

August 26, 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. Also attending were Commissioners' Assistant Maranda Williams and Granite County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw, who participated in 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, Jim and Carol Bacquet, Luke Ulatowski.

Commissioner Adler requested that microphones and videos be enabled for Zoom attendees who wish to make public comments during the meeting.

ELENA GAGLIANO'S PARTICIPATION IN OPEN GRANITE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETINGS; Commissioner McLure noted the current policy of requiring public to have videos and mics on when giving public comment via Zoom. Elena Gagliano said her camera was broken and the Commission gave her time (letting her give public comment via Zoom for a few weeks without Cameron), but Elena's camera is working now and she continues to refuse to follow Granite County policy. Commissioner Kulaski mentioned the bombardment of demanding emails sent by Elena Gagliano to the Commission's Assistant during meetings, not during public comment, and the repeated phone calls that he believes are disruptive. Blaine Bradshaw said Justine Richmond thinks the policy of cameras being on is targeted at Elena Gagliano, but he explained it applies to everyone and is not arbitrary. Elena Gagliano gave public comment in person, saying she is hard of hearing and asking if the meeting was tabled. Commissioner Adler said no. Elena thanked them for allowing her to speak and asked to submit records for the public record: a letter from May 6, a letter from the Silver State Post, a letter to Bradshaw dated June 9, a response from Mr. Overstreet dated July 30, and an email from Blaine Bradshaw dated August 12. It was determined that the May 6 letter, the Silver State Post letter, and the August 12 email were acceptable as public records, but the June 9 and July 30 letters were not as the County Attorney Bradshaw believes they are confidential criminal justice information. Elena Gagliano questioned why those two were not acceptable and asked for that information soon. Jim Bacquet made comments about the camera and phone issue, saying it might or might not be supported but that it is the norm for county commissioners to request compliance. He suggested Ms. Gagliano might benefit from having a third party review the matter to provide insight from outside the county. Carol Bacquet said she did not understand why other letters were excluded. Blaine Bradshaw responded that they were confidential criminal justice information. Carol Bacquet asked about a criminal charge against Elena, and Blaine said no, it was someone else's case. Blaine reiterated that it was confidential. Carol argued that if she had a lawsuit, she could authorize disclosure, but Blaine Bradshaw said only a judge could decide that. Commissioner McLure asked why Elena

Gagliano does not want to show her face on Zoom. Elena Gagliano answered that the reason is contained in the letters she is submitting for the public record, and she said the unanswered questions from her May 6 letter are important. Commissioner Kulaski moved to suspend Ms. Gagliano from commissioner meetings for one month (cannot attend in-person or virtually but may submit written public comment via email), starting immediately. She would still be able to submit public comment by email before the meeting, but if sent after, the commissioners would review it the following week. Commissioner McLure said she was present and participating and should be allowed if she abides by policy, and noted that commissioners can require cameras and microphones on if attending by Zoom. Kulaski said his concern was the harassment side of the issue. McLure added that emails written after a meeting begins can still be reviewed later. Commissioner Adler said if she attends by Zoom, they should let her in, but she cannot comment if she does not follow the rules. Elena Gagliano asked to hear the motion again and it was explained that should would not be allowed to . Commissioner Adler seconded. Commissioner McLure dissented. The motion passed 2–1.

Next, Blaine Bradshaw read questions submitted by Justine Richmond seeking responses from the Commissioners. Commissioner McLure explained that some County Commission agenda language had been mistakenly included in the amended template before approval, and that the section of agenda that Justine referenced was approved after the fact but has been approved for all future agendas. It was noted that “what goes around comes around,” wasn’t the correct language to use but that just as Commissioners keep cameras and microphones on, the public should also do so to put a face to a voice. Blaine Bradshaw said many of the questions seemed directed to Commissioner McLure but the Commission will ask Justine Richmond to attend an upcoming meeting so all questions can be answered.

