

MARCH 5TH, 2024 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.

CLERK AND RECORDER

Clerk and Recorder Davin Padmos was in to discuss the 2024 elections and the candidates who have filed so far. The deadline to file is March 11.

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.

FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS

Game Warden Willie Miller was in to discuss access for the coming year.

JUSTICE COURT

Justice of the Peace Chris Case was in to provide updates to the Commissioners on his office.

FUEL TAX MAPS

The Commissioners looked over and updated the fuel tax maps. Commissioner Wickum made a motion to sign the maps. Commissioner Woods seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor. They will be sent out tomorrow.

COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT

County Superintendent Kathy Armstrong was in to update the Commissioners on a District 10 information request. Kathy plans to attend a school board meeting in the coming weeks. The request to post the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) grant information on the County website was discussed. Two key points were discussed for not posting this information- first, the County is not obligated to post this information, and second, the ESSER grant did not contain correct information. After discussion, Commissioner Woods made a motion to deny posting the grant information on the County website. Commissioner Wickum seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

Undersheriff Kyle Heppner was in to update the Commissioners on the generator at the Sheriff's Office. The Commissioners will decide how to proceed with either fixing the current generator or purchasing a new one.

CEMETERY BOARD

Gerry Fenger stopped in to let the Commissioners know that he is disappointed in the Cemetery District and the mistake that was made with the burial of his brother.

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

ATTEST: _____

MARCH 6TH, 2024 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.

CLERK AND RECORDER

Clerk and Recorder Davin Buffington was in to discuss an increase in health care insurance costs for County employees.

ROAD DEPARTMENT

Kim Fossen, Road Department, was in to update the Commissioners on a project she was assigned to digitize the road petitions in Liberty County. Some of the petitions are in Hill County and Choteau County. Kim has also been working on locating all the county culverts and signs for inventory purposes and sign replacement throughout the county.

TREASURER'S OFFICE

The Department of Justice has notified the Treasurer's Office that a new system for the Motor Vehicle Department will soon be migrating to local County networks and will require that the County take over the licensing of vehicles, maintenance of networks, copiers, etc. The system will be named CARS (Credentialing and Registration System). This will be a large responsibility for the Counties and another unfunded mandate put on local jurisdictions from the State.

FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Woods made a motion to approve the February Commissioner meeting minutes as they stand, no corrections or additions. Commissioner Wickum seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

County Superintendent Kathy Armstrong was in to discuss an email she received and would like instruction on how to respond. She will consult with the County Attorney for an opinion.

UPDATED PROPERTY TAX BILLS

The Commissioners will be sending a statement with the updated tax bill for 95 mills to residents letting them know it is a Montana Supreme Court decision against statutory limitations and that the Department of Revenue is asking the County to levy extra mills they hold in reserve to generate additional revenue from property taxpayers in Montana.

SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

Undersheriff Kyle Heppner was in to visit with the Commissioners about the Stone Garden grant process.

CEMETERY DISTRICT

Cemetery Sexton Ted Zorn stopped in about a plot at the cemetery that is being questioned by a family member about the accuracy of the location. Commissioner Hendrickson, Commissioner Woods, and Commissioner Wickum went to the Chester Cemetery and looked at the location and determined that the plot is in the wrong place per the 2018 purchase.

COUNTY EMPLOYEE HEALTH CARE

Commissioner Wickum made a motion to revisit new health care contributions next week after learning more information on permissive levy statute. Commissioner Hendrickson 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: _____

MARCH 12TH, 2024 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.

ROAD DEPARTMENT

Road Foreman Dave Ghekerie was in to discuss the duties his crew will be working on this week. The crew will be filling in low spots where the frost has thawed, and maintaining roads where there is moisture.

JUSTICE COURT

Justice of the Peace Chris Case was in to discuss some issues he has going on in his office.

PROPERTY TAX BILL STATEMENT

The Commissioners have issued a statement about the supplemental tax bill for the 95 mills to the following: The Liberty Chronicle, the Liberty County Facebook page, and the Liberty County website.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

County Attorney Robert Padmos was in to update the Commissioners on some of his cases.

CLERK AND RECORDER

Clerk and Recorder Davin Padmos was in to discuss the health care package that needs to be decided today.

COUNTY HEALTH CARE PACKAGE

The Commissioners revisited the health care contribution amount. The discussion was about whether or not the county should cover the total increase for health care coverage. If the county mills for the total amount, the county remains whole in the permissive mill levy fund. The County will lose the ability to fund upcoming increases each year if they do not mill for the total amount. A discussion on taking this tier off for next year will be tabled until 2025 as it was too late to readjust the current tiers. If the full cost increase isn't covered this year, it would cost employees money out of their own pocket and the commissioners were not willing to do this due to inflation. Commissioner Wickum made a motion to increase the County contribution to \$1363.00. Commissioner Hendrickson seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

County Superintendent Kathy Armstrong was in to discuss the lack of an interlocal agreement between the Toole County Colony Schools (District 10) and Toole County Commissioners. She will research this and figure out how it got dropped. Kathy will attend the District 10 School Board meeting next Tuesday.

