

**BOARD OF MADISON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**July 30, 2019, Meeting Minutes**

On Tuesday, July 30, 2019, a meeting of the Board of Madison County Commissioners came to order at 9:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' 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, was present to take minutes.

Those people in attendance at the meeting were William Farhat, Jani Flinn, Alex Hogle, Kathleen Mumme, Vicki Tilstra, Van Puckett, Bonnie O'Neill, Britani Allhands, Tommy Luksha, Laurie Buyan, Shelly Burke, Joellen Moon, Holli Richardson, Hannah Kearse, Cindy Gockel, Cody Marxer, Melissa Brummell, Joe Brummell, Dan Birdsill, Esther Lince, Allen Jones, Cindy Adams, Phil Fortner, and Lisa Roberts.

**Approval of Minutes:** No minutes were available for approval.

**Claims:** The Board approved claims.

**Public Discussion on Items Not Listed on the Agenda but Within the Board's Jurisdiction:** William Farhat, Big Sky Fire Chief, met with the Board to discuss his concerns regarding the Spanish Peaks Overall Development Plan and fire station. He presented a timeline covering meetings and communication over the last few years between Big Sky Fire District, Lone Mountain Land Company (LMLC), Big Sky personnel, and the Planning Department/Board regarding the Spanish Peaks ODP and extension requests, emergency services, and the planned fire station. He expressed concern about what he sees as a lack of communication and collaboration, and how this is affecting the fire district's ability to meet the demands of continued growth. Discussion included recent development on the Madison County side, anticipated costs and timing of manning and building a fire station, location options and distance requirements, and the benefit in having one of the Commissioners attend future meetings.

**Airports:** Jani Flinn, Airport Board Secretary, met with the Board to discuss the following topics. Alex Hogle, Planning Director, was present for this portion of the meeting.

- **Twin Bridges Airport, AIP 3-30-0080-013-2018 – Pay Request #9 FINAL:** Jani explained the expenditures included in the Twin Bridges Pay Request #9. Following review, Dan Allhands moved to approve Pay Request #9 – Final for Twin Bridges AIP 3-30-0080-013-2018, for the amount of \$100,376 including gross receipts. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.
- **Twin Bridges Airport, AIP 3-30-0080-013-2018 – Final Report:** Jani briefly reviewed the final report documents for the Twin Bridges Airport Improvement Project. Following review, Dan Allhands moved to approve final closeout documents for Twin Bridges AIP 3-30-0080-013-2018, as presented by Robert Peccia & Associates. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Planning Office:** Alex Hogle, Planning Director, met with the Board to discuss the following topic. Kathleen Mumme, Clerk and Recorder, William Farhat, Big Sky Fire Chief, Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, Van Puckett, Sanitarian, Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, Jani Flinn, Grant Administrator, and Britani Allhands, Finance Clerk, were present for all or portions of this discussion.

- **Status of Current Planning Matters:** Alex informed the Board about several Planning-related topics. He discussed staffing, said he is working on evaluating and assigning processes and procedures in light of Leona's departure on August 6, weighing hiring options, and stated that he will keep the Board informed. He described a subdivision-related compliance matter at the RV park/campground in Alder which may end up as a redistribution, but technically triggered a review. He described regularly-occurring challenges, particularly with subdivision issues such as ODPs, regulation compliance and text amendments, fee schedules, emergency access, ambiguities, and

variances in design standards, which he is working on to streamline and clarify. Alex reviewed the Spanish Peaks ODP process and extension, discussion ensued about communication, public health and safety, and emergency services, and all agreed on the need to stay informed. Kathleen asked if there had been any efforts to encourage Leona to remain in the Planning Department, voicing concerns about the department being staffed with all new and relatively new people.

**Finance Office:** Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, and Britani Allhands, Finance Clerk, met with the Board to discuss the following topic. Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, and Jani Flinn, Grant Administrator, were present for this portion of the meeting.

- **Fixed Asset Review:** Vicki and Britani presented a list of fixed assets for review, in an effort to obtain project updates and close out projects where possible. After discussing most of the projects listed, it was determined that further research is needed to accurately update the list, and the topic was continued to the next regular Commission meeting.

**Department of Revenue Lease at Placer Loop:** Kathleen Mumme, Clerk and Recorder, Tommy Luksha, GIS Coordinator, Alex Hogle, Planning Director, Laurie Buyan, Executive Assistant to the Madison County Board of Commissioners, Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, Britani Allhands, Finance Clerk, Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, Jani Flinn, Grant Administrator, and Shelly Burke, Treasurer, were present for this portion of the meeting. A call was made to Brandy Hilton at the Department of Revenue in Madison County to discuss moving their offices from the Placer Loop location, due to the Sheriff's Offices relocating because of moisture issues in the lower floor of the Courthouse that must be dealt with, and to ask if they have a plan to move forward. Brandy said they have potential options in Ennis, and was informed that the Treasurer's and Clerk & Recorder's office personnel are very concerned about the DOR moving out of Virginia City, especially for the taxpayers' sake. Brandi explained that most of their current communication with taxpayers is through email and by phone, office visits are increasingly rare, she will make sure taxpayers are notified of the move with a mailing, newspaper articles, or whatever is needed, and mentioned that her staff already travels over the hill to Ennis quite often. Ron noted that moving the office to Ennis is as good an option as could be hoped for given the situation, and appreciation for everyone's openness to this change was expressed. A letter will be sent to the DOR before the end of the day outlining a 30-day notice to move out of the Placer Loop location.

