

**December 17, 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 Hinkle, and Commissioner Adler attending. 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, Elected County Commissioner Paul Kulaski, Sherriff Scott Dunkerson, Chief Public Works Officer Shane Stack, Treasurer Ashely Todd, Newspaper representative Luke Ulatowski, and members of the general public Sam and Lacy Cates and Elena Gagliano.**

**BOARD MINUTES; Commissioner Hinkle moved to accept the board minutes for December 10th, 2024. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. There were no public comments received. The motion passed unanimously.**

**CORRESPONDENCE;**

**Electronic mail was received from Dan McCaley from GreatWest Engineering regarding the bridge damage and if commissioners would like to move forward they will be happy to facilitate this process. This will be on next weeks agenda.**

**Electronic mail was received from Transportation Learning Network with Virtual Training Classes - snow plow truck maintenance, Tractor Mower Operator Safety Training. Commissioner McLure suggests road crew take some of these trainings. This will be given to Paul Alt for the road crew. Commissioner Adler would like to see everyone keep up on the safety training.**

**Electronic Mail was received from The National Program and Outreach Council on Foreign Relations for Commissioner Adler to participate in a webinar about future tariffs and trade.**

**Electronic mail was received from FERC acknowledging our corrective action plan and no comments were made on it.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comments were received.**

**ROAD & BRIDGE WEEKLY REPORT; & SOLID WASTE UPDATE WITH ROAD & BRIDGE SUPERINTENDENT PAUL ALT; Granite County Road & Bridge Superintendent Paul Alt updated the Commissioners on County roads. They are plowing snow and sanding, doing maintenance on equipment when they aren't plowing. Commissioners gave the webinar training to Road Superintendent Paul Alt for crew members to complete in the new year. Paul Alt asked about the South Main Street Bridge in Drummond that was hit in early December. GreatWest responded and the County would like to move forward with repairs. Will be on the agenda for next week.**

**PROTECTION PLAN UPDATE;** Skid steer and 930 Loader protection plans were discussed. There is a 1 year and 5-year plan. Paul Alt said he needs to see if this is the only chance to get the protection plan or if it's something they can keep renewing. Equipment is averaging 550 hours on the skid steer. Commissioner Adler suggests going with 36 months for 1000-hour protection plans on both pieces of equipment. Commissioner Adler moved to go with the 36-month protection plan for the skid steer and 930 Loader, and Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There were no public comments and the motion passed unanimously.

Solid Waste sites are doing good with nothing to update there. At the Hall pit there are 10-12 loads that the state didn't buy of salt/sand mix for \$12 a yard, Paul Alt told them that the County would take it.

**BRIDGE REPAIR ON MIDDLE FORK ROAD;** Commissioner Adler suggests to wait and see if the funds are there to replace or repair the bridge. Stated there are worse bridges than that on in the County. Commissioner Adler asked about getting money from the DOT like the state did. Commissioner McLure said they approached us and said there is help out there to repair bridges.

Commissioner McLure said the County has at least 3 bridges that need replaced and others needing repaired so she thinks the County should get ahold of the State to request about grant funding options available. Blaine Bradshaw suggests sending a letter to the state (MT DOT) to inquire about funding. Commissioner McLure asked that the draft letter be an agenda item next week. Commissioner Adler moved to send a letter to the state. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There were no public comments received and the motion passed unanimously.

Blaine Bradshaw brought up the County fee that is shown on Granite Disposal's customer invoices. Paul Alt suggested sending a letter to address that as there is no county surcharge that should be on their invoices. It's making the county look bad when the county worked with him to co-op in the first place. County Attorney Bradshaw said the billing is erroneous and confusing and needs addressed by Granite County disposal. The money isn't going to the County for the surcharge as they are quarterly overages that Granite Disposal owes and needs to work out with their customers as they are a co-op, so would like to see it removed or worded differently. A letter will be drafted for next week's meeting for the Commission to consider.

**GEORGETOWN LAKE OUTFLOW; DAM TENDER'S REPORT;** The lake level was reported at 6428.28 feet; 14.64 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 6 CFS which matches the estimated inflows; in alignment with the current FERC Order in place. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. There were no public comments and the motion passed unanimously.

**PETITION TO ABANDON A PORTION OF THE NORTH FORK OF LOWER WILLOW CREEK ROAD;** Commissioner Adler drove through this area and assisted surveyor, Hans

Bohrnsen, with the road investigation. Blaine Bradshaw reiterated that this agenda item is to acknowledge receipt of the road investigation report from Hans Bohrnsen (surveyor) and set the public hearing to accept public comment. Commissioner Adler moved to acknowledge the receipt of the Road investigation report and set the public hearing for January 21, 2024 at 11 am. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There were no public comments received, and the motion passed unanimously.

