

September 4th, 2012 ♦ Tuesday

The Board of Liberty County Commissioners met in regular session on the above stated date at 10:00 AM in their room at the Courthouse. Those present were: Chairman Larry Hendrickson, Commissioner Russ Tempel and Commissioner Rlynn Rockman.

LEPC

We attended the monthly LEPC meeting. Several local fires were the topic:

1. Seidlitz fire burned several outbuildings, and
2. September 1st fire in eastern Toole County and western Liberty County burned about a 7 mile swath, including a house and outbuildings on the Barker farms.

WEED BOAT

We purchased the landing craft jet boat that we sent Wayne Wardell to Billings to inspect and test drive on August 28th. Price = \$19,500.

ROAD DEPARTMENT

Shawn Norick was in about road issues. Mowing is being done. Rock screening is being done. Shawn had a "sit-down" with an employee who been slacking as of late. We need Dale Carlstad to do some prep work on the parking lot at the center, as Greg May plans his pour this month (estimated date is September 24th).

DES

Ed Gherke provided training today at the firehall for area DES coordinators and staff in computer work (specifically, Excel programing).

COUNCIL ON AGING

The monthly Council on Aging meeting was held today. Two topics were the parking lot project and additional cabinets and storage for the center. Treasurer's report reveals a \$85,526 balance.

ECIVIS GRANTS

Mark Manfre from Ecivis Grants Network called to inquire if the county had any future projects / needs that may be eligible for grants. If so, he would like to meet with us and help with this process.

PERMISSION TO BE OUT OF STATE

Commissioner Tempel asked permission to be out of state from September 5th-11th. A motion was made by Commissioner Rockman, and seconded by Commissioner Hendrickson to grant permission. The motion carried.

PAYROLL

A motion was made by Commissioner Tempel and seconded by Commissioner Rockman to pay the current county payroll. The motion carried.

GREAT FALLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Jeremiah Johnson of Great Falls Development Authority, Talia Paschini of ADF Group, and Spencer Woitk (Board member of G.F.D.A.) came to discuss a new Structural Steel Fabrication business being built in Great Falls by a Canadian company (ADF), who will need road access into Montana to haul about three large loads per week of equipment . If everything gets approved, this business will employ about 300 workers. Also present at this meeting was Chester Mayor, Noel Walston. We gave them initial permission to utilize Liberty County roads per official approval from Montana Department of Transportation.

The preferred road map to be approved by MDT involves a route from I-15 to Kevin #343 to Galata; then Hwy #2 to Chester; then Secondary #223 to Fort Benton; and then Hwy #87 to Great Falls.

SHOVEL FACTORY

While Noel Walston was here, we reviewed the contract that the City / County made on 11-16-2006 with Earl-Fisher Bio-fuels on the lease of the old shovel factory. We need to address this issue, as there has been a few minor contract breaches.

WEED DEPARTMENT

Jim Ghekiere was in to discuss weed issues. We alerted him about weed growth behind the museum, as we got an alert from the city.

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

ATTEST: _____
Clerk

Chairman

September 5th, 2012 ♦ Tuesday

The Board of Liberty County Commissioners met in regular session on the above stated date at 10:00 AM in their room at the Courthouse. Those present were: Chairman Larry Hendrickson, Commissioner Russ Tempel and Commissioner Rlynn Rockman.

EARL-FISHER BIO-FUELS

We sent a letter to Earl-Fisher Bio-Fuels requesting sales invoices dated 11-6-2006 to present per a provision in the original contract. A copy of the letter was forwarded to Mayor Walston, who also signed it.

NOTE: After checking Liberty County tax records, Earl-Fisher Bio-Fuels is paying about \$1,700 in Real Estate taxes plus about \$2,800 in commercial machinery and supplies taxes each year.

NORTH JOPLIN ROAD

There have been recent complaints about heavy truck traffic (i.e., hay trucks) on the north Joplin road. Commissioner Tempel spoke with Sheriff Burrows, who will check it out.

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Rachel Ghekiere was in to discuss the school budgets. She recommends that we go with 65% figure as related to oil & gas revenues and interest income (as it gives a little "cushion", if needed), pending discussion with the Whitlash School Board. A motion was made by Commissioner Tempel, seconded by Commissioner Rockman, to accept the 65% proposal. The motion carried.

