

**March 31, 2026**

**The Board of County Commissioners met at 9:00 a.m. in a regular session in the Commission Office of the Granite County Courthouse. Commissioner Kulaski, Commissioner Adler, and Commissioner McLure were in attendance. Also attending were Administrative Assistant Maranda Williams and Granite County Attorney Blaine Bradshaw, who participated in a portion of the agenda items in person. The session was live-streamed through the Zoom internet-based program available for the public to view the session and provide public comment. The public was also allowed to attend in person and provide comment. The session convened with the Pledge of Allegiance.**

**Also in attendance were members of the general public, including Justine Richmond, A. Tobin, Elena Gagliano, phone numbers, Monica Prince, Eric Anderson, Donovan Jones, Jen Walters, Sandra, Ashely Todd, Krista, Derek Campbell, and a zoom user.**

**BOARD MINUTES: Commissioner McLure moved to accept the board minutes from March 24, 2026. Commissioner Adler seconded the motion. Justine Richmond asked if Commissioner McLure got her question answered from prior to the meeting and Commissioner McLure said yes. Commissioner McLure confirmed she had her question about the meeting minutes answered before the meeting. She declined to elaborate, said no corrections were needed, and agreed to leave the minutes as they are. Justine asked if she is okay with an employee's name being on there. Commissioner McLure said yes. The motion passed unanimously.**

**CORRESPONDENCE;**

**An electronic mail was received from Maureen Connor asking if the Montana Department of Transportation has been around yet with their district plans for the future, and if Philipsburg has something for it, possibly. Commissioner Adler says they haven't received updates yet, but heard there's a new supervisor for the project. The weight list hasn't been provided, though it's expected soon. A presentation on the Bearmouth speed study (along I-90) is coming up, where the Commission and members of the public can ask questions. They're also waiting to hear MDOT's plans for Secondary State Highway 348, which are usually shared once conditions improve. The group considers responding with this information to Maureen.**

**Electronic mail was received about a public policy summit on April 6-7 in Bozeman on taxation.**

**Electronic mail was received from Maureen Connor asking if the Montana Department of Transportation has been around yet with their district plans for the future, and if Philipsburg has something for it. Commissioner Adler said department heads will start planning things once the weather breaks, it's what they do and on them.**

**Electronic mail was received from MACo on the County Participation Request – MT Census Block Boundaries.**

**Electronic Mail was received from MACo about the Annual On-Site Health Evaluation at Granite County on April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026.**

**Electronic Mail was received from the Montana Department of Transportation with information on the 11th Edition MUTCD Adoption and updates to load-posted bridge signage.**

**An electronic mail was received from MACo regarding the Districts 8, 9, and 12 Meeting Host in Granite County on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026, from 9 am -4 pm. We are to find a place to host and a cater to feed during lunch.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT: Elena Gagliano reviewed the correspondence and questioned whether Commissioners are thoroughly reading the correspondence items, noting that some require action or further discussion. She thanks Maranda for placing an item on the next agenda and reminds commissioners they should actively make decisions rather than just initialing and passing items along. Elena also references her detailed records of past meetings and suggests reviewing them to improve how correspondence is handled, expressing that current records lack clarity.**

**Monica Prince made public comments, saying she has reviewed several recent Commissioner meetings and, while she appreciates the Commissioners' work, raises concerns about how public comment is handled. She notes that some viewers see the comment section as chaotic, and some people watch to view the circus, and suggests stricter rules—such as prohibiting personal questions, limiting comments to the Commissioners (not the audience), and avoiding back-and-forth exchanges. She emphasizes that discussions should occur only when items are on the agenda, not during public comment, and encourages the commissioners to adopt clearer guidelines to prevent wasted time and inappropriate behavior.**

**WEEKLY REPORT WITH ROAD & BRIDGE SUPERINTENDENT, PAUL ALT; Paul Alt was absent from this meeting and is at MAKRS conference (training) in Great Falls right now. Crews recently completed work on Rock Creek and may continue there before moving to Middle fork, Moose Lake Road, depending on weather conditions. A new worker is starting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. Overall, road work is “hit and miss” this time of year due to weather, with crews prioritizing the worst problem areas first and planning to return for more thorough maintenance when conditions improve. Commissioner Adler adds that conditions are relatively good this year, with minimal runoff expected, though some roads have heavy traffic and potholes. Other projects, like culvert work, are underway or recently completed, but details are limited due to weather disruptions.**

**GRAVEL BID AWARD LETTERS; Bids were received from T3 Rock Productions at \$13.50 per yard, Bob Weaver at \$13.00 per yard, Carl Nelson Ranch Company at \$12.50 per yard with our loader or \$14.00 per yard if they load it, 348 Gravel Company at \$13.50 per yard,**

and F&R LLC at \$10.50 per yard. Commissioner Adler moved to approve the letters to all gravel bids which stated that the County would purchase based upon the lowest bids when considering trucking costs based upon where the gravel is needed around the County. Commissioner McLure seconded. Motion carried and passed.

