

August 20, 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 Clerk, Brandi Galiher, and Granite County Attorney, Blaine Bradshaw, who attended a portion of the agenda items via Zoom. 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; Granite County Clerk & Recorder, Sarah Graham; Granite County DES Coordinator, Jackie Bolster; Philipsburg Community Library Chairperson, Sue Sweeney; Granite County Custodian, Janeen Bonney; and members of the general public including Elena Gagliano, Bill (via Zoom), George and Karen Brooker, Chair of Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority, Dave Strohmaier, and Dan Bucks.

BOARD MINUTES; Commissioner Hinkle moved to accept the board minutes for August 13, 2024. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. There were no public comments received. The motion passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE;

Electronic mail was received from Morgan Marks of the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative providing an update on upcoming funding opportunities through the Montana Wildlife and Transportation Partnership between Montanans for Safe Wildlife Passage (MSWP), Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP), and Montana Department of Transportation (MDT). Commissioner McLure does not feel this needs to be a future agenda item as it is informational regarding Morgan's leave of absence.

Electronic mail was received from David Strohmaier, the Chair of Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority, noting that he will be joining the Commissioners later in their day to discuss their membership and voluntary contribution to assist with administration and operation of the Authority, which is not mandatory. This was put on the web for informational purposes. Commissioner McLure noted that the Commission will discuss this piece of correspondence in more depth during the later agenda item.

Electronic mail was received from MACo outlining upcoming Department of Revenue (DOR) Town Halls to discuss property taxes with local residents. There is one planned to take place in Philipsburg at Granite High School on October 2, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Electronic mail was received from Ed Siminich, member of the Flint Creek Dam Advisory Committee and resident at Georgetown Lake responding to Todd Blythe's most recent projection. He stated that since conditions look dire and strongly encouraged that no extra outflows be allowed this year. Commissioner Hinkle stated there is no plan for extra outflow. Commissioner Adler agreed and stated we have until October 15, 2024 before needing permission.

A letter was received from the Montana Department of Transportation stating that the Project Analysis Bureau of the Montana Department of Transportation has published the final version of the 2024-2028 Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan. This can be viewed online at www.mdtmt.gov.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comment was received. George Brooker had a comment regarding the agenda item on Idle Ranches Subdivision. Commissioner McLure told him that would be discussed at 9:20 am on the Commission's Agenda.

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 Travelers. There is a problem at the end where it turns into Georgetown Lake Estates with cows coming in. The people who live there will not let the cattle guard be cleaned out. County Attorney, Blaine Bradshaw asked about the current condition of the old cattle guard and Paul stated it is not in terrible shape but it does need cleaned. Attorney Bradshaw stated that if people have easement rights there they should be able to clean the cattle guard out without permission. He will look into who has easements. The plan is to initially clean the original cattle guard and if any issues arise, then a new cattle guard can be placed.

The road crew also bladed a portion of Rumsey Road. They are starting to pull ditches and lay gravel. They are starting to lay gravel at Echo for about one mile. Paul confirmed that Kolbeck Lane is finished. The road will be coming out of east fork in the next few days and pulling ditches. Maxville should be done in about one week.

The group discussed issues with debris in the right-of-way on lower Rock Creek Road through Idle Ranches subdivision. George Brooker from Idle Ranches Subdivision is in attendance to discuss his concerns regarding a letter from Andrew Cohen with complaints of encroachments on a county road that was made to the county. He states that the forest service road goes through his property. He has placed impediments on his property to discourage the general public from traveling on his property. His neighbor informed him that a Forest Service road is a county road and he is encroaching on a county road. George stated that previously there were locked gates placed on the county road and it was called a private road. Commissioner Adler stated that there can't be anything placed from 33 ft. of the center line out from the county road. Paul Alt states that on the mile of county road there are rocks and trees that have been hand placed on the right-of-way. George Brooker stated that he disputes Paul Alt's comments and that they do not have debris on a county road or forest service road. Commissioner Adler stated that there can't be obstruction on the right-of-way and the goal is to clean up for liability purposes. The complaint was filed about the obstruction. The Commission asked if there was a copy of the letter but George hasn't seen the letter; he was just informed about the correspondence. Commissioner Adler asked if George has talked with the Forest Service and he has not. Attorney Blaine Bradshaw joined the conversation via Zoom to confirm that the concerns about obstruction are for county

roads and anything with Forest Service roads needs to be discussed with the Forest Service. George Brooker would just like to protect his property. He would like to see further clarification with an agenda item and the planning board to clear all of the confusion. George thanked the road department for the chip and seal on Lower Rock Creek. Of note, Commissioner McLure stated the discussion was mainly information regarding the obstruction of the right-of-way and confirmed that the Idle Ranches conversation was resolved.

Elena Gagliano spoke about confusion between county roads versus forest service roads. She advised clarification could have been made for this to be a separate agenda item. She advised that Linda Bouck and Cameron Rasor could have been on this call. Elena wanted to ensure her public comment would be noted in the minutes. Blaine Bradshaw stated that if there were questions that they could be answered at this point, but neither Elena Gagliano nor other members of the public responded with any questions.

