

**BOARD OF MADISON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
PRELIMINARY BUDGET HEARINGS
May 18, 2022, Minutes**

On Wednesday, May 18, 2022, the Board of Madison County Commissioners conducted Preliminary Budget Hearings beginning at 10:00 a.m. in the Second Floor Courtroom of the Madison County Administrative Office Building in Virginia City, Montana, with Commissioners Dan Allhands, Chairman, John Heckler, and Ron Nye present. Jane Bacon, Commissioner's Clerk, was present to take minutes.

Those people in attendance at the hearings were Craig Schroeder, Vicki Tilstra, Britani Allhands, Duncan Hedges, Kila Shepherd, Jake Stewart, Van Puckett, Kacey Smart, Guy Buyan, and Carmin Hill.

Sheriff/911/Jail/Dispatch Preliminary Budget Hearing: Craig Schroeder, Undersheriff, met with the Board to discuss the preliminary budget for Sheriff/911/Jail/Dispatch. Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, Britani Allhands, Finance Administrative Assistant, and Duncan Hedges, Detention Officer, were present for this portion of the meeting. There was discussion about the cost sharing agreement with Gallatin County for Big Sky deputies. John noted he met previously with both sheriffs, the agreement needs to be redone for next year, and because Gallatin County is incurring overhead costs there should be consideration given for Madison County to contribute to administrative costs. The agreement for Sheriff coverage in the Ennis area when the Ennis police officer is not working was also discussed, as well as an assessment of other local towns for Sheriff coverage. Craig presented preliminary budgets for Sheriff, Coroner Services, Care or Custody of Prisoners, and Narcotics Investigation. The budget for the Sheriff's Office had an overall increase of \$168,000 due to several factors: increased cost of goods such as ammunition and fuel; hiring three new deputies and all associated costs of adding staff such as clothing and equipment, increased use of fuel, and adding completely-outfitted patrol vehicles; gradual replacement of Toughbook laptops; continuing education for deputies and Academy training for new hires; increased vehicle costs; and increasing the contingency fund. There was discussion about use of towing, vehicle rotation schedule of adding three fully-outfitted vehicles per year, SUV's versus cars for law enforcement, and regular maintenance schedules to extend vehicle life. Included in the \$67,000 increase to line 357, Other Professional Services, Craig discussed the five-year contract associated with the new cloud-based, video evidence management system that includes new vehicle cameras and body cams – the first \$40,000 annual payment was submitted to ARPA funds but future annual payments will come out of the budget – and the increase also includes rising costs to outfit patrol vehicles. The Sheriff's Contingency Fund, line 399, was increased by \$10,000 but after discussion Craig said that increase could be omitted.

The budget for Care or Custody of Prisoners was increased by \$81,000, primarily consisting of a \$20,000 addition to the Contingency Fund due to rising fuel cost concerns, and an increase of \$60,000 to line 392, Boarding Prisoners. There was discussion about the unpredictability of prisoner volume and related costs, contracts with surrounding counties, summertime volume increases, Dillon jail remodels and willingness to accept prisoners, current prisoner transport costs versus building a 20-24 bed County detention facility, grant funding, plans for reconfiguring the current Sheriff's Office to add a holding cell, and inflation rates.

The Coroner Services preliminary budget showed an overall increase of \$3,900 due to a cost increase for coroner calls from \$75 to \$125, an increase in autopsies costing \$1,500 each, and a slight increase in continuing education expenses.

There were no changes to the Narcotics Investigation budget.

Communications (Dispatch) Preliminary Budget Hearing: The Communications and 911 budget was reviewed. Line 397, Contract Payments, was increased to \$80,000 and includes the Central Square CAD system at \$42,000, voice products at \$21,000, Code Red 911 at \$8,000, Net Motion for \$2,500, and \$6,000 per year for five years for the new 911 recorder. \$75,000 was omitted for vehicles and equipment on line 947, and there was a slight increase to other professional services of \$5,425. Overall, the Communications (Dispatch) budget was decreased by \$39,575.

