

Prairie County Board of Commissioners Meeting

May 25, 2022

Prairie County Board of Commissioners Todd Devlin, Christine Keltner and Deanna Bockness met in regular session at 9 a.m. In attendance were Road Supervisor Todd Henry and Road Specialist Gary Pfieffe. Pledge of allegiance was recited. Road minutes were reviewed.

Discussion held on the Cherry Creek Gravel Pit and email received from Carissa Shilling, Bureau of Land Management Geologist, noting a fossil (to be determined) had been found and leafy spurge on the western slopes of the pit had been observed at the Cherry Creek Gravel pit.

9:15 a.m. Cherry Creek Gravel Pit Tour with Commissioners Devlin, Bockness, and Keltner, Gary Pfieffe, Todd Henry, and Sheriff Keiffer Lewis to locate the leafy spurge and to see if pit was flagged for the fossil find, no flags noted. The Weed Department will be contacted to spray the leafy spurge.

BLM was emailed requesting GPS coordinates of the fossil. Email from BLM relayed "fossil appeared to be a mammoth tooth, but everyone is too busy to get confirmation." Discussion held on contacting Department of Environmental Quality for an on-site inspection as Prairie County has a current DEQ permit, but unsuccessful in meeting the Bureau of Land Management demands and over regulation. Discussion held to potentially file a IBLA protest due to lack of gravel for roads is a public safety issue.

10 a.m. Ambulance Coordinator Jennifer Grey Eagle in to report that it would cost \$15-20,000 to replace the engine in the 1997 Ford ambulance. The Dodge ambulance will not be able to be put back into service as the catalytic converter has been stolen. Coordinator Grey Eagle is attempting to find a used ambulance to purchase as the county is currently using an ambulance from Glendive for backup.

Clerk & Recorder Shari Robertson in with timesheets and payroll. Timesheets reviewed and payroll and insurance warrants signed in the amount of \$128,950.54. General claims reviewed and warrants signed in the amount of \$2287.68.

10:30 a.m. **Resolution Approving the Southeast Montana DUI Task Force Plan and Membership for SFY-22-23.** Membership includes representation from Miles City Police Department, Rosebud County Sheriff Office, Custer County Attorney, SADD, Montana Highway Patrol, Custer County Sheriff Office, Powder River County Sheriff Office, Eastern Montana Mental Health Center, and Buckle Up Montana. County Attorney Dan Rice joined meeting.

Commissioner Bockness made a motion to accept and sign the resolution. Commissioner Keltner seconded the motion, all in favor, motion carried.

11:00 a.m. Salary Compensation Board In attendance were Commissioners Devlin, Keltner, and Bockness; Public Sector Members Darlene Strobel, Lana Tibbetts, and Cynthia Bond; County Attorney Dan Rice; Sheriff Keiffer Lewis; Clerk & Recorder Shari Robertson; Treasurer Noell Martinson; and Justice of the Peace Mary Bucher.

Meeting called to order by Commissioner Devlin. Discussion held on the current Consumer Price Index (CPI) of 4.7%, past history of salary compensation board recommendations, the current county budget status, what other counties are doing in their compensation boards, and how everyone is being affected by the increasing inflationary costs for food, supplies, and energy. Clerk Robertson submitted information on the American Rescue Plan State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds which can be utilized for providing competitive wages. Prairie County permissive mill Levy covers a portion of the health insurance premiums on twenty-seven employees with premium costs will increase to \$741 per month, which was pointed out by Lana Tibbets, is a significant employee benefit. Discussion held on pros/cons of providing an employee bonus this year as an employee pay raises may not be sustainable in the future.

Sheriff Lewis made a motion to give full-time employees a bonus of \$1500 with part-time employee bonus be prorated on hours worked. Motion seconded by Darlene Strobel.

Discussion: The bonus suggested is based on the cost-of-living adjustment 7-year average plus 1% on the sum of the average hourly rate of all combined employees which equals 3.5%. Commissioner Keltner made a motion to amend Sheriff Lewis's motion to pay the bonus in two installments with the first payment be paid on November 30, 2022, and the second payment on June 30, 2023. Sheriff Lewis was agreeable to amendment. Motion called to vote with one opposition vote of Lana Tibbets. Motion carried.

12:00-1:00 p.m. MSU Extension Administration Luncheon and Extension Awards. The Silver Buffalo award was presented to County Extension Agent Sharla Sackman for her excellence in the field of professional extension work in Montana.

1:00 p.m. Discussion on audit purchased services with Commissioner Devlin reporting that MACO will go to the legislature to address prohibitive costs of Montana State mandated audit services and hardship of the less populated counties to pay for the mandated services.

Treasurer Noell Martinson presented the Prairie County Delinquent Tax Report as of May 25, 2022.

Commissioner Devlin made a motion to accept the May 18, 2022, minutes as corrected. Motion seconded by Commissioner Keltner, all in favor, motion carried.

1:30 p.m. County Attorney Dan Rice and Clerk & Recorder Shari Robertson.

Commissioners reviewed the Expenditure Report.

2:00 p.m. Ambulance Coordinator Jennifer Grey Eagle

The Ambulance 4010 capital assets account has \$16,067.49. Coordinator Grey Eagle would like to purchase a used type I gas engine ambulance noting that good used ambulances are in demand and hard to find. Per County Attorney Dan Rice, three quotes will be required.

Coordinator Grey Eagle will be gone from June 4-19, 2022.

Commissioner Bockness will be gone from June 11-June 18, 2022.

2:30 p.m. Update on Fairgrounds-In attendance were County Extension Agent Sharla Sackman, County Attorney Dan Rice, and Clerk & Recorder Shari Robertson.

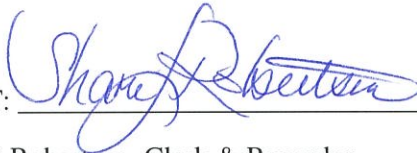
Agent Sackman reported that Chad Hanson, Great West Engineering will prepare options with estimated costs for the fairgrounds water project. The Department of Commerce will pay 20 hours for technical assistance for the initial proposed work. Funds available for Prairie County is \$393,000 with match of \$52,299 or 1:1 match if less. Project will be budgeted under ARPA 2993 with \$52,299 designated reserve for the project. Fair improvement procurement procedure must be followed with state prevailing wages, advertising, and sealed bids.

3:00 -5:00 p.m. Commissioners Keltner, Devlin, and Bockness worked on placement of gravel on the north side of the courthouse.

Signed this 1st day of June 2022.



Todd Devlin, Commission Chair

ATTEST: 

Shari Robertson, Clerk & Recorder