The Commission reviewed details of the budget for the Road Department for FY 2025; which needs to be cut significantly. Commissioner McLure presented a detailed list for Paul Alt to look over in order to make some necessary budget cuts.

Paul Alt stated that the bathrooms will be done within the next day or two in Philipsburg and then they will start in Drummond.

GEORGETOWN LAKE OUTFLOW; DAM TENDER'S REPORT; The lake level was reported at 6428.68 feet; 10.32 inches below full pool, according to the USGS lake level gage and the dam tender's report for the week. Commissioner Hinkle moved to continue releasing 30 CFS in alignment with the current FERC Order in place. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. There were no public comments received and the motion passed unanimously.

PHILIPSBURG LIBRARY UPDATE WITH SUE SWEENEY; RESIGNATION OF CHARLENE BUCHA AND THE APPOINTMENT OF LINDA GRAHAM TO THE PHILIPSBURG COMMUNITY LIBRARY BOARD; REVIEW OF THE LIBRARY'S FY 2025 BUDGET; The Commission was joined by Philipsburg Library Board Chairperson, Sue Sweeney. She explained to the Commission that Charlene Bucha has resigned from the Library Board, and after advertising for a replacement member, the Board would like the Commissioners to appoint Linda Graham. The Commissioners reviewed a letter from Linda Graham requesting to become part of the Philipsburg Community Library Board. The term ends in June of 2025 and Sue Sweeney requests that Linda Graham finish the term of . Sue Sweeney asked if Linda Graham could be appointed now to finish the term of Charlene Bucha and be appointed for another term beyond that at this time. County Attorney, Blaine Bradshaw advised that Linda Graham just be appointed now to finish the current remaining term of Charlene Bucha and that the Commission look to re-appoint her later on at the end of that current term.

Commissioner Hinkle moved to accept Charlene Bucha's resignation and appoint Linda Graham to the Philipsburg Community Library Board to finish he remaining term of Charlene Bucha. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. There were no public comments received and the motion passed unanimously.

The group reviewed the details of the Library's FY 2025 budget. Sue Sweeney provided a general update of Library operations to the Commissioners. Their salary and wages does take every bit of money the library's current revenues. The library's goal is to get their mortgage loan paid off so they aren't always scraping along to meet their budget. They count on donations and miscellaneous revenue. The library has had to dip into the reserve fund. Insurance premiums have really gone up and the library's insurance premiums have about doubled. They now need to also take workman's comp on the volunteers, which also increase by about \$1, 000. The apartment is rented and brings in \$750/mo. One basement office space is rented at \$400/mo with another requested for rent. The seasonal summer helper is done the third week of September. The library has a big fundraiser planned in 2025. They did bring in over \$10,000 at the silent auction last weekend. Sue Sweeney would like to see a 5-year plan to pay the mortgage off. Sue Sweeney also stated that a mil levy was done in 2018 and maybe in 2028 another one could be done.

AGREEMENT WITH DAVE KAUFMANN FOR CONSULTING SERVICES ON THE COURTHOUSE ROOFING PROJECT; The Commission reviewed the details of the updated contract from the previous weeks' session. The Commission had approved the contract the previous week. The Commission agreed to sign the agreement with Dave Kaufmann with CRCI, Inc. for consulting services on the Courthouse Roofing Project. Commissioner Adler and Dave did go inspect the roof after the discussion. Dave Kaufmann will work with Blaine Bradshaw with moving forward with the bid.

GRANITE COUNTY CUSTODIAN JANEEN BONNEY WITH A MAINTENANCE UPDATE; The Commission was joined by Custodian, Janeen Bonney. She explained that the door on the lower level and another door of the Courthouse needs to be refinished. She provided several different samples of finish for the project and asked the Commission to select one. The doors have been weathered. She would also like a kick plate ordered to help eliminate moisture from coming in. Janeen will refinish the exterior doors of the Courthouse with (Behr Premium DeckOver in the color Cape Cod Gray) from Lowes.

USGS JOINT FUNDING AGREEMENT 25RSJFA006; The Commission reviewed the annual joint funding agreement between the County and USGS. Commissioner Hinkle moved to approve the USGS Joint Funding Agreement 25RSJFA006. Commissioner McLure seconded the motion. There were no further public comments received and the motion passed unanimously.

AREA V AGREEMENT WITH GRANITE COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER; The Commission reviewed the updated Area V Agreement between the County and Granite County Medical Center. Commissioner McLure explained that this is an annual agreement in which certain Area V funds are passed through by the County to the Granite County Medical Center for home companionship services (such as was done the previous fiscal year). Blaine Bradshaw confirmed this is what was done last year also. Commissioner Adler commented that it is a good idea for it to be a year to year agreement as there are no guarantees the County will always receive this funding. Commissioner Hinkle moved to approve the Area V Agreement between the County and Granite County Medical Center. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. There were no further public comments received and the motion passed unanimously.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH BLOCK GRANT CONTRACT WITH THE DPHHS; The Commission did not receive updated Maternal and Child Health Block Grant details. This is an annual grant that the Public Health Department utilizes to support operations. Commissioner McLure tabled this agenda items as there was not a proposed task order received yet from DPHHS to decide upon. This will be on next week's agenda.

