

**BOARD OF MADISON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
MADISON COUNTY FAIR BOARD  
February 26, 2018, Joint Meeting Minutes**

On Monday, February 26, 2018, a joint meeting of the Board of Madison County Commissioners and the Madison County Fair Board came to order at 10:38 a.m. in the Fair Office Building at the Fairgrounds in Twin Bridge, Montana, with Commissioners Ron Nye, Chairman, Dan Allhands, and Jim Hart present. Laurie Buyan, Commissioners' Assistant, was present to take minutes.

Fair Board members present at the meeting were Bill Holden, Tom Leo, and Heather Puckett. Dana Escott, Fair Manager, was also present.

Others in attendance at the meeting were Bob Lancaster, Fairgrounds Maintenance, Jani Flinn, Grants, Chief Croy, 4-H Council, Bonnie O'Neill, Human Resources, Van Puckett, Sanitarian, Kerry Taylor, Extension Agent, and Randy Lowder, County resident.

**Communications between Boards and Decision Making:** Bill Holden discussed communications between the Fair Board and the Board of Commissioners, stating that what the Fair Board votes on and recommends to the Commissioners doesn't really matter. Either nothing happens or it's over-ruled. He stated that he understands the Commissioners have the final say but it seems like it happens over and over. Tom Leo stated that the Fair Board does not discuss things between meetings and the only time they discuss Fair business is at the Fair Board meetings. He went on to say that the mower issue is probably what brought the communication issue to a head. The fair has been limping along with old broken-down mowers and he can't say what's been spent on repairing old mowers each year, but it seems like, for some reason, the Commission seems hesitant to allow them to follow through with new mowers. Jim Hart thanked Bill and Tom for their candor, noting that this kind of thing has happened with other boards. He stated that, other than possibly the mowers, he doesn't feel this is true. He discussed other requests from Dana, extra-time, pay, help, etc., noting she has pretty much always gotten what she's asked for. He stated that he took the time to get the mowers from the Cemetery in hopes they would work at the Fair. He discussed repairs needed for the mowers and reasons they became available. Ron Nye stated "we did it as a good act, not as an act to say no, no, no". He apologized for not adequately getting the message across. Repairs on the tractor that were done without input from the Fair Board were also discussed. Ron explained the events and discussions that led to getting the tractor fixed, stating we had no intentions other than doing the right thing. Tom stated the Fair Board got handed a bill without even knowing the tractor had left the fairgrounds. He stated that each of the Board members take their position seriously and, when stopped on the street by someone asking questions they need to know what's going on. Members of the Fair Board also asked that if the Commissioners make all the decisions, what is the purpose of having a Fair Board? After further discussion, it was agreed that emails to the Fair Board would be copied to the Commissioners and emails sent to Dana would be copied to the Fair Board, with the intention of keeping everyone on both sides informed. Ron discussed his support for the fair and the advantages of it to the Town of Twin Bridges, stating "we need to move forward and try not to make the same mistakes."

Chad Armstrong, Fair Board Chairman, joined the meeting at this point.

**Purchase of Lawn Mower for Fairgrounds:** There was further discussion regarding the purchase of a used lawn mower. Dana asked what type of recommendation the Commissioner would like. Jim stated they would like some rational as to why it's a good idea. Chad responded that the Fair Board has asked for a new lawnmower for three years and have never gotten any rational for not getting one. Jim Hart reiterated some of the earlier discussion to bring Chad up to speed. Chad asked that when a recommendation is sent to the Commissioners and denied, that the Fair Board get a reason that it was not approved.

**Water Line:** There was discussion regarding the broken water line. Dana presented the final bill from the town. There was discussion regarding when and how the leak was detected and the location of the meter. After much discussion, Bill stated that the work the Commissioners have done is huge. Chad agreed that in this case the Fair Board has been in the loop as much as they need to be. Ron noted that on the positive side, we're going to have new water lines and may even get a new sewer line.

**Master Plan:** Chief Croy stated they are looking at a huge increase in 4-H enrollment, gave numbers of new members and additional animals, and discussed the implications of not having adequate pens for the increased amount of animals. He stated it definitely needs to be addressed. Bill responded that he feels that it is being addressed. There was discussion about a new barn. Dan Allhands stated that they have looked at the building in Deer Lodge, noting that he has turned it into a multiple-use facility. There was discussion of doing that same type of thing here. Bill noted that it would catch on eventually but noted that he's against it because they have more than they can maintain right now. Ron stated that maintenance money was turned back this year, noting that Jani has the amount. Tom responded that it was because they over-spent the year before and heard about it. There was discussion about putting a building in the flood prone area. Tearing down the hog barns and replacing them with bathrooms and showers were discussed. Other building locations and priorities were also discussed. After much discussion, Dan Allhands stated that it sounds like the Fair Board has priorities in line and now needs to move forward with what they want. Ron Nye added that if this is the way they want to go, they will need to figure out how to pay for it. He added that its good to see them talking that 4-H is a big part of the fair.

**Public Comment:** Randy Lowder discussed the decision on raising the Fairgrounds rates.

Chief Croy asked if they are running a fairground or a campground? Dana responded, both, noting that they are designated as a campground. Chief stated that they need to focus more on 4-H growing, noting that it feels like you're focusing too much on mowing and rodeo.

Bonnie O'Neill discussed hiring practices and explained the regulations regarding "short term" employees, noting that they are terminated at the end of the fair and are no longer employees. There was discussion regarding preferences for returning employees. Bonnie noted that there is no preference and discussed the hiring process. There was also discussion about eliminating one position if a new lawn-mower is purchased.

Dan Allhands brought up the possibility of putting up security cameras, noting that other County buildings have them and that it is a security issue. Chad asked if this was something that the Fair Board should look at as a board. Dan agreed that it is something we can work on.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 noon.

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Ronald E. Nye, Chairman  
Board of Madison County Commissioners

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Chad Armstrong, Chairman  
Madison County Fair Board

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Minutes prepared by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Laurie Buyan, Commissioners' Assistant

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kathleen Mumme, Clerk and Recorder, Madison County