

**BOARD OF MADISON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
PRELIMINARY BUDGET HEARINGS
April 28, 2021, Minutes**

On Wednesday, April 28, 2021, the Board of Madison County Commissioners conducted Preliminary Budget Hearings beginning at 10:10 a.m. in the Second Floor Courtroom of the Madison County Administrative Office Building in Virginia City, Montana, with Commissioners Dan Allhands, Chairman, Jim Hart, and Ron Nye present. Jane Bacon, Commissioner's Clerk, was present to take minutes.

Those people in attendance at the hearings were Chris Christensen, Susan Vonasek, Vicki Tilstra, Kila Shepherd, and Janet Doornbos.

County Attorney Preliminary Budget Hearing: Chris Christensen, County Attorney, presented the Board with the preliminary budget for the County Attorney's Office. Chris discussed salaries and wages first, pointing out that line 111 includes an annual \$500 longevity amount. In line 119, he intends to include a salary increase from \$22.74 to \$23.91 per hour for the lead legal assistant, he reviewed her work noting it goes beyond that of a legal assistant, and he discussed similar County salaries and alternative job titles. He explained that line 212 appears as if the department is over budget because a \$14,625 grant was not credited to the correct account but in fact the department is under budget. Chris reviewed the remainder of the preliminary budget, which is mostly unchanged from last year. He explained the \$5,000 increase in line 394 is due to an increase in jury witness fees: the law was changed resulting in witness fees no longer being paid by the courts, the past year was the first time that fees were paid from his budget and the amount was based on a guess, and he thinks this increase will cover fees in the upcoming year. Further discussion included the likely passage of DUI legislation and how it might increase the number of jury trials requested, marijuana testing compared to DUI tests, anticipated revenue from legalization, State courtroom equipment, ADA issues and accommodations in the Courthouse, and road policies related to maintenance and closures.

Victims Advocate Preliminary Budget Hearing: Susan Vonasek, Victims' Advocate, met with the Board to review the preliminary budget for the Victims Advocate Program. Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, was present for this hearing. The budget is unchanged from last year. Vicki pointed out a reserve held due to a grant that has not been received yet, and Susan noted she submitted a grant for the next two-year cycle but typically will not be notified by the State until September/October. She reviewed the current grant, reminding the Board that \$80,000 comes from the State and the County matches 20% (\$20,000) over the two-year grant span. There are some small charges from Ennis, and the County Attorney submits \$8,000. She noted that activity is picking up and is happy that victims are using her as a resource.

Finance Office Preliminary Budget Hearing: Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, met with the Board to discuss the preliminary budget for the Finance Office. Kila Shepherd, Human Resource Specialist, was present for this hearing. There was a \$100 increase in office supplies, and since Vicki anticipates any training will be done by webinar the training services line was zero, a decrease of \$150. She wants to keep existing funds in the salary/wages line for extra help and suggested using a former employee who has occasionally filled in as needed in the Clerk and Recorder's office. Kila stated that the interview process would not be required for temporary help.

Human Resources Preliminary Budget Hearing: Kila Shepherd, Human Resource Specialist, and Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, met with the Board to discuss the preliminary budget for the Human Resources department. Overall, the non-wage/benefits budget was increased by \$1,350: \$1,500 was added for office furniture and equipment, operating supplies were reduced by \$500, fuel was increased by \$1,400, Other Professional Services showed a \$300 decrease, and tuition was listed at zero reflecting a decrease of \$750. Discussion turned to staffing and salaries – Kila pointed out there is already a second full-time position included in the budget, and it is standard to have a second position when the number of employees reaches 100 to 120. She suggested that her position could be reclassified to a director level with a salary increase, and the new position could be a specialist who is able to do "anything and everything" but who takes ownership of the recruitment and selection process,

which will continue to be part of Kila's focus as well. Recruitment primarily concentrates on the nursing homes, but other County positions need to be filled and Kila emphasized getting the best possible candidates. Asked about timing, she said hiring for the new position will take a couple of months so it will be well into the next fiscal year, which also gives her some time to adjust and settle in. She anticipates that her own position will include more travel, visiting the County's various locations and becoming more familiar with the activities of each department. Additional discussion included working with supervisors on employee appreciation and motivation, and employee training options for new and existing employees.

Safety Department Preliminary Budget Hearing: Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, presented the Board with the preliminary budget for the Safety Department. She said line 229 was increased \$10,000 during the last year for COVID supplies but based on actual expenses she reduced it from \$13,000 to \$8,000. Basically, she based the budget on what was spent in the last year and was able to decrease the overall budget by \$5,225. She also pointed out that the last budget included wages for extra help based on a plan to hire students, which didn't happen. There was additional discussion about hiring for the Safety Coordinator position.

Housing Advisory Board Preliminary Budget Hearing: Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, presented the Board with the preliminary budget for the Housing Advisory Board. She received it from Cindy Gockel, Housing Advisory Board Chair, who recommended keeping it the same as last year.

Road Review Committee Preliminary Budget Hearing: Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, presented the Board with the preliminary budget for the Road Review Committee which was unchanged from last year.

Senior Citizen's Advisory Board Preliminary Budget Hearing: Janet Doornbos, Senior Citizen's Advisory Board, presented the Board with the preliminary budget for the Senior Citizen's Advisory Board. Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, was present for this hearing. Vicki noted the budget will largely stay the same unless the County acquires another bus, and discussion included hiring bus drivers, driver salaries, bus schedules, reserve funds, timing, allotment, County costs, and matching funds. Janet said the final contract for the bus hasn't been received yet and the County might owe +/- \$10,000 for a new bus from MDOT, which is why the vehicles and equipment line was changed from \$45,000 to \$55,000. The only other change was a \$500 increase to the fuel line with a note about possible bus acquisition, but Vicki pointed out that some amounts won't be filled in until taxable values are received. She also noted that line 357 includes an annual contribution to Area 5 of about \$5,000. Janet informed the Board that Virginia City lost its senior lunch program without warning, and options are being explored with other restaurants so the program can be reinstated.

With no further business, the hearings concluded at 2:15 p.m.

Dan W. Allhands, Chairman
Board of Madison County Commissioners

Date Approved: May 4, 2021

Minutes prepared by:

Jane Bacon, Commissioner's Clerk

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