RESOLUTION 24-09

Commissioner Woods made a motion to approve Resolution 24-09 for amending the mill levy for the state equalization. Commissioner Wickum seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

RESOLUTION NO. 24-09

A RESOLUTION AMENDING 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 shall 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(8), 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 77.89 mills; and

WHEREAS the Montana Supreme Court issued an Order stating that the Department of Revenue may continue to determine statewide mills by carrying forward any mills exceeding the cap in one year and require counties to apply those mills to reach the cap; and

WHEREAS, The Board of County Commissioners must modify the levy to comply with the court order of the Montana Supreme Court and to comply with the State of Montana/Department of Revenue's request to levy 95 statewide mills.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Liberty County Board of County Commissioners that an additional 17.1 additional mills must be fixed for the State Equalization Aid Levy for a total of 95 mills, as determined by the Montana Department of Revenue, for Fiscal Year 2024 are hereby fixed.

DATED this 12 day of MARCH, 2024

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



ATTEST: Dawn Adams Clerk of the Board

JOPLIN ROADS

A complaint was called into the Commissioners about some ruts in the roads in Joplin. The Commissioners explained that if there is an opportunity in the next week to get there, the County will re-blade the streets. The town of Joplin is currently very muddy, but the road crew will get there when it dries up.

FIDUCIARY RESTRICTIONS

The Commissioners discussed removing fiduciary restrictions for Special Districts. This includes allowing the ability for District 10 Payroll Clerk, Jennine Syness, the ability to do payroll and process direct deposits through online banking. Commissioner Woods made a motion to add access for the Liberty Elementary District 10 Payroll Clerk to be able to log in to online banking in order to upload and initiate direct deposit files, as well as to add overdraft protection to the account. Commissioner Wickum seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

AMBULANCE

Tara Hendrickson, Ambulance Director, called the Commissioners about Logan Health and the possibility that they are looking into overseeing the ambulance services. She asked if the subject comes up to be included in that conversation.

INTERIM TREASURER INTERVIEWS

The Commissioners interviewed Sharlys Davis and Laura Daily for the Interim Treasurer position. The Commissioners will make their decision and extend an offer by the end of March.

DISASTER/EMERGENCY SERVICES

DES Coordinator Kayla Johnson was in to update the Commissioners on the two refurbished radios she was able to purchase with DES grant funds.

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

ATTEST: _____

MARCH 13TH, 2024 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 Larry Hendrickson (chair), Joette Woods, and Justin Wickum.

SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

Kyle Heppner, USO, was in to update the Commissioners on radios and some issues they are dealing with in the Sheriff Department.

SURPLUS SALE

The Commissioners approved the surplus sale list at the hospital. Commissioner Woods made a motion to approve the sale of outdated unused items for the hospital to sell. Commissioner Hendrickson seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

JANUARY MINUTES CORRECTION

There is a correction to the Commissioner Meeting Minutes from January 16th which has incorrectly named Eagle Creek Colony instead of Hi-Line and Riverview Colonies. The correction should read as follows: Hi-Line and Riverview Colony Members stopped in to visit with the Commissioners about why the CJI school will not take on the Riverview School.

Commissioner Wickum made a motion to approve an amendment to the January minutes to correct the names of the colonies. Commissioner Woods seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

CEMETERY

Jesse Fulbright, MSU Extension Agent, stopped in to update the Commissioners on some cemetery issues that have come up. The Commissioners accompanied Jesse to the cemetery to mark some lots and blocks that have been questioned.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

County Attorney Robert Padmos was in to update the Commissioners on a letter he wrote to District 10 about their account restrictions.

ROADS

Dave Ghekerie, Road Foreman, was in to let the Commissioners know that he drove through Joplin and the roads are still too muddy to get a maintainer in at this time. He will send a crew member by early next week to check if they are drier. Kim Fossen continues to digitize road petitions for the county, along with updating county road maps.

LOCAL ASSISTANCE AND TRIBAL CONSISTENCY FUND

The required annual reporting for the LATCF funding has been completed, this is an annual reporting due at the end of March for the Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund.

PROPERTY TAX PAYMENT SCHEDULE

There will be a payment schedule contract coming in April, per new state law, that will give taxpayers the ability to set up a 7-month payment plan to pay property taxes that are owed.

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

ATTEST: _____

MARCH 19TH, 2024 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.

CEMETARY

Jesse Fulbright, MSU Extension Agent, was in to discuss posting the Cemetery Sexton position on the County website. The Commissioners have discretion on what to allow on the County website as Liberty County owns its own domain. Jesse also gave the Commissioners a resignation letter from Ted Zorn as the sexton.