BOARD MINUTES: Commissioner McLure moved to accept the board minutes for August 19, 2025. Commissioner Kulaski seconded the motion. No public comment was received, and the motion passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE;

Mail was received from Headwaters with the annual dues for Granite of \$1720 to go to claims.

Electronic Mail was received from Ruby Kikkert, stating that the skate park is underway and a celebration is planned for August 28th.

Electronic Mail was received from Justine Richmond sent in minutes and highlighted, and did not agree with the way the minutes were worded. Transcript was asked about. In regards to Elena’s meeting end of last weeks meeting. Justine inquired about the basis for public comment rules and zoom is arbitrary and targeted to Elena. Blaine reiterated her changes to the minutes.

Electronic mail was received from Jeremiah Theys invited Commissioners to a dinner during the MACo Conference in September. Commissioner McLure will be attending.

Electronic mail was received from a Real Estate agent in Missoula, wondering about news, construction updates, and events in September in Granite County.

Mail was received from MT Rail Link with a reminder to keep the approaches and flangeways of the crossing free and clear of all snow, dirt, or any other obstructions whatsoever which may accumulate by virtue of vehicles or farm machinery crossing there over or otherwise. Also removing and keeping removed any vegetation at the crossing which may interfere with the view of vehicles approaching in either direction.

Mail was received from the Montana Department of Transportation with an update on I-90 work to be done, and crews will be from Clinton to Bearmouth pertaining to Granite County.

Mail was received from Dave Harris with concerns about Cliff Gulch Road and homeowners doing work themselves that the county needs to do.

PUBLIC COMMENT: During public comment, Jim Bacquet tried to clarify the rules with the Commission Chair, noting that he believed he was not supposed to address the chairperson rather than others in the room. He explained that he generally speaks to Commissioner Adler and wants to use his three minutes properly without interruption. Commissioner Adler reminded him to stay on topic and added that he is often criticized for enforcing the timer. Blaine spoke up, saying that last week he had raised his hand, was given the floor, and had asked a question respectfully, which he did not consider uncivil. Jim Bacquet disagreed but emphasized again the importance of being allowed his three uninterrupted minutes. Blaine Bradshaw responded that having back-and-forth dialogue is healthy and should not be a problem that is how issues are worked out through such communication. Carol Bacquet commented that Blaine Bradshaw had not been civil in his remarks to her husband the previous week. Blaine Bradshaw said his discourse was not anywhere close to uncivil (video will show that) and he replied that the Bacquets were glaring and smirking at him during the meeting, which he felt was improper, and urged that such behavior be avoided. Carol Bacquet denied that she was glaring or smirking.

Commissioner Kulaski then reported on a new fishing access at 348, noting the speed limit would drop from 60 to 35 about a quarter mile from the bridge. He suggested sending a letter to the MT Department of Transportation to request a study and possible speed reduction. Commissioner Adler agreed that a study would be required but supported sending a letter and putting up a reduced speed ahead sign if they could. Paul Alt suggested asking for a speed reduction sign ahead to be installed by MT DOT. A draft letter will be on the Commission's agenda for the next week for decision.

ROAD & BRIDGE WEEKLY REPORT WITH ROAD & BRIDGE SUPERINTENDENT PAUL ALT; Granite County Road & Bridge Superintendent Paul Alt reported that work at Georgetown Lake and Lakeshore is finished with gravel and magnesium applied. He noted concerns about potholes on a short stretch of asphalt that will be hard on plow trucks this winter, with a plan to use cold patch and carry the cost forward to next year. Commissioners discussed whether the Forest Service should share in road costs, but acknowledged that a formal agreement is unlikely. Piney Point has not been visited yet, and

work will continue on East Fork Road next. Blackfoot Communications' fiber installation impacted the road; Blackfoot agreed to pay \$2,500 for gravel while the County will handle hauling and spreading. Elk Creek work is underway, and invoicing will be managed through the Clerk and Recorder's office. The Commission also discussed Blackfoot's weed-spraying obligations, which are required under their permit. Ben Hauptman will work up a bill and an invoice will be sent to Blackfoot. Paul noted the need for 750 yards of sand for both shops, proposing to purchase 500 yards each from 348 Gravel Pit (Benson) and Mazza and Theriault's in Hall pits at a total cost of \$24,000. Commissioners unanimously approved the purchase. A discussion followed on the cost of bringing in a reclaimer, estimated at \$20,000 just for shipping, and whether attempting this process on a test road would be beneficial in the long term. An oil company from Butte will assess the best oil mix for use. Finally, as soon as crews are caught up, they will move to work on Cliff Gulch Road.

