

OCTOBER 3RD, 2023 TUESDAY

The Board of Liberty County Commissioners met in regular session on the above stated date at 8:00 AM in their office at the Courthouse. Those present were Larry Hendrickson (chair), Joette Woods, and Justin Wickum.

LEPC

The Commissioners attended the monthly LEPC meeting at the fire hall.

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE MILL LEVY REQUEST

Per the agenda, the Commissioners met at 10 am with Ivan Vandessel (CJI School Board Chair), Devin Grammar (School Board Member), Luke Haggerty (CJI Superintendent), Senator Russ Tempel, County Attorney Robert Padmos, Clerk and Recorder Davin Padmos, and County Treasurer Denise Wanken. The topic was discussion of a resolution for changing the school equalization mill levy from 95 as indicated by the Department of Revenue to 77.89. The Commissioners will decide on Wednesday as to whether or not they will declare a resolution to collect 77.89 mills or 95 mills.

SENIOR CENTER

Glenda Hanson, Senior Center Director, was in to update the Commissioners on buses and Senior Center issues.

MSU EXTENSION

Jesse Fulbright, Extension, was in to discuss board leadership training for the community. This will take place on Tuesday, October 7th at 6 pm at the senior center.

JUSTICE COURT

Chris Case, Justice of the Peace, was in to update the Commissioners on what he has seen in his office the past couple weeks.

SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

Sheriff Nick Erickson, Undersheriff Kyle Heppner, and County Attorney Robert Padmos were in to update the Commissioners on the mental health issues that are currently happening in the community and shared the proposed plan to handle these issues. They would start by bringing individuals to Logan Health. Then if they decide to transport for further assessment/treatment, they would go to Kalispell to a holding place, and then go from there to the Montana State Hospital in Warm Springs or get released.

WEED DEPARTMENT

Jim Ghekiere, Weed/911 Department, was in to update the Commissioners on his departments. They discussed having Jim be the point person for the Road Department in the event that the Commissioners are gone so that the road crew have someone to ask questions of and check in with. Commissioners Woods made a motion to appoint Jim Ghekiere as the point person for the Road Department. Commissioners Wickum seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

There being no further business, the regular meeting of the Board of Liberty County Commissioners was adjourned at 5:00 PM

ATTEST: _____
Clerk Chairman

OCTOBER 4TH, 2023 WEDNESDAY

The Board of Liberty County Commissioners met in regular session on the above stated date at 8:00 AM in their office at the Courthouse. Those present were Commissioners present were: Larry Hendrickson (chair), Joette Woods, and Justin Wickum.

RESOLUTION 23-15

Following up on an item from the previous day, Commissioner Woods made a motion to approve resolution 23-15 to correct the state equalization mill from 95 mills to 77.9 mills. Commissioner Wickum seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

RESOLUTION NO. 23-15

A RESOLUTION FIXING THE MILL LEVY FOR THE STATE EQUALIZATION, COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL EQUALIZATION AND COUNTY ELEMENTARY EQUALIZATION MILL LEVY AUTHORITY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2023 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2024

WHEREAS, the Department of Revenue has indicated the number of mills that the board of county commissioners may levy upon all property in the state and has determined that the ad valorem tax for Fiscal Year 2024 for the State Equalization Aid is 40.00 mills, the County Elementary Equalization Levy is 33.00 mills, and the High School Equalization Levy is 22.00 mills; and,

WHEREAS, Section 15-10-420(E), MCA states The department shall calculate, on a statewide basis, the number of mills to be imposed for purposes of 15-10-109, 20-9-331, 20-9-333, 20-9-360, and 20-25-439. However, the number of mills calculated by the department may not exceed the mill levy limits established in those sections. The mill calculation must be established in tenths of mills. If the mill levy calculation does not result in an even tenth of a mill, then the calculation must be rounded up to the nearest tenth of a mill; and,

WHEREAS, The Montana Department of Revenue performed the calculation under 15-10-420, MCA, and reported that the levy authority for FY2024 is 77.99 mills; and

