

BOARD OF MADISON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
January 26, 2021, Meeting Minutes

On Tuesday, January 26, 2021, a meeting of the Board of Madison County Commissioners came to order at 9:30 a.m. in the Second Floor Court Room of the Administrative Office Building in Virginia City, Montana, with Commissioners Dan Allhands, Chairman, Ron Nye, and Jim Hart present. Laurie Buyan, Executive Assistant to the Board of Commissioners, was present to take minutes.

Those people in attendance at the meeting were Joe Brummell, Robert Wallingford, Bonnie O'Neill, Susan Vonasek, Lisa Brubaker, Vicki Tilstra, Michelle Frank, Alex Hogle, Bob Bates, Jani Flinn, Paula McKenzie, Tammy Mahlstedde, Gail Nelson, and Ellis Thompson. Ryan Wolter, IT Support Specialist, was present to administer the Webex connection. Those present via Webex were Chad Tree, Carmin Hill, Jani Flinn, Lynn Vaughn, Bob Bates, Tammy Mahlstedde, Lance Bowser, Charisse Opie, Jolene Palmer, Craig Erickson, Becky Lawson, Britani Allhands, Kathy Barnes, Allison Veland, Jane Bacon, Steve McNeece, and Kelley Larson.

Approval of Minutes: No minutes were available for approval.

COVID-19 Update: Joe Brummell, DES, and Robert Wallingford, Deputy DES, met with the Board to give an update on the COVID-19 pandemic. Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, was present for this portion of the meeting. Joe reviewed the current COVID numbers, stating that Madison County has a total of 627 confirmed cases, 30 active cases, 591 people have recovered, and there have been 6 fatalities. There are currently 3 hospitalizations with a total of 38 overall. The State of Montana has had 91,816 confirmed cases, with 1,151 fatalities, and 86,274 recovered. The US is sitting at 25.3 million confirmed cases and 421,000 fatalities. Joe reviewed maps of current cases across the state, cumulative cases, bed capacity, and school numbers. He discussed new strains of the virus noting that the vaccines are doing well against new strains so far. He reviewed a new chart which is a vaccine dashboard that shows the number of people vaccinated in each county. He noted that Montana is doing good in their distribution of the vaccine. He also reviewed the weather and stated that since there have been fewer COVID cases, it has lightened the load in the Public Health Office and they are going to help out at the Manor today.

Claims: The Board approved claims.

Mental Health Local Advisory Council Appointment: Following discussion, Jim Hart moved to appoint Melanie Johnson to the Mental Health Local Advisory Council for a four (4) year term that will expire on December 31, 2024, per recommendation of the Council. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

VOCA Grant Approval: Susan Vonasek, Victim Advocate, and Lisa Brubaker, former Victim Advocate, met with the Board to discuss the current application for VOCA funds through the Montana Department of Crime Control. There was discussion about the possible amount of funding, where the funds come from, and when the awards would be announced. Lisa stated that the funding for this program comes from surcharges not taxpayer dollars. Based on the recommendation of the Victim Advocate, Jim Hart moved to approve the signature page of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant as presented. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Alex Hogle, Planning Director, met with the Board to discuss the following topics.

- **Resolution (9-2021) of Road Name Change – Old Stagecoach Trail:** Alex stated that he received an address request from a landowner, adding that it has been a long process due to the number of owners involved. Michelle Frank, property owner, was present for this portion of the meeting. Alex noted that an address petition requires signatures from all the affected landowners and that now, he does have signatures from 100% of the affected landowners. He added that Dispatch and EMS have no concerns with the name. Following discussion, Jim Hart moved to

approve Resolution 9-2021, a resolution naming Old Stagecoach Trail as shown on "Exhibit B". Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried. Michelle asked about a sign with the new name. Jim Hart stated that she would need to pay for the sign but he would ask his road crew to get a locate and install the new sign.

