

February 18, 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 McLure, Commissioner Adler, and Commissioner Kulaski attending via zoom. Also attending were Commissioners Assistant Maranda Williams and Granite County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw, who attended a portion of the agenda items in person. The session was live-streamed 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 Granite County Treasurer Ashley Todd, Luke Ulatowski of the press and members of the general public, Elena Gagliano and Chuck Johnson.

BOARD MINUTES: Commissioner McLure moved to accept the board minutes for February 11, 2025. Commissioner Kulaski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE;

Electronic Mail was received from Brandon Jesse raising concern that the County had not plowed since Friday morning at the earliest. Commissioner Adler said they plowed on the holiday yesterday for the bus run.

Electronic mail was received from Joan from the Montana Department of Transportation with an Immediate Release about putting up fencing on I-90 where the wildlife cross.

Electronic mail was received from Alex Scolavino of Fish Wildlife and Parks regarding Georgetown Lake Outflows and moving to 15 CFS in the future.

Electronic Mail was received from Kristin Kuiken (Senator Daines' Office) for more information about federal grants available for dams.

Electronic mail was received from Jackie Bolster regarding a safety training about "What is abusive conduct" for County employee departments to take.

Electronic mail was received from the Montana Department of Transportation requesting information on any bridge construction and repair activities under the County's jurisdiction.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Public comment was received from Elena Gagliano, wondering if the county is acting on correspondence and will be a future agenda item, particularly the letter from Senator Daines's office.

ROAD & BRIDGE WEEKLY REPORT & SOLID WASTE UPDATE WITH ROAD & BRIDGE SUPERINTENDENT PAUL ALT; Granite County Road & Bridge Superintendent Paul Alt updated the Commissioners on the roads during this portion of the meeting. Everyone is plowing snow. 2 blades are going tomorrow, and it's been hard to stay ahead of it; light snow is going everywhere, and visibility is zero.

SOLID WASTE UPDATE; Quiet time of year not much to report.

Chuck Johnson lives in a place where he can observe the county road crew working diligently, and we are getting a lot of snow. He agrees it is hard to keep up with when there are 3 more inches by the time you get done working.

Public comment was received from Elena Gagliano about a letter to Jason Rittal and where the photos are online. The Commissioners Assistant will upload it after the meeting.

LETTER TO STATE SENATOR BECKY BEARD REGARDING MT HB369; Blaine Bradshaw has communicated with Becky Beard. Chuck Johnson asked about House Bill 369, and Blaine Bradshaw explained that that the bill would allow for petition process and creation a road maintenance district that by passes any county commission approval. They could take funds out of the county road fund. Blain testified last week at the Capitol on the County's behalf. Commissioner McLure said the county was negatively spoken about at the hearing, and the County and Commission was defended by the testimony of Blaine Bradshaw at the State House committee hearing. Commissioner McLure motioned to make the change to say "we want to work with the landowners" at Georgetown Lake. Commissioner Kulaski seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Concern was raised there's been little communication from Georgetown Lake Homeowners to the Commissioners regarding HB369. Commissioner McLure did receive a call and suggested they come into have a meeting soon. Georgetown Lake Homeowner Association, Forest Service, and Landowners recommended working with them on this.

Elena Gagliano made public comments about the County's website and out-of-date information. She mentioned there are bills that will affect the county and town and Commissioners should go. She also stated how hard Commissioners are to get a hold of as there is information on the website is missing in her opinion.

Blaine Bradshaw said if someone wants to get a hold of a commissioner, i.e., Paul Kulaski, there are ways to get a hold of him; the phone number is in the phone book, etc.

GEORGETOWN LAKE OUTFLOW; DAM TENDER'S REPORT; The lake level was reported at 6428.73 feet; 9.24" inches below full pool, according to the USGS lake level gage and the dam tender's report for the week. Commissioner Kulaski moved to go to 15 CFS, subject to approval, 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.