Commissioner Hendrickson signed the Liberty Elementary, C-J-I Elementary, and C-J-I High School budgets, but did not sign the Whitlash Elementary budget (pending information from the School Board Association).

COUNTY CLAIMS

Current claims were reviewed. A motion was made by Commissioner Rockman, seconded by Commissioner Hendrickson, to pay these claims as submitted. The motion carried.

LIBERTY COUNTY COMPENSATION BOARD

The Liberty County Compensation Board met with the following participants:

- A. 3 commissioners
- B. 3 community members = Ron Gleason, Dana Lalum, Roger Olson
- C. 5 elected officials = Gayle Dahlen, Rhonda Pimley, Ann Seidlitz-Melton, Rachel Ghekiere, and Holly Frederickson

Also present was county employee, Teresa Fenger.

There was discussion about the salary process; how the results affect other county employees (non-elected workers); benefits available to workers not available to elected officials; responsibilities of elected officials versus deputies and other workers; salaries of hired department heads versus elected officials; inequities in the system; and the effects of the recent raises granted in November, 2011.

We also discussed the \$3 billion hole in the pension system, which may result in an additional 1 ½ % increase to PERS.

It was also made clear that Liberty County also picked up the additional increase in employee medical insurance premiums per our permissive levy.

Calculations of current taxable values reveal a 4.5% increase. Clerk & Recorder, Rhonda Pimley, confirmed that any raise over the 5% would compromise our county reserves. Considerations of this and the potential increase to PERS, Dana Lalum made a motion to recommend a 3 ½% raise to our elected officials. The motion was seconded by Gayle Dahlen and it passed.

The meeting was adjourned with "thanks" to the board members for their time, efforts and concern.

COUNTY SALARIES

The Commissioners discussed the compensation board’s recommendation and made a decision. A motion was made by Commissioner Tempel, and seconded by Commissioner Rockman as follows: All Liberty County elected officials will be granted a 3 ½% raise for Fiscal Year 2012-13 (retro-active to July 1st, 2012). All non-elected workers will be given 53¢ per hour raise to their prospective wages. The motion passed unanimously.

SIERRA ROCK / GRAVEL

Rick McDaniels of Sierra Rock & Gravel in Great Falls called to offer his rock-crushing services to Liberty County. He will mobilize for 10,000 yards. He would like to be considered in our bidding process.

WEED & ROAD DEPARTMENTS

The Commissioners met with Shawn Norick, Jim Ghekiere, and Vern Holmes (maintenance man) at the county yards to discuss an addition to the pole barn storage area. We have expensive tires that need to be protected and other supplies and equipment to be enclosed. After ideas, measurements, conclusions, Vern will draw up initial plans and get bids on materials.

Also, Shawn will check on the cattle guard west of John Fritz’s place. It was repaired and welded by John this spring, but it’s now a “liability” issue to be solved.

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

ATTEST: _____
Clerk

Chairman

September 11th, 2012 ♦ Tuesday

The Board of Liberty County Commissioners met in regular session on the above stated date at 10:00 AM in their room at the Courthouse. Those present were: Chairman Larry Hendrickson, Commissioner Russ Tempel and Commissioner Rlynn Rockman.

DEPARTMENT HEAD MEETING

Nine department heads met with the Commissioners to update everyone on county business and projects.

WEED AND ROAD DEPARTMENTS

Jim Ghekiere and Shawn Norick stopped in to discuss current issues. We presently need 8-10 updated radios. Jim got verbal bids from Hi-Line communications (including rebates and trade-in's) for two different models (price range of \$4,665 to \$5,000). We looked at Vern's sketches of the proposed storage bay (secure garage addition to the pole building at the county yard); he is still getting material bids. Crew is presently working on road repairs and hauling gravel. We need a load of boulders at the 4-H Campground to do the bridge repairs.

EMS CONTRACT

We received the Region 2A EMS, Inc annual contract via Yvonne Hunnewell. A motion was made by Commissioner Rockman, and seconded by Commissioner Tempel, to approve this contract. The motion carried. Monetary consideration is \$250 / year.

WHITLASH SCHOOL

We asked Dan Kultgen, Chairman of the Whitlash School Board, to meet with us to clarify the current status of the Whitlash School. It seems that the Whitlash School "opened" for two days this fall with one student (who is presently enrolled in the C-J-I School system), with no hired / certified school teacher, and with a substitute teacher (who is not certified). The School Board authorized this "opening" to satisfy their interpretation of the statute that authorizes an "operational school". We requested that Dan provide us two criteria – a student and a certified teacher – before we can authorize their budget.

