

**April 15, 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 Adler, Commissioner McLure, and Commissioner Kulaski was excused from this meeting. 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 members of the general public, Elena Gagliano.**

**Commissioner Adler requested that microphones and videos be enabled for Zoom attendees who wish to speak during the meeting.**

**SPECIAL BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING;**

**BOARD MINUTES: Commissioner McLure moved to accept the board minutes for April 8, 2025. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. No public comment was received, and the motion passed unanimously.**

**CORRESPONDENCE;**

**Craig Erickson of GreatWest Engineering emailed to say that they would like to start working on a \$75,000 Reclamation and Development Grant to help finance the preparation of a Part 12D Report for the Flint Creek Dam.**

**Electronic mail was received from Joe Nye of the FAA with a Grant Closeout Letter for \$278,600**

**Joan Redeen of the Montana Department of Transportation sent an electronic mail to notify people that safety improvements will begin in western Montana in the week of April 14 and are anticipated to end in July.**

**Electronic mail was received from Scott Cromwell of Slate Architecture with a Field Observation Report for March 2025 of the Courthouse Updates.**

**Electronic mail was received from the Montana Department of Revenue with a Memorandum about the Delayed Mailing of 2025 Mobile Home Classification and Appraisal Notices.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT: Public comment was received from Elena Gagliano while Commissioner Adler asked for cameras to be on when making a public comment. Elena Gagliano said her camera on her device isn't working and she can't afford to fix it, so no public comment was received. Blaine Bradshaw said it is legally allowed to require cameras to be on when given public comment (state legislature requires it), and it is not a public meeting violation. The Commission gave Elena Gagliano reasonable time to get her video**

fixed (allowed her to give public comment on Zoom without camera on, but she didn't get it fixed), but the Commission's rule is legal.

Elena Gagliano said she called and can't get on because it's muted. Elena Gagliano said you can telephone in, look at your agenda, which says to join by telephone, and make the connection for the host to let me in, but you can't ask to be unmuted. She then mentioned Amanda Bohrer couldn't get video camera to work either, and the Commissioner Adler let her comment on Zoom so there is a double standard. Blaine Bradshaw reiterated it is legal and she is not being singled out as that was a one-time deal with Amanda Bohrer. If you're having problems, they'll let you give public comment but there is a two-week limit to that exception. Commissioner McLure believes that Elena Gagliano is playing games and was the one who originally wanted the Commission to be on video so the public should be required as well when giving public comment. Blaine Bradshaw stated that people can attend on Zoom without video on, but video is required to give public comment; people can always provide written comment via e-mail.

**ROAD & BRIDGE WEEKLY REPORT & SOLID WASTE UPDATE WITH ROAD & BRIDGE SUPERINTENDENT PAUL ALT;** Granite County Road & Bridge Superintendent Paul Alt joined the Commission for this portion of the meeting to update on Roads and Solid Waste. Blading roads currently. There are a few culvert issues, upper and lower Willow Creek, waiting for pipes to come in to fix those. Paul Alt visited with Lee Lambrecht with MACo insurance who sent a check to the County for the repair costs for the damaged snow plow truck (minus the deductible). There is some damage to the snow plow truck that still needs fixed. Waiting on part of the Blackfoot check still from fixing after fiber optic went in, although a partial payment was made. Paul Alt recommends that if we don't have the money by next week, we should send a letter. Worried about the contractors. Subcontractor for black foot.

**SOLID WASTE:** Backhoe is broken down at the Drummond dump. Has one from Caterpillar to use while it's being fixed. Other than that, Solid Waste is good.

**GEORGETOWN LAKE OUTFLOW; DAM TENDER'S REPORT;** According to the USGS lake level gauge and the dam tender's report for the week, the lake level was reported at 6428.89 feet, 7.32 inches below full pool. Commissioner McLure moved to proceed to keep outflows consistent with the inflows (20 CFS for now) which aligns with the current temporary modification consent agreement in place. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. Brad Liermann joined the commissioners via zoom and agreed with their motion. No public comment was received. The motion passed unanimously.

**GRANITE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE'S 2017 FORD EXPLORER TURBO OUT SURPLUS AUCTION AND BID NOTICE;** Commissioner Adler commented on the cost of the notices in the paper, but Blaine suggested they run it in the paper for 2 weeks. Commissioner McLure moved to put the Surplus Granite County Sheriff's 2017 Ford Explorer in the paper for 2 weeks. Commissioner Adler seconded. No public comment was received. The motion passed unanimously. Safety fund was brought up to pay for the Truck and Equipment books that are to be in all county vehicles.

**BRIDGE SOUTH MAIN STREET OVER CLARK FORK REPAIR UPDATE;** Commissioner Adler tabled this agenda item as it will be discussed on a future agenda.

**COUNTY CLAIMS:** The Commissioners reviewed County claims. They discussed having Robert Littlejohn from Philipsburg Ambulance and Sarah Morris (billing agent) to come discuss their billing and revenue on a future agenda item. Commissioner McLure moved to accept claims for March Claims 2025. Commissioner Adler seconded. No public comment was received, and the motion passed unanimously.