**GRANITE COUNTY RESOLUTION 2024-18: A GRANITE COUNTY RESOLUTION ORDERING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FOUR COUNTY ROADS AND FOR SAID ROADS TO REMAIN OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, INCLUDING ALGONQUIN MINE ROAD, BROWN'S GULCH ROAD, CLIFF GULCH ROAD, AND TOWER ROAD PURSUANT TO THE PUBLIC PETITION PROCESS PER TITLE 7, CHAPTER 14, MONTANA CODE ANNOTATED;** Second reading was held and Commissioner Hinkle moved to approve Granite County resolution 2024-18. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. There were no public comments received. County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw said as long as the roadway stays within the right of way we should be good (regarding proposed moving of Cliff Gulch right in which the roadway surface will be moved 40-feet over by 40-feet in length adjacent to Lacy and Samuel Cates' property as they requested such and the County consented). No more public hearings should be needed regarding this moving of Cliff Gulch Road within the County's right-of-way. The signed Resolution 2014-18 will be mailed, via certified U.S. mail, to all adjoining landowners to each of these 4 county roads established under this Resolution. No public comment was received and the motion passed unanimously.

**PROPERTY AND CASUALTY AGENT APPOINTMENT AND AGREEMENT BETWEEN MACo, GRANITE COUNTY, AND MARSH MCLENNAN AGENCY;** Commissioner Adler moved to appoint a property and casualty agent agreement between MACo, Granite County and Marsh McLennan Agency. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There were no public comments received and the motion passed unanimously.

**DECOMMISSIONED 2018 FORD F-150 OF SHERIFFS OFFICE WITH PLATE NO 46-1744B (BAD CYLINDER; TRANSFER OWNERSHIP TO VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT; 2017 FORD EXPLORER OF SHERIFFS OFFICE WITH PLATE NO. 46-0063B (TURBOS OUT), POSSIBLE SURPLUS AUCTION WITH MINIMUM BID;**

Sheriff Scott Dunkerson joined the Commission for the meeting to discuss the two decommissioned Sheriff's vehicles. Sheriff Scott Dunkerson said if Valley Fire gets the truck he would like to see the blue lights taken off. Commissioner Adler suggested to keep what we can inside the rigs for backup on similar vehicles. Commissioner Adler suggested keep the truck and give explorer away. The Sheriff doesn't want the deputies broke down on the way to calls. Valley Fire expressed interest in the truck specifically. Commissioner Adler suggested to keep the Ford Explorer for spare parts possibly, but the other Commissioners wanted to sell at public auction. Commissioner Adler then moved to sell the 2107 Ford Explorer at public auction (sealed bids; bid notice in newspaper for two consecutive weeks) with a minimum bid of \$3,000 on the 2017 Ford Explorer. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. No public comment was received and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Adler moved to transfer ownership of the Sheriff Office's 2018 Ford F-150 truck to Valley Fire District. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There were no public comments received and the motion passed unanimously.

**MULTI-COUNTY GRANT APPLICATION FOR BRIDGES;** Chief Public Works Officer with the City of Missoula, Shane Stack joined on Zoom to discuss with the Commissioners about possible partnering to apply for bridge grants. Shane Stack suggests applying as multi-county jurisdictions as they'd likely be more successful that way. He is reaching out to see if we'd partner on any application. There are 11 Bridges needed to be replaced in Missoula at a total value at over \$40 million. Just seeing if Granite County is interested in partnering to apply as a multi-county jurisdiction. Commissioner McLure asked if we can word potential grants applications of bridge repairs, not only replacements. Shane said yea. He doesn't know if some of these programs will be available down the road as 2025/2026 may be end of current federal funding program. Commissioners agreed they are interested in moving forward with this. Down the line, will need from Granite County, the scope, repairs, schedule, and what the proposed budget would be. If there's more counties working together, looks better to have 6-8 counties rather than 1 get funding. Missoula County to manage projects but there will need to be some local funding (matches) invested in it depending on the grant. Commissioner Adler will be the point of contact for the county but Shane will get stuff to Administrative Assistant. Proposed interlocal agreements will be on agenda in the future.

**OAC MEETING COURTHOUSE ELEVATOR & ADA PROJECT;** Superintendent of TCS Northwest Ryon Covington and Brook Covington joined the commissioners to update them on the courthouse elevator projects. Ryon updated that Temp Right has completed the rough in plumbing in the Women's restroom. Doors are coming 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week of January. Second floor drywallers hung everything they could until inspection. Larry put in a heater on first floor at elevator. A meeting with flooring company will take place on Friday and hoping to get tile laid in the ladies' bathroom 2<sup>nd</sup> week of January. Great Floors is the tile company out of Missoula. TCS had a meeting with Architects and Engineers on Friday to address the issue of the drain pipe that is going through the elevator pit. This unforeseeable will require a change order. Temp Right cannot give us a quote. It will have to be billed on a time and material basis. Elevator will be here by the 13<sup>th</sup> of January and waiting for the install crew to schedule when they will be available to install it. No comments were made from the Commission about the project. Paint cracking in the jury room was brought up but this was discussed at a previous meeting. It will have to be taken care of after the elevators installed. Commissioner Adler asked about the windows at the ambulance shed in Drummond. Ryon Covington said he would go look at them.