KENFIELD WINDFARM

Bret, Tim, Dennis, and Charlotte Kenfield met with the Commissioners and Corey Juhl (Juhl Wind, Inc), Andrew Seesiel (investor), and John Brown (construction) to update us on their wind project. Because they plan to put up ten two mega-watt wind machines, which is less than 25 mega-watt total, the development qualifies as a CREB project. The RFP will be announced in February 2013 and they hope and plan to be on the shortlist! The towers will come from Fargo, ND with an expected delivery date of September, 2013. As before, we offered total support to this project and will send an updated letter of support.

CEMETERY BOARD

Commissioner Rockman attended the monthly cemetery board meeting on September 6th. Current bills were paid and we discussed progress on the "info" building.

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

ATTEST: _____
Clerk

Chairman

September 12th, 2012 ♦ Tuesday

The Board of Liberty County Commissioners met in regular session on the above stated date at 10:00 AM in their room at the Courthouse. Those present were: Chairman Larry Hendrickson, Commissioner Russ Tempel and Commissioner Rlynn Rockman.

NEW RADIOS

A quote from Highline Communications in Cut Bank for 10 CM300's is \$565 each (less a Motorola rebate of \$185 and \$50 / trade-in) = \$4,975 total. We called Action Communications in to discover we can get 10 CM 300's at \$330 each (freight free and programmable to narrow-band) = \$3,300 total.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tempel, seconded by Commissioner Rockman, and the motion carried to declare the old radios as surplus property. Shawn will offer them for sale at \$50 each.

WHITLASH SCHOOL

We met with the County Superintendent of Schools, Rachel Ghekiere, and Dan Kultgen (Whitlash School Board chairman) to re-visit the controversy about the Whitlash School being "operational" versus "non-operational". The Whitlash School Board met last night (September 11th) to discuss our concerns about their proposed budget and to address the letter sent to them by Rachel. Dan provided a written response, which addressed our two requests: #1, they do have a teacher that qualifies as certified (Darlene Skari is applying for a Class 5 Educator license and has 3 year period to comply) and #2, they do have a student who started school on August 20th for the opening two days. Dan admitted that this student is presently enrolled at C-J-I, but could be back at Whitlash soon. Dan says his board is well-aware of the potential penalties from OPI if they determine the school is "unoperational", and he will deal with those consequences. We accepted his information prior to visiting with Elizabeth Woods (Deputy County Attorney), who was not available at the time of the conference.

After consulting with Elizatbeth Woods, she recommended that we not approve the Whitlash School budget, because they do not have a student.

Upon further discussion with County Attorney, Hugh Brown, we will approve the Whitlash School budget with the understanding that the Whitlash School board will accept the consequences of OPI related to "unoperational" schools. A motion was made by Commissioner Tempel, and seconded by Commissioner Rockman to approve the Whitlash School budget. The motion carried.

As a point of information, the approval of the Whitlash School request for 3.14 mills, which equates to approximately \$1,000.

CLAIMS

The claims were submitted for approval. A motion was made by Commissioner Tempel, seconded by Commissioner Rockman to pay the current claims. The motion carried.

LIBERTY COUNTY BUDGET

The Liberty County Budget Reports for Fiscal Year 2012-2013 were submitted for the Commissioners final approval. In reviewing all departments and other special funds, the budget changes to these departments range from a 33% increase (State Examiner Audits) to a 28% decrease (Disaster and Emergency Services). After discussing several specific items with the Clerk and Recorder (Rhonda Pimley) for explanation and clarification, Commissioner Tempel made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Rockman to approve the Fiscal Year 2012-13 Liberty County Budget. The motion passed unanimously.

ADF INTERNATIONAL

At the request of ADF International, we sent a letter to MDOT.

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

ATTEST: _____
Clerk

Chairman

September 18th, 2012 ♦ Tuesday

The Board of Liberty County Commissioners met in regular session on the above stated date at 10:00 AM in their room at the Courthouse. Those present were: Chairman Larry Hendrickson, Commissioner Russ Tempel and Commissioner Rlynn Rockman.

