

# SWEET GRASS COUNTY

## Local Emergency Planning Committee (L.E.P.C.)

All Hazards and Emergency 9-1-1

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### Minutes

Date of Meeting: **January 22, 2026 11:30 AM**

Location: **Ambulance Hall, Meeting Room; 220 W 1<sup>ST</sup> AVE; Big Timber MT**

Attendees:

J.V. Moody, SG Commissioner  
Justin Ferguson, City Mayor  
Mike Duval, City Council  
Corey Austin, HS Superintendent  
Jeremy Countryman, EMS Manager  
Jennifer Chappell, Public Health  
Heidi Baker, PMC DON  
Kevin Langhus, SG Public Works/SAR

Kris Novotny, City Fire Chief  
Levi Duncan, USFS  
Cliff Brophy, DES / 9-1-1 Coordinator  
Nick Vertz, NWS (virtual)  
GUESTS:  
Joshua, PMC  
Jessica Wilson, ARC  
Robert Wyant, PMC EP Coordinator

**The meeting was called to order** by Clifford Brophy, Chair at 11:30 AM

**The pledge of allegiance to the US Flag** was recited

**Welcome and self-introductions:** Completed

**Minutes for the Meeting on December 11, 2025** were approved as submitted.

#### **National Weather Service:**

In short, we have been, and will be, warm and dry for a while. We may be going into above normal snow fall but that will depend on conditions and how patterns develop.

#### **Local Emergency Planning Committee (L.E.P.C.) Topics:**

Election of LEPC Officers. Kris moved to leave the same individuals in the same offices. JV seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Cliff Brophy will remain as Chair, Secretary/Treasurer, and Information Coordinator. Kris Novotny will remain as Vice-Chair. Cliff Brophy will also remain as Emergency Services Coordinator. That position is appointed by the Sweet Grass Commissioners.

Cliff presented the "1-Page" summary sent to us by the MT DES on behalf of the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC). Handouts were made available. The topic was "EPCRA, Water, & LEPCs".

Cliff announced that our LEPC membership list has not been sent in to the State SERC at the end of 2025 due to anticipated changes. With the City elections and other membership changes, we will make those changes and then submit the list to the County

Commissioners and then the State SERC. Usually we submit that list in November or December.

**Disaster and Emergency Services (D.E.S.) Topics:**

Cliff announced that we are starting on updating our County/City Emergency Operations Plans (EOP) again. Cliff identified some areas that needed to be updated. If anyone has suggested changes, please let Cliff know and we will get that on the list. The official update was just completed last year. We are required to review the EOP and make any changes at least every two years.

Cliff announced that there are several grants available if anyone has a need or a project in mind. No suggestions were offered.

Cliff reported on various projects. The audible (no voice) siren behind the courthouse has been working and is tested each week on Wednesday at noon. Discussion was held on its purpose and possible ways to get the information out to the public to inform them as to its purpose.

The generator behind the courthouse has been fixed so that it starts and runs regularly when it self-tests each week. The starter motor was dragging and a new one appears to have remedied the no-run issue.

Cliff gave an update on the CodeRED notification platform that is used by the County and City. The original platform was hacked by a nefarious group and left it compromised. The company switched us over to the newer platform within several days. Though we still don't have access to IPAWS, we have had alert capabilities. Most of our contact numbers have been migrated over to the new system.

Cliff compiled a two-page awareness calendar that lists the pertinent topics for each particular month. The list includes topics like: winter preparedness, storms, fires, floods, earthquakes, etc.

**Emergency 9-1-1 Topics:**

State is still working on finding a consulting group to study Montana's infrastructure and recommend some state-wide E9-1-1 options.

The State announced that there are grant moneys available for E9-1-1 related projects.

**Fire Topics:**

Fire Reports. Kris announced that the fire department has responded to 5-6 grass fires. Two were over 20 acres.

Kris requested that the County revisit the topic of the burn permit system available through the State. He believes that it would help all involved. Cliff expressed his support of it based on his experience with that same system.

Levi reported that the USFS is waiting for more snow before they burn any fuels in the forest areas.

**Law Enforcement Topics:**

None

**Public Health Topics:**

Jenn reported that there have been respiratory issues around the county but not many Influenza cases.

Jeremy reported that EMS has been crazy last few months.

Bo Wyant is now the EP Coordinator for the PMC. He will be attending the LEPC and working with others to keep their training and plans updated.

**Public Works:**

Kevin reported that it has been slow for snow removal. Bridge projects have been put on hold due to permitting issues and other issues. Plans are to start up the bridge projects again this spring.

Two new employees for the County, and they have been going through training.

**Mitigation Progress:**

No updates or reports

**Comments from Members:**

Jessica Wilson (ARC) will be starting the "Sound the Alarm" program in Big Timber this spring. That program involves Red Cross volunteers working with local Fire Departments and installing fire alarms in residential structures.

Corey Austin reported that they experienced damage to the High School roof and insurance is having that repaired.

Kevin Langhus gave an update on the Star Link sat phone that Search and Rescue obtained. It has been working great. They are considering purchasing another one for the Fire Department.

**Select Next Meeting Date: Thursday, February 26, 2026 11:30 AM**

**Public Comments:** None given

**Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 12:21 pm. Short break was held for setup and then the tabletop exercise (TTX) for fictitious aircraft crash was started. The TTX tested local and agency specific EOP's and response plans for a simulated crash at the Big Timber airport.

Submitted by



Clifford Brophy  
Chair/Secretary/Treasurer