

July 16, 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, and Granite County Attorney, Blaine Bradshaw, who attended a portion of the agenda items. 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 Treasurer, Ashley Todd; Granite County Road & Bridge Superintendent, Paul Alt; Granite County Public Health Nurse, Deb Robinson; Tobacco Prevention Specialist, Amanda Bohrer; Local Health Officer, Dr. Kira Conn; Public Health & Safety Coordinator, Jackie Bolster; Granite County Board of Health Chairperson, Ashley Westphal; TCS Northwest Project Superintendent, Ryon Covington and Project Coordinator, Brooke Covington; Granite County Deputy Clerk & Recorder, Becky Mickey; and members of the general public including Elena Gagliano, Barbara Komberec, Scott McDonald, and Suzanne Browning.

QUARTERLY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING; The Commission was joined by Granite County Public Health Nurse, Deb Robinson; Tobacco Prevention Specialist, Amanda Bohrer; Local Health Officer, Dr. Kira Conn; Public Health & Safety Coordinator, Jackie Bolster; Granite County Board of Health Chairperson, Ashley Westphal, and the Granite County Attorney, Blaine Bradshaw.

Commissioner McLure called the meeting to order. Commissioner Adler moved to approve the minutes from April 16, 2024 meeting. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There were no public comments and the motion passed unanimously.

Tri-County Sanitarian, Chad Lanes was not able to join the meeting and provided a written report. The group reviewed the report that explained that onsite septic development is still going very strong with septic systems being installed all along the length of Rock Creek, in the existing subdivisions such as Whiskey Flats and Greystone Subdivision, as well as increased interest in mining claims and other remote (and at times, large) parcels. His office has also been steadily completing plan reviews for food businesses with a heavy emphasis on mobile food units. The Sanitarian's Office is working on how to handle certain food issues including those that previously required licensure and inspection but are now allowed events such as farmers markets without oversight. They are working on some sort of notification to assist people in understanding the difference between "licensed and inspected" and "allowed but unregulated". They feel strongly that the general public should be educated about the potential risks associated to allow them to make informed decisions. There are also some complaints that the Office is still working on that may require legal notification. Chad Lanes will keep the Board updated on these matters as they move forward. Commissioner Adler raised concerns over a trailer that needs to be cleaned up 7.5 miles west of Drummond; he

would like an update on this matter. Chairperson Westphal will reach out to Chad Lanes and share the update with the Board.

Granite County Public Health Nurse Deb Robinson provided an update of Public Health operations noting that they have been working on grant administration, and everything is up to date. Additionally, they had their Immunization Audit last week and no deficiencies were found. The Public Health Department is looking forward to events including School and Daycare Immunization Clinics, the Blue Shield Van for Flu Shots, and hosting a Babysitting class that assists also young people to get CPR Certified. The Department is also hoping to host a Children's Health Fair focused on safety, and are working with area schools to partner for this event. The Board reviewed a WIC Participation Update that was provided from Anaconda-Deer Lodge County, who are currently providing WIC services in Granite County.

Granite County Public Health & Safety Coordinator, Jackie Bolster joined the session to provide an update on the PHEP program, which is on track with all quarterly reporting deliverables. Jackie Bolster and Deb Robinson are working together to ensure all PHEP tasks are completed.

Tobacco Prevention Specialist, Amanda Bohrer joined the group explaining that she has ordered new provider packets concerning cessation, which will be sent to providers in the area. The packet also includes an updated list of cessation medications that are approved. She explained that she will be resuming youth activities in Granite County and will also be sending out a survey to collect public opinion on whether a distance ruling would be in the best interest of the communities within the County. There will be an update on that information in a year to provide time to gain that data. Amanda Bohrer will continue working with local partners to build youth programs focused on prevention including County schools. Commissioner Adler inquired what days she would be working in Granite County. Amanda Bohrer explained she is still determining which days she will be present in the County.

Dr. Conn noted that she does not have anything specific to comment on at this time.

The Session adjourned at 9:28 a.m.

BOARD MINUTES; Commissioner Adler moved to accept the board minutes for July 9, 2024. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There were no public comments received. The motion passed unanimously.

