

January 7, 2025

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 Blanche McLure, Commissioner Scott Adler, and newly elected, Commissioner Paul Kulaski attending. Paul Kulaski had been sworn into office previously. Also attending was Commissioners Assistant Maranda Williams 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 provide public 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 Road & Bridge Superintendent Paul Alt, Treasurer Ashley Todd, Civil Engineer Kareem Bynoe, Katie Clarkson, Jonathan Weaver (GreatWest), Doug Johnson, Jackie Bolster, Deputy Clerk of District Court Mackenzie Prince, Press for Philipsburg Mail Luke Ulatowski, and members of the general public Elena Gagliano and Tom Rue.

SELECTION OF A COMMISSION CHAIR FOR 2025; Commissioner McLure moved that Commissioner Adler be the new chairperson for the Commission in 2025. Commissioner Kulaski seconded the motion.

Public comment was received from Elena Gagliano that it should be alternated and she agrees with Commissioner McLure.

The motion passed unanimously.

BOARD MINUTES; Commissioner McLure moved to accept the board minutes for December 31st, 2024. Commissioner Kulaski seconded the motion. There were no public comments received. The motion passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE;

Electronic mail was received from Granite Headwaters Watershed Group inviting the commission to a public meeting to discuss the sampling results from the former Rumsey Mill site taking place at the Granite County Museum on Thursday January 16th at 6:30 p.m.

Electronic mail was received from Vaia Errett notifying that the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group will not meet in January and that their next meeting is on Wednesday, February 5th.

Electronic Mail was received from Carol Bacquet with her thoughts on the CRO program from last weeks agenda.

A letter was received from Granite County Treasurer Ashley Todd in regards to Resolution 2025-1 asking the County Commissioners to consider changing this policy (regular courthouse office hours) to ensure that all the courthouse employees have an opportunity to take a lunch break. She mentions how the Treasurer's office has a hard time ensuring that they are properly staffed through the lunch hour for particular services that not all

employees are trained on or have authorization/certification to do with examples. Commissioner Adler stated there are a lot of people that use their lunch hour to come up to the courthouse. Commissioner McLure said there may be a statute that office has to be open but needs looked into.

Electronic Mail was received from MACo regarding the 2025 Standard Mileage Rates. The IRS set the standard mileage rate at 70 cents for 2025, which is an increase of 3 cents from 2024.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Public comment was received from Elena Gagliano she said it's hard to hear in this meeting and suggested that the public should see Commissioner Adler on camera. Recommended that the correspondence (letter from the County Treasurer regarding Courthouse hours) could be discussed when the resolution is read. Mentioned the letter from Carol Baquet and if we are sending a letter to thank her and that the deadline is over. Commissioner McLure responded that we did respond and thanked her. She commented on the drafted resolutions that picking a chair needs corrected. Thinks they should state draft when they are a draft. Commissioner McLure said the correct chair will be on the signed resolution.

Tom Rue represented the Chamber of Commerce and spoke with the commissioners. He discussed a proposed rail project passing through the area and expressed interest in understanding what kind of support it needs. Rue mentioned that he might have missed some prior meetings and is seeking more information about the project. Additionally, he pointed out that the county's natural resources could be better utilized and that more resources should be routed through the area. A group of people is eager to learn more about these topics.

Public comment was received from Elena Gagliano that she was the director of Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority and that her push was to get the short rail going from Drummond to Philipsburg. Drummond did contribute; doesn't know what Philipsburg is doing. She received an email from Dave Strohmaier (Chairman of the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority) wanting to know if there would be a different response with a new commissioner taking office. She mentioned that Big Sky Passenger Rail meeting is tomorrow and anyone can attend this public meeting.

ROAD & BRIDGE WEEKLY REPORT; & SOLID WASTE UPDATE WITH ROAD & BRIDGE SUPERINTENDENT PAUL ALT; ROTATING CREW MEMBERS THROUGHOUT JOBS; Granite County Road & Bridge Superintendent Paul Alt updated the Commissioners on County roads. Plowing snow and sanding. Graded up at Georgetown Lake after some complaints. They are union workers that don't have to work on the weekends Paul stated. When people start calling and yelling; little respect goes a long way. Commissioner Kulaski asked if there are priority roads. Paul Alt said the bus routes are always priority, then go to the worst roads by need. Commissioner Kulaski mentioned if there could be something on the website for the public to see normal working hours and a map of what roads are priority. Commissioner Adler asked about road crew members and

where they live within the county and to focus on those areas closest to their home location. Paul Alt said they all work together and would like to leave them where they are and he tells them where to go. He mentioned he saw the agenda item about rotating crew members and had asked all of them how they feel about where they are and they had no complaints with what they are doing. Commissioner McLure said it's more about training on all the different equipment rather than a rotating consistently. Commissioner Adler reiterated that it's getting the road crew trained on all equipment so they can step up when shorthanded. Paul Alt said he has fill ins ready to go if the oldest employees were to retire today. Paul Alt said 100% you need to be able to run all of the equipment. Commissioner McLure said the employee that was plowing on Friday and got stuck is inexperienced. Also mentioned how crew members didn't want to go to recent trainings and that experienced crew members went and the inexperienced should have gone. Blaine Bradshaw suggested make it commissioner mandated to attend the trainings. Blaine Bradshaw said it could be subject to discipline if they don't go to the trainings as required. Paul Alt agreed to make it mandatory to get the road crew to attend the trainings.