Later in the meeting, options and concerns were discussed further, it was mentioned that only about seven counties still have a DOR office, and moving the office to Ennis would be better than closing it altogether or moving it to Bozeman. Following discussion, Dan Allhands moved to approve sending a letter to the Montana Department of Administration to not renew the State of Montana Standard Lease Contract for Counties for Department of Revenue Office Space located at Placer Loop, giving the DOR a thirty-day notice until August 30, 2019, to vacate the premises, subject to approval by the County Attorney. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**GIS Department:** Tommy Luksha, GIS Coordinator, met with the Board to discuss the following topics. Alex Hogle, Planning Director, Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, Joellen Moon, and Holli Richardson, Michael Johnson Estate, and Jani Flinn, Grant Administrator, were present for this portion of the meeting.

- **Additional GIS Staff:** Following review, Dan Allhands moved to approve advertising for a part-time, 20-hour per week, temporary position in the GIS Department. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.
- **GIS Update:** Tommy presented an update on the GIS Department, including his appreciation for the additional GIS hours which have already proven helpful; work on the Mission Statement; evaluation of the current fee schedule, noting that county departments are currently not charged for requests; and a list of prioritized projects and how time is spent.
- **GIS Hours:** Tommy requested that he be allowed to work 10-hour shifts, and provided a list of reasons to support his request. Discussion included office time and public access, working together, staying with five 8-hour shifts for the most part but flexing the work schedule as needed, and keeping the Board informed.

**Property Tax Adjustment Request:** Joellen Moon, representing the Michael Johnson Estate, met with the Board to request a property tax adjustment for the Estate. Shelly Burke, Treasurer, Holli Richardson, Michael Johnson Estate, Laurie Buyan, Executive Assistant to the Madison County Board of Commissioners, Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, Jani Flinn, Grant Administrator, and Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, were present for all or portions of this topic. Joellen described the challenges of administering the Michael Johnson Estate, noted that she has been able to raise some money and pay bills, acknowledged missed filing deadlines and the decedent's inactions, and because she is having difficulty understanding the recent sharp increase in taxes, is requesting any amount of relief possible to help with the situation. Further discussion included recent tax reappraisals, status of land and buildings, which taxes are paid and which are outstanding, and procedures regarding statutes. Following discussion, the topic was continued to the regular Commission meeting on Tuesday, August 13, 2019.

**Human Resources:** Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, and Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, met with the Board to discuss the following topic. Hannah Kearse, The Madisonian, was present for this portion of the meeting. The CDBG grant and other funding for the Madison Valley Manor kitchen remodel was briefly discussed, as well as the best way to process donations.

- **Nursing Home Private Pay Rates:** Bonnie pointed out that every year the private pay rates for nursing home residents are established. The current year Medicaid-based rates are \$203.46 for TRMCC and \$205.81 for MVM, and Bonnie recommended keeping the private pay rates the same as the Medicaid rates in each facility. Following discussion, Jim Hart moved to approve setting the private pay rates for 2019/2020 at \$203.46 for TRMCC residents, and \$205.81 for MVM residents. Dan Allhands seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**2020 Census Complete Count Committee:** There was no discussion on this topic.

**Letter Regarding Madison River Fishing Opportunities:** Jim Hart informed the Board about a letter he sent to Governor Bullock and several others, expressing concern about proposals to limit fishery participation on the Madison River. Hannah Kearse, The Madisonian, was present for this portion of the meeting. Jim presented the letter and, following review, Dan Allhands moved to approve the letter sent to Governor Steve Bullock concerning fishing restrictions on the Madison River. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Housing Advisory Board Update:** Cindy Gockel, Housing Advisory Board Chair, met with the Board to give an update on the Housing Advisory Board. Cody Marxer, Housing Advisory Board, and Hannah Kearse, The Madisonian, were present for this portion of the meeting. Cindy reported that the housing survey is ready to go live online, discussed how they will distribute the survey to get the most responses, and Rob Gilmore will evaluate the data and produce a report in October/November. She reviewed Habitat for Humanity's progress and plans in Ennis. Frustration was expressed with national and state housing discussions concentrating on big cities, but Cindy reported that USDA World Development is specifically tasked with serving rural communities.

