

DECEMBER 2013
COMMISSIONER MEETINGS

Sweet Grass County Commissioner meetings are held in the office of the county commissioners in the Sweet Grass County Annex in Big Timber, Montana, unless otherwise noted in the minutes. Regular commissioner meeting days are the first working day of each week (usually Monday unless Monday is a holiday then Tuesday) and every Thursday during the month. These are the days to schedule issues that require the commissioner to take action. The first Monday of each month a department head staff meeting will be held at 9:30 a.m. Claims will be reviewed and approved for payment every Thursday unless a conflict arises. At least one commissioner will be in the office from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily unless they are at a conference or a meeting requiring them to be out of the office.

Acronyms

DES – Disaster and Emergency Services	MOU – Memorandum of Understanding PMC – Pioneer Medical Center
CCR – Coordinated Community Response	RC&D – Rural Conservation and Development
FLAP – Federal Lands Access Program	RFR – request for reimbursement.
IC – Incident Command	TSEP – Treasure State Endowment Program – provides matching grant funds to local government agencies for construction of infrastructure projects.
L.E.P.C. – Local Emergency Preparedness	Tyler Technology – CAS sold to Tyler – the company that Sweet Grass County contracts with for all of our financial software.
MACo – Montana Association of Counties	
MDT – Montana Department of Transportation	

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Monday, December 2, 2013

All of the Commissioners arrived to begin n the last month of 2013.

Staff meeting for the month was held with Evie Halverson, Dan Tronrud, Deanna Novotny, Brooke Osen, Vicki Uehling, John Becken, Cory Conner, Jane Stene, Jessie Connolly, Marc King, Pat Dringman, Sherry Bjorndal and Lindsey from the Big Timber Pioneer.

Assessor, John Becken reported that his office has been measuring new construction in other counties as they are caught up in Sweet Grass County.

Treasurer, Jane Stene has been busy collection the 1st half of 2013 Real Estate taxes to the tune of \$3,819,000 plus.

Cory Conner announced that the road department has been busy putting gravel on county roads – Swamp Creek, and Lower Deer Creek being two of them. They have also been doing some mowing on the county roads in an effort to keep the roads from drifting if and when the snow comes.

Financial Officer, Vicki Uehling reported that JohnPaul the auditor will be here the 4th and 5th to assist with closing out the FY 2013 books. Bob Denning will do the actual audit the end of January. She has also been working on a grant for the Airport and procedures for voiding checks.

Judge Connolly reported that she had 11 new city court cases in November and 67 justice court cases. Her office has actually been getting some activity on old warrants that have been hanging out there for some time. She also attended a Mental Health Board meeting and a meeting with Kenco about a security system for the courthouse and the court room.

County Attorney, Pat Dringman, says it has been business as usual. He attended a CCR meeting and a CPT meeting. Pat, the County Commissioners, the CEO from the PMC and PMC Board members traveled to Billings to meet with folks on the pending

affiliation of the PMC with Billings Clinic. Pat will be at county attorney winter training Wednesday through Friday.

County Agent, Marc King, stated that the 4-H year end bash was held last weekend and enrollment for the new 4-H will be in November. He attended the Sweet Grass County Stock Growers and Wool Growers annual banquet. The new bleachers at the Fair Grounds are going up. They will be selling the wool pool next week.

Sheriff Tronrud handed out the information with the number of case, complaints and offenses for his department during the month of November. His department has had several transfers to Billings of mental health cases. One dispatcher has resigned so they will be advertising and interviewing soon.

DES Coordinator, Brooke Osen, reported that they have received a quote from Kenco on a security system for the courthouse. She has also been looking into a new company for rural address mapping. Brooke has been reviewing and updating the EOC Plan.

Weed Supervisor, Evie Halverson has been working on grants – both old and new. She also held a weed board meeting on organic permitting.

Clerk of District Court, Deanna Novotny, announced that the case count was down in November. She will have law in motion on December 10th and 24th.

