

**August 13, 2024**

**The Board of County Commissioners met at 9:00 a.m. in a regular session in the Commission Office of the Granite County Courthouse with Commissioner McLure, Commissioner Adler, and Commissioner Hinkle attending. Also attending were Commissioner's Assistant, Billie Ann Kulaski, Clerk, Brandi Galihier, and Granite County Attorney, Blaine Bradshaw, who attended a portion of the agenda items in-person. The session was livestreamed through the Zoom internet-based program available for the public to view the session and comment. The public was also allowed to attend in person and provide comment. The session convened with the pledge of allegiance.**

**Also, in attendance were *Philipsburg Mail* Editor, Amelia Wood; Granite County Road & Bridge Superintendent, Paul Alt; USFS District Ranger (Pintler District), Cameron Rasor; Coast-2-Coast Operator, Sarah Morris; Granite County Clerk & Recorder, Sarah Graham; Granite County DES Coordinator, Jackie Bolster; DNRC Representative, Craig Hanson; and members of the general public including Elena Gagliano and Vladimir Babich.**

**BOARD MINUTES; Commissioner Hinkle moved to accept the board minutes for August 6, 2024. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. There were no public comments received. The motion passed unanimously.**

**CORRESPONDENCE;**

**The FY 2024 County Motor Vehicle Graveyard Grant for Granit County JV Graveyard in Philipsburg was received along with the vendor invoice from the DEQ. This will be reviewed and addressed when the Commission reviews County budgets.**

**A letter was received from Willowrock, Inc. explaining that the survey of Georgetown Lake Dam has been completed to satisfy FERC requirements.**

**An informational sales brochure was received from Road Groom Manufacturing.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**No public comment was received.**

**ROAD & BRIDGE WEEKLY REPORT; & SOLID WASTE UPDATE WITH ROAD & BRIDGE SUPERINTENDENT PAUL ALT; Granite County Road & Bridge Superintendent Paul Alt joined the session to provide an update on projects across the County. Currently the Road Crew is working on blading roads and spreading gravel on Willow Creek Road, they are hoping to be done with the road tomorrow. They plan to head to Echo Lake Road next then to Travelers Home after Blackfoot Communications is done with their fiber optic project in the area. The Commission discussed the potential replacement of Paul Alt's County truck. The truck has been in and out of the shop and has more than \$200K miles on it. The County would like to trade in the vehicle on the purchase of a new truck. Paul Alt talked to Ford and Dodge and the price of a new half ton work truck will be approximately \$50K less the trade in value of the current truck. Commissioner Adler**

moved to trade in Paul Alt's current work truck on a new half ton truck to replace Paul Alt's truck. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There were no public comments and the motion passed unanimously.

The Commission discussed the placement of radar signs on Georgetown Lake. Previously, the Commission had agreed to place the signage at specific sites on Georgetown Lake, but recently discussed moving the signs to locations recommended by the Road & Bridge Superintendent. These changes were recommended in order to serve more of the residents living off of Georgetown Lake Road. Commissioner Adler moved to post the signage at 6/10ths (???) of a mile from the crosswalk on both sides; as recommended by the Road & Bridge Superintendent. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There were no public comments and the motion passed unanimously.

Vlad Babich commented after the motion that length between the radar signs and the cross walk is too far along Georgetown Lake Road.

Paul Alt provided an update on a request made the previous week by Clay Kinser for snowplowing services on Algonquin Road. Paul Alt had noted that the section of roadway requested to be plowed is actually on Tower Road. Paul Alt explained that Clay Kinser is willing to plow his own section of road and is qualified to do so. Commissioner Adler moved to approve a one-year road maintenance (snow-plowing) agreement with Clay Kinser for the section of Tower Road. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There were no public comments received and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Hinkle raised concerns over a culvert on Little Gold Coin Road. Paul Alt explained that they County looked into this matter last year and determined that this was a Forest Service Road. The County will do some more research on the matter, and discuss replacement of the culvert if it is in fact on a County Road.

Paul Alt mentioned the issues with debris in the right-of-way on lower Rock Creek Road through Idle Ranches subdivision. The Commission will discuss this matter in more depth during next week's meeting.

Solid Waste Update; the Commission discussed the difficulties to dispose of newer refrigerators (freon disposal). Paul Alt is going to look into the matter further and get the proper equipment to dispose of the freon.

**GEORGETOWN LAKE OUTFLOW; DAM TENDER'S REPORT;** The lake level was reported at 6428.67 feet; 9.96 inches below full pool, according to the USGS lake level gage and the dam tender's report for the week. The Commission reviewed the projection report from DNRC Water Hydrologist, Todd Blythe. Commissioner Hinkle moved to continue releasing 30 CFS in alignment with the current FERC Order in place. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. Billie Ann Kulaski noted that he received communication from Georgetown Lake homeowners, Lee Tangedahl and Bob Murdo, who raised concerns over the ability of the lake to fill in the future if the outflow is not decreased for the remainder of the irrigation season. There were no other public comments received and the motion passed unanimously.