WHEREAS, The Board of County Commissioners has determined that the correct number of mills to be levied for Fiscal Year 2024 for the State Equalization Aid is 32.90 mills, the County Elementary Equalization Levy is 27.00 mills, and the High School Equalization Levy is 18.00 mills, for a total of 77.9 mills;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Liberty County Board of County Commissioners that the State Equalization Aid Levy of 32.90 mills, the County Elementary Equalization Levy of 27.00 mills, and the High School Equalization Levy of 18.00 mills, for a total of 77.9 mills, as determined by the Montana Department of Revenue, for Fiscal Year 2024 are hereby fixed.

DATED this ____ day of October, 2023

ATTEST:

Clerk

Chairman

Commissioner

Commissioner

SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

Sheriff Erickson and Undersheriff Kyle Heppner were in to update the Commissioners on some decriminalization laws they have been informed about.

BEAR PAW DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Jim Ghekerie was in to update the Commissioners on the Bear Paw Board members. He is serving as Vice President representing Liberty County.

LIBRARY

Julie Erickson, Librarian, was in to let the Commissioners know she has a continuing education training for the Library Board on October 18th, and she wanted the Commissioners to know that they are also welcome to attend.

PAYROLL

Payroll Specialist Jordan Miller presented payroll to the Commissioners for them to review and approve. Upon review, Commissioner Wickum made a motion to approve payroll. Commissioner Woods seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor

CLAIMS

Claims Specialist Monica Serrato presented claims for the Commissioners to review and approve. Upon review, Commissioner Wickum made a motion to approve claims. Commissioner Woods seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor

DISASTER/EMERGENCY SERVICES

Kayla Johnson, DES, was in to update the Commissioners on a grant that was awarded to the DES program. The approved project cost is in the amount of \$43,322.00.

There being no further business, the regular meeting of the Board of Liberty County Commissioners was adjourned at 5:00 PM

ATTEST: _____

Clerk

Chairman

OCTOBER 10TH 2023 TUESDAY

The Board of Liberty County Commissioners met in regular session on the above stated date at 8:00 AM in their office at the Courthouse. Those present were Commissioner Larry Hendrickson (Chair), Commissioner Justin Wickum (via phone), and Commissioner Joette Woods.

SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

Undersheriff Kyle Heppner and Deputy Bill Hicks were in to update the Commissioners on the Lexipol training program. Also, they are looking to use the courthouse for a hands-on training for their department.

FIRE RESTRICTIONS

Commissioner Woods made a motion to remove fire restrictions in Liberty County. Commissioner Wickum seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

ROAD DEPARTMENT

The road crew is working to get the mowing done before undesirable weather comes in. They are grading roads where there is still moisture in the ground. Sage Creek Colony called asking if roads could get a blade in the next few days. The road crew is working in that area and they were informed that the county is trying to get roads bladed.

WEED/911 DEPARTMENT

Jim Ghekerie, 911/Weed Dept, was in to discuss putting fiber optics in for a cell tower in northwest Lothair, and wanted to know if the county had right-of-way due to some local land owners not wanting to give easements. The county owns 60 feet on each side of the county road, and we will give access to Northern Telephone.

COURTHOUSE FIRE SAFETY

The Commissioners checked the fire extinguishers in their office along with the carbon monoxide detectors for our 6-month check to make sure everything is up to code.

MSU EXTENSION

Jesse Fulbright, MSU Extension Agent, is out of the office this week in Pennsylvania for a conference.

MONTANA NATURAL RESOURCES COALITION

Motion to approve renewal of our MNRC membership for \$2500.00, made by Justin. Second by Larry. Hearing no public comment, motion carries.

JUSTICE COURT

Justice of the Peace Chris Case was in to update the Commissioners on his office happenings today.