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION 2024-19; A GRANITE COUNTY RESOLUTION TO AFFIRMATIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE MT COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT PLAN BY IDENTIFYING AND APPROVING A COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT ORGANIZATION (CRO);** Commissioner Hinkle is not in support of this and thinks it's not going to be equal or fair. Kelly Sullivan of Headwaters RC&D and Hanna Tester of NeighborWorks MT joined the commissioners. Kelly Sullivan encourages commissioners to

choose a CRO. The intent was trying to help some of the housing shortages that the state faces. There is no cost to the county, the CRO will handle everything. Encourages not to decline to accept this money as it will help someone. Hanna Tester reiterates what's important to remember is that the program is designed for the work force. And how drastically the market has changed. 15 years ago, someone in that AMI range could afford 88 of the average home in Granite County needing 12% support. Same wage earner today can only afford 72% of a home. We've moved the gap between affordability. It's not going to make people rich or build a ton of equity but will help them remain stable and in the community to contribute in meaningful ways.

Blaine Bradshaw asked what the loan interest rates will be for those homeowners using the program. Hanna Tester responded that it is designated as an investment instead of a loan, they have an equity cap. The 1% per year goes to the homeowner to keep and put into the next purchase. It is set up as a deferred loan and has an equity cap and the program gets the rest. Commissioner McLure noted the decision was already made to choose a CRO. She thinks NeighborWorks Montana would be a good choice. Hanna stated the cap comes from income. Hanna said a couple houses could be used with this funding and with the return to the program, it would build overtime. Ashley Todd asked if would they (NeighborWorks) would report back to commission once applications have been submitted and funds have been depleted; Hanna would be happy to report out. Ashley said then it would show the need there was in the county. The number of applicants would be a good thing to know.

Public comment was received from Elena Gagliano who agrees with Commissioner Hinkle. She was hoping for more information and was confused. She said it's an investment, who buys the home if the person goes delinquent?

Hanna Tester replied to Elena's comment that first mortgage loans want to work with a viable secondary mortgage loan. This would work like any other mortgage does. The first mortgage loan is fielded by secondary mortgage investors. This would be owner occupied housing, residents will live in these homes.

Elena mentioned fanny may and how those work, new administration coming in January. And how do they know money will available. Said Legislatures said no to HB819 with legitimate reason. She's never seen anything that the government provided. Against it as a tax payer living in this county.

Kelly Sullivan replied and said it's the legislatures first attempt at finding a way to solve work force housing crisis even if it's a little bit of money. It's a positive thing for Granite County.

Elena said she hasn't talked to anyone that had a problem. Mentioned how the old high school turned into apartments and she's seen the people they are giving those apartments to.

Blaine Bradshaw said that it's a State of Montana bill using Coal Tax Trust Funds and that the funding will be there.

Commissioner Hinkle said with new administration coming in what will happen but agreed with the Coal Tax Funds. Asked how are they going to build equity if they don't have to pay it back until they sell the house. It will take a little bit to build it up. People might keep the house for 10/15/20 years and never pay it back.

Blaine Bradshaw said right now it could help some people potentially. In the long term, reducing taxes in Montana would be better for resident than these pork barrel projects like this. Commissioner Hinkle said you can't treat one person better than the other person and that it's not fair.

Ashley Todd stated there are other programs out there that they can use in conjunction with the HUD Program to help with buying a house. If people decide to not use this program there are others available. If commissioners don't opt in they are taking away \$200k to help people afford a down payment on a home within the county they are living in without commuting from Missoula and Anaconda, like we see every day.

Commissioner Hinkle said people back in the day worked hard and saved their money for a down payment, they didn't get it right away. Blaine Bradshaw commented with the state of the economy it's tough for someone coming out of college with say, a mechanical engineering degree or equivalent, to even think about buying a house. He does understand the criticism that this will only benefit a select few.

Commissioner Adler asked do they have a certain percentage to put down on the house to be qualified?

Hanna Tester answered Commissioner Adler's question and said there will be a minimum borrower contribution requirement. NeighborWorks does 1% of home value or \$1,000 -- whichever is more.

That concluded the first reading. No further public comments were received.

**VERKADA SECURITY SYSTEM PRESENTATION;** Alec Wheeler joined the Commissioners to present them with Verkada Security System. Verkada is used by Missoula County, Lewis and Clark County, Glacier County, and Philipsburg Schools. Commissioner Adler asked how much is the program. Alec said it depends on how many cameras etc. would be used. MSRP is on the website or reach out to Alec for quotes that will be more accurate. Public sector would get a bit of a discount, Alec said. Commissioner Hinkle asked about a package on pricing. Alec replied it's different for specific buildings and their needs. Commissioner McLure said we would take this under advisement. Alec asked if we wanted to see the demonstration, but Commissioner Adler said no. Commissioner McLure said we'd take it under advisement and can put them on the list and Alec Wheeler would provide more pricing.

Public Comment was received from Elena Gagliano that he was already gone but he could have completed the presentation. Commissioner Hinkle stated that he thinks there should have been pricing and agreed with Commissioner Adler.

**CLAIMS;**

**The Commissioners reviewed the monthly claims throughout breaks in agenda items. Commissioner Hinkle moved to approve the claims. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. No public comments were received and the motion passed unanimously.**

**The Session Adjourned at 11:44 A.M.**