Commissioner Faw attended the Crazy Mounting stock growers meetings on the 22nd of November. Water and water rights was one of the topics of discussion and more coordination between State and Local Governments. The commissioners met with the company that will be doing the blasting on the Wormser Loop project. It will cost approximately \$30,000 and should be done by the first of February. There are two areas that need attention and Lyle Stenberg will be doing some mechanical removal of some of the loose rock. Bob announced that the county has not yet received the entire FEMA flood funding for the Wormser Loop projects and he would like to fix the road at the time of the blasting.

Commissioner Wallace was involved in many of the same issues as the other two commissioners as well as a monthly cash meeting and a weed board meeting. He also attended a DNRC flood plain meeting.

Commissioner Mosness traveled to Billings for a Regional Mental Health Board meeting, canvassed votes for the 2013 Municipal Election, attended a PMC Board meeting, the monthly cash meeting and was involved in two presentations for companies to develop a new county web site.

Classic Ink is the firm that has been hired to design a new web page for Sweet Grass County. Maria Ferre' and Kietra Nelson gave a presentation after the staff meeting and asked that all of the departments get information that they would like to have on their web page. We will all have a chance to visit with these ladies and get our page up and running and there will be additional training for upgrading and maintaining our page. They will get a contract to the commissioners soon.

Commissioner Faw left to go to Helena for the second half of the newly elected official training.

Tuesday, December 3, 2013

Commissioner Faw is still in Helena at a conference, Commissioner Wallace will be this afternoon and Commissioner Mosness is holding the office down.

Commissioner Mosness spent the morning calling folks to cancel the Airport Board public hearing due to the weather.

Marc King stopped in to say that Dave Bjorndal had bid the upper part of the grandstands at the Sweet Grass County Fair Grounds at \$20.00/running foot for the labor.

Rick Jarrett was in to visit about a possible wind farm on his property. Crazy Mountain Wind is the name of the project. He was advised that he would need to schedule a meeting that would be notices 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Vicki worked on Homeland Security grand and came in with questions.

Wednesday, December 4, 2013

Commissioners Wallace and Mosness were in the office for the day. Commissioner Faw is still in Helena at meetings.

County Attorney, Pat Dringman, and PMC CEO Erik Wood met with the commissioners to discuss the terms of employment for the interim county health nurse.

Thursday, December 5, 2013

Commissioners Bill Wallace and Susie Mosness were in the office and Commissioner Bob Faw is in Helena.

Commissioner Wallace and Darrell Elgen went to the fairgrounds to set the dump on fire.

Commissioner Mosness and Sherry Bjorndal went over the agenda for the next week.

Commissioner Mosness attended an addictive disorders meeting at noon.

Friday, December 6, 2013

Commissioners Faw, Mosness and Wallace were all in the office for the day.

Sherry Bjorndal came in to go over the agenda for next week.

Vicki Uehling brought in the extension for the Montana Department of Military Affairs Disaster and Emergency Services Grand modification - Extension Project title FFY 12HS Sweet Grass Co DES – Multi Jurisdictional Equipment \$110,000.00 grant. This is part of the FY 2012 Homeland Security Grant Program. Commissioner Wallace made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner Faw to approve the modification extension application. Commissioner Faw asked why an extension was need and the process was not done in the regular time allotment. DES Coordinator, Brooke Osen was not here to answer the question. The motion passed with 3 ayes. Brooke will be in on Monday to sign the extension. Vicki reported that the reimbursement for the 2011 HSG has several issues that need to be addressed before reimbursement can be made. May 31, 2013 was the end of this grant and the reimbursement request is \$124,000+.

The annual agreement between the U.S. Forest Service and Sweet Grass County for the county to do patrols of campgrounds within the county was reviewed by the commissioners. The USFS reimburses the County \$6,200 for law enforcement to do the patrols. Commissioner Wallace made a motion to approve the agreement. Commissioner Faw seconded the motion and it passed with 3 ayes. Commissioner Faw reminded everyone that if the Rainbow people come in the county is responsible for extra costs associated with them.