The Communications Coordination budget was increased overall by \$10,000, primarily to plan for replacing equipment, since much of the equipment should be replaced every five years. ARPA funds will be used for radio

consoles to begin with, and then a schedule for replacement will be developed and followed for repeater and tower sites, vehicle radios, and the phone system. Duncan pointed out that the State is replacing their entire system, Bozeman is in the process of updating their system to work with the State system, and while the County is far from doing the same thing updates should be started as a base to build upon. Further discussion included reception blind spots within the County and what it would take to build full coverage, the County's ability to use P-25 power sites once installed by the State, possible interagency use of BLM installations in the Madison Canyon and up the Ruby, the complexities of radio communications, the increase of people in the area and corresponding crime rate adding to overall costs, adding mills, and finding appropriate land for a law and justice center and a solid waste site. Discussion turned to salaries for ten dispatchers including a Dispatch Coordinator, doing away with the supervisor position for now, and how the hiring process is going. There was also discussion about accounting details such as use of the general fund, the tax base, cash flow, and the best line items to use for various expenses.

Human Resources Preliminary Budget Hearing: Kila Shepherd, HR Director, met with the Board to discuss the preliminary budget for the Human Resources department. Since no increase was requested the overall total will remain the same as last year, although several line item amounts were increased or decreased to more accurately reflect actual expenses.

Madison Search and Rescue Preliminary Budget Hearing: Jake Stewart, Madison Search and Rescue, met with the Board to discuss the preliminary budget for Madison Search and Rescue. Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, and Britani Allhands, Finance Administrative Assistant, were present for this portion of the meeting. Jake noted that line item amounts were moved around but overall there was only a slight increase of \$2,700. He did not anticipate much more expense coming in before the end of the fiscal year, noting that there have been less rescues this year than last year. The amount carried forward in capital improvements was discussed, Jake and Vicki explained that it is for future land and building plans funded up front instead of getting a loan, and while normally funds in government accounting are not encumbered it is approved by the auditor as long as there is a definite plan. After some discussion, it was decided that Vicki and Jake will meet to discuss moving an annual amount to a separate cash account for capital improvement. Vicki pointed out that one mill is designated for search and rescue, the amount is divided between Madison and Ruby S&R, and expenses are generally paid by S&R and reimbursed by the County. Communication in remote areas was discussed, Jake described how they can tap into Forest Service/BLM repeaters or bring in a special repeater for multi-day events, and there was discussion about special frequencies and interagency agreements.

Sanitarian Preliminary Budget Hearing: Van Puckett, Director of Environmental Health, and Kacey Smart, Sanitarian's Assistant, presented the Board with the preliminary budget for the Sanitarian's Office. Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, and Britani Allhands, Finance Administrative Assistant, were present for this portion of the meeting. Van reviewed increases of \$2,000 to gas and diesel fuel, and a \$10,000 increase to vehicles and equipment in order to save enough to buy a new vehicle in 2024 when mileage on the current vehicle reaches 150,000. In addition, telephone was increased by \$500 and training services by \$2,000 for a total overall increase of \$14,500. Discussion included keeping up with revenue, expected use of contract services, past expenses for gas and diesel, ideas for cutting down on fuel expenses such as Van working four 10-hour days and/or teleworking one day per week (a 20-40% reduction), maintaining office hours, sharing costs of special events with other entities, and the effect of growth on various departments. Van stated there is more on the revenue side than is being requested and the department is being fiscally conservative.

Solid Waste/Junk Vehicle/Recycling Preliminary Budget Hearing: Guy Buyan, Solid Waste Foreman, and Kacey Smart, Solid Waste Assistant, presented the Board with the preliminary budget for Solid Waste. Guy pointed out substantial increases for fuel (\$30,000) and Gallatin County tipping fees (\$30,000), as well as an increase in printing and duplicating for informing the public about possible changes to solid waste site hours and processes – ideas to be discussed at a later date. The total increase to the budget was \$61,700. Discussion included charges for commercial businesses, how to streamline revenue, construction fees, restaurant fees proportional to size, cost reduction ideas, modernizing sites, container box purchases and revenue, and identifying hazardous waste including marijuana byproducts.

Clerk of Court Preliminary Budget Hearing: Carmin Hill, Clerk of Court, presented the Board with the preliminary budget for the Clerk of Court Office. She discussed reducing salaries and wages to \$120,000.

Carmin noted that jury meals are up 103% and since the number of jury trials per year has almost doubled she would like to raise the amount to \$1,500. There was discussion about a reduction in paper products used due to the prevalence of e-filing, schooling and tuition, obtaining a computer from the State for a part-time position, and adding credit card services in the next budget cycle.

With no further business, the hearings concluded at 2:10 p.m.

Dan W. Allhands, Chairman
Board of Madison County Commissioners

Date Approved: May 24, 2022

Minutes prepared by:

Jane Bacon, Commissioner's Clerk

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