There being no further business, the regular meeting of the Board of Liberty County Commissioners was adjourned at 5:00 PM

ATTEST: _____

Clerk

Chairman

OCTOBER 11TH 2023 WEDNESDAY

The Board of Liberty County Commissioners met in regular session on the above stated date at 8:00 AM in their office at the Courthouse. Those present were Commissioner Larry Hendrickson (Chair), Commissioner Justin Wickum, and Commissioner Joette Woods

SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

The Commissioners assisted in the installation of a new door for the rear entry to the Sheriff Office. The new door is re-enforced metal with a keypad lock mechanism so there is less possibility of an unlawful entry.

MUNICIPAL ELECTION

The Clerk and Recorder's staff conducted their practice test for the upcoming Town of Chester municipal election. The test went smoothly and all votes were counted accurately by the counting machine.

MOTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

Commissioner Woods made a motion to approve a claim for RPA/Joplin Sewer Project. Commissioner Hendrickson seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor. A copy was scanned and sent back to RPA for their records.

The Commissioners, at the request of Governor Gianforte, lowered the flag to half mast, due to the lives lost in the Israel conflict on October 7th, 2023. This will be in effect from sunrise today through Monday, October 16th at sunset.

Commissioner Hendrickson made a motion for Commissioner Woods to speak on behalf of the Liberty County Commissioners at the town hall for MACo on Friday, October 13th. Commissioner Wickum seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

Commissioner Woods made a motion to approve a resolution 23-16, for the County Attorney to have prosecutorial assistance from October 13th through October 22nd while he will be out of the country. Commissioner Wickum seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor. During this time period, the Chouteau County Attorney Steve Gannon will provide prosecutorial assistance as needed in Liberty County.


LIBERTY COUNTY, MONTANA
RESOLUTION 23-16
AUTHORIZING PROSECUTORIAL ASSISTANCE
IN DISTRICT AND JUSTICE COURT CASES

WHEREAS, the Liberty County Attorney, ROBERT PADMOS, will be out of the county and unreachable for the time period beginning October 13, 2023 until October 22, 2023;
WHEREAS, the Liberty County Attorney has requested prosecutorial assistance in all causes in Twelfth Judicial District Court, Liberty County, and/or Liberty County Justice Court as deemed necessary for the aforementioned time period; and
WHEREAS, it is desired and deemed appropriate that a special deputy county attorney be appointed to assist in the prosecution of these matters; and
WHEREAS, Montana Code Annotated §7-4-2705 authorizes the board of county commissioners to employ special counsel to assist in the prosecution of any such criminal case pending in the county on request of the county attorney; and
WHEREAS, the Liberty County Attorney has requested that a special deputy county attorney be appointed to assist in any matters as necessary in the Twelfth Judicial District Court, Liberty County, and/or the Liberty County Justice court during the aforementioned time period; and
WHEREAS, STEVE GANNON, Chouteau County Attorney, has agreed to act as a Special Deputy Liberty County Attorney for the aforementioned time period;
THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED:
That the Chouteau County Attorney, STEVE GANNON, shall be appointed a special deputy county attorney for Liberty County for the purpose of fulfilling the functions set out in Montana Code Annotated §44-4-103 from October 13, 2023 to October 22, 2023.
IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED:
That under the terms of this agreement, no fee will be charged for attorney time provided by the special prosecutor of this case. Mileage will be paid at the current rate of \$.68 per mile. Witness fees and expense, jury costs and other normal costs associated with the trial will be the county's responsibility on with all other prosecutions.
Adopted this 11th day of October, 2023 as moved by Commissioner Woods, seconded by Commissioner Wickum, and passed on a unanimous vote of the full board. Effective on passage and approval.

LIBERTY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Liberty County, Montana

[Signature] Chairman
[Signature] Member

ATTEST: [Signature]
Davin Buffington, Clerk & Recorder



MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT IN LIBERTY COUNTY

The Commissioners visited with Department Heads about Many Rivers Whole Health coming to the courthouse and providing services to people that need mental health supports in the community. There will be additional information including more details about days, hours, and office locations available next week.