- **Final Signature for Smail Court-Ordered Survey:** Alex submitted the final plat for the Smail Court ordered land division. He reviewed the plat noting that the access road is the same road that accesses the Alder Solid Waste site. It was noted that the recommendations from Madison County were sent to the judge and that the Clerk and Recorder indicated that the plat is okay to record. Alex recommended approval. Following discussion, Ron Nye moved to approve the final plat of the Smail Court Ordered land division, Smail DR-20-144, located on the north side of Montana Highway 287 and Judy Lane intersection in Alder, Montana, shown as Tract C in Book 7, Page 2082-FC in Southeast ¼, Section 9, Township 6 South, Range 4 West. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Air Purifier Replacements: Bob Bates, Safety Coordinator, met with the Board to discuss air purifiers. Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, was present for this portion of the meeting. Bob noted that he has repurposed the air purifiers from the Courthouse and moved them to the Madison Valley Manor. He provided a hand-out showing a Pure HEPA air purifier for extra-large rooms. He also discussed the cost of filters and suggested replacing the eight that were repurposed. Following discussion, Ron Nye moved to approve the purchase of 8 air purifiers with replacement air filters, adding that they will discuss which budget to take them from. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Airports - CARES Act Grant Request for Funds: Jani Flinn, Airport Board Secretary, met with the Board to discuss the following airport topics. Lance Bowser, Robert Peccia and Associates, participated in this portion of the meeting by telephone. Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, was present for this portion of the meeting. Lance reviewed information related to CARES Act funding for the County airports. He noted that the grants are in place and all the paperwork is in place to close the grants. He added that the expenses have already been incurred per the conditions of the grants. Ron asked if these are matching grants. Lance replied that they are not. He stated that every airport in the state received these funds and he just offered to do the paperwork. Based on information from Lance Bowser, Robert Peccia and Associates, Jim Hart moved to apply for reimbursement of the 2020 CARES Act Grant Funding, in the amount of \$30,000 for the Ennis/Big Sky Airport and \$20,000 for the Ruby Valley Field in Twin Bridges. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried. Lance noted that they are getting ready for a second round of funding adding that the information will probably go directly to the Commissioners' Office.

Madison Valley Manor Generator Bids: Craig Erickson, Great West Engineering, and Becky Lawson, SMA Architects, met with the Board via Webex to discuss generator bids for the Madison Valley Manor Project. Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, and Jani Flinn, Grant Administrator, were present for this portion of the meeting. Becky discussed the process of going out to bid for the project, stating that they are planning to advertise three times beginning on February 8, 2021. She noted that there will be several addendums throughout the advertising period and they will answer questions from contractors and subcontractors during that time. At the end of February or early March, they will have the bids on a Commission meeting where they will be opened publically and see where they come in as far as cost. She noted that Madison County is obligated to choose the lowest responsible bidder. The project includes the walk-in cooler/freezer, the boiler replacement, and a new generator. She discussed research she has done on the generator. The current generator runs on diesel but the idea was to switch to propane because it's already there and the tanks are buried and having one fuel source would simplify things for the Manor. She noted that there have been no issues of freezing and that they are constantly used by the Manor. There was discussion about the size of the tanks, and the efficiency of propane generators of this size. Becky will check on the question of efficiency of propane generators. There was also discussion about splitting the generator out of the project and the cost involved and changing the timeline if the generator is switched to diesel. Becky recommended leaving the generator in the project. Dan will send Becky information he received about generators. Becky will check on how it will affect the project if the generator is changed from propane to diesel. There was also a question regarding the down time for installing the generator. Becky responded that the installation will be timed carefully so that there should be no delay.

Petition to Set Hearing to Call for a Resolution Calling for an Election - Big Sky Transportation

