

**BOARD OF MADISON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**June 7, 2022, Meeting Minutes**

On Tuesday, June 7, 2022, a meeting of the Board of Madison County Commissioners came to order at 10:00 a.m. in the Second Floor Court Room of the Administrative Office Building in Virginia City, Montana, with Commissioners Dan Allhands, Ron Nye, and John Heckler present. Jane Bacon, Commissioners' Clerk, was present to take minutes.

Those people in attendance at the meeting were Emilie Saylor, David Kack, Darren Brugmann, Gayle Schabarker, Arthur (Mac) Snow, Hannah Brook, Vicki Tilstra, Jennifer Westfall, and Jeff LeVeque. Ryan Wolter, IT Support Specialist, administered the Webex connection. Those who attended via Webex or by phone included Craig Erickson, Cindy Gockel, Mary Beth Walsh, Gail Nelson, Britani Allhands, Cori Koenig, Janie Alt, Jennifer Martens, Mike Callahan, Abby Thomas, Cindy Perdue-Dolan, and unidentified attendees.

**Approval of Minutes:** Following review, John Heckler moved to approve the May 9, 2022, Board of Commissioners' meeting minutes as edited. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried. After review, John Heckler moved to approve the April 6, 2022, Board of Commissioners' meeting minutes as written. 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 topic.

- **COVID Update including Nursing Homes Status:** Emilie updated the Board regarding COVID status. The County's total confirmed positive cases are 1,850 with 12 active cases. Fatalities total 22, with one active hospitalization for a total of 126 hospitalizations. The State's positive cases totaled 278,993, there are 1,815 active cases, 3,423 fatalities, and 46 active hospitalizations for a total of 12,084 total hospitalizations. Daily new cases in the County saw a return to numbers similar to March of 2020 – not quite as high, but 2-3 per day reported testing positive, and the test positivity rate is 5.8%. State maps of active and cumulative cases show the County is still similar to surrounding counties. She reviewed and explained the community levels map, noting Madison County levels are low and we are not seeing severe cases, and this information is useful for people to determine whether to wear a mask or take other precautions. It differs from the nursing home transmission rate. The State vaccination rate is still 55%, and the County rate remains at 46%. Vaccine uptake by age group increased in the 18-29 and 50-59 age groups. Madison Valley Manor has 20 residents, with one resident in isolation due to admissions protocols, no one is hospitalized, and one staff member is in isolation/quarantine. The County transmission rate is high, and this rate is used to determine interventions used in the nursing homes. Staff not up to date on vaccinations are tested twice per week. Visitation is allowed with education and screening. Tobacco Root Mountains Care Center has 24 residents and is currently in outbreak status, hoping to exit this week. No residents are in quarantine, one staff member is out for quarantine/isolation, and one has recovered. Staff and residents are tested three times per week during outbreak. Visitation is allowed following CDC recommendations on testing/screening. Vaccination rates remain at 95% for staff and 96% for residents. There was a question about monkeypox and Emilie noted it has been detected in only nine states, not in Montana.

**Claims:** The Board approved claims.

**Skyline Funding Request:** David Kack and Darren Brugmann, Big Sky Transportation District, met with the Board to request funding for the Skyline bus service operating in the Big Sky community. Gayle Schabarker and Arthur (Mac) Snow, County residents, were present for a portion of this topic. David introduced Darren as the new Executive Director, replacing him when he leaves at the end of September, and described Darren's background. He discussed ridership which was around 29% higher overall than last fiscal year and said the line between Bozeman and Big Sky is up 35%. He reviewed growth in Big Sky, the cost of housing, workers driving

from Bozeman, and noted bus service can get some of those commuters off the road. He reviewed District's budget, pointing out that with expenses higher than revenue there is a shortfall of over \$300,000. He discussed issues with new bus orders, including two-year wait times and substituting smaller busses/coaches at a higher cost, said they are doing the best they can to come up with solutions, and will receive some help through the TIGER grant. He asked Gallatin County for \$80,000 and is requesting the same from Madison County, noting the County has contributed around that amount for several years. Discussion included expansion of Transportation District boundaries to match Resort Tax boundaries, property and sales taxes, busses needed over the next five years, potential property purchase for new facility, transit alternatives given availability and types/sizes of vehicles, effects of altitude and cold temperature on battery-powered vehicles and heating systems, and the percentage of ridership transported to Big Sky's upper resorts (in Madison County). The Board expressed support of the service and the need for some time to look at overall finances before making a decision about the funding request.

**Great West Engineering/ SMA Architects:** Craig Erickson, Great West Engineering, met with the Board via Webex to discuss the following topics. Hannah Brook, Grant Writer/ Administrator, Gayle Schabarker and Arthur (Mac) Snow, County residents, were present for this portion of the meeting.

- **Madison Valley Manor (MVM) Certificate of Completion:** Craig reviewed the Certificate of Substantial Completion for boiler and generator work at MVM, and there was discussion about the one year warranty period and a punchlist of items remaining to be completed, which John requested by next week if there is such a list. After discussion, John Heckler moved to approve the Certificate of Substantial Completion for Madison Valley Manor infrastructure upgrades, the boiler and generator work, dated May 19, 2022. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Damaged Headstones in McAllister & Ennis Cemeteries:** Gayle Schabarker and Arthur (Mac) Snow, County residents, met with the Board to discuss damaged headstones at the McAllister and Ennis Cemeteries. Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, was present for a portion of this topic. Gayle and Mac presented a letter and photos to the Board showing headstones at the McAllister and Ennis Cemeteries that are damaged, tipped over, or sinking beneath the grass, and after meeting with people serving on the Madison Valley Cemetery Board, requested that appropriate funds be used for repairs and preventive measures. Discussion included cemetery funds, hiring professionals at least for the taller/heavier headstones, historical value and considerations, Cemetery Board member changes, and obtaining a request letter from the Cemetery Board.