GRANITE COUNTY'S MEMBERSHIP IN THE BIG SKY PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY (INCLUDING DUES; The Commission was joined by BSPRA Chair, Dave Strohmaier and BSPRA Development and Strategic Engagement Committee Chair, Dan Bucks.

Commissioner Adler and Commissioner Hinkle are not interested in continuing to be members if there is not a planned passenger rail stop in Drummond. Commissioner Adler moved to withdraw from the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority and disallow the claim for membership dues. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion.

Dave Strohmaier joined with public comment and shared his screen with the commission for a presentation on their updates. BSPRA is the largest transportation district in the state of Montana and they do span the width of the state. Granite County was an original founding member of the authority. He ended explaining there are no dues and once a county agrees to be a member, the only requirement is to appoint someone to be on their board. Dave confirmed that they are looking at long distance service and not connecting Drummond and Philipsburg.

Commissioner Adler asked how a passenger train will get around a coal train. Mr. Strohmaier stated that freight and passenger trains do run at the same time often without concern. BNSF Railway partnered with Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority to identify infrastructure needs and improvements to facilitate the movement of both trains without impeding one another. Commissioner Hinkle would like to know what the total cost of this will be. Commissioner Hinkle asked about the twice daily service and Dave confirmed it would be two trains in each direction. Dan Bucks responded that twice daily service in both

directions is important for several reasons but most specifically for smaller communities to get somewhere for healthcare, education, etc. A 100-200-mile trip can be completed in one day without an overnight lodging cost. They expect this to be a substantial benefit to the smaller communities of Montana, beyond the larger ones.

Commission Chairperson McLure asked what impact would be made to BSPRA if Granite County decides to withdraw. Dave responded that there is power in numbers and it makes a difference when you see counties across the state coming together working for a shared goal. Not being a member could hurt Granite County more than it will hurt BSPRA, as a signal will be sent that a strain can roll right through Drummond and stop in Missoula instead. Commissioner McLure stated that there is concern about being members if there will not be a stop in Drummond. Mr. Strohmaier stated that Granite County being involved as a member and in the conversations will help with discussions for a station stop. Dan Bucks added that the idea of the BSPRA is a cooperative endeavor and in the coming months the authority will continue with discussions on what the service looks like, as well as locations of the train stations. The opportunity to make this discussion is just coming to the floor now and if Granite County wants to be apart of the discussion, being a member does make sense.

Public comment was received from Elena Gagliano. She thanked Mr. Strohmaier and Mr. Bucks for clarifying what she had said regarding Drummond. She stated that Drummond, Philipsburg and the people in between think this is a good idea. She would like to know what funding was used with the past contributions for BSPRA. Commission Chairperson McLure stated that it was funded from the Hard Rock Fund.

Commissioner Adler renewed his motion to withdraw and Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There were no further public comments received and the motion passed unanimously. Commissioner McLure abstained.

Mr. Strohmaier added another comment after the motion. He stated that Granite County will need to pass a formal resolution to withdraw from BSPRA. County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw agreed and will draft the proposed resolution that will be on a later agenda.

POSTING OF COMMISSIONER'S ASSISTANT POSITION INTERNALLY; The Commission discussed that their current Assistant, Billie Ann Kulaski will be leaving her position. The Commissioners noted that there is internal interest in this role, and that they would like to fill the position internally, if they are not able to fill this position internally they will advertise it externally. The applications need to be returned by Tuesday, August 27, 2024.

Commissioner Adler motioned to advertise the Commission Assistant role internally. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There were no public comments received and the motion passed unanimously.

POTENTIAL FIRE RESTRICTIONS IN GRANITE COUNTY; The Commission reviewed the current fire restrictions in place (Stage I Restrictions with no campfires being allowed). Commission members commented generally that they were good with the current restrictions in place.

Granite County DES Coordinator, Jackie Bolster provided an update of other Counties current restrictions. She stated that most everyone has gone to Stage I. Sanders County went totally out but they have received more rain.

Commissioner Hinkle moved to remain at Stage I Restrictions with no campfires allowed. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. There were no public comments received and the motion passed.

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 Department Budget as well as the Philipsburg Volunteer Ambulance, Drummond Volunteer Ambulance, and Flint Creek Project budgets. Commission Chairperson Blanche McLure confirmed certain changes to the Road Department budget.

During the upcoming public hearings that have been set and noticed in the Philipsburg Mail newspaper, the Commission will official designate the funds.

Sarah Graham brought up Junk Vehicle and informed the Commission that the junk yard is mostly cleaned up. The road crew is going to finish it up soon.

There were no public comments received.

The meeting adjourned at 12:49 p.m.