

**BOARD OF MADISON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**February 8, 2022, Meeting Minutes**

On Tuesday, February 8, 2022, a meeting of the Board of Madison County Commissioners came to order at 9:35 a.m. in the Second Floor Court Room of the Administrative Office Building in Virginia City, Montana, with Commissioners Ron Nye and John Heckler present. Commissioner Dan Allhands was absent for personal reasons. Jane Bacon, Commissioners' Clerk, was present to take minutes.

Those people in attendance at the meeting were Emilie Saylor, Guy Buyan, Jennifer Westfall, Kila Shepherd, Marshall Bettendorf, Hannah Brook, Mike Callahan, Suzanne Nellen, Caitlin Avey, Amie Kusch, Vicki Tilstra, Tony Simonsen, Gayle Schabarker, and John (Shorty) Roberts. Ryan Wolter, IT Support Specialist, administered the Webex connection. Those who attended via Webex or by phone included Dan Metzger, Becky Lawson, T. Downton, Kayla Bean, Hanna Dietrich, Courtnie Fisher, Allison Veland, Abby Thomas, Julie Thompson, Carmin Hill, Britani Allhands, Jon Swanson, Laurie Buyan, Victoria Elsworth, Jennifer Martens, Janie Alt, Jani Flinn, Jolene Palmer, Gail Nelson, Lynda Holt, and unidentified phone attendees.

**Approval of Minutes:** After review, John Heckler moved to approve the January 11, 2022, Board of Commissioners' meeting minutes with corrections. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried. Following review, John Heckler moved to approve the January 18, 2022, Board of Commissioners' meeting minutes as presented. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Public Health Office:** Emilie Saylor, Public Health Director, met with the Board to discuss the following topics. Kila Shepherd, HR Director, Jennifer Westfall, Human Resources, and Guy Buyan, Solid Waste Foreman, were present for a portion of these topics.

- **COVID Update including Nursing Homes Status:** Emilie updated the Board regarding COVID status, noting the first decrease in cases in about five weeks. The County has a total of 1,749 confirmed positive cases, there are 48 active cases, the fatality count remains at 20, and there is one active hospitalization. Montana has had a big decrease in active cases 212,078 confirmed positives, a big increase in active cases from over 18,000 last week to 10,256 this week, fatalities slightly increased to 3,037, and there are 310 active hospitalizations. She explained the chart of daily new cases in the County and discussed issues with the reporting system, noted the test positivity rate decreased 20%, compared current and cumulative active cases with other Montana counties, reviewed the vaccine dashboard map showing fully-vaccinated people in Montana (54%) and in the County (45%) which increased by 17 people but not enough to increase the percentage. The Public Health Office has over 3,500 home tests to distribute that are good until the end of July and include instructions for self-reporting, she recommended getting one kit per household per week, and kits are also available at both pharmacies in the County. Case investigations are mostly being done online, although high-risk people and those unfamiliar with using the Internet will still be contacted by phone. Emilie also noted the special meeting of the Board of Health tonight for the purpose of appointing a new Public Health Officer and transferring medical duties.

Madison Valley Manor currently has 20 residents and no staff or residents are isolated or hospitalized. COVID testing is done regularly for staff, and as needed for anyone who is symptomatic. Visitation is allowed with screening and testing prior to entry.

Tobacco Root Mountains Care Center has 25 residents, and is still in outbreak status, which hopefully will be closed after two more rounds of testing. No residents are infected, quarantined, or hospitalized, one has recently recovered, one staff member is quarantined for high risk exposure, and 8 staff have recovered. Transmission rate in the County is high. Residents and staff are tested every 3-5 days, and visitation is allowed following CDC recommendations on testing and screening. Staff vaccination rates are 86% with two recently getting a first dose, and 96% of residents are vaccinated.

- **PHEP Grant Amendment:** Emilie reviewed the Public Health Emergency Preparedness grant amendment. It authorizes her department to accept funding for one additional position, for a trained medical employee that is not a nurse but has enough medical background to take on some of the clinical

duties needed in Public Health, particularly since they have not been able to fill the nurse position. Emilie expressed her intention to hire for the position and is ready to create a job description and begin the process. After discussion, John Heckler moved to accept Task Order Amendment Number Four, Task Order for PHEP (Public Health Emergency Preparedness) Number 20-07-6-11-032-0. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Human Resources:** Kila Shepherd, HR Director, and Jennifer Westfall, Human Resources, met with the Board to discuss the following topics. Guy Buyan, Solid Waste Foreman, Marshall Bettendorf, Madison Valley Golf Association, and Hannah Brook, Grant Writer/Administrator, were present for all or a portion of these topics.

