

**BOARD OF MADISON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**April 23, 2019, Meeting Minutes**

On Tuesday, April 23, 2019, a meeting of the Board of Madison County Commissioners came to order at 9:32 a.m. in the Commissioners' Conference Room of the Administrative Office Building in Virginia City, Montana, with Commissioners Ron Nye, Chairman, and Dan Allhands present. Commissioner Jim Hart was delayed due to road construction. Jane Bacon, Commissioners' Clerk, was present to take minutes.

Those people in attendance at the meeting were Bonnie O'Neill, Leona Stredwick, Kathleen Mumme, David Elias, Erland Gendreau, Alfred Hokanson, Frank Colwell, Vicki Tilstra, Darcel Vaughn, Joe Brummell, Don Copple, Tim Egan, Laurie Buyan, Dale Grose, Ellis Thompson, Lori Jones, Jim Jarvis, Justin Gatewood, Maynard McQuiston, Flo Bay, Adrienna Hines, Joanne Romasko, and those on the attached lists.

**Approval of Minutes:** After review, Dan Allhands moved to approve the March 26, 2019, Board of Commissioners' meeting minutes, as presented. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried. Jim Hart joined the meeting at this point and was present for the remainder of the meeting. Jim Hart moved to approve the April 9, 2019, Board of Commissioners' meeting minutes, with corrections. Dan Allhands seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Claims:** The Board approved claims.

**Library Board Resignation:** Following review, Dan Allhands moved to accept the resignation of Nancy Whiting from the Library Board and to advertise for a replacement. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Mental Health Board Verbal Resignation:** Jim stated that he and Doris Fisher have each received a verbal resignation from Mary Carlson for the Mental Health Board, a written resignation was requested but has not been received, and that the Mental Health Board is comfortable accepting the verbal resignation. Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, was present for this portion of the meeting. After a brief discussion, Jim Hart moved to accept Mary Carlson's verbal resignation from the Mental Health Board. Dan Allhands seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Human Resources:** Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, met with the Board to discuss the following topics.

- **Recommendation to Hire IT Director Full-time Position:** Bonnie requested additional time to process the results of the IT Director position interview results. Dan Allhands moved to continue the topic of Recommendation to Hire for the IT Director position until later in the day. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.
- **Custodian Supervisor County Cell Phone Request:** Bonnie discussed the Custodian Supervisor's request for a County cell phone. Laurie Buyan, Executive Assistant to the Madison County Board of Commissioners, was present for this portion of the meeting. Discussion ensued about annual costs, where other employee cell phone costs currently fit into department budgets, and appropriate and/or temporary line items to use. After discussion, Jim Hart moved to approve getting a County cell phone for David Baldwin, Custodian Supervisor, and to clarify the line item that it should be billed to. Dan Allhands seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried. Further discussion included

**Mental Health LAC By-Laws:** Following a brief discussion, Jim Hart moved to continue this topic until he has had the opportunity to discuss the quorum portion of the by-laws with the county attorney. Dan Allhands seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Agreement for Attorney Services for Road Issues:** The Board discussed two attorneys that might be willing to assist with road issues, one of whom has experience with BLM Revised Statute 2477 (R.S. 2477) but is not available immediately, how it might work to use both, and the importance of involving the Deputy County Attorney to gain experience in this area as well. After discussion, Jim Hart moved to contact Abigail St. Lawrence and schedule a time, when she becomes available, to discuss an agreement for attorney services for road issues. Dan Allhands seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Exemption Review Committee Decision Appeal:** David Elias, G & E Land Development LLC, met with the Board to appeal the Exemption Review Committee's decision regarding the Hokanson property (Parcel 3-A situated in Section 16, Township 4 South, Range 5 West). Leona Stredwick, Planner I, Kathleen Mumme, Clerk and Recorder, Erland Gendreau, G & E Land Development LLC, Alfred Hokanson, Norris resident, Frank Colwell, Berkshire Hathaway Realtors, Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, and Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, were present for this portion of the meeting. David Elias presented his report and alternative considerations on behalf of his client, Mr. Hokanson, stating that the proposed transfer of property from Mr. Hokanson to his son does not violate the use of a family transfer exemption. Leona reviewed the opposing reasons behind the decision denying the transfer, cited the number of lots created historically, discussed Pattern of Use supporting the denial, and commented that the subdivision regulations were in place when Mr. Hokanson purchased the land. A lengthy discussion followed. The Board determined that additional time is needed to review the particulars and supporting documents regarding this topic, as well as to discuss the matter with the new Planning Director, before a final decision can be made. The topic was continued to the regular Commission meeting on May 21, 2019.

