

**BOARD OF MADISON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**April 27, 2021, Meeting Minutes**

On Tuesday, April 27, 2021, a meeting of the Board of Madison County Commissioners came to order at 9:34 a.m. in the Second Floor Court Room of the Administrative Office Building in Virginia City, Montana, with Commissioners Dan Allhands, Ron Nye, and Jim Hart present. Jane Bacon, Commissioners' Clerk, was present to take minutes.

Those people in attendance at the meeting were Joe Brummell, Brett Schriock, Vicki Tilstra, Tony Forsythe, Laurie Buyan, Kila Shepard, Kaleena Miller, Mikayla Hudson, Jani Flinn, and those on the attached list. Ryan Wolter, IT Support Specialist, was present to administer the Webex connection. Those who attended via Webex or by phone included Gail Nelson, Allison Veland, Becky Lawson, Craig Erickson, Sam Frederick, Abbi Lee, Lisa Stapp, Tommy Luksha, Mark Brook, Dave Reintsma, Jolene Palmer, Lynda Holt, Kathy Barnes, Jennifer Martens, Margie Edsall, Keely Larson, Michelle Schriock, and several unidentified Webex/phone attendees.

**Approval of Minutes:** Following review, Ron Nye moved to approve the March 30, 2021, Board of Commissioners' meeting minutes with corrections. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried. After review, Jim Hart moved to approve the April 6, 2021, Board of Commissioners' meeting minutes with corrections. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Public Health Office/DES - COVID-19 Update:** Joe Brummell, Director of Emergency Management, met with the Board to present an update regarding COVID-19 status. Madison County has had 775 positive cases, currently has 18 active cases, 749 people have recovered, and has had 8 fatalities. Montana currently has 965 active cases and 47 active hospitalizations. Joe reviewed Montana county maps showing active cases, cumulative cases, and hospital bed capacity. County schools have had cases reported in Twin Bridges in the last 14 days. He reviewed Incident Command Team operations and structure, noting that Public Health has a new director, and the Public Information Officer position is still unfilled. Joe said the County is doing really well with vaccines and hospitals are doing a great job at administering doses. He mentioned Montana's worker shortage attributing some loss of key workers to the pandemic. Upcoming meetings and events were reviewed, as well as upcoming weather, red flag/fire watch/drought conditions, and snow water equivalents. Joe also discussed recent issues with drip torches used in fire-fighting.

- **Nursing Homes COVID Update:** Gail Nelson, TRMCC Administrator, and Allison Veland, MVM Administrator, updated the Board via Webex on COVID status at the nursing homes. Gail said the TRMCC census is 24, no residents or staff are quarantined or hospitalized, testing is being done once a week for staff and as needed for residents, indoor visitation is allowed, and she briefly discussed staffing. Allison said there are 16 residents at MVM, no residents or staff members are on quarantine, and testing is being done once a week. The vaccination rate for the residents is up to 87.5% and indoor visiting is allowed. Two additional admissions are scheduled for this week.

**IT:** Brett Schriock, IT Director, met with the Board to discuss the following topic. Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, was present for a portion of this topic.

- **DIS Technologies Server Replacement Proposal:** Brett explained the County's server situation and ongoing challenges faced by the IT Department and said one of the workhorse servers is at the end of its expected life and should be replaced. He has been working with DIS Technologies and Dell Computers on a server proposal for \$15,481 that includes shipping, a five-year warranty and guaranteed overnight replacement, and Brett is confident this server will handle the next five years very well. Costs, budgets, and the importance of reliable equipment were discussed. Following discussion, Ron Nye moved to move forward immediately with the order of a new server and domain setup as recommended by DIS Technologies. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Finance Office:** Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, met with the Board to discuss the following topic.

- **Expense Account Clarification for Fair Foundation Grant Services:** After conversations with Dana Escott, Fair Manager, and Nondi Harrington, the Fair Foundation's fundraising consultant, about

expenses involved in setting up the Fair Foundation, Vicki and the Board discussed mills, use of the Fair Fund, trackability, and the costs expected through the end of the calendar year. The Board agreed that the County will cover initial expenses through the Fair budget, and once the Foundation is set up it will be up to them, in a similar way to the operations of hospital and nursing home foundations.

**Maintenance:** Tony Forsythe, Maintenance Manager, met with the Board to discuss the following topic.

- **Purchase of Conex Boxes:** Tony said he already has one Conex storage box in Alder with shelves in it, he requested approval to purchase one additional box, and said lighting is not needed since they will be accessed during the day. Based on the request and recommendation of the Maintenance Manager, Jim Hart moved to approve moving forward on purchasing a Conex storage box for a total of \$5,300, delivered. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Claims:** The Board approved claims.