CLAIMS; The County Commissioners reviewed the January 2025 monthly claims. Commissioner McLure moved to accept claims from January 2025 Commissioner Kulaski seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

GRASSEY VS. GRANITE COUNTY; Blaine Bradshaw updated the commissioners of litigation against the county wanting to put a gate up on a public road. Injunction went to hearing and waiting on a ruling. They want the county to stop realtors from claiming that the road in question is a public road. Realtors aren't part of litigation, and the commissioner

doesn't have the authority to tell realtors what to do. Greg Overstreet was assisting with some of the case. Noted that it is a major public safety issue to have a gate up. Wapiti is just a public road. The county has standing in it as there are public safety issues. No public comment was received.

FLASHING LIGHTS ON HIGHWAY 1 IN HALL;

Commissioner Adler put forward an agenda item about the speed limit signs along Montana Highway 1 in Hall. Chuck Johnson expressed concern about the placement of the 30 and 40-mph speed limit signs, stating specifically that the 30-mph are located over 200 feet into residential areas and should be moved further out of town. There is a lot of speeding through Hall and there is a school cross walk and bus turn around right in Hall. There are have accidents in Hall lately too as a result of excessive speed. He advocated for installing flashing warning lights (solar speed signs) at both ends of the town, which would help with visibility and safety. The historical sign at the south end was mentioned, and the issue of low visibility on Farm to Market Road was also raised. Sheriff Scott Dunkerson supported the idea of the flashing speed signs (solar), and the Commissioners discussed sending a letter to MT DOT strongly requesting these changes. Chuck Johnson also raised concerns about speeding in the area, particularly after seeing the 40-mph sign but with high acceleration even before the sign heading north out of Hall. Commissioner McLure moved to submit a letter with the petition requesting a speed study and flashing lights, while also asking for radar signs near the 30 mph zones. Chuck Johnson and Blaine Bradshaw suggested addressing the radar signs first before moving the speed signs as a speed study may be needed to move the 30- and 40-mph speed zones. Public comment was received from Elena Gagliano that a previous study was denied for on Montana Highway One with the intersection of Black Pine Road, and noted the MT DOT's lack of concern for public safety. The motion passed unanimously.

NORTHWESTERN ENERGY CUSTOMER AGREEMENT; Donovan Jones joined the Commissioners for this portion of the meeting. The majority of funds for the power work is in their current year budget, and Commissioners can sign and then work on installing new power poles, transformers, underground service, and removal of overhead primary and poles. Commissioner Kulaski moved to approve and sign the agreement. Commissioner McLure seconded the motion. No public comment was received. The motion passed unanimously.

GREAT WEST TASK ORDERS #11 AND #12; Jeremiah Theys joined the Commissioners with Task Orders for the DSSMR that need to be submitted by April 1st. Dam Safety Program Plan and operation and maintenance documents updated. Planning on tackling all of these and submit to FERC by April 1st. Task order 12 is curb repair on Clark Fork Bridge. Their work is assisting with putting together a solicitation package for building on that. Get quotes from 3 contractors and assist with construction oversight. Concrete pour and project closeout they will assist with in person. Great West Engineering to solicit a minimum of 3 contractors. Commissioner Adler asked if they would do it this Spring. Jeremiah said the weather is going to need to be warm enough to do that work. Commissioner McLure moved

to accept task orders 11 and 12 from Great West Engineering. Commissioner Kulaski seconded the motion. No public comment was received and the motion passed unanimously.

KELLY COTTON DIRECTOR OF CONSTITUENT SERVICES AND REGIONAL OUTREACH FOR TIM SHEEHY; Kelly Cotton joined the commission for this portion of the meeting and wanted to introduce herself. She wants to best support us as she can. Commissioner Adler said Forest Service funding on roads would help as well as dam funding. Blaine Bradshaw talked about the infrastructure bill that went to Flint Creek Hydroelectric so the County wanted to inquire about that for more improvements. Paul Kulaski asked about the bridges and infrastructure bill. Kelly Cotton updated on Tim Sheehy looking for more office space in their Butte office, and that they have boots on the ground.

