit grounds would ever been expanded or changed. Popple stated that changes would have to be done through legislation.

Spliethof gave a history of the DNRC County Co-Op Fire program. In 1967, the first County-State Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement was entered into by the state with Meagher County. This enabled the state to provide organizational and planning assistance, equipment, training, and also direct fire suppression support to the county. The county in turn protects all state and private lands within the county which are not under the protection of another recognized forest fire protection agency. Spliethof also explained how the Meagher County Fire Department can request assistance from their office to help. Spliethof and Kusek explained times when the DRNC assisted the county fire department. Commissioners thanked Spliethof for the positive cooperation between the entities for fire suppression.

Discussion took place about how the Federal Fire Fee is assessed on the landowner's real property tax statement and is paid when taxes are due in November and May. The fee was inadvertently left off the real property tax statements due to an upload error between the Department of Revenue and the Meagher County. Popple stated he would do research on how the DRNC could assist in collecting the fee from the program participants. Commissioners tabled any formal decision for the payment of the Federal Fire Protection Fee until their February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023 meeting.

Kusek then ended discussion with a brief Fire and Road Report. Kusek presented the Commissioners with a letter received from Michael and Katherine Walter. Kusek explained that the letter is requesting permission to remove snow from around their personal mailbox that sits on the County Road. Commissioners stated to write a letter in response granting permission to remove snow from around their mailbox. Kusek and the Commissioners then discussed the two (2) structure fires that took place at the end of January 2023. One structure was a total loss and the other had repairable damages.

**Community Health Worker Introduction – Christina Sandford:**

*Cancelled*

**Public Comment:**

No Public Comment.

**Claims Approved:**

Commissioners were presented with Check #60020 through Check #60048 totaling \$47,056.62. All Checks were signed as presented.

**Meeting Adjourned:**

Meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

**Next Meeting:**

Commissioners are scheduled to meet Tuesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

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**CLERK & RECORDER**

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**CHAIRMAN**

**SEAL**

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**VICE-CHAIRMAN**

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**COMMISSIONER**

Note: Minutes taken by Clerk to the Commission Rebekah Luchterhand  
Distributed February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to Chairman Brewer, Vice Chair Hurwitz and Commissioner Galt, and Clerk & Recorder West.