

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

**Tuesday**

May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023

8:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Met in Commissioner's Chambers

**Meeting Called to Order:**

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

**Commissioners Present:**

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

**Minutes:**

**ACTION #1**

Commissioner Galt moved to approve the minutes from April 18, 2023. Commissioner Brewer seconded the motion. A vote was taken and minutes were approved.

**Road/Fire Report – Jake Kusek:**

Jake Kusek entered the chambers at 9am

Commissioner Galt asked Kusek if he had received a request for a speed study on Highway 89. Kusek suggested to contact Sean Ringer at the State Highway Department for information on the process of conducting a speed study on a State highway. Galt will forward the email to Finance Officer Dayna Ogle & county Attorney Burt Hurwitz to follow up on.

Kusek reported one of the status of the new leased graders. The first grader should be arriving by the end of May with the second to follow 2-3 weeks later.

Kusek then reported on the recent flooding and the damage to county roads. The most significant damage on the Bonanza Creek Rd near Lennep, the road was almost entirely washed out. The county was able to rent an excavator to aid in the repairs to the Bonanza Ck Rd. Kusek also commented on the flooding due to warmer temperatures in the town of Ringling. Other county roads affected by the runoff included Battle Creek Rd, Canyon Ranch Rd, and Stud Horse Rd.

Commissioner Galt inquired on the status of the highway project near Martinsdale and the potential of using the asphalt milling to repair the roads in the town of Martinsdale. Kusek thought the project was put off until next summer, he suggested contacting the State Highway department for more details. They also discussed option for repairing the roads temporarily, possibly filling the holes with gravel or old millings. Kusek said he has seen good results by mixing gravel and the millings together. Jake will inspect the streets in Martinsdale and report back to the Commission. Galt suggested possibly removing the existing asphalt since it will be removed next summer when the Martinsdale Water & Sewer project commences.

The need for street signs in Martinsdale was discussed. Not having the streets identified hinders emergency services providers. Kusek will gather some information on the cost of street signs. The number of signs needed is estimated at between 20-25.

There were 2 reported fires in the county. The first near Martinsdale, it was thought to have started by an electrical problem in a barn. The owners Cattle Pod/ Bull Rack was lost in the fire. Martinsdale fire was dispatched, however the power outage shortly before the fire had left the Martinsdale repeater not functioning so radio communication was not available. Meagher County Fire was dispatched. The second fire was south of Ringling, a local rancher/farmer called

for a burn permit to burn stubble that turned out to be a haystack. Meagher County fire was dispatched to the fire.

The Volunteer Fire Department was awarded a Bair Grant in the amount of \$16,500 for the purchase of a UTV to aid in fighting wildland fires. The UTV is in stock and available for purchase at Lewistown Honda.

Kusek then reported on the Paul Hill Memorial decals. The Volunteer fire department is selling as a fund raiser. To date the initial investment has been repaid and any further purchases of the decals will go directly into the Paul Hill Memorial Fund. The public has shown great support for the memorial decals.

### **Sheriff Report – Jon Lopp:**

Lopp entered the chamber at 9:20

Commissioner Galt inquired about any opportunities to purchase street signs through the 911 program. Sheriff Lopp will check for any available grants through the 911 program and Disaster and emergency Services programs.

E-dispatch program is working well and the new CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) system implemented this week. Now when emergency services personnel receive an emergency call they will receive a message through the E-Dispatch app on their phone. The message will contain a map showing where the emergency is located along with the address and the nature of the emergency. The second message will be the voice call from the dispatcher on duty.

Galt inquired about the Martinsdale repeater not functioning correctly and the possibility of the UPS (uninterrupted power supply) failing. Galt will check the batteries at the repeater tower. Lopp explained the repeaters at Black Butte and Checkerboard both run on solar power and their batteries have an expected life of 10 years.

Deputy Cody Wilson will be going to North Carolina for the month of July to train at Excel K-9 Services Inc. Deputy Wilson will train with the replacement K-9 narcotic dog for one month before coming home and putting the K-9 to work.

Search & Rescue received a Bair Grant in the amount of \$8,000 for their portion of the cost of the drone. Lopp reported the drone pilots have received their initial drone pilot training. Lopp was impressed with the capabilities of the drone. The drone has a range of between ½ - ¾ mile. The pilots are trained to keep the drone in sight. A minimum of 2 pilots are needed to fly the drone, one to run the controls and one to be a “spotter” and watch for obstacles etc. It is ideal during a search to have 3 pilots; one to control the drone, one to spot and one to watch on the video feed from the drone.

Disaster & Emergency Service received a Bair Grant in the amount of \$15,000 for the purchase of portable radios. The new portable radios will have the capability of being programmed in the field with 150 channel capacity. This will ease communication between Meagher county emergency services and outside Incident management Teams.

The Sheriff Office received a Bair Grant in the amount of \$15,000 for the purchase of four (4) thermal vision monocular devices, each unit costs \$3900. The units have the ability to record video, take pictures and email the image/video. The units have heat recognition at 3200 yards and human recognition at 1300 yards. The units will be asset to the department, and can be used during the day or at night.