**MDT Parking Lease:** This topic was continued to the next regular Commission meeting.

**Forest Service MOU for Road Repair on Fire Damaged Areas:** This topic was continued to the next regular Commission meeting.

**Grants:** Hannah Brook, Grant Writer/Administrator, met with the Board to discuss the following topics.

- **Cliff & Wade PSE Certification:** This topic was continued to the regular Commission meeting on June 28, 2022.
- **Twin Bridges Stormwater:** There was no discussion on this topic.
- **New Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for ARPA funding:** Hannah stated that the County's auditor revised all the ARPA Memorandums of Understanding, with approval of the County Attorney, so each revised MOA will be up for approval in the next few weeks. After review, Ron Nye moved to approve the revised Twin Bridges MOA for ARPA funding as presented. John Heckler seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.
- **Twin Bridges Contactor's Application for Payment – ARPA:** Hannah said Twin Bridges is submitting invoices for payment against the ARPA funds, and confirmed the payment amount on the contractor's application for payment of \$150,022.90 with 5% retainage. Following review, Ron Nye moved to approve Contractor's Application for Payment No. 3 for the Twin Bridges stormwater project. John Heckler seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Amerigas Annual Contract:** The Board reviewed the annual contract with Amerigas and discussed the rate. After review, Ron Nye moved to approve the annual Amerigas propane contract as presented at a fixed price of \$1.94 per gallon. John Heckler seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Insurance Renewal for Airports:** The Board reviewed the insurance renewal for the Airports. Hannah Brook, Grant Writer/Administrator, was present for this portion of the meeting. The Board had questions about dates, coverage changes, and rate changes, and the topic was continued to allow review by the Airport Board at their next meeting.

**Human Resources:** Jennifer Westfall, Human Resources, met with the Board to discuss the following topics. Jeff LeVeque, IT Systems Computer Support Specialist, was present for this portion of the meeting.

**New Hires:**

- **Vernon Messerly, District #3 Road & Bridge Tech, Wage \$24.35, Tentatively Starting 8/1/22:** John stated that the offer to Vernon Messerly for the District 3 Road & Bridge Tech was accepted, he has a CDL license and is looking for housing, and the background check is in process. Following review, John Heckler moved to proceed with hiring Vernon Messerly as a Road and Bridge Tech in District 3 at a starting wage of \$24.35 and a tentative start date of August 1, 2022. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried. John discussed having a backup plan if Vernon's start date is delayed, because the 90-day window for another District 3 short-term employee is down to about 15-16 days.
- **Kristy Harper, Planner I, Wage \$24.42, Started 6/1/22:** Jennifer reviewed the hiring of Kristy Harper as Planner I. After review, Ron Nye moved to approve hiring Kristy Harper for the Planner I position at a starting wage of \$24.42, and starting on June 1, 2022. John Heckler seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Communications Office (Dispatch) Staffing:** Jennifer reported that there have been seven total applicants for Communications Officer positions – three did not show up for scheduled interviews, one was interviewed a week ago, and two applications were forwarded to the Undersheriff for review. No one has been hired so far. She recently renewed advertising and did a push on social media.

**Discussion Regarding Joint Housing / Economic Development Board:** Cindy Gockel and Mary Beth Walsh, Madison County Housing Advisory Board, met with the Board via Webex to discuss combining the Housing Board with an economic development board. Dan stated the Board has been considering the combination board, since housing and economic development go hand-in-hand. Discussion included expectations of Housing Board members, taking on more of a supervisory role, hiring a consultant versus using the same funds in different ways, a paid administrative position, examples of specific goals and expected results, grant possibilities, reaching out to other counties to find experts/consultants who have produced successful/ and creative results, current housing issues such as infrastructure capacity of local towns, forming a foundation that could get grants and donations, and time/activity limits of volunteer board members. Mary Beth will reach out to other Housing Board members for ideas and opinions, and John will investigate successful results/consultants, and the ideas will be discussed at the next Housing Board meeting.

**Establishing Private Pay/Per Diem Room Rates for Tobacco Root Mountains Care Center (TRMCC) and Madison Valley Manor (MVM):** Gail Nelson, TRMCC Administrator, met with the Board via Webex to propose new private pay/per diem room rates for TRMCC and MVM. There were questions about why the two facilities have different room rates, and Gail explained they are based on CMS quality ratings in several categories, and the proposed rates are subject to final CMS approval. The Finance Office pointed out via Webex that currently Medicaid and private pay rates are the same unless a resident has a private room. Following discussion, John Heckler moved to adopt the individual room rates for private rooms pending Medicaid's final decision. For the residents and families of Tobacco Root Mountain Care Center, the new private pay per diem rate for a semi-private room for fiscal year 2022-2023 at a rate of \$223.50. A private room at the facility will have a rate of \$255.19 per day for fiscal year 2022-2023. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried. John Heckler moved that the Commissioners approve the per diem rate for the Madison Valley Manor for fiscal year 2022-2023 of a semi-private room at a rate of \$223.57 and private room at a rate of \$238.58 per day. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Chemical Dependency Provider Designation:** This topic was continued to the next regular Commission meeting.

**Journal Vouchers:** John Heckler moved to approve Journal Vouchers for the 5/22 accounting period as presented. Ron Nye seconded the motion. All voted aye and the motion carried.

**Calendars:** The Board reviewed calendars in the Commissioner's office.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:17 p.m.

**Next meeting:** The next regular Commission meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 14, 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: August 2, 2022

Minutes prepared by:

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Jane Bacon, Commissioners' Clerk

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