SOLID WASTE UPDATE; Ashley Todd is working on burn permits for solid waste.

Blaine Bradshaw referenced a provision currently in the solid waste/granite disposal for working meeting. Policy is good as is just need to work with businesses who use more than the set amount of units in the policy and enter into written agreements for additional units to be assessed on taxes.

Commissioners went to closed session for a personnel matter.

Commissioner Adler asked that the road crew time cards be more detailed. Commissioner Kulaski suggested to put how many hours of maintenance per road to see how many man hours are put in to each road.

GEORGETOWN LAKE OUTFLOW; DAM TENDER'S REPORT; The lake level was reported at 6428.49 feet; 12.12" inches below full pool, according to the USGS lake level gage and the dam tender's report for the week. Commissioner Adler moved to raise to 10 CFS which matches the estimated inflows; in alignment with the current FERC Order in place. Commissioner McLure seconded the motion. There were no public comments and the motion passed unanimously.

INITIAL PART 12D COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT COORDINATION CALL WITH FERC;

Kareem noted that the primary contact form for the project needs to be updated with the new Chairperson, Commissioner Adler, and filed. Katie Clarkson, Jonathan Weaver (GreatWest), Doug Johnson, Kareem Bynoe, and Jackie Bolster joined the commissioners for the Part 12 comprehensive assessment coordination call. Kareem reviewed the guidelines, and Commissioner Adler questioned the changes, which were explained as necessary due to past project failures and a prior audit. The old system missed key details, and thorough

assessments every 10 years are required. Doug Johnson emphasized the value of more detailed inspections, even though it is challenging for small dam owners. Kareem proposed working backwards to clarify project milestones. Public comment was received from Elena Gagliano who asked why the dam tender and hydrodynamics representatives weren't present, given their control over the powerhouse.

COURTHOUSE ROOF PROJECT BID OPENINGS;

TCS Northwest Superintendent Ryon Covington joined the commissioners for bid openings.

Metal works of Montana 1st bid opened is \$518,002.00 and included the bid bond.

TCS Northwest 2nd bid opened is \$573,828 and included the bid bond.

Ryon Covington stated that a few other things (epoxy anchors) that weren't specifically noted prior to submitting bids that should have been in all bids.

Commissioner Adler tabled the awarding of the bids. Slate will take a look at them and will be on the agenda for next week.

The Commissioners then took a short recess.

COUNTY RESOLUTION 2025-1: A GRANITE COUNTY RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING DATES AND REGULAR COURTHOUSE OFFICE HOURS FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2025; County Treasurer Ashley Todd joined the commissioners. County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw gave some background on previous hours prior years at the Courthouse. Historically Courthouse was closed during lunch hour, but public wanted the offices to be open and a Resolution, as consented to by the public officials in the Courthouse, establishing the courthouse to be open during the noon hour was adopted several years ago. County Treasurers' letter has an issue with staffing. Montana Code Annotated Statute 7-4-102 states the treasurer can close their offices during the period from noon to 1 pm every day if needed for protecting records or property, etc. Ashley Todd stated its not her preference to be the only Courthouse Office closed during the noon hour. She stated it gets difficult when that office has certain people come in to do specific processes that some staff isn't authorized to do. For example; notary, refunds on credit card system and motor vehicle system, and voiding transactions. When there is vacation time, someone works through their own lunch hour to be able to cover. She acknowledges that she realizes it's only her office and understands having them closed isn't ideal for the tax base. Ashley mentioned how they don't see as much traffic during the noon hour but she could pull transactions during certain hours if that's something the Commission wanted to see. Blaine Bradshaw asked if titles are the bigger issue during the noon hour and suggested that if it was open, to exclude certain things during the noon hour. Mackenzie Prince mentioned she wasn't aware of this and said they are busy during the lunch hour. Ashley said it doesn't make sense to have just their office closed and everyone else open during the lunch hour. Blaine Bradshaw asked if she's advocating for all offices to be closed, Ashley responded that she feels it's right for her office but doesn't know if it's right for all

offices to be closed during the noon hour. Commissioner McLure said the courthouse used to historically be closed for lunch for past 50-100 years and people got used to it. Clerk and recorder Sarah Graham is generally for being open during the lunch hour to accommodate the public. Blaine Bradshaw is personally neutral and that members of the public have come in the past that wanted it open. Ashley stated having that statute for the Treasurers' Office but they would not want to use that without proper notice. For example; when there's 1 person in the office the whole day they could exercise the option to close during the noon hour with notice being placed on the door; but it's not good practice. Commissioner Adler said they can't make everyone happy. Blaine Bradshaw said however the commission acts; the statute is still in place for the Treasurer to close during the noon hour.