**POTENTIAL FIRE RESTRICTIONS IN GRANITE COUNTY;** The Commission reviewed the current fire restrictions in place (Stage II Restrictions). The Commission discussed the rescinding of fire restrictions from Stage II to Stage I across several different Counties, as well as in the National Forest. Granite County DES Coordinator, Jackie Bolster provided an update of other Counties current restrictions. She noted that Sean O'Conner noted he would like to see the County remain at Stage II Restrictions. Commissioner Hinkle moved to rescind Stage II Fire Restrictions and move into Stage I Restrictions with no campfires allowed. Commissioner McLure seconded the motion. There were no public comments received and the motion passed two to one with Commissioner Adler dissenting.

Commissioner Adler noted that some of the contractors that he spoke too after last weeks meeting, stated that they knew they would get what they wanted.

**DISTRICT RANGER, CAMERON RASOR TO DISCUSS THE EMERGENCY USE OF WATER FROM GEORGETOWN LAKE BY FIRE FIGHTING AIRCRAFT DURING WILDFIRE SEASON;** The Commission was joined by District Ranger Rasor and Craig Hanson with the DNRC to discuss the usage of water from Georgetown Lake by fire fighting aircraft during wildfire season. Commissioner Adler explained he would like more information on where the aircrafts are wanting to dip out of the reservoir. Commissioner Hinkle explained that he would like to know what the emergency response is to get people off of the lake when using the aircraft; and how does that notice would go out. Cameron Rasor responded that Georgetown Lake is large enough for the dippers. He noted that they cannot take water from one side of the continental divide to the other (invasive species). The Commission discussed other lakes in the area including Silver Lake, which is not in long enough for the dippers. Ranger Rasor inquired if there are concerns over where the dippers take water from due to infrastructure in place, noting that there are more things at play (i.e. draft) when the dippers are determining where to land. He added that the Game Warden, Sheriff's Department, DES Coordinator and Counties could work together to create a plan for emergency response when the lake needs cleared for the dippers to gain access. Ranger Rasor explained that the need for water in a public emergency is going to allow the agencies to take water from the reservoir; and that no agreement is necessary between the two agencies. Commissioner Adler moved to have key stakeholders' partner together to create an emergency action plan associated with the response required when aircraft utilized the lake for fires response. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. Public comment was received from Jackie Butler noting that the ranchers are always fighting for their water out of the reservoir; and that the HOA's from Georgetown Lake will have concerns over the removal of water. Ranger Rasor responded that in times of emergency no water rights come into play and the water can be taken as needed per federal law. Commissioner Adler responded that the irrigators have received water in accordance with their state water rights and FERC order in place. Public comment was received from Elena Gagliano inquiring about past fire season where she saw a dipper on Georgetown Lake. She inquired if ADLC will be involved in the decision-making process concerning water removal and emergency response at Georgetown Lake. Ranger Rasor stated that DNRC ultimately controls the water, and for emergency purposes the water can be removed, noting that no County has

control of the water space. He added that they need to include ADLC when creating an emergency action plan. Elena Gagliano added that in Montana the State Constitution controls operations not federal agencies. There were no further public comments received and the motion passed unanimously.

**PROPOSAL FROM DAVE KAUFFMAN FOR CONSULTING SERVICES ON COURTHOUSE ROOF PROJECT;** The Commission reviewed the proposal from Dave Kauffman for consulting services for the Courthouse Roofing Project. Commissioner Adler raised concern over the costs outlined in the proposal. Attorney Bradshaw explained that he spoke with Dave Kauffman and tried to negotiate a lower cost; but that Dave Kauffman recommended that the County have a consultant to avoid issues like the County has experienced in the past. This will be a large project to address issues with the roof and using Dave Kauffman will prevent future issues. Commissioner Adler moved to approve and sign the contract for consulting services with Dave Kauffman. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There were no public comments received and the motion passed unanimously. The Commission discussed the details of the agreement in more detail after the motion, and asked that Attorney Bradshaw follow up with Dave Kauffman and ensure the pre-bid and a quality assurance inspection are included in the agreement before they sign off. The current contract draft will be held and not signed until further clarification. The final version of the contract will be on a future agenda for signature.

The Commission granted preliminary approval for Dave Kauffman to get started on this project in the coming week.

