

Prairie County Board of Commissioners Meeting

August 20th, 2025

Prairie County Court House Commissioners Room

217 West Park St Terry, MT 59349

www.prairiecounty.org

Prairie County Board of Commissioners Todd Devlin, Christine Keltner and Dennis Teske met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. In attendance Administrative Assistant Harry McNall.

9:00 a.m. Pledge of allegiance and call to order. Public Comment.

Dawyne Fisher has some questions about the TV District, why was it taken off the tax rolls? Would like to be put on the agenda, to put a levy in place, and have a good discussion. It would need a new dish to pull Miles City broadcast into the area. Would it be possible to make a levy for 1 mill?

Sheriff Keiffer updated the commissioners about the fire near Cottonwood Creek, a grant process for new vehicles for the sheriff's department, and a shed project for storage.

9:30 a.m. Road Department Supervisor was unable to make the meeting. Commissioners moved onto Commissioners Business. The Milwaukee Bridge is currently at 95%, and a tentative schedule has been put together for 2026.

Commissioner Devlin read the minutes from August 6th, 2025, Commissioners meeting.

11:35 a.m. Commissioner Keltner made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 6th, 2025, commissioners meeting as corrected, seconded by Commissioner Teske "all in favor" motion passed.

10:00 a.m. County Attorney Dan Rice and Clerk & Recorder Shari Robertson. Dan explained that the zoning petition is high risk, and Dennis Teske is a petitioner, you cannot vote on anything concerning this petition from Shane Eaton due to conflict of interest. Dan explained the petition process, and steps needed to take forward to a zoning commission. Shari Robertson explained that she made it clear that they would not start till this week. Dan explained that the 60% must be confirmed before any other process can start. Shari's main focus currently will be finishing budget for FY26. Todd Devlin has BLM permitted properties within the petition but is not part of the petition.

Commissioners had a discussion on Land Use Defense Coverage with (MACo.)

10:30 a.m. Delite Dukart with Watts Insurance joined the meeting to discuss MACo Insurance.

10:40 a.m. Commissioners discussed the Environmental Health Services Contract/Junk Vehicle Contract.

11:05 a.m. County Treasurer Garrett Lapp provided the commissioners with an Investment Authorization, to review and sign.

Note Commissioner Keltner had surgery on her hand and can only sign as her initials.

Garrett Lapp provided the commissioners with Property Tax Abatement Reverse Billing.

Commissioner Keltner made a motion to approve “Property Tax Revisions for Hay Creek Inc” seconded by Commissioner Teske, “all in favor” motion passed.

Art Henry Sr. is resigning from the Cemetery as the caretaker for the county on September 30th, 2025.

11:30 a.m. John Pisk DES coordinator to speak with commissioners about Resolution 26-7.

11:45 a.m. Commissioner Devlin made a motion to approve Resolution 26-7 “Mitigation Plan Adoption, County of Prairie, Adopting the 2024 Eastern Montana Region Hazard Mitigation Plan” seconded by Commissioner Keltner “all in favor” motion passed.

1:00 p.m. Deputy Clerk & Recorder Aria Walters provided commissioners with claims to review and sign.

Prairie County Voucher # 1017 \$23,780.59

Prairie County Voucher # 1016 \$5,834.09

Journal Adjustments # 40 and 46

1:10 p.m. Clerk & Recorder Shari Robertson, County Attorney Dan Rice, Shane Eaton, and other citizens joined the meeting to discuss the Type 1 zoning petition received in the Clerk’s Office.

Commissioner Devlin explained that the signatures have to be verified before a selection on the commission on zoning will happen.

Shane Eaton, with the growth policy and petition and other input from the public, we will likely be going down this road, why not get a commission together and ready to go? Has there been any action on percentage on landowner?

Shari Robertson explained where they are on the process, which started Monday of this week. Aria Walters explained what has been done to this point.

Dennis Teske explained that he made an error by signing up for the district. Because of that it excludes his ability to make decisions concerning the petition.

Arron Martinson the proposed XIT road as a haul road for the wind turbine project, there is no way that the XIT road will work, and there has to be other routes involved. In the road haul agreement, we should have multiple alternatives. Wait on signing permits until much more information is determined in this process. Could the county provide bottled water for the county road department to keep them safe?

1:40 p.m. Commissioners will adjourn the meeting until 2:00 p.m.