POTENTIAL FIRE RESTRICTIONS; As an emergency has arisen with current weather conditions, the group discussed potential of fire restrictions being enacted. This matter was not on the agenda. Jackie Bolster will be meeting with the DNRC to discuss fire restrictions in the area. She added that there have been several fires ignited, mainly in the lower valley, including 8 calls since the 4th of July Holiday. The Commission discussed going to Stage I Fire Restrictions. Jackie Bolster has spoken with Fire Chief O'Connor who recommended the County enacting Stage I Restrictions. Commissioner Hinkle moved to establish Stage I Fire Restrictions on private land within Granite County. Commissioner McLure seconded

the motion. Public comment was received from Elena Gagliano noting that an alert was noticed from the Sheriff's Department stating that there was some sort of a fire restriction. She added that this came from the Town of Drummond and that it would be helpful if the County did something similar. The County Attorney clarified that the Sheriff was not issuing any burn permits at this time. There were no public comments received and the motion, for this emergency measure, passed two to one with Commissioner Adler dissenting, as he would like the County to enact Stage II Restrictions.

CORRESPONDENCE;

Electronic mail was received from the Town of Drummond with pictures showing a hole in the bridge on South Main Street. Road & Bridge Superintendent, Paul Alt is addressing this issue.

A letter was received from the Montana Department of Transportation stating that the County's DUI Task Force Plan has been approved for SFY 2025.

Electronic mail was received from Debbie Peters, a resident on Traveler's Home Lane, raising concern over the road conditions and requesting services. This e-mail was forwarded to Road & Bridge Superintendent, Paul Alt, who responded stating that they are just waiting for the Blackfoot Fiber Optic Project to be completed in the area and then they will blade the road.

The BNSF Technical Document explaining the Tower placement across Granite County was received; this has been forwarded to the Road & Bridge Superintendent.

Electronic mail was received from Suzanne Browning providing written comment for an upcoming agenda item (Potential Purchase of a Road Grader).

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 joined the session to provide an update of projects across the County including completing gravel work on Henderson Creek and are working in the Hall area (Kolbeck Lane). The Road Crew will also begin blading Travelers Home after Blackfoot has completed their Fiber Optic Project. The group referenced the bridge on South Main in Drummond. The Road Department is addressing the issue.

During the previous session, the Commission discussed the potential purchase of a new Grader. Paul Alt presented information and this matter that the group reviewed. The Commission also reviewed written comment from Suzanne Browning concerning this matter. *RE: July 16, 2024 Commission Agenda Item 9:50 Weekly Report with Road & Bridge Superintendent; Potential Purchase of a New Grader. Granite County Commissioners: For the*

record, I have public comment and questions, on the above agenda item, in regards to the potential purchase of a 2024 CAT 160 AWD Grader. I would like to remind the Commissioners that Resolution 2022-5 was for the consolidation of loans, through the Intercap Loan Program, for new equipment purchased for the road department. Exhibit A of that resolution includes total equipment costs of \$998,134.49, which includes the following road graders. 2019 CAT 160 Grader – payoff amount \$276,428.83; 2019 CAT 160 Grader – payoff amount \$271,995.54; This Intercap loan was approved in 2022, for a loan period of 5 years. So, Granite County is still paying on the two (2) 2019 road graders now. The road department equipment list shows four (4) motor graders listed as assets. Besides the 2019 graders, there is a 2013 CAT 160M2 and the CAT 140M, which does not list a year. However, it was put into service 02/18/16, tag #261, and possibly listed on the Western States CAT sales agreement as a 2011 trade proposal. The sales agreement, after trade proposal of \$135,000.00, will cost Granite County \$143,125.80 (4 annual payments), and a balloon payment of \$300,000.00 should the county purchase the grader on year five (5). If it is not purchased, Granite County will have paid a total of \$278,125.80 to have a 2024 CAT Grader, which includes the value, by Western States, for the 2011 trade in. This appears to be nearly the same debt, as the 2019 graders that are now being paid off through the Intercap Loan. What is the reason for the purchase of a new road grader, why is it needed? How many road graders does the County need to maintain the gravel roads? How many of the employees can operate the newest road graders, or have had training to do so? How many equipment hours do you put on each road grader every year? Time and again, each fiscal year the 2210 Road Fund must be supplemented with PILT money (\$500,000.00) for expenditures in the road department. What would the Granite County Commissioners do if the PILT money was not available? I appreciate your time and consideration with my public comments and answers to my questions. I would gratefully hope that you will act in a fiscal responsible manner, for the taxpayers of Granite County. Regards, Suzanne Browning