COUNTY RESOLUTION 2025-2: A GRANITE COUNTY RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING MILEAGE, LODGING, AND PER DIEM FOR BUSINESS TRAVEL FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2025; Mileage reimbursement (state rate) went up to \$.70 per mile in 2025. Ashley Todd asked if this is across the board when you use your personal vehicle or if it's a different set rate if county vehicle is available vs not. County Commissioners set if you choose not to use the county car you get a reduced rate. Blaine Bradshaw mentioned the applicable mileage statute sets the percentage at 48.51% of the mileage rate when using your own private vehicle if the County vehicle is available to use. Commissioner McLure brought up lodging and that the county tries to get state rates but they don't always do state rates so the county does actual amount. Ashley Todd had questions coming up in the next year wondering the rates for hotel conventions, trainings, etc. stating that hotels are having a very hard time offering state rates. The current Resolution covers that, Blaine Bradshaw stated.

COUNTY RESOLUTION 2025-3: A GRANITE COUNTY RESOLUTION SETTING DAILY INCARCERATION RATE FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2025; \$82.80 is the state rate that the sheriff is going with.

UPDATED AUDIO/VIDEO FOR COMMISSIONERS' MEETINGS; Commissioner McLure said we need our video back in place for transparency and for zoom to be able to understand and that it's hard to understand people when they aren't on video. She understands why Commissioner Adler would rather not be on camera. A Quote was received on getting an Owl through DIS. Commissioner McLure stated that commissioners can make any public comment via zoom a policy that their mic and camera have to be on as well. Commissioner McLure moved to get all commissioners on camera and sound. Commissioner Adler would rather not be videoed and doesn't think he has to be but agrees the meetings need better sound. Blaine Bradshaw is for the Commission using Zoom for their meetings because it helps people be able to participate, especially those presenting from out of town, but the Commissioners are required to audio record their meetings. Commissioner McLure moved to have all Commissioners on video camera via Zoom during their meetings, and purchasing the Owl system from DIS. Commissioner Kulaski second the motion.

Public comment received from Elena Gagliano says she can't hear. As far as Owl is concerned; the Town of Philipsburg has the Owl and half the time it doesn't work and they

don't know why. She agrees with Commissioner McLure, that they all are elected officials and the constituents that elected you should be able to see you when you talk. Mentioned that a county this big there are a lot of people that can't travel to Philipsburg and that it is part of our constitution, public participation, transparency, and the right to know. There are other systems that Elena will send to commissioner's assistant.

Commissioner McLure asked to put a policy in place that the public must go on camera and microphone when making a public comment via Zoom. Commissioner Kulaski agrees. This will be a future agenda item to discuss.

Ashley Todd said if nothing else the mic situation needs to be addressed. She turns closed captioning on when participating on Commission meetings via Zoom to see what people are actually saying. Regarding video; she thinks its sufficient to have a camera on the front half of the room for anyone that comes up to make public comment and speak to commissioners. Blaine Bradshaw asked if the owl helps with the audio; commissioner assistant said yes, it's all in one mic/video combo and can get a microphone extender as well for across the room or longer tables.

Luke Ulatowski from the Philipsburg Mail joined the Commissioners' meeting and said he appreciates them acting on this. He mentioned how Powell County uses the Owl as well and weren't quite able to figure it out and so they have not been recording meetings as required. He suggests getting a competent tech person to come install the Owl system.

Public Comment was received from Elena Gagliano said she can't hear everything being said in the meeting. It's where the microphones are being placed and the host (Commissioners' assistant) has the only mic on and working so you can't hear people. If we want to see how owl works, the town is having a meeting tonight and they have zoom and the owl and if you have time to check it out.

Blaine Bradshaw asked if there were multiple mics around; there is only one speaker hooked up but that the owl will help with that issue. With DIS doing this, if it doesn't work out for us, can we return it? Commissioners Assistant will ask DIS.

There were no further public comments received and the motion passed two to one with Commissioner Adler dissenting. The Commission meetings will be shown on video camera (all Commissioners) via Zoom and the Owl system will be purchased from DIS.

LETTER OF SUPPORT - AHNNA REID GRANITE HEADWATERS WATERSHED GROUP – DNRC WATERSHED MANAGEMENT GRANT PROGRAM;

Ahnna Reid joined the Commissioners from Granite Headwaters Watershed group. She came in asking commissioners that she's looking for letters of support from the community. Offered her support for anything the Commissioners may need to work on in the future.

Commissioner McLure moved to send a letter of support for the Granite Headwaters Watershed Group. Commissioner Kulaski seconded the motion. There were no public comments received and the motion passed unanimously.

The Session Adjourned at 12:20 p.m.