- **Employment Offer for District 3 Foreman Position:** John is offering the position of District 3 Road Foreman to Joe Dickinson with a targeted start date of February 22, 2022. They discussed a pay range where his hourly wage can increase over the next two 6-month periods, as he gains experience and meets certain requirements. Following review, John Heckler moved to adopt the letter offering Joe Dickinson the position of District 3 Road Foreman, starting on February 22, 2022, at an hourly rate of \$27.36, with two planned wage increases based upon performance and meeting the requirements stated in the offer letter. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.
- **New Hire – Izabellah Olson as a Housekeeping/ Laundry Aide at MVM Starting 2/1/22 at \$16.35:** Jennifer reviewed hiring a Housekeeping/Laundry Aide at MVM who started on February 1, 2022. After review, John Heckler moved to approve hiring Izabellah Olson as a Housekeeping/Laundry Aide at Madison Valley Manor, starting on February 1, 2022, at \$16.35 per hour. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.
- **New Position for a Temporary Employee in Solid Waste:** Kila reviewed a request for a new, temporary position in Solid Waste. Guy said summers are very busy for Solid Waste and asked for temporary help from April to September. The job description and pay rate are still to be determined, there will be defined start and end dates, and CDL license is preferred but not necessary. Following discussion, John Heckler moved to approve advertising for a Solid Waste temporary employee from April through September 2022, at a pay rate to be determined at a later date. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Madison Meadows Golf Association:** Marshall Bettendorf, Madison Valley Golf Association, met with the Board to discuss the following topic. Hannah Brook, Grant Writer/Administrator, was present for this portion of the meeting. Dan Metzger, Madison County Golf Association, participated by Webex.

- **Madison Meadows Golf Course Update:** John referred to the Board's activities toward keeping the golf course in operation, stated an expectation that the Golf Association would present re-worked bylaws in two weeks, brought up an example of another co-owned, municipal Montana golf course that has offered to help with the process, and said the future of the facility according to grant providers he has talked with depends on changing to something like a community center that offers several things, including golf. Marshall questioned the need for re-worked bylaws, asked what the goal would be, and noted that the municipal course example is very different than Madison Meadows. John replied that the goal is to qualify for funding, continue to operate, and there will be compromise in order to move forward. Marshall and Dan M stated that the funding request is for maintenance requirements and keeping the course open, and changing the bylaws is a lengthy, separate process since working with the current members and getting their approval will take some time. There was discussion about creating an agreement and bylaws that will stand the test of time, adding more comprehensive and community-related services to the facility, revenue generating opportunities, being open to change and not leaning on the past, envisioning a shared facility with year-round activities, and whether there is enough infrastructure in the community to support a community center. Ron asked about timing and financial needs for getting the course ready to open by April, and discussion ensued about employment in uncertain circumstances, the necessity of hiring a good golf superintendent, cross-training, membership support of staff, cash needed to get through the season, and this season's dependence on weather, equipment maintenance/replacement, and the irrigation system. Dan M reviewed the financial commitment needed to open the course, John suggested ideas for getting financial support from the Ennis business community, and Dan M said a renewal agreement won't be signed if the financial backing is not sustainable. Everyone agreed to meet again in Ennis on February 23, 2022, to discuss budget and minimum amount of cash needed to operate, and other details including equipment and the hydraulic system.

**SMA Architects:** Becky Lawson, SMA Architects, met with the Board via Webex to discuss the following topic. Allison Veland, MVM Administrator, also participated by Webex. Hannah Brook, Grant Writer/Administrator, and Mike Callahan, Safety Coordinator, were present for this portion of the meeting.