**Public Health Department:** Melissa Brummell, Public Health Nurse, met with the Board to discuss the following topic. Hannah Kearse, The Madisonian, was present for this portion of the meeting.

- **Public Health Emergency Preparedness Grant Contract Renewal:** Melissa discussed the annual renewal of the Public Health Emergency Preparedness grant. The amount changes every year, and this year's amount is less than last year's, but still a good amount. She discussed the focus of the program and reviewed areas covered. Following review, Jim Hart moved to approve Task Order 20-07-6-11-032-0 to Madison County Unified Government Master Contract (Public Health Emergency Preparedness) for Task Order period July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. Dan Allhands seconded the motion. Discussion included a question about dates on several of the contract pages that don't seem to coincide with one another. Melissa made a phone call to get the dates clarified, and then explained that the contract is for one year but the state wants it to be for two years, so they will write an amendment next year for the changes and for next year's deliverables, and Melissa explained the timeframes to the Board's satisfaction. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Melissa also asked permission to have a Public Health float in the parade at the county fair, noted that the staff has agreed to participate, and it was okayed by the Board.

**DES – Burn Ban Resolution:** Joe Brummell, Director of Emergency Management, met with the Board to discuss the implementation of a Burn Ban in Madison County. Hannah Kearse, The Madisonian, was present for this portion of the meeting. Joe presented a review of drought and moisture conditions in parts of the state, and gave a briefing on the current fires in the area and expected behaviors. He had a discussion with all the fire chiefs in the county about several days ago about implementing a burn ban. Based on the recommendations of fire chiefs throughout Madison County and the recommendation of the Director of Emergency Management, Jim Hart moved to approve Resolution 36-2019, A Resolution Imposing a Burn Ban in Madison County, effective at 12:00 a.m. on August 2, 2019. Dan Allhands seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**SW Montana Prevention:** Cindy Adams, Esther Lince, and Al Jones, SW Montana Prevention, and Dan Birdsill, DUI Task Force, met with the Board to discuss SW Montana Prevention's efforts in working with Madison County. Hannah Kearse, The Madisonian, Melissa Brummell, Public Health Nurse, Phil Fortner, Sheriff, and Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, were present for this portion of the meeting. Lisa Roberts, Ennis Town Commissioner, and Laurie Buyan, Executive Assistant to the Madison County Board of Commissioners, were present for portions of this topic.

- **Prevention Efforts in Madison County:** Esther stated that SW Montana Prevention can help the DUI Task Force with their activities, although efforts to contact them had been largely unsuccessful, and asked about meetings and what they are working on. Dan B. responded that the task force usually tries to have at least 6-8 meetings a year, although this year there have only been 2 or 3, said there is a meeting planned for the end of August, and mentioned several things they have been working on such as having a booth at the fair, extra patrols for underage drinking, compliance checks, driver's education in Sheridan and Twin Bridges, the Natural High website, health fairs, and helping with graduation parties. Esther asked further about compliance checks, and further discussion included the difficulties of getting things done with an all-volunteer organization, funding sources, law enforcement involvement with DUI patrols and the STEP (Strategic Traffic Enforcement Patrols) program, education and training, and the structure and functionality of the task force. Esther emphasized SW Montana Prevention's desire to collaborate with and help the task force, not to take over, and pointed out that each prevention specialist has their own story and genuine reason for being involved. Discussion concluded with agreement about concentrating on issues that need to be fixed, establishing positive communication, and the goal of keeping the community safe.

**Request to MDT to Conduct a Traffic Study in Ennis:** Lisa Roberts, Ennis Town Commissioner, met with the Board to seek support for sending a request to the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) to conduct a traffic study in Ennis. Hannah Kearse, The Madisonian, Phil Fortner, Sheriff, and Laurie Buyan, Executive Assistant to the Madison County Board of Commissioners, were present for all or portions of this topic. Lisa presented a draft letter describing a recent truck collision with a building on the east end of Ennis, requesting a traffic study to determine the best solution for slowing down trucks entering the town. Several ideas were discussed, including speed signs that collect data, blinking lights, costs and funding sources, signage locations, curb extensions, pedestrian safety, and grabbing driver attention. Following discussion, Jim Hart moved to approve sending a joint letter to the Montana Department of Transportation requesting a speed study on Highway 287 south of Ennis. Dan Allhands seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried. Further discussion included the previous request for the area north of town, police patrols, sign maintenance, and what other towns in the county are doing and requesting. A call was made to a traffic sign vendor to discuss options, features, and costs.

**Fair Board Recommendation to Adopt Revised Bylaws:** This topic was continued to the next regular Commission meeting.

**Courthouse Elevator Project:** There was no discussion on this topic.

**Calendars:** The Board reviewed calendars.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

**Next meeting:** The next regular Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 6, 2019, beginning at 9:30 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: September 3, 2019

Minutes prepared by:

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Jane Bacon, Commissioners' Clerk

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