**Joint Application Permit for Bank Stabilization Work along the Beaverhead River at the Fairgrounds and along the Ruby River near the Duncan District Bridge:** The Board reviewed two Application Permits and a Land Use License Application submitted by Great West Engineering for areas along the Beaverhead and Ruby Rivers. Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, and Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, were present for this portion of the meeting. Following review, Dan Allhands moved to approve the Joint Application Permit for Bank Stabilization Work along the Beaverhead River at the Fairgrounds. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried. Dan Allhands moved to approve the Joint Application Permit for Bank Stabilization Work along the Ruby River near the Duncan District Bridge. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried. Dan Allhands moved to approve submitting the Land Use License Application to the DNRC associated with the bank stabilization work along the Beaverhead River adjacent to the Fairgrounds. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Darcel Vaughn, Madison Valley Manor Administrator, met with the Board to discuss the following topics. Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, and Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, were present for this portion of the meeting.

- **Madison Valley Manor and Tobacco Root Mountains Care Center Updates and Aging Reports:** Darcel gave updates for both MVM and TRMCC, reviewing number of residents, staffing issues, scheduling, and TRMCC's new pharmacy procedure. She discussed the work being done to make improvements to the aging reports for each facility, and the importance of continuing these efforts to completion.
- **Facility Billing Outsourcing (MVM and TRMCC):** Darcel discussed the complexities of nursing home billing, CMS requirements, the significance of getting it right, and the consequences of getting it wrong. She outlined a proposal for outsourcing the billing to a known and trusted company that specializes in all aspects of nursing home accounting, keeps up with the latest regulations and changes, is familiar with long term care issues as well as the Point-Click-Care system, and would be able to take over the financial liabilities. As a result, aging reports would shrink, issues such as write-offs and billing errors will be prevented. She pointed out how nursing home personnel would work closely with the billing company and continue to do certain financial work such as reports and a specific checklist tasks but this would take the burden of specialization off employees, freeing up their time to continue to do what they do best. She laid out other future benefits of going in this direction and discussed the financial justification, including a plan to rearrange existing staff responsibilities and to not replace a current vacancy. Bonnie and Vicki pointed out the responsibility to the taxpayers for managing these two facilities correctly, and the challenges of finding qualified in-house personnel to provide a comparable level of expertise. Following

discussion, Dan Allhands moved to approve a contract with Wipfli for billing services for a one-year period, at a total cost not to exceed \$2,750 per month, per facility, for MVM and TRMCC. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Joe Brummell, Director of Emergency Management, Don Copple, Department of Natural Resources (DNRC), and Tim Egan, DNRC, met with the Board to discuss the following topics.

- **County Co-op Program, Requesting State Assistance on Fires, and Equipment Contracting:** Don briefly reviewed the County Co-op program, discussed the DNRC's new strategic plan and direction for fire crews, and will continue to keep DES and the Board informed. Jim expressed appreciation for their efforts. Discussion continued about various matters, including last year's fire-fighting cooperation that seemed to work well, new personnel, Forest Service policies, and the next Interagency meeting.

**Courthouse Elevator Project:** This topic was continued to Thursday, April 25, 2019, at 9:00 a.m.

Laurie Buyan, Executive Assistant to the Madison County Board of Commissioners, stopped in to request permission to add minor repairs to the cost of Boardroom benches being reupholstered, after receiving an email outlining the repairs recommended by the reupholstering company. The Board directed her to have the recommended repairs made.

Dale Grose, Weed Department Assistant Coordinator, met with the Board to discuss the following topics. Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, was present for this portion of the meeting.

- **Weed Board Recommendation for Herbicide Bids:** Dale related that there were two herbicide bids received by the Weed Board, the prices were similar, but one did not include some of the products preferred by the Weed Department. Based on the Weed Board's recommendation, Dan Allhands moved to approve the herbicide bid from Nutrien Solutions for the 2019 herbicide season. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.
- **Grant Contracts:** Dale listed four fully-funded grants obtained through the Noxious Weed Trust Fund Council for the 2019 season. Following review, Dan Allhands moved to approve accepting the grant contracts listed below for the 2019 weed year. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.
  - South Madison Cooperative 2 \$12,086
  - Jack Creek Project 3 22,313
  - Upper Ruby Revisited 2 50,198
  - Madison County Biologic Program 10,725

**Human Resources** (continued from earlier):

- **Recommendation to Hire IT Director Full-time Position:** Bonnie reviewed the results of the four interviews that were held for the IT Director position. Bonnie will schedule a second interview with the top two candidates. She listed who is on the interview committee, and there was a discussion about getting someone with more technical expertise to assist with the interview questions and evaluation was discussed.

**Agreement for Attorney Services for Road Issues:** Ellis (Eli) Thompson, Virginia City resident and Road Review Committee member, stopped in to ask about the Agreement for Attorney Services for Road Issues, and the Board reviewed the earlier discussion.