- **Madison Valley Manor Renovation Project:**

- **Kitchen Work at MVM:** Becky updated the preliminary schedule for the kitchen renovation at MVM based on a 7-month projected timeline for walk-in delivery, since if a general contractor were hired in March and a walk-in was ordered at that time it wouldn't arrive until October, and given other details needed for installation the schedule would realistically be pushed back to Spring of 2023. There was discussion about having the general contractor order the walk-in and being responsible for it versus the County ordering it, warranty issues if equipment sits idle prior to installation, costs, requesting a grant extension, readiness of preliminary bid documents, and requesting warranty time to be set upon installation rather than delivery.

**Safety Coordinator:** Mike Callahan, Safety Coordinator, met with the Board to discuss the following topics. Suzanne Nellen, Justice of the Peace, and Kila Shepherd, HR Director, were present for all or a portion of these topics.

- **OSHA 300A Summary for 2021:** Mike prepared the OSHA 300A forms to be posted at the nursing homes and County Administration building, and said the forms required by the Department of Labor were completed and sent. Following review, John Heckler moved to approve signing OSHA Forms 300A, Summary of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses, for the Madison County building, Tobacco Root Mountain Care Center, and Madison Valley Manor. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.
- **Safety Update:** Mike presented and reviewed the February Safety update. He reviewed his activities including supply distribution and replacement, meetings and trainings, accident investigations, eyewash station and AED maintenance, monthly and annual inspections, and updating the Employee Safety Manual. There was discussion about County-supplied work boots and specialized clothing, and sending employees to the upcoming Drive Workshop.

**Justice of the Peace:** Suzanne Nellen, Justice of the Peace, met with the Board to discuss the following topics. Kila Shepherd, HR Director, was present for this portion of the meeting.

- **Justice Court Compliance Officer Compensation:** Judge Nellen reviewed the Justice Court office situation over the last several months including training a new staff, filling in for staff absences, and the Compliance Officer being critical to the office. She explained her reasons for requesting additional compensation retroactively and/or going forward. Kila recommended wage levels for retroactive pay and reviewed the standard pay increments for the position. Discussion included cross training, staff changes anticipated in the Courthouse, and giving more thought to temporary compensation for employees in other departments who fill in when needed. The Board expressed general support for Judge Nellen's request, asked for more details, and the topic was continued.
- **Justice of the Peace Resignation:** Judge Nellen discussed her resignation, getting people interested in the position, filing deadline, timing an interim appointment so the appointee can attend judge training at the end of April, and said she will work with the Board on the process. After discussion, John Heckler moved to accept the notice of resignation of Judge Nellen, effective March 15, 2022, as presented. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Senator Tester's Field Reps:** Amie Kusch and Caitlin Avey, Field Representatives for U.S. Senator Jon Tester, met with the Board to introduce themselves and discuss current topics.

- **Introduction and Update:** After introductions, several topics were discussed including getting a post office in Big Sky, gravel pit stormwater reporting requirements, planning for quality growth in the County, the challenges of working with Big Sky, water consumption and wastewater concerns in Gallatin County and neighboring counties, growth rates and keeping up with capital projects, Senator Tester's focus on infrastructure, the County assistance to its smaller communities by obtaining and directing infrastructure funding, County ARPA-funded projects, bridges that need to replacement or work, the Cliff and Wade Lakes road project, having no water/sewer line to the Fairgrounds, future ARPA funding, buyer interest in the Children's Center in Twin Bridges, conversations about the effect COVID has had on the community and particularly on the mental

health and development of children, lack of child care and Head Start programs in the County, and building the relationship with Senator Tester's office by raising awareness of County questions and concerns.

**Grants:** Hannah Brook, Grant Writer/Administrator, met with the Board to discuss the following topics. Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, was present for this portion of the meeting.