**SPEED STUDY REQUESTED ON MONTANA HIGHWAY 1 THROUGH HALL, MT;** Commissioner Adler reported that the Montana DOT claimed they never received a letter sent by the Commissioners on February 18, 2025. Chuck Johnson joined the meeting, representing Hall, and shared that the Hall Elementary School sent a supporting letter (in support of the speed study and radar speed signs) to MDOT on March 21, addressed to Director Chris Dorrington. Chuck Johnson is here to file a copy of the Hall School's letter along a petition with 56 signatures for the County Commission records as such were sent to the Montana DOT. He received a response from Joan Redeen, Executive Assistant – Communications with DOT, who confirmed their speed study could take up to 18-months and that the County could pay for it and radar signs if they want that expedited. There was some initial confusion by MT DOT and delay in locating the Commissioners' original letter, but it was eventually found. Joan Redeen mentioned the speed study could take 12–18 months, but might be expedited. Commissioner Adler inquired about blinking light signs, which are mentioned in the letter. It was discussed whether local or state government should fund the signs and studies. Commissioner Adler and Chuck Johnson believe the state should cover costs, while Blaine Bradshaw will investigate how similar projects are funded in other areas. The Commission is currently awaiting further action from MDOT and will stay in contact.

**UPDATES ON MRL'S PROPOSED ABANDONMENT OF RAILWAY LINE IN GRANITE COUNTY;** Chuck Johnson addressed the group regarding a notice published in the *Philipsburg Mail*, indicating that Montana Rail Link (MRL) is expected to soon file a petition for abandonment with the federal Surface Transportation Board regarding the rail line between Drummond and Philipsburg. As of April 3rd, the petition had not yet been filed, but MRL representatives stated it is anticipated within four to six weeks, along with an amended environmental report. Mr. Johnson expressed a number of environmental and historical concerns related to the proposed abandonment, including with missing information regarding bridges, culverts and environment hazards. Regarding bridges, there are approximately ten bridges along the route, several of which are on Mr. Johnson's ranch. These structures contain creosote-treated timbers that are deteriorating and may eventually fall into nearby creeks, posing environmental hazards. Regarding culverts, between Hall and Douglas Creek alone, there are an estimated eight culverts beneath the railroad and highway bed, with potentially over 100 total along the corridor. These culverts direct year-round spring water flows and are at risk of collapse, which could create substantial environmental and infrastructural challenges. **Contamination Risk:** Given the region's history with mining operations, there is concern that the railway may have been used to transport hazardous

materials, including mercury. Mr. Johnson recommended that MRL be required to conduct a comprehensive hazardous waste assessment of the line. Mr. Johnson believes weeds will be an issue. Plans to remove railroad ties and rails will likely disturb soil, exacerbating noxious weed growth. Mr. Johnson emphasized that MRL should be responsible for post-removal weed control along the entire rail corridor. He also noted that MRL's current historical report does not address several key infrastructure elements, including the aforementioned culverts and other potentially significant environmental impacts. Mr. Johnson has contacted MRL legal counsel and is expecting a follow-up discussion. He encouraged continued engagement by the County regarding this matter, as the Surface Transportation Board (STB) will be seeking local input throughout the review process. He clarified that he is not advocating for the county to assume full responsibility, but rather to remain actively involved to help assure such concerns he laid out are considered and resolved. The possibility of converting the corridor to a "Rails to Trails" use was briefly discussed, though it was noted that local groups have no current interest. Blaine Bradshaw agreed with Mr. Johnson's concerns and underscored the importance of staying informed and engaged, particularly in anticipation of the forthcoming petition. He also emphasized the need to establish protective conditions should the abandonment proceed.

**NORTH FORK OF LOWER WILLOW CREEK ROAD ABANDONMENT WITH DAVID PEITZ AND MIKE SHAYLOR;** Dave Peitz, Rex Radtke, and Mike Shaylor addressed the Commissioners, confirming they met all conditions for abandonment as set by the Commission, including obtaining signatures from the irrigation district, to support vacating North Fork of Lower Willow Creek Road. He noted he was unaware the road was officially recorded and had previously filed an easement out of order, which has now been replaced. Commissioners, along with Rex Radtke and Dave Peitz, discussed multiple historical easements on the Peitz property, particularly the Anderson Easement from 1960, which supports the emergency spillway. Ownership changes and unclear documentation of easements and road rededications, especially those prior to 1981, were also brought up. There was concern over the current existing County road being partially under water due to dam construction, raising safety and liability issues. The irrigation district supports the road's abandonment to prevent public access near the dam. Some property owners (e.g., Patty Bignell, the Skinners) initially had concerns but later signed in support. One resident, Travis Colbeck, remains opposed. Dave Peitz said there was some story and rumors surfacing of a big subdivision going in there, and there is not. Commissioners agreed that Commissioner Kulaski needs to review the easement and other documents when he returns. Commissioner Adler moved to table the easement item for two weeks, indicating it will return on a future agenda. There was previously a public hearing on the matter with public comment taken so another public hearing is not needed, but another decision meeting, a public meeting is needed and will be held by the Commission in two weeks.

**OUTDOOR CHAPEL AT GEORGETOWN LAKE DAM RENTAL ON JULY 25, 2026;** Commissioner McLure moved to rent the chapel at Georgetown Lake on July 25, 2026, for zero rent and a \$500 deposit. Commissioner Adler seconded. No public comment was received and the motion passed unanimously. Liability insurance will be required if serving or consuming alcohol on the premises.

**SERVICE PROVIDER DEIGNATION FORM: STATE APPROVED SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER DESIGNATED PROVIDER; Commissioner McLure brought up Zenith View. Blaine Bradshaw said the County's alcohol monies from the State went to Zenith View last year. Commissioner McLure moved to keep it the same as last year. Commissioner Adler seconded. Commissioner Adler said there was a question of state-recognized establishments. Blaine Bradshaw said Zenith is doing a good job. Commissioner McLure moved to give the alcohol share to Zenith View LLC. Commissioner Adler seconded. There were no public comments received and the motion passed unanimously.**

**Commissioner Adler adjourned the meeting at 11:51 a.m.**