SOLID WASTE DISTRICTS WEEKLY UPDATES FROM PHILIPSBURG AND DRUMMOND LOCATIONS; Todd Bahsteter and John Kendall submitted their reports for the Commissioner. Todd Bahsteter, Philipsburg Solid Waste Transfer Site Supervisor, was a verbal report to Maranda Williams that he trained the fill-in employee, and he will work the next holiday for him on Tuesday, September 2.

GEORGETOWN LAKE OUTFLOW; DAM TENDERS REPORT; According to the USGS lake level gauge and the dam tender's report for the week, the lake level was reported at 6428.52 feet, 13.68 inches below full pool. Commissioner Kulaski moved to stay at 30 CFS. Commissioner McLure seconded. Commissioner McLure seconded. No public comment was received. The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner McLure mentioned that the Annual Dam Inspection went well and reviewed the rules with Paul, Jarrod, and Jackie, taking care of any necessary matters. The weeds were bad and didn't look like they got sprayed. They didn't go up when they said they could. They waited a week later, Commissioner Adler said. Comments were made about the vegetation at the weir pond.

FIRE RESTRICTION UPDATE: Fire restrictions are currently at Stage 1, though there has been discussion about moving to Stage 2. No campfires are allowed, and recent fires, including one near the interstate in Missoula that threatened Bretz RV, have been caused by lightning. With Labor Day weekend approaching, Blaine Bradshaw asked about DNRC recommendations, and the County Fire Marshal's input. Commissioner Adler said he has been coordinating with Jackie Bolster regarding recommendations from federal and state agencies. All three commissioners support moving to Stage 2 but are waiting for feedback before acting.

CONTRACT MODIFICATION BETWEEN GRANITE COUNTY AND AREA V ON AGING IN-KIND MATCH; In-kind match was discussed, and Brian said that in-kind, they have no problem with donating. Commissioner McLure moved to accept the Area V Contract modification between Granite County and Area V. Commissioner Kulaski seconded. No public comment was received. The motion passed unanimously.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN GRANITE COUNTY AND GCMC FOR USE OF AREA V FUNDS; Commissioner McLure moved to accept the agreement between Granite County and GCMC for use of Area V (with GCMC to pay any required match and also provide in-kind services as required by Area V), seconded by Commissioner Kulaski, and the motion passed unanimously. Brian Huso reported that the start of the fiscal year is always challenging, with July showing a loss of \$112,000, but lower than last year. They resealed the asphalt with two coats, expected to last three years, emphasizing the importance of maintaining investments. The oxygen project was completed, bringing significant improvements. The reception area was also updated to provide more privacy, which patients appreciated. The Windows 10 deadline of October 11 was noted, and after reviewing multiple bids, a \$9,500 VoIP telephone system was selected, offering growth potential and computer integration, with quarterly updates planned. Overall, business continues as usual, with commissioners occasionally seeking updates.

PROPOSED SOW FOR FY26 MONITORING AT GTL; Commissioner McLure moved to pay the County's share to USGS for the monitoring costs for lake levels and Flint Creek flows (continual ongoing monitoring) for \$4,986.00 to USGS who operate and maintain the gauges and website that continually updates measurements. Discussed coming out of the Flint Creek Project. Commissioner Kulaski seconded. No public comment was received. The motion passed unanimously.

A discussion of the County's Title III funds ensued, and updating the budget, though there was some uncertainty about which fiscal year (Year 26) was being discussed. Title III funds can be used for safety training for services on the national forest. All remaining funds (Title III) will be allocated in the current FY26 budget to safety training on the national forest to be used over the upcoming years.