A meeting was held at 11:00 a.m. for and update and discussion on the proposed Crazy Mountain Wind project on the Rick Jarrett Ranch. This meeting was recorded and a Cd is on file and available to interested parties for \$6.00. Attending the meeting were Jim Hogemark, Jan Engwis, Dave Chesnoff, and Kent Morgan, who are all land owners in the vicinity of the proposed wind farm, Marty Wilde from Windata, Inc., Rick Jarrett and daughter Jami Moody, Commissioners, Faw, Wallace and Mosness, Clerk Bjorndal, Planner Page Dringman and Lindsey from the Big Timber Pioneer.

Commissioner Mosness asked Marty Wilde to start the meeting off by telling the group about the project and the purpose of the meeting today. Marty discussed the process by which this location had been chosen. About a year ago Coyote Wind negotiated a lease that got tabled because they were not able to get a contract with Northwest Energy to purchase the energy. Coyote Wind is now out of the picture. Northwest Energy's Community Renewable Energy Program (CREPS) is now trying to support Montana businesses.

Crazy Mountain Wind didn't have the production tax credit that it needed; however the issue was reopened five weeks ago and they have two weeks to get the paper

work done. Crazy Mountain Wind would like to secure a special use permit ASAP. Sweet Grass County has encroachment permits for damage and changes to the county roads but no special use permit as such. They would like to be able to start GEO tech work and access on the roads in 2013. They would like to start moving dirt within two weeks. Crazy Mountain Wind will be checking into the process to ask for tax abatement.

This will be a 12-14 turbine project on the western edge of Rick Jarrett's land. They are GE turbines with 1.85 megawatt production. The rotors are about 87 meters in diameter and the hub is about 80 meters high. FAA permitting is in the process. They currently have about 640 acres leased, but the project will actually use about 80 acres. Crazy Mountain Wind hopes to sign an agreement with Northwestern Energy on Monday for the purchase of the power for 25 years.

Commissioner Faw would like for this matter to go to the voters.

Commissioner Mosness reminded the group that this is on private land.

Jan Engwis produced a copy of a letter that the commissioners had written about a year ago stating that they supported the wind project. He wanted to know if that is still their position. Commissioner Faw is not in agreement with the letter of support. Commissioners Mosness and Wallace reiterated that it is on private property. Mr. Engwis told the commissioners that they are a sham that this project would affect many people; roads will be affected property values and the view of the Crazy Mountains.

There were no maps, plans or road plans available at this meeting; however, Marty Wilde stated they will comply with whatever the county wants.

County Planner, Page Dringman, reminded the group that they could initiate a zoning process for the area. She feels that county wide zoning would be impossible.

Mr. Engwis asked the commissioners to rethink the project.

Mr. Chesnoff concurred with Mr. Engwis that this project would affect the roads and the value of his property as well as the view of the Crazy Mountains. He is also concerned about noise and the affect it could have on birds.

Kent Morgan also expressed concerns that this project would decrease the resale and property value of his place.

Jim Hogemark expressed that he knows we need energy but not in his backyard. Jim was also concerned about the impact on the roads especially during hay season.

The commissioners informed Marty Wilde that he would need to start with an encroachment permit for the roads and go to the DOR and request tax abatement. He expressed that they do need the abatement to make the project financially more feasible; however they would probably proceed without the abatement.

Erik Wood brought the PMC claims over for review and the warrants to be stamped by Commissioner Mosness and Sherry Bjorndal. Erik informed the commissioners that the job for the public health nurse position has been posted and is currently vacant.

Monday, December 9, 2013

Commissioners Faw and Wallace were in the office for the day. Commissioner Mosness is in Billings for a communications class.

The contract between the blasting company and Sweet Grass County was reviewed and signed.

The commissioners reviewed and signed the extension for the 2012 Homeland Security grant.

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Commissioners Faw and Wallace were in the office and Commissioner Mosness is still in Billings learning how to communicate more efficiently.

Commissioner Faw attended the noon CCR potluck and meeting at the courthouse.

Wednesday, December 11, 2013

All of the commissioners made it for hump day. Brooke Osen came in with the EMPG application for 2013-2014. This grant will cover training.