There being no further business, the regular meeting of the Board of Liberty County Commissioners was adjourned at 5:00 PM

ATTEST: _____
Clerk Chairman

OCTOBER 17TH 2023 TUESDAY

The Board of Liberty County Commissioners met in regular session on the above stated date at 8:00 AM in their office at the Courthouse. Those present were Commissioner Justin Wickum and Commissioner Joette Woods

PAYROLL

Payroll Specialist Jordan Miller presented payroll to the Commissioners for them to review and approve. Upon review, Commissioner Woods made a motion to approve payroll. Commissioner Wickum seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor. Motion to approve payroll, made by Joette Woods. Second by Justin Wickum. Hearing no public comment, motion carries.

ROAD DEPARTMENT

Errol Fritz stopped in to visit with the Commissioners about mowing. He says the Road Department is doing a really good job. Tyler Streit was in to let the Commissioners know they have gravel being hauled to their road tomorrow morning and they were hoping a grader could come spread it. The county will go and spread gravel in the afternoon.

JUSTICE COURT

Justice of the Peace Chris Case was in to update the Commissioners on a situation over the weekend and some continuing education he has coming up this week.

MSU EXTENSION

Jesse Fulbright, MSU Extension Agent, was in to update the Commissioners on his trip last week, and remind them of the board training meeting tonight at the Senior Center.

BOARD UPDATES

Commissioner Woods attended the Board of Health and Mental Health Board on Monday. The Board of Health will be looking to come up with a draft policy on “for profit” food vendors in Liberty County. The “non-profit” groups or fundraising groups will be limited to 4 sales per group to sell food for fundraising events. This was brought to the attention of our sanitarian Sarah Robbin, due to the sudden increase of food at events and used for fundraising. This would localize any food-borne illnesses to the group responsible should that situation arise. This is just a precaution. The Board is looking to implement this new policy immediately, and implement the fee for the for-profit vendors by next July.

JOPLIN SEWER PROJECT

Austin Wargo, RPA, called to remind the Commissioners about the landowner agreement we will be signing upon approval with Curt May for sludge spreading. He is looking to go ahead and send out bids for the Joplin Sewer Project. Commissioner Woods made a motion to approve going forward with the bid process. Commissioner Wickum seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

Sheriff Nick Erickson was in to update the Commissioners on a couple of situations he has been dealing with.

WEED/911 DEPARTMENT

Jim Ghekerie, Weed/911, was in to discuss some federal grant paperwork and to provide updates on his departments to the Commissioners.

There being no further business, the regular meeting of the Board of Liberty County Commissioners was adjourned at 5:00 PM

ATTEST: _____
Clerk Chairman

OCTOBER 24TH 2023 TUESDAY

The Board of Liberty County Commissioners met in regular session on the above stated date at 8:00 AM in their office at the Courthouse. Those present were Larry Hendrickson (Chair), Commissioner Justin Wickum, and Commissioner Joette Woods

WEED/911

Jim Ghekerie, 911/Weed Dept, was in to update the Commissioners on the grant he is applying for. He is looking for the civil rights form previously filled out for other federal grants.

TREASURER

Treasurer Denise Wanken was in to update the Commissioners on House Bill 497 which passed, requiring counties to provide online services. This unbudgeted mandate will cost the county \$2500.00.

MUNICIPAL ELECTION

Election Administrator Davin Padmos was in to update the Commissioners about the new election issues happening around the state. She will be facilitating the upcoming town election on November 7th.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

The Commissioners have made a list of open/active gravel pits and non-active/open pits. DEQ is looking at a new rule for the open pits in the county.

SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

The County has a damaged repeater that sits up on top of Mount Royal. The Commissioners will figure a way to fix it and get it working again. Sheriff Nick Erickson, and Deputy Bill Hicks were in to discuss a possible MOU with Choteau County for deputies. They also discussed the need for radios and grants to possibly facilitate that. The discussion of losing radio services is imminent. The County will have to figure out a way to communicate.