RESOLUTION 2025-12: A GRANITE COUNTY RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE METHOD OF LEVYING VOTED MILLS PER 2025 ADOPTED MONTANA HOUSE BILLS 231 & 542; Sarah Graham explained two options for Mills Valley Fire funding: either increasing from 18 mills to 19.2 or reflecting it on the mill levy determination form, with a meeting scheduled Thursday to discuss further. Mark was the contact Sarah spoke with, and Blaine noted that if revisions are needed, a first reading could be held next week. The hospital district, Drummond Library, and Philipsburg Library each have set amounts, and legislative changes prompted adjustments in funding language. For Valley Fire, ballot language added 15 mills to the existing 3 but kept it at 15, totaling 18, and the board needs to decide whether to proceed with the second reading or make changes and hold a first reading again. Commissioner McLure said the decision will occur before setting levies, with the county following recommendations. Regarding TV and broadcasting, Sarah mentioned that it should be working, and people need to rescan due to Butte changing channels. Over \$20,000 has been allocated in both funds and letters sent to Senator Daines, highlighting the community and safety benefits. Commissioners also discussed a sign on Rock Creek, which requires approval from the Montana Department of Transportation.

Commissioner Kulaski moved to stage 2 fire restrictions, seconded by Commissioner McLure, and the motion passed unanimously, with Blaine Bradshaw preparing the resolution.

PUBLIC HEARING SUSEQUENT MINOR SUBDIVISION ARROWSTONE LOT 14 JOHNSON SUBDIVISION AMENDING LOT 14 OF THE ARROWSTONE MAJOR SUBDIVISION; Linda Bouck, Kevin Lane, and Lynn Edens joined the Commissioners for this portion of the meeting and discussed a proposed 2-lot split on the flats by Will Shoutis on Arrowstone, with the HOA maintaining the property. The request includes standard requirements: no further division, bringing up utilities, right-to-farm protections, and keeping fences out of the right-of-way. The owner plans to build on one lot and sell the other. The original covenants and county regulations allow 20-acre lots to be split into 10-acre lots. The term “developer” is used in reports, but the applicant is not a developer. Commissioner Kulaski moved to accept lot 14 of the Johnson subdivision and lot 14 of the Arrowstone major subdivision. Commissioner seconded with the conditions. Commissioner McLure seconded. No public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

RECESS; The Commissioners took a recess before the Budget Hearing.

GRANITE COUNTY’S FISCAL YEAR 25-26 BUDGET HEARING; The public hearing was held and public comment was requested. The hearing covered the amended levies for 2025-2026, with Commissioner McLure presenting 112.92 mills for the countywide and general funds. Discussions included the general fund, non-levied TV funds, Drummond airport, gravel projects, the disaster fund, PILT funds, and administrative services for the junk vehicle program. The County’s union pay, roads’ budget, and available funds were also addressed.

Public calls included Jason Robertson requesting an exemption from Stage II fire restrictions, which was denied. Todd Bahsteter inquired about a new container for the Town of Philipsburg’s sewer items, and the matter will be looked into more. Local homeowners near Philipsburg, Diane and Don Bauer addressing a civil matter regarding a bright light on a neighbor’s property, and they were directed to the Sheriff and County Attorney.

Lisa Stravakas presented the Granite Recreation and Swim Project, proposing a multipurpose center with a recreation area, commercial kitchen, gym, walking track, workout room, small pool, and senior space. Locations are under consideration, feasibility studies are ongoing, and collaborations with local schools, the hospital, and the senior center were discussed. The project, estimated over \$10 million, would be funded through grants, donations, endowments, and memberships. County support could include letters of recommendation, but direct tax funding would require a bond. Commissioners expressed openness to revisiting the project as it develops.

Finally, County Courthouse elevator costs were discussed and remaining funding, along with allocations for Valley Fire, were discussed.

Commissioner Adler adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.