**RID in Virginia City Ranches:** Lori Jones, Madison County/Virginia City Ranches resident, met with the Board to discuss the Rural Improvement District (RID) agreement in the Virginia City Ranches subdivision. Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, was present for this portion of the meeting. Lori read her letter describing the impassable condition of the road leading to her residence, distributed photos and discussed her concerns about emergency access, and asked the Board for help in determining what resources might be available to solve the problem. Jim described the background of the choices made by the Homeowner's Association (HOA) and how the RID works, noting that the County's only role is to hold the funds, and gave examples of other HOAs with bonded RID's. Discussion ensued about immediate and long term options, potential costs and funding sources, and rumored repairs being undertaken. While the Board does have the authority to

increase maintenance fees, which would be less expensive long term than a bond, it was suggested that a good first step would be a meeting of the homeowners to discuss issues and solutions for maintaining the 12.5 miles of roads in the subdivision.

**Agreement for Attorney Services for Road Issues:** Susan Swimley, Attorney at Law, telephoned the Board to discuss Attorney Services for Road Issues. She said while she does not have specific experience with R.S. 2477, she is familiar with the other attorney who does have that experience, would be happy to work together if needed, and will give her a call.

**Administrative Office Building Canopies:** Jim Jarvis, Virginia City Historic Preservation Officer, and Justin Gatewood, Virginia City Mayor, met with the Board to discuss the status of the Administrative Office Building Canopies. Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, and Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, were present for this portion of the meeting. Justin stressed the importance to the town that the building canopies get finished as planned, stated that completion would help to visually detract from the monumental scale of the building, and it would be helpful to know the project is being worked on. The permit was issued in 2014, and a new permit may be required. Design history, various iterations and structural issues, alternatives based on the museum entrance, additional ideas for increasing visual appeal without high costs, and the use of local builders and contractors were discussed. The Board reviewed the status of the courthouse remodel project, and the historical significance of the building was talked about. Justin answered questions about the status of the Virginia City parking lot purchase planned for May of 2021, and reviewed financial commitments to date. Conversation turned to the cement wall/curb installed by the County in the library driveway, which is hazardous because it's too low to be seen from a vehicle in reverse, but too high not to be hit, and ideas for fixing the problem were briefly discussed. Another issue brought up was the brightness and tone of the light posts bulbs in front of the courthouse not fitting in with Virginia City's established lighting tone. The Board will be talking with the architect later this week about a scaled back version of the courthouse remodel project and plans for the canopies, and will get back to Jim and Justin with some answers.

**Health Insurance Renewal Report and Rates (Public Meeting Room):** Maynard McQuiston, First West Insurance, Flo Bay, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana (BCBSMT), Adrienna Hines, BCBSMT, and Joanne Romasko, BCBSMT, met with the Board to continue the discussion about Madison County's Health Insurance Renewal Report and Rates, in an effort to obtain affordable rates for employees with dependents. Maynard outlined his continued goal of keeping the County's rates stable and as low as possible, stated that keeping the County's increases at or under 3% per year is rare in the industry, recommended staying with BCBS due to its extensive network, and said that since BCBS doesn't offer the "blue dime" plan anymore it won't be available if it is given up. The BCBSMT representatives discussed ubiquitous rate increases of 8-12%, difficulties in comparing plan options, concerns about future rates and coverage levels if changes are made, gave examples of possible alternatives, discussed the possibility of re-allocating costs, and Flo said she would research alternatives and discuss options with underwriters. Several attendees voiced questions and concerns, and further discussion included forming a committee to develop a list of priorities, looking at a tiered system or altering the HDHP plans, and sending out an employee survey.

**Calendars:** The Board reviewed calendars.

At 4:45 p.m., the remainder of the meeting was continued to April 25, 2019, at 9:00 a.m.

**Thursday, April 25, 2019:** The meeting reconvened at 9:02 a.m. in the Commissioner's Conference Room of the Administrative Office Building in Virginia City, Montana, with Commissioners Ron Nye, Chairman, Jim Hart, and Dan Allhands present. Jane Bacon, Commissioners' Clerk, took notes for this portion of the meeting.

**Courthouse Elevator Project:** A call was received from Bill Hanson, ThinkOne Architects, to discuss the status of the Courthouse Elevator Project. The Board passed along ideas for the building canopies that came out of the recent meeting with Virginia City's Mayor and HPO, discussion ensued about ideas for reducing the cost as well as using local contractors, and Bill will get in touch with Jim before coming back with a less expensive plan.

Several options were discussed for reducing the cost of work on the Courthouse while making it more accessible, and Bill will draw up an alternative plan incorporating today's ideas and send it to the Board.

With no further business, this portion of the meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

**Next meeting:** The next regular Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 30, 2019, beginning at 10:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Conference Room of the Administrative Office Building in Virginia City, Montana.

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Ronald E. Nye, Chairman  
Board of Madison County Commissioners

Date Approved: May 7, 2019

Minutes prepared by:

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Jane Bacon, Commissioners' Clerk

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