**MONTHLY CLAIMS;** The Commission reviewed the monthly claims. Commissioner Adler inquired if the Commission has approved sending money to the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA). Commissioner McLure noted that the County agreed to be a member and the claim refers to the membership dues. She recommended that since the claim has been submitted, that the County has already agreed to be a member, that this matter would need to be looked at next year. Attorney Bradshaw explained that since the County is still a member, that they should pay the dues or withdraw from the BSPRA; and the Commission should put the matter of removing themselves from BSPRA if they are not wanting to pay the dues. Public comment was received from Elena Gagliano explaining that every time there is a BSPRA Meeting that she, as the Director for Granite County, has invited the Commission to the meetings; and that their meeting notices are posted in the paper. She added that she can have the BSPRA Chairperson, Dave Stroheimer come discuss happenings of BSPRA with the Commission. The Commission noted that they are going to table the claim and put this matter on the agenda for next next week. Elena Gagliano noting that she will have Chairperson Stroheimer attending the next meeting.

The Commission discussed the water heater that needed replaced last week in the County's rental house in Hall. Commissioner Adler noted that the County is working with a plumber to get additional work completed on the house that needs to be done. They had local contractor, Dave Kesler replace the water heater in the said rental property last week.

Commissioner Adler moved to approve the claims for July 2024. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There were no further public comments received and the motion passed unanimously.

**SARAH MORRIS WITH COAST-2-COAST TO DISCUSS THE POTENTIAL PURCHASE OF COUNTY AMBULANCE(S);** The Commission was joined by Sarah Morris, who would like to potentially purchase older ambulances owned by the County. She explained that there is an old Drummond Ambulance that is not running, and asked if the County would sell this ambulance to Coast-2-Coast. They are wanting to purchase the ambulance for parts; or if they are able to get it running, they would station it out near the Ranch at Rock Creek enabling faster coverage on that side of the County. The ambulance is stationed between Ambulance Shed and Fire Hall in Philipsburg; behind the Search & Rescue vehicles. The Commission inquired if the Ranch at Rock Creek has their own ambulance. Sarah Morris stated the ambulance would not be for the Ranch at Rock Creek, and that the Ranch at Rock Creek does have their own fire engine, but not an ambulance. Attorney Bradshaw explained that if the ambulance is not needed for County business it could be sold but required under Montana law, it must be sold at public auction by statute; unless the value is less than \$2,500.00. He recommended putting the ambulance out for public auction, even if valued under \$2,500, to provide members of the public an opportunity to bid on it. Commissioner Adler noted that if Coast-2-Coast needs parts for the County ambulance they are leasing, they are able to just get parts off the unusable ambulance for that purpose. Sarah Morris responded that they are hoping to get it running. Commissioner Hinkle motioned to put the out-of-commission ambulance out for public auction as surplus property. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. There were no public comments received and the motion passed unanimously.

**BDS PRINT & MAIL SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR TAX STATEMENTS;** The Commission reviewed the agreement with BDS for print and mail services. Treasurer, Ashley Todd introduced the idea of this service in previous months. She had explained how the service would streamline operations in her office, saving both time and money. Commissioner Adler motioned to approve the agreement with BDS for print and mail services for \$3,198.90. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There were no public comments received and the motion passed unanimously.

**DESIGNATION OF GRANITE COUNTY'S TAX DOLLARS;** The Commission discussed the correspondence that was received from Jean Starr of Starr Counseling the previous week. Attorney Bradshaw noted that the Commission has already designated their annual alcohol tax dollar funding for the current fiscal year to Zenith View, a local company, and that Zenith View now depends on the funding, recommending the Commission to not make any adjustments until the next fiscal year. Commissioner Adler noted that he would prefer to keep the designation with Zenith View since they are a local provider. The Commission noted that they will continue with Zenith View and that Starr Counseling can inquire for next year's designation when it comes back around.

**GRANITE COUNTY BUDGET WORK SESSION; The Commission was joined by Granite County Clerk & Recorder, Sarah Graham to review the budgets for FY 2025. The group reviewed various budgets including the Road Budget. Sarah Graham explained that at convention Counties were told not to anticipate SRS funding for FY 2025, due to attachments of the funding to unsigned bills in congress. MACo advised to not anticipate SRS funding that would support the Road Department. The Commission will likely need to find approximately \$600K to make up the deficit in the Road Budget. The Commission discussed using the remainder of LATCF funds to support the budget. There are additional budgets that Sarah Graham would like to review with the Commissioners the next week, including Philipsburg Volunteer Ambulance, Drummond Volunteer Ambulance, and Flint Creek Project budgets. The Commission will also review the Road & Bridge Budget as well as Capital Projects.**

**Public comment was received from Elena Gagliano asking for clarification on the BSPRA claim from earlier in the session. Commissioner McLure responded that they will have the matter concerning BSPRA, as well as the claim for annual contribution request (dues), on the agenda next week. Elena Gagliano inquired about next weeks' budget session, asking if the Department Heads would be in attendance to review their budgets. Commissioner McLure responded that if the Commission does need to speak with a Department Head concerning their budget, they will have them come in; but that it is not necessary to have them in attendance for the budget work sessions.**

**The meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.**