Financial Officer Uehling and Clerk Bjorndal met with the commissioners as Vicki is scheduled for back surgery on December 18th and will need four to six weeks off; she is almost out of sick and vacation time. Dennis will give her 40 hours and Char may give her some. She will not be able to do anything for two weeks and would like to work from home after that. Vicki will give Char some balancing and other things to keep up. Vicki will go in two weeks to get her stitches out and the commissioners want written permission from her doctor for her to start working part time. She will then hold a conference call with the Commissioners to discuss what the next step is.

An Airport Board meeting and public hearing was held at 6:30 for the master plan study review for the airport.

Commissioner Faw attended an affordable care act meeting at the Library.

Thursday, December 12, 2013

Commissioners Wallace, Mosness and Faw were all in for the day.

Sherry came in and went over the agenda for next week.

County Attorney Dringman stopped in and the group discussed the exhibit from Don Bedard on the Dave Smith issue on the Swamp Creek Road with the placement of the cattle guard. Montana is an open range State. You must fence livestock out. Some issues with overtime were also discussed.

Commissioner Wallace had to leave to take his wife to the doctor.

Friday, December 13, 2013

Commissioners Faw and Mosness were in for the day. Commissioner Wallace is in Billings for the day.

Claims and warrants were presented to commissioner Mosness to compare and stamp. They were then sent on to Sherry to review and stamp.

Commissioner Mosness attended a noon meeting at the courthouse on a security system for the courthouse. It will be paid for by the remaining funds from the 2012 Homeland Security Grant.

Commissioner Mosness was gone in the afternoon for a resident Christmas party at the PMC.

Monday, December 16, 2013

Commissioners Wallace and Mosness were in the office for the day. Commissioner Faw is in Kalispell.

The County Christmas Party was last Friday evening at the Grand. It was very well attended and everyone had a good time.

The Secure Rural Schools paper work was reviewed and Commissioner Wallace made a motion to keep it at and 85/15 split for Title I and Title II. Commissioner Mosness seconded the motion and it passed with 2 ayes. Phil Hathaway and Public Works Director, Cory Conner, were also present.

At 10:30 a.m. Planner Dringman met with the commissioners to present a resolution for Building for Lease or Rent. Page set the fee for the permit at \$200.00 after reviewing fees of other counties. Phil Hathaway commented that he thought the fee was too high for the amount of work needed. Commissioner Mosness made the motion to accept resolution # 12-16-2013. Commissioner Wallace seconded the motion and it passed with 2 ayes.

The PMC claims were presented for review and for Commissioner Mosness and Clerk Bjorndal to stamp the warrants.

County Attorney, Pat Dringman met with the commissioners to discuss encroachment permits. The commissioners will have Clerk Bjorndal draft a resolution that all encroachment permits will be noticed 48 hours prior to approval.

An e-mail was sent to Marty Wilde with Windata requesting more information on the Crazy Mountain Wind Project.

Commissioners Wallace and Mosness traveled North Yellowstone Trail to look at the potential encroachment site.

Commissioner Mosness attended a PMC Board meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 17, 2013

Commissioners Wallace and Faw were in for the day and Commissioner Mosness attended the HRDC annual Christmas lunch and meeting in Billings.

All of the commissioners attended the 6:30 meeting at the PMC with Billings Clinic. Present at the meeting were Billings Clinic CEO, Dr. Nick Walters, Scott Dukes from Billings Clinic, PMC CEO, Erik Wood, PMC board members Paula Curtin and Perry Anderson, County Attorney, Pat Dringman and Laura Nelson from the Big Timber Pioneer.

Wednesday, December 18, 2013

Commissioners Faw and Mosness were in the office for the day and Commissioner Wallace is in Billings for an appointment.

The day was spent catching up on correspondence and office work.

Thursday, December 19, 2013

All of the commissioners are back on board.

A committee from Sweet Grass County High School met with the commissioners on possible ways the county can help with the parking lot and new road construction around the school. Attending the meeting were Tim Yuzeitis, Michael Chyulak, Betty Alexander, Cory Connor, Al Buerkle, Bonita Cremer and Lindsay Kroskrob for the Big Timber Pioneer. Discussion was held about the county road crew being able to do the rough grading in the parking lot and finish building a road all the way around the school building. Another project that the county may help with is cutting down the trees and pulling the root balls out along the west side of the football field. The public works director will try to help in getting these projects completed. Mr. Buerkle will talk to Great West Engineering to see what the cost savings will be if the county does this work.