The group discussed the response to Suzanne Browning’s email. Commissioner McLure inquired to why the County needs a new grader. Paul Alt responded that it is about having updated equipment that functions well. Commissioner McLure noted that she is against this, because she believes the County needs to finish paying off our equipment before we purchase or upgrade any other equipment. Commissioner McLure noted that it hasn’t been Granite County’s policy to upgrade equipment regularly. Commissioner Adler noted that he likes the option to have the warranty in place to cover any issues that may arise. Commissioner Hinkle added that the grader they are thinking of trading in is a 2011 and is currently 13 years old; but that more employees in the crew will need to be trained on how to use the equipment. Paul Alt added that in the future they will probably need a larger Crew. Commissioner Hinkle commented on the amount of work he individually completed on East Fork Road and that the equipment at that time needed to be upgraded. Commissioner McLure referenced the Intercap Loan, stating that we need to pay this loan off before investing in new equipment. Commissioner Adler moved to approve the purchase and sales agreement with Western States CAT dated May 10, 2024 (\$476,275.00 total with a trade in proposal on a 2011 grader. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion.

Public comment from Suzanne Browning inquired if a smaller road grader is needed to access roadways in the County that the smaller snow plow was purchased for. Commissioner Adler noted that the lighter graders do not work as well as the larger, heavier graders; and that the narrower roads would be able to be served by the proposed grader. Commissioner Hinkle noted that the larger graders are incredibly helpful to address the snowdrifts and berms as well as the ice on the roadways during the winter months. Suzanne Browning inquired if the 2019 graders owned by County are serving this purpose now; and how often the graders are used for snowplowing. The Commission responded that they are used every winter, not every day of the winter but it is dependent on the weather/ road conditions. Suzanne Browning doesn't think the buyback program is a bad program, but noted that once you enter into the buy-back program that it is a continuous circle of upgrading equipment, and that the County should first pay off their InterCap Loan before purchasing another gr. Commissioner Adler raised concern over how the Department was operating in the past with equipment that constantly broke down, noting examples of such breakdowns, etc. Public comment was received from Elena Gagliano agreeing with the comments of Suzanne Browning, raising concerns over the debt the County is currently incurring for road equipment. There were no further comments received and the motion passed two to one, with Commissioner McLure dissenting.

Solid Waste Update: Paul Alt explained that there have been some concerns over the new hours at the Philipsburg Site received from the public. There is no update on the well at the Philipsburg Site for the new bathrooms.

Public comment was received from Suzanne Browning inquired what will happen with the belly dump that is inoperable and was recently replaced. Paul Alt explained that they will likely take it to Pacific Steel, but currently, they are working on stripping the belly dump down so they will have reusable parts for the new belly dump.

Suzanne Brown asked if they have thought about selling it outright (where is / as is) to get more money than scrapping it. Paul Alt stated the belly dump has had to have continuous repairs and it leaks raising concern over the liability exposure. Attorney Bradshaw would recommend stripping the belly dump and selling the materials to Pacific Steel, as suggested by Paul Alt, due to liability concerns of selling it at public auction with all of its many problems.

Public comment was received from Elena Gagliano inquiring which pages of the document from BNSF include Granite County. Commissioner McLure explained that the address of BNSF is out of state, but that each area referenced in the document is in Granite County. Commissioner Adler noted that they have provided the document to the Road & Bridge Superintendent to work with BNSF, but that the County does not yet have an encroachment permit to review; and that this is just an initial discussion until the encroachment permit from BNSF is received.

GEORGETOWN LAKE OUTFLOW; DAM TENDER'S REPORT; The lake level was reported at 6429.16 feet; 4.08 inches below full pool, according to the USGS lake level gage and the dam tender's report for the week. Commissioner Hinkle raised concern over the lake

level dropping in the hot weather. 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 comments and the motion passed unanimously.

MONTHLY CLAIMS; The Commission reviewed the monthly claims for June 2024. Commissioner Adler moved to accept and approve the monthly claims for June 2024. Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There were no public comments received and the motion passed unanimously.

UPDATE ON TIME CLOCK PROJECT WITH TIME CLOCKS PLUS; The Commission reviewed the correspondence from the previous week concerning the implementation of the Time Clocks from Time Clocks Plus. Commissioner Adler noted that the County would have to work with the Union to get this project implemented. Commissioner McLure added that the Department Heads were not in favor the implementation of Time Clocks during the last session. The Commission discussed having a new session with the Department Heads to see how they feel about the implementation of Time Clocks; and they would like to reach out to the new Union Representative in regard to Time Clock implementation.

Public comment was received from Elena Gagliano asking if the representative from Time Clocks Plus would be at the session next week. Commissioner McLure clarified that Time Clocks Plus would not be at their next session, because this is a time for the Commission to talk to the Department Heads and Union Representative to determine if this project should go forward.