**Date for Public Surplus Auction:** Laurie Buyan, Executive Assistant, met with the Board to discuss setting a date for a public surplus auction. The topic was continued to the next regular Commission meeting to allow time for Commissioners and other departments to compile lists of surplus items.

**Date for Compensation Board Meeting:** Laurie Buyan, Executive Assistant, met with the Board to discuss setting a date for a Compensation Board meeting. Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, and Kila Shepard, HR Officer, were present for this portion of the meeting. Setting the meeting for 3:00 p.m. on June 10, 2021, was proposed, and Laurie will contact elected officials regarding schedules and availability.

**Selection of Committee and Date for Safety Coordinator Interviews:** The Board discussed selecting an interview committee and a date for Safety Coordinator interviews. Laurie Buyan, Executive Assistant, Kila Shepard, HR Officer, and Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, were present for this portion of the meeting. Kila said several applications have been received and she will distribute candidate information to the Board and interview committee when determined, along with proposed interview questions.

**Madison/Jefferson Extension:** Kaleena Miller, Madison & Jefferson County Ag Agent, and Mikayla Hudson, Madison & Jefferson County 4-H Agent, met with the Board to discuss the following topics. Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, and Kila Shepard, HR Officer, were present for a portion of these topics.

- **Ag Extension Update:** Kaleena presented and reviewed recent Ag Extension activities. Training and education events were well-attended and included the Rancher Roundtable webinar series, backcountry first aid, calving techniques, grasshopper integrated pest management (IPM), and grazing to improve soil health. Upcoming training topics include a pollinator planting project funded by a DNRC grant in conjunction with the Ruby Valley Conservation District, Twin Bridges, Sheridan FFA programs, and Jackson's Gardens; a range health/soil health pilot project; a late June grazing academy in Ennis; tree pruning workshops; and backyard composting. Kaleena noted she has been busy recently with site visits involving soil recommendations, as well as insect, disease, and small vertebrate damage. She is also seeking stakeholder feedback in preparation for the MSU retention process after being in her position for two years.
- **4-H Extension Update:** Mikayla presented and reviewed 4-H Extension activities, including a Cloverbud workshop with 8 Cloverbuds and 5 junior leaders; a record book workshop in conjunction with Madison Valley Shooting Sports in Ennis with 13 kids and their families; livestock sales meetings, setting fair schedules and attending Fair Board meetings; Demonstration Day; attending a 4-H institute meeting in Miles City; and planning upcoming activities including Whitehall Arbor Day, BY's rodeo, and archery shoots at the fairgrounds.
- **Authorization to Store or Transport Firearms for Shooting Sport Purposes:** Mikayla discussed transportation of 4-H owned firearms in the County vehicle, which is expected to be needed very rarely but would be beneficial to the kids in the program for their 4-H shooting activities. She explained 4-H and safety rules, which include not transporting youth in the County vehicle, 4-H owned firearms must be in cases with no ammunition in cases, and firearms must be transported by either a registered/certified shooting sports leader or the county agent. Since the firearms are registered and owned by 4-H program clubs, 4-H members should not travel with them due to liability. Discussion ensued about logistics, competitions using firearms, parent involvement, supporting volunteers and local programs, including

firearm transport in extension job descriptions, transparency, County vehicle policies and designation of specific positions for firearm transport, use of County vehicle versus personal vehicle, training requirements, and developing an addendum to the motor vehicle policy.

- **Vehicle for Extension Use:** The Board and Extension agents discussed which vehicle to designate for Extension use since the pickup currently assigned is getting less reliable, and it was determined they will use the Durango formerly used by IT.

**Great West Engineering / SMA Architects:** Craig Erickson, Great West Engineering, and Becky Lawson, SMA Architects, met with the Board via Webex to discuss the following topic. Jani Flinn, Grant Administrator, was present for this portion of the meeting.

- **Madison Valley Manor Project:** Craig and Becky discussed the MVM project being separated into three separate bid packages, prioritizing the generator purchase due to long lead time, and waiting to hear from the County Attorney to make sure there are no conflicts of interest that might cause the project to be delayed. Craig reported that the Department of Commerce is aware of the project being broken up and indicated their understanding and approval. Along with the electrical upgrade, Becky noted that Northwest Energy will be working on the transformer at a cost of \$7,000, which would have been included in contractor costs. Additional discussion included generator specifications and bids, scheduling, local contractors and bidders, and compliance with State and CDBG grant requirements.

**Noxious Weed Trust Fund Project Grant Agreement:** A call was made to Dale Grose, Weed Program Coordinator, for information about the Noxious Weed Trust Fund Project annual grant agreement. He explained how the program is run with the County as the carrier, the total of \$10,500 including the County's \$500 match for Biocontrol, the Upper Ruby match with the State grant covering 50% and private property landowners covering the other 50% of the \$35,000 total, and confirmed the agreements were approved by the Weed Board.