Clerk Bjorndal came in to go over the agenda for the rest of the year.

Clerk Bjorndal read the minutes of the November 2013 Commissioner's meetings. Commissioner Wallace made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Commissioner Faw seconded the motion and it passed with 3 ayes.

Claims and warrants for the week were reviewed and signed by the commissioners and passed on the Sherry Bjorndal to review and sign.

The rest of the day was spent celebration John Becken's retirement from the Department of Revenue after 27 plus years.

Friday, December 20, 2013

Commissioner Wallace was in for a portion of the day. Commissioner Faw was out of the office and Commissioner Mosness stopped in then went to pick up a family member at the airport.

Commissioner Wallace compared warrants to the claims and stamped the warrants for payment. The warrants and claims were then sent to Clerk & Recorder, Sherry Bjorndal to review and stamp before being returned to Vera, the claims clerk to finish processing and mail out.

Monday, December 23, 2013

All of the commissioners arrived full of Christmas cheer to head into the week of Christmas.

At 9:30 a.m. the commissioners reviewed the Mental Health Service Plan for the county allocation for the Medicaid match. Commissioner Wallace made a motion to approve and sign the plan. Commissioner Faw seconded the motion. Commissioner Faw commented on the fact that many of these programs have made Big Timber an easy mark for people to move here and get free stuff. The motion passed with 3 ayes.

Commissioner Mosness was out of the office for the afternoon.

Tuesday, December 24, 2013

Commissioner Mosness is home dealing with a broken refrigerator and hoping Santa will bring her a new one. Commissioners Faw and Wallace were in the office.

Most county offices closed early except for the Clerk & Recorder, Treasurer and Clerk of District Court.

Wednesday, December 25, 2013

Merry Christmas!!

Thursday, December 26, 2013

All of the Commissioners arrived after a great Christmas and are heading for the end of another year.

Clerk Bjorndal came in to go over the agenda for the next week.

Julie Schmidt with Key Insurance came in to go over the new appraisal that was done this summer from Valuations Northwest, a company hired by MACo/JPIA to go to each county and appraise buildings that we have insured. There will be further discussion on this in January.

Commissioner Faw drove out North Yellowstone Trail to look at the site for the encroachment permit from Crazy Mountain Wind.

Claims were presented for review and approval.

Friday, December 27, 2013

Commissioners Faw and Mosness were in for the day. Commissioner Wallace has family visiting from out of state.

Commissioner Mosness and Clerk Bjorndal compared warrants to claims and stamped the warrants for payment.

Monday, December 30, 2013

Commissioners Wallace, Mosness and Faw came in for the last few days of 2013.

Jeff and Scott Urlacher with Precision Drilling and Blasting, Lyle Stenberg with Stenberg Construction, Cole Peebles with Great West Engineering, and Public Works Director, Cory Connor met with the commissioners for a preconstruction meeting for the Wormser Loop blasting project. The total contract for the project is \$29,992.00. Big Timber Pioneer reporter, Laura Nelson also joined the meeting. The equipment will get moved in next Monday and there will be a test shot next Thursday weather permitting. Cory Connor reported that he had notified 811 on Friday. Sheriff Tronrud was notified about the blasting project.

December 31, 2013

All of the commissioners were in for the last day of the year.

Commissioner Mosness and Clerk Bjorndal reviewed and stamped the PMC payroll warrants for December.

Claims amounting to \$ 161,855.66 were paid during the month of December.

December payroll for the county and the PMC totaled \$ 487,608.01.

Respectfully submitted

Sherry Bjorndal, Clerk

Minutes reported to the Commissioners at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, January 27, 2014.

Motion made by Commissioner Faw to approve the minutes as corrected. Motion seconded by Commissioner Wallace and passed with 2 ayes. Commissioner Mosness is out of the state for a week.