District: Paula McKenzie, Clerk and Recorder, presented the Board with a resolution to set a hearing to call for a resolution calling for an election to enlarge the boundaries of the Big Sky Transportation District. Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, and Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, were present for this portion of the meeting. Paula stated that a petition has been circulated and certified. She added that the new district boundary would be the same as the Resort Tax District boundary and that the enlargement is being done in conjunction with Gallatin County. She noted that the resolution is calling for a public hearing to be held on February 4, 2021, to take action on a resolution calling for an election that would be run with the school election in May to enlarge the district but that no assessment is involved. Following discussion, per recommendation of the Clerk and Recorder, Jim Hart moved to approve Resolution 10-2021, a resolution calling for a public hearing for the enlargement of the Big Sky Transportation District. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Nursing Homes COVID Presentation: Steve McNeece, Nursing Homes Administrator, met with the Board via Webex to discuss the status of COVID in the nursing homes. Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, Tammy Mahlstede, Nursing Homes Office Manager, Gail Nelson, Tobacco Root Mountains Care Center Administrator in Training, Ellis Thompson, Virginia City Resident, and Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, were present for this portion of the meeting. Steve opened the discussion by asking Ron Nye to make a presentation. Ron stated that he has good news – Gail took her test last Friday and it was made official yesterday that she passed her test. He added that his prayers have been answered. Steve congratulated Gail stating that this is a very significant accomplishment in a very short period of time. He then reviewed a spreadsheet showing the current number of residents at each facility, the number of residents and staff currently quarantined, and the number of residents that have recovered from COVID. He noted that there has been no COVID at the TRMCC and that they are not allowing any visitation. There was discussion about staff and residents who have been quarantined and/or contracted COVID. Allison Veland, Madison Valley Manor Administrator in Training, discussed the process for quarantining residents and explained how the separation is made in the facility. There was also discussion about putting screening protocol in the bid documents for the upcoming project, putting a plan in place to ensure the safety of the residents, and who would serve as the liaison for the project.

Bonnie O'Neill, Human Resources, met with the Board to discuss the following topics. Tammy Mahlstede, Nursing Homes Office Manager, Gail Nelson, Tobacco Root Mountains Care Center Administrator in Training, Ellis Thompson, Virginia City Resident, and Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, were present for this portion of the meeting.

- **Setting Nursing Home Administrator Interview Dates:** Bonnie discussed setting dates for interviews for nursing homes administrators. She briefly discussed dates and noted that currently there are 11 applicants and gave a break-down of how many are in state and how many out-of-state. She noted that the applicants have not been screened and suggested that each interview would last for at least one hour and maybe longer. She added that the position is open through 5:00 p.m. on January 31, 2021. Dan Allhands suggested since there are so many and maybe to be transparent possibly getting a firm to pre-screen the applicants and narrow it down to three or four candidates. Bonnie stated that we could use an outside firm to do the pre-screening for the interviews based on their applications, the job description, and the requirements; and that there are several consulting firms out there that we could contact to get an estimate of the charges. She added the topic could be put on the next agenda for approval. Gail asked how that would affect the current Administrators in Training, noting that the criteria they use could affect how they are rated. Bonnie responded that they would use the job description, consider years of service, and they should use a matrix that would list all of the criteria for each candidate. She further stated they encourage all employees to apply for vacant positions and use a scoring system when interviewing, adding that it is most certainly a fair process. Tammy discussed the conversation when this whole thing started, noting that you wanted someone who was established and local because the position has been advertised many times and it has never been successful. Now we have two people who are local and are established and want to remain local and now one has gotten a license. She added that it seems like a slap in the face after they've put their heart and souls and so much work into this and aren't going to have an opportunity to get it. She added that hiring an outside firm might not even allow them the opportunity for an interview. Ron Nye stated that this was not their

intent. There was talk about the screening process and making the process fair and transparent. Steve suggested that the job description should be modified. He stated it's antiquated, old and the AITs don't meet the criteria of the job description. He added that it is concerning because this has been a year-long plan and the plan is exactly what they have done. He said this is a very extraordinary step in a small county with a limited amount of applicants and suggested that the normal screening process be followed and the selection committee doing the screening. Jim suggested postponing the discussion until the next meeting and stated that he would like to review the applications before then. Tammy asked why we need an outside firm after we've struggled to fill these positions and now have people that want to do it, why would we spend taxpayers' money for an outside firm. She added that she didn't understand why there couldn't be a subcommittee selected to do something so mundane without the added expense. Dan stated this is a big position in the county and for the sake of not getting sued, we need to vet this process properly. After much more discussion, Eli Thompson noted that the public needs to be kept informed on what's going on in this process and suggested putting something in the paper about it.

- **Amending Motion for Interview Committee for Nursing Homes Administrators:** This topic was continued to the next regular Commission meeting.

Calendars: The Board reviewed calendars.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Next meeting: The next regular Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 2, 2021, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in the Second Floor Court Room of the Administrative Office Building in Virginia City, Montana.

Dan W. Allhands, Chairman
Board of Madison County Commissioners

Date Approved: February 22, 2021

Minutes prepared by:

Laurie Buyan, Executive Assistant to the
Board of Commissioners

Attest: _____
Paula McKenzie, Clerk and Recorder, Madison County