- **Biocontrol:** Following discussion, Ron Nye moved to approve the Noxious Weed Trust Fund Project grant agreement, Madison County Biocontrol Project 2021, MDA Number 2021-002. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.
- **Upper Ruby:** Following review, Ron Nye moved to approve the Noxious Weed Trust Fund Project grant agreement, Upper Ruby Continuing IV, MDA Number 2021-031, as presented. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Resolution 20-2021 Authorizing Use of Emergency Funds for Fairgrounds Levee:** The Board discussed a resolution authorizing use of emergency funds for the Fairgrounds levee. Ron said the proposal to work on the levee was approved by the County Attorney after his questions were answered by Jeremiah Theys at Great West, and it was explained that the existing levee could fail at any time, possibly with people at the Fairgrounds. Jim read the resolution aloud. Ron noted that piggybacking the project to work being done under a Twin Bridges grant, the cost is expected to be about half of what it would otherwise cost, and there may also be additional grants available. After discussion, Ron Nye moved to approve the County Declaration Resolution, Resolution 20-2021, with corrections. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Great West Task Order #35 - Madison County Fairgrounds Levee Accreditation Feasibility Study:** The Board reviewed Great West Task Order #35, for a Fairgrounds levee accreditation feasibility study. After review, Ron Nye moved to approve payment for Task Order #35 – Fairgrounds Levee Accreditation Feasibility Study, Great West Engineering Project No. 1-15267, for an amount not to exceed \$32,900. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Great West Engineering – Moore's Creek Grant Closeout:** The Board reviewed Great West Engineering's grant closeout document for the Moores Creek flood mitigation project, and Jim pointed out that the name is actually Moore Creek. After review, Jim Hart moved to approve Task Order No. 1 – General Services, Scope of Services, Madison County Engineering Services On-Call, Moores Creek Flood Mitigation HMGP Grant Closeout, in an amount not to exceed \$3,600 to Great West Engineering, in hopes of a return of approximately \$38,000 payable to Madison County. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Great West Engineering – Traffic Control during Granite Bridge Replacement:** The Board discussed traffic options laid out by Great West Engineering during the planned replacement of Granite Creek Bridge. Following discussion, Ron Nye moved to direct Great West to pursue Option 1 during the Granite Creek Bridge

replacement, to provide a detour bridge or detour route to allow for uninterrupted traffic. Jim Hart seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Morrison-Maierle – Amendment to Ousel Falls Snow Removal Contract:** The Board reviewed the Morrison-Maierle contract amendment for snow removal at Ousel Falls, and Jim pointed out that the contract mistakenly had Madison County’s payment percentage at 76% and Gallatin County’s payment at 24%, but it was supposed to have been 74% and 26%. After review, Jim Hart moved to approve the Morrison-Maierle amendment to the Agreement for Services changing Madison County’s portion to 74% and Gallatin County’s portion to 26% of the \$25,000 annual contractor payment. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Recommendation to Name a Geographic Feature near Laurin - Dehorty Flat:** This topic was continued to the next regular Commission meeting.

**Open Proposals for Engineering and Grant Administration Services:** Two proposals for engineering and grant administration services were received and opened: 1) Great West Engineering, and 2) WWC Engineering. It was noted that a post office notice was received for a package that arrived this morning, the post office is now closed, so if the package is a third proposal it will be accepted since it arrived prior to the deadline. The Board will consider the proposals and schedule interviews.

**Adobe Town Road Issues:** The Board met with those on the attached list to discuss Adobe Town road issues. Webex participants included Sam Frederick, Heroes and Horses Board. Micah Fink, Heroes and Horses CEO and Founder, described his background, said they inherited the disputed trail issue after purchasing the property and are seeking the best solution possible for everyone involved, and went on to describe their program and plans for the property. Mark Davis, Heroes and Horses Chief Operating Officer, presented and reviewed aerial photos showing existing structures, and pointed out planned structure locations. Micah further described the program for veterans, breaking and training wild mustangs, with a goal to use local labor whenever possible. He understands that the road has been in dispute for a long time but their organization was not aware of the issue until the property closed. He believes they have a good solution, they plan to work with neighbors and landowners, BLM and the Garnet Mine to come to the best solution, and he will be presenting more detailed plans in the next few weeks. Discussion included horse gates, road/trail condition, access via Williams Creek Road, Adobe Town Road history, County maintenance history, Road Review Committee research, MCA codes regarding removal of County road encroachments, road petitions and public information, alternate access options, location of original petitioned road, avoiding litigation, accuracy of GIS system and other map documentation, and scheduling evening meetings for expanded public availability. This topic was continued to Tuesday, May 11, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.

**Calendars:** The Board reviewed calendars.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

**Next meeting:** The next regular Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 4, 2021, 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: June 8, 2021

Minutes prepared by:

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Jane Bacon, Commissioners’ Clerk

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