LIBERTY MEDICAL CENTER BOARD MEETING

Commissioner Hendrickson attended the monthly Liberty Medical Center Board meeting on September 12th. The administration is currently updating DRG's to coincide with BCBS payments. Also they discovered a substantial overpayment for computer services contract, so a refund is forthcoming.

HRDC

Commissioner Tempel attended the monthly HRDC board meeting on September 13th. An "at large" board member is needed.

POLE BARN

1. Vern Holmes (maintenance man) was in with the materials bid from Western Lumber on the 40' X 40' addition to the county shop pole barn. The total is \$9,930, not including the overhead door(s).
2. A previous bid dated 6-18-2012 from Greg May Construction for materials on a 20' X 40' addition was \$15,550, not including the overhead door (18' X 12' steel door installed = \$9,385).

A motion was made by Commissioner Tempel, seconded by Commissioner Rockman, to approve the material bid as submitted by Western Lumber in #1 above. The motion carried.

EXTENSION CONTRACT

The Fiscal Year 2013 Extension Services Agreement between MSU Extension and Liberty County was submitted for approval. The total county funding is \$85,377. A motion was made by Commissioner Rockman, and seconded by Commissioner Tempel, to approve and sign this contract. The motion carried.

EMS

Commissioner Hendrickson attended the monthly EMS meeting on Monday evening, September 17th. The group practiced on patient recovery from coulees using the new Junkin "basket" stretcher purchased / donated by EGT.

NIMS

Penny Walston reported that our PIO (Public Information Officer) is required to complete NIMS #702.

CHESTER MAYOR

Noel Walston, mayor, stopped in with a letter from Earl-Fisher BioFuels, which confirms their biodiesel sales for years 2006-2011. We will re-negotiate this contract as planned in 4 years.

CORRESPONDENCE

Regarding the Whitlash School issue, we received a letter from Lorang Law Office, who confirms that the mediation process in the Kultgen divorce resulted in the children to be enrolled in C-J-I (not Whitlash). Copies given to Hugh Brown and Rachel Ghekiere.

CLAIM

A late claim for commissioner’s registration fee for the upcoming MACo convention was submitted for payment. A motion was made by Commissioner Rockman, and seconded by Commissioner Tempel to approve this claim. The motion carried.

ROAD DEPARTMENT

Shawn Norick was in to discuss road issues. Shawn, the Commissioners, and Greg May met at the Senior Center to discuss the scope of the prep-work / cements work on the parking lot, which will begin this week.

SENIOR CENTER

Commissioner Tempel made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hendrickson, to order a cabinet for the Senior Center from LeCabinet Shoppe Inc. Price is \$2,245.00; to be payed out of the money raised by the Senior Center. The motion carried.

COUNTY PAYROLL

The current county payroll was submitted for approval. It includes the additional pay for approved raises retroactive to July 1st, 2012. A motion was made by Commissioner Rockman, seconded by Commissioner Tempel, to pay this payroll as submitted. The motion carried.

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

ATTEST: _____
Clerk

Chairman

September 25th, 2012 ♦ Tuesday

MACO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The three commissioners attended the MACo Annual Conference in Great Falls on Sunday through Wednesday, September 23 – 26. They were available by telephone and handled the following issues:

1. Current claims: A motion by Commissioner Tempel, seconded by Commissioner Rockman, to pay the current county claims. The motion carried, and was confirmed with Clerk & Recorder Pimley.
2. Audit: Our auditor from Denning & Downey is in the courthouse this week. Information from Clerk & Recorder Pimley is that we may have to submit an additional special audit related to the ARRA funds (transportation funds at the new center).
3. Ambulance Reports: Communication with Penny Walston about a recent request that all 2012 “trip reports” to be filed electronically with the state EMS by 9-30-12; this request is her first contact. Penny Walston and James Dahlen met with Yvonne Hunnewell to discuss this issue and its urgency. Reportedly, Yvonne will get on this right away.
4. We received official notice that Liberty Medical Center’s CEO, Ron Gleason, has resigned and will be taking the administration position at Northern Montana Hospital in Havre.
5. Kenfield Wind-Farm: We sent a new “letter of support” for the Kenfield Wind-Farm.
6. Laird Road: We received a call regarding a “blow out” on the road surface on the Laird Road near Wanken’s turn-off. Shawn Norick was notified and repairs were completed on 9-25 and 9-26.
7. Senior Center: The parking lot project is being completed this week by May Construction.