ROADS

Dave Ghekerie, Road Foreman, was in to discuss what his crew has been busy doing. The Commissioners have helped him put a priority list of roads together so maintenance can get underway after this weekend's coming storm. Due to the constant theft of signs in the county, Dave will need to order new road name signs and regulatory signs.

OPIOID SETTLEMENT MONEY

The County has received the second portion of opioid settlement money. The amount is \$269.41, which brings the total received to around \$700.00. This money is to be used for mental health and the

prevention of opioid drug use. The money has not been designated to anything specific yet, some ideas include programs at the school and local EMS trainings.

QUARTERLY SAFETY MEETING

The quarterly safety meeting was held in the Commissioners office at 9 am. In attendance were: Melissa Kantorowicz, Kayla Johnson, Chris Case, Davin Buffington, Julie Gagnon, Dave Ghekerie, Kassondra May, and the three Commissioners. The next safety meeting will be June 18th at 9 am and will include a fire extinguisher training at the courthouse and senior center. The Commissioners will be placing new carbon monoxide monitors in both the upper level and lower level in the courthouse. There will also be a Narcan training for the election volunteers, due to fentanyl currently being sent through the mail during elections.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

County Attorney Robert Padmos was in to discuss some issues on his agenda this week.

JUSTICE COURT

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

FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS

Game Warden Willie Miller was in to update the Commissioners on issues he's encountered locally.

SEWER PROJECT

Austin Wargo, RPA, called the Commissioners to update them on contractors and construction for the Chester and Joplin Sewer Project. Pre-construction meetings and contractors looking to be starting around April 29th. They are still waiting to hear back from Lakeside to have the sewer lines looked at through a camera.

WEED DEPARTMENT

Jim Ghekerie, Weed/911, was in to update the Commissioners on his SCBA grant. He is looking to hire a couple of staff for the weed department.

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.

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.

INTERIM TREASURER

The Commissioners discussed the Interim Treasurer position and the candidates that were interviewed. The decision ultimately came down to who had immediate availability for the full 5 days a week. Commissioner Woods made a motion to hire Sharlys Davis for the Interim Treasurer position until the June 4th primary election, at which point the candidate who wins will be appointed to fill the position until the term officially begins January 1st, 2025. Commissioner Wickum seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor. The Commissioners will call Sharlys and offer her the position and ask if she can start as soon as possible.

SHERIFF DEPARTMENT

Sheriff Nick Erickson was in to discuss the interlocal agreement between the County and the Town of Chester.

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

ATTEST: _____

MARCH 26TH, 2024 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.

TREASURER

The Deputy Treasurer was in to update the Commissioners on the tax bills for the 2023 supplemental 95 mill tax bill. The Montana Supreme Court ordered the taxpayers to pay the full 95 mills after the County only milled for the 77 mills due to an increase in property taxes. Now a supplemental bill is ordered by the State to make up the difference, resulting in a supplemental tax bill to the Liberty County Residents.

The Commissioners discussed not billing Liberty County residents whose bill was less than \$5.00, instead having the County pay for those bills. The total amount for all residents who owe less than \$5.00 comes to \$616.14.

Commissioner Woods made a motion to not bill taxpayers owing less than \$5.00. Commissioner Wickum seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

Commissioner Wickum made a motion to approve Liberty County paying the \$616.14 for the taxpayers owing less than \$5.00. Commissioner Woods seconded the motion. Hearing no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

ROADS

The Commissioners will be discussing priority roads in the coming weeks. The bus routes are torn up from the usual wear and tear. The Commissioners will connect with the transportation committee and will be discussing a couple of changes for the buses.

COUNTY WEBSITE

The issue of who can post on the County website has come up- whether this would include special districts or solely County departments. The final determination of what can be posted on the County website is at the discretion of the Commissioners, and this will be noted on the website after the wording is finalized. Commissioner Woods made a motion to put a disclaimer on the Liberty County website to inform visitors that the County has the discretion to decide what is posted. 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 the conferences he's attended in the last couple of weeks, as well as recent cemetery district issues.

CLERK AND RECORDER

Clerk and Recorder Davin Padmos has updated the records retention list. The records no longer needed to be stored will be destroyed this week.

INTERVIEW

There is an applicant for the Universal Worker position, a part-time on-call position for the Senior Center or custodial throughout County offices. The Commissioners will be interviewing the applicant this week or next.

MAINTENANCE

Jerry Ghekerie, Maintenance, was in to update the Commissioners on the generator situation and ambulance maintenance schedule.

SENIOR CENTER

Glenda Hanson, Senior Center Director, was in to update the Commissioners on Senior Center services and some funding she is waiting on.

WEED DEPT/911

Jim Ghekerie, 911/Weed Dept, was in to update the Commissioners on road side spray prices, and uses.

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.

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: _____
