

BOARD OF MADISON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
February 19, 2020, Special Meeting Minutes

On Wednesday, February 19, 2020, a special meeting of the Board of Madison County Commissioners came to order at 10:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Conference Room of the Administrative Office Building in Virginia City, Montana, with Commissioners Dan Allhands, Jim Hart, and Ron Nye present. Jane Bacon, Commissioners' Clerk, was present to take minutes.

Those people in attendance at the meeting were Bonnie O'Neill, Chief Administrative Officer, Steve McNeece, CAH Solutions Group/Nursing Home Administrator, and those on the attached list.

CAH Solutions Group Contract: The Board met to discuss and/or take action on a contract between CAH Solutions Group and Madison County, which was executed on January 20, 2020, by Steve McNeece and Bonnie O'Neill, regarding the administration and analysis of the County's nursing home facilities. Chairman Allhands opened the meeting by reviewing ground rules that will be observed for this meeting. Steve McNeece, CAH Solutions Group owner, introduced himself and reviewed his background in health care administration, and laid out the major task areas specified in the contract in addition to managing day-to-day operations. He explained why he recently gave notice to terminate the contract. Discussion included publicly-available online information, the Chief Administrative Officer's role and authority in executing administrative contracts, the importance of having a Nursing Home Administrator in place, having all three Commissioners participate in major decisions and the Board's fiscal responsibilities, informing the public about major decisions, and filing contracts with the Clerk & Recorder. Steve stated that while the contracted amount may sound like a lot of money, it is one of CAH's smallest contracts. He discussed the task of analyzing operations and administrative staffing, observed areas that can be improved, and expressed willingness to reconsider termination if certain details are worked out. Discussion ensued about contract changes, setting parameters as a safety measure for both parties, allowing adequate time in the event of termination, as well as whether to use the existing contract. Support was expressed by members of the staff, public, and Board for Steve/CAH to remain as Administrator and provide contract services. Discussion ensued about public review and input on County contracts. It was agreed that the contract would be revised and reviewed prior to the next regular meeting, discussion included avoiding a lapse in administrator coverage, and it was noted that the existing contract is currently in effect through March 10, 2020. Steve observed, however, that if the CAO was not authorized to sign the contract there is no contract in force, but Justin said that would be debatable since both sides have executed it. The level of authority given to the CAO by the Commissioners was discussed, as well as the dynamics and timing of nursing home staffing decisions needed to provide ongoing and uninterrupted resident care. Kathleen Mumme, Clerk and Recorder, and Laurie Buyan, Commissioners' Assistant, discussed authority for everyday staffing decisions versus blanket authority, noting that the issue here is who should sign a contract hiring an administrator since the public has a say in running the nursing homes. Following discussion, Ron Nye moved to approve the contract with CAH Solutions Group at the next regular Commission meeting on Tuesday, February 25, 2020, subject to review and recommendations made by the Deputy County Attorney, and acceptance by Steve McNeece/CAH Solutions Group. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

At this point, many attendees left the room and the meeting continued. Bonnie discussed previous administrative contracts and past practices; and committed to filing the contract in the Clerk and Recorder's Office when approved. She reiterated that personal information should not be disclosed to the public, discussed holding a closed meeting if discipline issues are involved, reviewed the unresolved definition of CAO job duties, and noted criticism and lack of respect from employees for the CAO position. Further discussion included engaging an Administrator during a crisis situation, public impressions and transparency, and contract-signing authority. In the midst of lively discussion, Jim noted that differences of opinion happen all the time and suggested ending the meeting.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:19 a.m.

Next meeting: The next regular Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 3, 2020, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' Conference Room of the Administrative Office Building in Virginia City, Montana.

Dan W. Allhands, Chairman
Board of Madison County Commissioners

Date Approved: March 31, 2020

Minutes prepared by:

Jane Bacon, Commissioners' Clerk

Attest: _____
Kathleen Mumme, Clerk and Recorder, Madison County