USGS AGREEMENT SCOPE OF WORK; Discussion was had on whether this is yearly or every 6 months, believed to be yearly on a fiscal calendar even though it reflects a 6-month period. Commissioner Kulaski moved to accept and sign the scope of work. Commissioner McLure seconded. No public comment was received. The motion passed unanimously.

TWIN WILLOWS SUBDIVISION PRELIMINARY PLAT; County Planner Linda Bouck joined the commissioners for this portion of the meeting. 5 lot subdivision up Granite ½ mile a road by the Tram sign. The property is very steep and they will need to get county encroachment permits from Commissioners. Driveways are steep and there's no way around it. Nothing on the subdivision other than those roads. Page 9, number 9, utilities, added a statement all utilities in the county right of way have to be underground. Commissioner Adler asked about Blackfoot and getting around that. Linda spoke about some specific County wording for the area they are building in, adding Granite County will not increase services, including plowing, grading, etc., due to this subdivision. Road easements maintenance, can't park vehicles on granite road, snow removal areas on map. Going to have to plow up and not down onto the county road. Linda talked to Tom Rue at the planning board level; realtors are requiring people to read the covenant and sign it so they know prior to purchasing. Commissioner McLure moved to accept the subdivision preliminary plat on the 24 conditions as amended. Commissioner Kulaski seconded the motion. No public comment was received. The motion passed unanimously.

MEETING WITH STATE REPRESENTATIVE, MR. JOHN FITZPATRICK; Chuck Stokke, Brian Clark, Mike Hayes, Dan Reddish, and Dan Villa Joined the commissioners for this portion of the meeting. A discussion took place about snow plowing and grading on Lakeshore Drive. Blaine Bradshaw suggested creating a plan for the future, especially regarding what happens after May 1st. Commissioners Adler and Commissioner McLure emphasized working together towards a plan that works for everyone involved. Blaine Bradshaw mentioned efforts to involve the Forest Service in the process. Commissioner Kulaski viewed the meeting as preliminary, aiming to resolve the issue with the Forest Service, or else find another solution.

Representative John Fitzpatrick joined the discussion, reflecting on his past efforts for Granite County, including securing funds for various projects. He expressed surprise that the county now wants a working relationship after years of neglect. He highlighted issues

with state funding, including mistakes at the state level in revenue distribution that affected Granite County. He also disagreed with Blaine's optimism, claiming that federal money opportunities were missed due to actions from Commissioner Hinkle.

There was mention of HB 6 and HB 7, where Granite County didn't originally commit to match funds so the County was removed from grant consideration and the House committee didn't find the County's testimony during the House committee Hearing was convincing in which the County agreed to providing matching dollars once notified it was required, and discussions of money for first-time homebuyers versus museum funding. Mr. Fitzpatrick argued that the County hasn't been in touch with the community either on projects. Blaine Bradshaw emphasized this meeting was about having apologized and moving forward on projects to benefit the people. Fitzpatrick felt federal funding could have been secured.

The conversation moved to the Forest Service's role in road projects around the lake, with homeowners planning to meet and then return to the commission. Mr. Fitzpatrick spoke of possible federal grant funding for roads around the lake and teaming up with Anaconda Deer-Lodge County (to obtain grants) which was well-received by the Commission (to look into this plan). There was a call for quicker action from the Commission. Chuck Stokke and others urged collaboration, especially with Anaconda Deer-Lodge County, and emphasized the negative sentiment within the lake community with the Commissioners.

Public comments reflected concerns from Georgetown Lake property owners, with Elena Gagliano expressing hope for change. Chuck Stokke acknowledged HB369 has its issues, but that the County needs to work better with the homeowners at Georgetown Lake going forward. Brian Clark discussed additional funding efforts to improve the roadway itself. Commissioner McLure spoke on the county's available funds, including road and general funds, noting a shortfall in SRS funding and the need for better grant coordination to match funding.

Elena Gagliano asked Is PILT funding part of the General Funds of the County, yes or no? The answer is no, it is not part of the general funding. It is its own fund and its supplements other funds. At budget time if we need money, we anticipate taking it from PILT in various funds to balance the budget.

The Session Adjourned at 12:40 p.m.