- **ARPA – Twin Bridges MOA:** Hannah reviewed the documents in front of the Board to be approved. Discussion included updating MOA's/contracts to meet audit criteria, and whether to inspect projects for compliance after funds have been distributed. After discussion, John Heckler moved to proceed with the Memorandum of Agreement on the ARPA water and sewer infrastructure grant program between Madison County and the Town of Twin Bridges. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.
- **ARPA – Twin Bridges Grant Management Plan:** Hannah presented the ARPA Grant Management Plan with Twin Bridges, pointing out that it defines everyone's roles and responsibilities regarding the grant. After review, John Heckler moved to adopt the ARPA Water & Sewer Infrastructure Grant Management Plan between Madison County and Twin Bridges. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.
- **Resolution 22-2022 Committing Funds for Twin Bridges Stormwater System:** Hannah reviewed Resolution 22-2022, providing funding to Twin Bridges for their Stormwater System project. Following review, John Heckler moved to adopt Resolution 22-2022, a resolution by Madison County committing to provide funds to the Town of Twin Bridges, Montana for the Twin Bridges Stormwater System project. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Ruby Valley Medical Center Twin Bridges Clinic:** Tony Simonsen, Ruby Valley Hospital Foundation, met with the Board to discuss the Twin Bridges Clinic. The Ruby Valley Hospital Board is discussing tripling the size of the clinic and making a substantial financial commitment, and after considering all aspects of relocating the clinic it was determined to be cost prohibitive so they are looking at options on the current property, including acquiring the small strip of land on the west side. The County's property line on the clinic's south side currently limits any substantial addition in that direction, the County shop building is older and has issues, and Tony asked about getting a boundary adjustment or a 99-year lease, or other ideas to be able to build up to the property line and still have a setback. Ron said the shop building is currently used for storage by the County and the Twin Bridges Fire Department. Discussion included storm drains, other adjacent properties, setbacks, parking options, planning for 20 years ahead, long term vision of a parking lot on the County property when the building is no longer there, potential cleanup issues, whether the County would eventually give their property to the Clinic, and coming to an agreement before Tony meets with an architect so the design can be approached with future intentions understood. Tony will check on setbacks for new construction in Twin Bridges and consult with the County Attorney to draft a proposal/agreement.

**Johnson Controls Annual Service Agreement Scope of Work:** John presented and reviewed the draft of the annual service agreement and scope of work for Johnson Controls to maintain the heating system at Madison Valley Manor. It's a three-year agreement with budgets for maintaining a spare parts inventory, and he anticipates it will be finalized and signed in about three weeks.

**Proposal for Purchase or Lease of Property next to Ennis Solid Waste Container Site:** John presented a draft letter to Bob Davidson confirming the Board's interest in going forward with the purchase or long-term lease of the Ennis property adjoining the Solid Waste container site, with the intent that a decision will be made by the end of March. After review, John Heckler moved for the County to proceed with negotiations and discussions with the landowner, Bob Davidson, for acquiring the adjacent lot to the Solid Waste container facility in Ennis, for purchase and/or long-term lease. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Road Safety/Safety of the Belly Dump:** Gayle Schabarker, County resident, met with the Board to express concerns about road safety at the end of the McAfee Bridge where 6 concrete blocks have been placed. John (Shorty) Roberts, District 3 Road Crew, and Mike Callahan, Safety Coordinator, were present for this portion of the meeting. John explained that due to concerns expressed by residents about inadequate signage and crashes into the ravine, temporary measures were taken by the road crew to

increase safety and when the ground thaws they intend to do something different. Additional discussion included increased sanding of icy roads, recent reorganization and additions to District 3 road crew, snowplowing challenges and the hazards of plowing in the dark, school bus safety, remotely-located residents, potential overload of the sideboards on the belly dump trailer, and the maintenance being done at the road shop.

**Ranch Rodeo Awards (Belt Buckles):** The Board considered sponsoring Ranch Rodeo awards at the Fair this year, noting last year they sponsored the awards for an amount not to exceed \$1,000. Following review, John Heckler moved to sponsor Ranch Rodeo award buckles for the winning team this year, for a budget not to exceed \$1,000. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Claims:** The Board approved claims.

**Calendars:** The Board adjourned to the Commissioner office and reviewed calendars. Laurie Buyan, Executive Assistant, was present for this portion of the meeting.

**Workers' Compensation Experience Form:** Following review, John Heckler moved to approve the ERM-6 Form, Workers Compensation Experience Rating for Non-Affiliate Data, effective (date of rating) 7/1/22. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

**Next meeting:** The next regular Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 15, 2022, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in the Second Floor Court Room of the Administrative Office Building in Virginia City, Montana.

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Dan W. Allhands, Chairman  
Board of Madison County Commissioners

Date Approved: March 22, 2022

Minutes prepared by:

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Jane Bacon, Commissioners' Clerk

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Paula McKenzie, Clerk and Recorder, Madison County