2:00 p.m. The meeting continued in the courtroom with a discussion on the Growth Policy Update from The Land Planning Board.

Lon Raukuaf went over some progress and changes in the growth policy. He explained that the policy in its previous form didn't account for the possibility of zoning, so the revision encompasses zoning and other needed updates, with the help of Great West Engineering. After many meetings there was a public comment meeting and afterwards there were more meetings to incorporate the public comments. Then in June we had another public hearing and made more changes comments from that public meeting.

Commissioner Devlin would like to have 30 days for written comments, and comment period will end September 20th, and final decision on September 30th, 2025 Commissioners meeting.

3:00 p.m. Garrett Lapp provided the Commissioners with a revision on the investment report.

Commissioner Teske made a motion to accept the revisions to the treasurer investment report, seconded by Commissioner Keltner, "all in favor" motion passed.

Commissioner Teske made a motion to accept the Dawson County Sanitarian Service Addendum to 2025-26 Service Agreement", seconded by Commissioner Keltner, "all in favor" motion passed.

Public Comment:

Jesse Smalis, had a comment on the road haul agreement, concerning XIT haul road, his family, livestock and ranch will be impacted greatly by this route. His family trail cows regularly down the XIT road, as well tractors etc. Since there are many boards in the county, there should be a road board, and made up by those who would be most impacted by this project. See written comment Exhibit 1.

Shane Eaton he would like to add to the previous comment by Smalis. If the road gets closed, there will be no way out in emergency situation. He has a comment that "Why would Commissioner Teske would have to recuse himself and also have the county attorney write an opinion on why he would need to recuse himself because he signed a petition." Being a county Commissioner doesn't end his first amendment rights. In January, NextEra said the landowner set their own setbacks from their homes, and NextEra doesn't follow through on what they say.

Dan Pike He will be submitting written comments about haul agreements.

3:30 p.m. Commissioner Devlin read Resolution 26-6.

Commissioner Keltner made a motion to accept Resolution 26-6 "A Resolution Pursuant to 7-6-4006 of The Montana Code Annotated, Authorizing Amendment of Final budget for FY 2024/2025 to account for Unanticipated Revenue and Expenses", seconded by Commissioner Teske, "all in favor" motion passed.

3:35 p.m. Clerk & Recorder Shari Robertson worked with the commissioners on the budget changes within the workbook preparation for the Preliminary Budget Hearing. She went over the spreadsheets in detail to explain changes and overall budgeting options.

4:00 p.m. Commissioner Teske left the meeting to attend a Department of Revenue Meeting.

Commissioners worked through the budget to ensure numbers and prepare for the preliminary budget hearing.

5:30 p.m. Commissioner Keltner made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Devlin, "all in favor" motion passed.

Signed this 27th day of August 2025



Todd Devlin, Commissioner Chair

ATTEST:



Shari Robertson, Clerk & Recorder

~~Exhibit 1~~
Exhibit 1

Hello Commissioners,

As you all know, I am Jesse Smalis, resident of 272 XIT Rd.
My family and I have lived on this property since 1987.

Recently, I have become aware of a draft use road agreement that was previously submitted to yourselves as commissioners, for your consideration. This shows the preliminary route map and preliminary load analysis. In this draft, it shows XIT road as one of the main routes. In The total ESAL, there is projected 125,265 loads –vehicle traffic per year.

If this comes about, my family, my workers and my livestock will be impacted greatly, for the safety and well being of all. Our main working corrals that are used throughout the year are less than 50 yards from the county road. We trail cattle throughout the year, down the XIT road, Cedar Creek road, Bad Route Road and Prairie Road.....we move large farming equipment and haying equipment and use these roads to transport livestock and hay home. The XIT Road is the main artery to our operation .

My main concern is Safety but another concern is dust for our houses and working facilities all within ½ mile from the XIT Road.

If this project goes forward and Prairie County is allocated funds , all funds need to be directed to these routes that are impacted first and most.

Since Prairie County has a Planning Board, a Weed Board, a hospital board and several others, there should be a Road Board to address all issues that will come up before, during and after, caused by traffic of this magnitude. I would also suggest that Board members for a prospective Road Board, would be people that are affected the most with livelihood and/or living impact.

I appreciate your time given to me to address my concerns.

Thank you.