SENIOR CENTER

Glenda Hanson, Senior Center Director, was in to update the Commissioners that she will be watching the weather for tomorrow's trip to Great Falls. They may cancel if the snow gets deep. They have had some internet issues and think they have it figured out with Triangle Communications. She has had a lot of deliveries for food from the Senior Center due to sickness in the community.

COUNTY ATTORNY

County Attorney Robert Padmos was in to look over documents and update the Commissioners on some court proceedings he has coming up.

DISASTER/EMERGENCY SERVICES

Kayla Johnson, DES, was in to let the Commissioners know if they remove fire restrictions that she and the State of Montana need to be notified. Commissioner Woods made a motion to sign the DES Fire Restriction Removal. Commissioner Wickum seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

CLAIMS

Claims Specialist Monica Serrato presented claims for the Commissioners to review and approve. Upon review, Commissioner Woods made a motion to approve claims. Commissioner Wickum seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

JUSTICE COURT

Justice of the Peace Chris Case was in to update the Commissioners on some of the issues pertaining to his office.

COMMUNITY PHONE CALLS

The Commissioners had a phone call from a hunter from Washington state about road access through BLM land across two private land owner easements. The Commissioners explained why it was on the map but not accessible to the public.

The Commissioners also received a call from a community member about a hole starting to form North of Chester on Laird Rd. The Commissioners will have that flagged today and gravel hauled to it before it freezes in the next couple days.

There being no further business, the regular meeting of the Board of Liberty County Commissioners was adjourned at 5:00 PM

ATTEST: _____

Clerk

Chairman

OCTOBER 31ST 2023 TUESDAY

The Board of Liberty County Commissioners met in regular session on the above stated date at 8:00 AM in their office at the Courthouse. Those present were Larry Hendrickson (Chair), Commissioner Justin Wickum, and Commissioner Joette Woods.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Commissioner Woods made a motion to approve and sign the HRDC Community Service Block Grant plan for 2024-2025. Commissioner Wickum seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

MSU EXTENSION

Jesse Fulbright, MSU Extension Agent, was in to update the Commissioners on his upcoming events.

ROAD QUESTION

The Commissioners visited with Rudy Cicon about the old Alma Road North of Chester along Laird Rd. The owner wants to know if this road is abandoned or still a road. The Commissioners will look into it; however, this will not be a Commissioner issue.

FEEDING PRISONERS

The Commissioners met with the Senior Center, Sheriff Office, and County Attorney about providing freezer meals from the Senior Center for people in jail. The Sheriff will get them as needed.

CLERK AND RECORDER

Clerk & Recorder Davin Padmos was in to update the Commissioners on a project she would like to get done, which is scanning the road petitions for electronic access.

COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT

County Superintendent Kathy Armstrong was in to let the Commissioners know she will be on vacation for the next two weeks.

MONTANA STATE FUND DIVIDEND

Tina Wood, Wood Enterprises Insurance, was in to give the Commissioners a dividend check from the Montana State Fund. She also mentioned a building in Joplin that is shedding bricks into the street past the barrier that is set up. Her concern is that someone could get hurt or wreck a vehicle. The sheriff will go check it out and talk to the owners.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Amy Jacques, VOCA, was in to update the Commissioners on some grant opportunities she has found. The Commissioners filled her in the radio replacement issues; the grant application will be open in January.

ROAD DEPARTMENT

Commissioner Hendrickson and Commissioner Woods interviewed Blaze Wendelin for a road operator. He will start on November 15th.

PUBLIC HEALTH/DES

Kayla Johnson, DES/Public Health, was in to update the Commissioners on a hazmat training on Monday. She also reported that the Public Health flu clinic has been successful so far.

PAYROLL

Payroll Specialist Jordan Miller presented payroll to the Commissioners for them to review and approve. Upon review, Commissioner Woods made a motion to approve payroll. Commissioner Wickum seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

There being no further business, the regular meeting of the Board of Liberty County Commissioners was adjourned at 5:00 PM

ATTEST: _____

Clerk

Chairman