

BOARD OF MADISON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
March 3, 2016 Special Meeting Minutes
Madison County Road Crews Meeting

On Wednesday, March 3, 2016, a special meeting of the Board of Madison County Commissioners came to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Public Meeting Room of the Administrative Office Building in Virginia City, Montana, with Commissioners David Schulz, Chairman, Ron Nye, and Jim Hart present. Jani Flinn, Relief Clerk, was present to take minutes.

Attendees included those on the attached visitor sign in sheet.

David Schulz, Chairman, opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed those in attendance. All participants introduced themselves to the group. The following items were discussed:

1. **Communications.** Lynda Holt, Communications Coordinator, talked about known holes in radio communications, working with dispatch to have service in emergency, and other tools that are available to help with crew safety and public awareness that crews are working in their area. Lynda outlined the current emergency operations program and encouraged the road crews to communicate with dispatch. They discussed known areas in the county that are not reachable by the current radios or phone such as Point of Rocks and the Upper Ruby. Lynda emphasized that road crews should radio dispatch if traffic or emergency issues come up and their phone doesn't have service. The group discussed radio codes and the Sheriff's available radio contact information, and asked for an updated list of call numbers – not names. Lynda suggested that every Monday morning the crews should take advantage of "radio checks" between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m., where dispatch confirms radio service. The current radios used by the road departments are old – typically 30 watt vs. 100 watt. They may need to find someone besides the current vendor to come out and inspect the radios and antennas to help identify the issues, conduct training, and suggest changes for better communication. The group discussed the current repeater sites and the possibility of adding others vs. the cost of better radios. Paul noted that the County graders should have top of the line communication – there are seven of them. Dustin Tetrault, DES Coordinator, suggested maybe we should look into getting SAT phones and compare costs to radios.

Lynda also let the group know that she is working with the Sheriff's office and Emergency Services to purchase a Reverse 911 Mass Notification System to be used by dispatch to notify Madison County residents in the case of an emergency. This same system could also be used to notify homeowners along a particular stretch of roadway of planned road work and the days expected. Labor & Industry requires that both ends of a planned section have signage and recommends that every access or home on that road also be signed. This system could instead notify the homeowners by telephone that construction or maintenance is planned and the dates of work - both the day before and the morning of.

2. **Working with the Sheriff to address Verbal Complaints of traffic speeding, reckless driving, etc. in vicinity of county road work.** Craig Schroeder, Sergeant, and Ryan Brown, Deputy Sheriff, discussed traffic issues with the road crews. They reminded them that the first point of contact should always be dispatch -- either by phone or radio. Ideally they would like license plate and vehicle description, driver, road and direction headed. If there are repeat violators in certain areas, let dispatch know when they are working in that area and they will do their best to be present or close by. There are incident report forms used by bus drivers that could be made available to the road vehicles. Shane asked if the speed limit in work zones could be changed to 25 mph instead of 35 mph. Justin will look into it. Signage is a key issue for enforcement. Pat McCarthy with Payne West insurance confirmed that in his experience on rural roads you can post reduced speed limits and use extra signage or stickers on equipment as well as portable and permanent road signage. The County may have to do a resolution for that. Dave Schulz noted that the County has ordered 100 new 35mph signs and will be posting them.
3. **Dustin Tetrault, Director of Emergency Services,** talked about the Reverse 911 system and how it will be helpful in emergencies and encouraged the road departments to make sure that cell phone numbers for contacts also be made available to dispatch along with their radio contacts. At the time the system is implemented, residents will be contacted and asked to subscribe to the service by providing their address and phone numbers. Dustin also mentioned that he is in the process of purchasing Garmin "Dash Cam" cameras for the fire units in the county. These are relatively inexpensive at around \$140.00 per unit and

could be used on the graders to help document traffic and speeding in the work zones. The Commissioners asked Dustin to get the information to them for review and discussed putting them in all seven graders in the county.

4. **Discussion of Upper Ruby Grader/Vehicle Incident:** Ellis described the circumstances that lead up to the accident and told the participants that he hoped they never had to experience what he has gone through. Both Labor & Industry and the insurance company have completed their investigations. Ray talked about the need for safety and that they are willing to do whatever is necessary to make road maintenance safer. His department has discussed options on more signage and locations to post, and have met with the agencies involved. The specific wording for signs was discussed. They will use permanent signs in specific areas and need to identify how we sign and manage primary and secondary snow routes. Signing at both ends of a work zone takes twice as long to do the work now, but is worth it to avoid another situation like this. The Road districts will draft a written protocol about how we sign and manage maintenance operations. Discussion included running with every light available, reflective tape on wings, beacons vs. flashing beacons, reduced speed signs, temporary signs, and penalties. Policy will refer to minimum requirements and will be left up to the discretion of each crew for added signs and beacons, etc. Additional safety incidents were discussed and reviewed. Dash cams would be helpful to document them.
5. **Signage for normal maintenance, snow plowing, other activities.** Options and requirements were reviewed and discussed. The Commissioners will be drafting protocol. The County continues to improve road signage and will now focus on speed and notification signing in necessary areas around the county. Mass notification of planned work will be a great help for the public – newspaper, signage, reverse 911. Other options include notifying the sheriff of work zones, especially when the crews are pulling gravel out of the pit, in order to help with speed. Completion of the new Reverse 911 system is anticipated for June 1st and will be reviewed at that time. A County Facebook page would be good, also.
6. **Carolyn Henry, Safety Director, and David Schulz** discussed requirements for training and required documentation to be done weekly, equipment “walk-around” checks, Incident Report Forms that must be used, and asked for ideas on additional training and safety concerns. Carolyn will work with Dustin Tetrault to identify the cameras for each of the seven graders, which will be paid for out of her budget, and coordinate training on them when installed.
7. **Discussion: How can we improve safety of the road crews and public during road project work?** Signage and safety options were reviewed from previous discussions. A question was asked about a County policy for pulling vehicles out that are stuck. When the crews are plowing out drifted roads, especially, there are often abandoned or stuck vehicles which must be moved in order to clear the road. Common sense is generally the rule. Insurance says avoid it, but safety and circumstances have to be considered. If concerned, call your Road foreman and get permission, or call D&D towing. It is illegal to transport persons in the grader, but you can let them warm up while waiting for help. If the county is going to authorizing towing, the road crews should be trained on it.

David Schulz thanked everyone for their input and discussion. This meeting will be continued in another month, and a date and time will be sent out to all participants.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

David Schulz, Chairman
Board of Madison County Commissioners

Date Approved: March 14, 2016

Minutes prepared by:

Jani Flinn, Clerk

Attest: _____
Kathleen Mumme, Clerk and Recorder, Madison County