### **Community Health Worker Introduction – Christina Sanford**

Cancelled

### **Clerk & Recorder - Liv West**

Clerk & Recorder Liv West & Temporary Deputy Clerk & Recorder Penny Plachy entered the chamber at 10:00 a.m.

West presented the contract with Susan Beley, Wheatland County Superintendent of Schools to meet the qualification in MCA 20-3-207 and MCA 20-3-201. The contract is for the remainder of Fiscal Year 23 and all of Fiscal Year 24. The contract has a base rate of \$100/year with an hourly rate of \$40/ hour. The current state rates for mileage, meals and motel accommodations will also apply.

Plachy inquired about the minutes from prior months that need to be recorded. The minutes were signed by the Commissioner's Brewer and Galt, and are waiting Commissioner Hurwitz signature.

West informed the Commission that she will be cancelling the maintenance contract with Daida for the maintenance on the Scan Pro. West feels the device does not warrant the need for an on-going maintenance agreement.

West presented the job description for a Deputy Clerk & Recorder. The job description was reviewed by the Commission. West asked to open the position for applications. The job will be posted in the Meagher County News, on the website and on the Meagher County Facebook page.

## **ACTION #2**

### **Resolution Fiscal year 22.23 - #100**

Commissioner Galt moved to accept the *Contract for Services of County Superintendent* with Susan Beley. Commissioner Brewer seconded. A vote was taken and passed. The issue is hereby resolved.

### **MACo Insurance Policy renewal – Shannon Chamberlain:**

Shannon Chamberlain, entered the chambers at 10:25

Chamberlain handed out the renewal packet for July 1, 2023 for review. Chamberlain opened by stating Meagher County was the only county they insure that had a decrease in premium. The premium is down -0.35% compared to last year. Chamberlain then gave an overview of the PCT (Property and Casualty Trust). Showing the trends from the previous year claims, General policy exclusions, automatic coverage for newly acquired vehicles and the exclusion coverage for special districts. Meagher County does not have any special district currently on the policy.

Lunch

### **Commission Work Session:**

Present at the work session included County Extension Agent Makayla Paul; Sheriff Jon Lopp; Clerk of Court Candi Richardson; Clerk & Recorder Liv West; Temporary Deputy Clerk & Recorder Penny Plachy; County Attorney Burt Hurwitz

Paul facilitated the meeting and opened by reviewing the vacant Clerk to the Commission job position and the related duties. Paul presented two options for filling the position and meeting the needs of the courthouse/county moving forward.

Option one consists of one full time position (FTE) for a Finance Assistant and a second FTE for a Witness/ Victim Advocate, Deputy Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator (DES) and backup for Elections and the Clerk & Recorder office. Currently only one FTE is budgeted for fiscal year 22/23. The second FTE could be partially funded through a grant from State Board of Crime Control (BOC) for a Witness Victim Advocate and partially funded through an Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) for a Deputy DES coordinator.

The Commission inquired about the duties for the new position and the available grants. Hurwitz stated all counties are required to have a Witness Victim Advocate and currently he is doing that work. The grant through BOC is a well-established route for funding these positions across the state. The grant will have to be renewed each year. Lopp stated the State of Montana requires each county to have a Deputy DES Coordinator and he is getting pressure from the state to appoint a deputy. This will be a ¼ time position and half of the position will be funded through an EMPG grant.

Options two consists of one part time employee (PTE) and one FTE. The duties of the PTE position would include claims, payroll and backup for Human Resources. The duties of the FTE position would include Witness/Victim Advocate, Deputy DES, Board minutes and a Public Information Officer responsible for all outwardly communications for the county.

The Commissioner tables any decision until the next Commission meeting when Commissioner, Ben Hurwitz will be present.

**4 Corners Recycling – Dave Levertt**

Cancelled

**Building Window Replacement Update – Candi Richardson**

County Extension Agent Makayla Paul; Sheriff Jon Lopp; Clerk of Court Candi Richardson; Clerk & Recorder Liv West; Temporary Deputy Clerk & Recorder Penny Plachy; County Attorney Burt Hurwitz were all present.

County Attorney Hurwitz opened with some background on the window replacement project and reviewed the contract with Frontline Glass. The contract reads Frontline Glass will demo and clean up the courtroom windows and the stairwell window but did not identify the glass blocks specifically. Clerk of Court, Candi Richardson presented communication from McKenzie McCarthy, Montana Association of Counties (MACo) regarding County Disposal of Real and Personal Property. Outlined in the handout is the process the county has to follow to dispose of real & personal property. The county can sell, trade or exchange any personal property, however acquired, belonging to the county that is not necessary to the conduct of county business or the preservation of its property. A decision was tabled until an inventory of the windows, glass blocks and blinds could be completed.

**Public Comment:**

No Public Comment.

**Claims Approved:**

Commissioners were presented with Check #60260 through Check #60295 totaling \$36,669.48. Check #60289 & 60286 was voided for incorrect amount. All Checks were signed as presented.

**Meeting Adjourned:**

Meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

**Next Meeting:**

Commissioners are scheduled to meet Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

  
CLERK & RECORDER

  
CHAIRMAN



  
VICE-CHAIRMAN

  
COMMISSIONER