UPDATE ON GRANITE COUNTY COURTHOUSE & ADA PROJECTS WITH TCS NORTHWEST AND SLATE ARCHITECTURE; The Commission was joined by TCS Northwest Project Superintendent, Ryon Covington and Project Coordinator, Brooke Covington. The group went on a walkthrough of the projects then returned to the Commissioners Proceedings Room. The three bathrooms being remodeled (second and third floors; men's bathroom and judge's bathroom on second floor and family restroom on third floor) are ready for drywall. The women's restroom on the second floor is next on the list, and they will work on getting the project roughed out ahead of the upcoming election in November; as the Contractors will need to drop down to the ceiling in the Election's Office for plumbing purposes. Ryon Covington noted that he wanted to alert the Commission of the ADA Parking space, as he has it lined out and it will be very tight in the space, essentially getting rid of the alleyway running along the side of the building.

Attorney Bradshaw provided an update on the agreement with Ace Roofing concerning the drainage on the roof. Commissioner Adler noted that the collars need to be fixed so they don't leak. Ace Roofing will be here on Thursday to walk through the project (there is a contract in place for Ace Roofing to replace the drains on the top side of the roof). Commissioner Adler will try to attend the meeting with Ace Roofing.

RESOLUTION 2024-10; A GRANITE COUNTY RESOLUTION REQUESTING A BALLOT ISSUE FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION ON NOVEMBER 5, 2024 REGARDING A PROPOSED LOCAL OPTION MOTOR VEHICLE TAX; FIRST

READING; Commissioner McLure provided some background on the development of the Resolution following last weeks update from Granite County Treasurer, Ashley Todd. The Commission reviewed the drafted Resolution and discussed the percentage detail with Ashley Todd, who explained that the maximum percent allowable according to the MCA for Counties to include is 0.7%; however, all other Counties across the state have set the percent at 0.5%. The group discussed the \$100K MSRP that would initiate the additional tax on lightweight vehicles and the \$200K MSRP for motorhomes. Ashley Todd requested that the rate be set for lightweight vehicles \$90K or above, and explained that the County does not retain any funds for processing motor vehicle titles. Commissioner McLure noted that the Treasurer's Office is swamped with out-of-state vehicles that register their vehicles in the County, because there is no sales tax in Montana and no option tax in Granite County. Ashley Todd noted that within the last 5 years their transactions have increased by 12K annually; with a large amount being out-of-state titles. The group discussed how the funds are appropriated; 50% to the County and the other 50% is disbursed between the County, Town of Philipsburg, and Town of Drummond. Commissioner Hinkle inquired if they could write into the resolution to have the amounts adjust due to inflation. Ashley Todd responded that according to her research this was not possible and any change would have to go back to the voters, and County Attorney Bradshaw agreed.

Public comment was received from Suzanne Browning inquiring if this is only on new vehicles. Ashley Todd responded that this is for registration and titles, and the group discussed the depreciation schedule outlined in the MCA. Ashley Todd has been trying to get hard numbers to illustrate the amount of out-of-state titles her office processes, but has to wait for a response from the Department of Justice. Suzanne Browning stated she thinks this is a good way for the County to generate revenue. Public comment was received from Elena Gagliano asking for clarification, and if this is only on new transactions or applies to renewals as well. Ashley Todd is still waiting for a response on that matter and will share information as she receives it. Elena Gagliano raised concern over the ballot measure passing and the Commissioners making changes after the fact. Attorney Bradshaw explained that in order for anything to change the local option tax would have to go back to the voters to approve or not. This matter will be on the agenda next week.

PROVIDING A COLA INCREASE FOR UNION EMPLOYEES (ROAD & BRIDGE / SOLID WASTE) OF 4.1%; Granite County Attorney, Blaine Bradshaw explained that former Union Representative, Craig Davis had retired and the new Representative is Megan Yuhas. He had reached out to the Union to see if they were agreeable to the 4.1% COLA Increase. Megan Yuhas responded that after speaking with the employees they are agreeable to the 4.1% COLA. Commissioner Hinkle moved to provide a COLA increase for Union Employees (Road & Bridge / Solid Waste) of 4.1%. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. There were no public comments received and the motion passed unanimously.

MONTANA WOOL GROWERS ASSOCIATION MOU FOR FY 2025; The Commission reviewed the annual MOU with Montana Wool Growers Association. Commissioner Adler moved to approve and sign the MOU with Montana Wool Growers for FY 2025

Commissioner Hinkle seconded the motion. There were no public comments received and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 12:07 p.m.