**SOLID WASTE DISTRICT'S WEEKLY REPORT; John Kendall and Todd Bahsteter sent in their weekly updates via email. Commissioner Kulaski said he would get a slip tank coming this week for the Philipsburg site. Commissioner McLure brought up about getting signs for the manganese tailings. The Commissioners discussed the status of the Drummond and Philipsburg sites, accompanying written reports, that things are generally going well, but they are still waiting on a final burn permit. Due to weather issues, burn dates for the large debris (tree/branch) piles at site were rescheduled to the 8th and 9th. Preparations are mostly complete, including coordination with the volunteer fire department to manage safety burns around the site. They expect to receive the final permit just before the scheduled burn, allowing work to begin as planned. Coordination is ongoing with the Fire Department with David Ray and Mike Lee, and they plan to notify John Kendall to ensure everything is organized.**

**DAM TENDER'S REPORT, GEORGETOWN LAKE OUTFLOW; According to the USGS lake level gauge and the dam tender's report for the week, the lake level was reported at 6428.88 feet, 7.44 inches below full pool. Paul Tallon joined the Commissioners for this portion of the meeting and asked they go up to catch up to the inflows. Commissioner Adler moved to stay at 10 CFS for a week. Commissioner McLure seconded. No public comment was received. The motion passed unanimously. The Commission directed the County Attorney to send a letter to the agency representatives and stakeholders letting them know the County may request a temporary modification the following week if inflows remain as high as they have been, and the County Attorney stated he would get that done.**

**COUNTY AIRPORT ORDINANCE RE: BEACON AND RUNWAY LIGHTS AT RIDDICK FIELD AIRPORT—EMERGENCY USAGE; GENERAL WITH PUBLIC HEARING PROCESS; Blaine Bradshaw gave an update on the draft emergency beacon/runway lights ordinance. The commissioners discuss a proposed ordinance regarding airport runway lights and the beacon, which would limit use to emergencies. The plan is to have the airport board review the draft at their April meeting before moving forward with formal readings and publication. The discussion raises several points: ensuring coordination with the local Sheriff and emergency responders, possibly including the fire chief; clarifying whether the ordinance applies only to fixed-wing aircraft or also to helicopters; and concerns about pilots potentially activating lights remotely without authorization. It's noted that in emergencies, pilots and authorities may already have the ability to activate lights. Public comments suggest allowing the airport board to fully review and refine the ordinance, and to clarify rules and accessibility. Ultimately, the Commissioners agreed to send the draft ordinance to the Airport Board for review and recommendations before proceeding.**

They also briefly discuss logistics for the airport board's upcoming meeting, including having Eric Anderson serve as temporary, acting chair until a new Airport Board Chair is selected.

**COUNTY COURTHOUSE RE-ROOF: PLANS, COST ESTIMATES, AND PUBLIC BIDDING SCHEDULING WITH SLATE ARCHITECTURE;** Scott Cromwell and Seth Varty joined the commissioners for this portion of the meeting. Scott updated the commissioners on the re-roof project. They suggest doing a walkthrough of the roof area to review details before moving forward to bid. Commissioner Adler, Commissioner McLure, Maranda Williams and Blaine Bradshaw walked to look at the roof with Seth Varty and Scott Cromwell with Slate Architecture. Membrane will go a portion of way up the brick wall on each roof section (as per plans). Scott Cromwell said they will do a pre-bid walkthrough with prospective contracts. Project would be publicly bid. The architects presented an updated plan for the re-roof project, explaining that the scope has been reduced to focus mainly on replacing the roof membrane, which lowers the cost. There would be some windows replaced, but windows would not be re-located. They outline the work: removing the existing roof, repairing any damaged areas (like rot near drains), adding insulation, and installing a new membrane. They also explain a design change—rather than extending the membrane all the way up the walls, it will go partway up, which they believe is sufficient with proper drainage. Commissioner Adler raised concerns about past water seepage through brick and emphasizes the importance of sealing brick walls on sides of roof that are not covered by membrane and ensuring long-term durability. The architects agree to address this with added sealant and careful inspection. Commissioner Adler moved to proceed forward with the project and publicly bidding the project. Commissioner McLure seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

**TASK ORDER #16 FOR SERVICES TO COMPLETE THE PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING REPORT AND MCEP GRANT APPLICATION FOR THE SOUTH MAIN STREET BRIDGE WITH GREATWEST ENGINEERING;** Jeremiah They's with GreatWest Engineering joined the commissioners for this portion of the meeting. The commissioners discuss Task Order #16 with Great West Engineering for preliminary engineering work on the South Main Street Bridge and related infrastructure. The proposal aims to pursue funding through the Montana Coal Endowment Program (MCEP), which could provide up to \$750,000 to help cover the county's required match for a larger bridge replacement project (potentially part of a \$10 million effort). This would require completing a preliminary engineering report, evaluating alternatives, and submitting a grant application by a tight deadline. They discuss funding risks, match requirements (a 50/50 commitment), and uncertainties about ownership of certain bridge sections (county vs. state). It's noted that even if funding isn't secured, the effort could still help position the project for future support.

Commissioner McLure moved to go forward with and approve Task Order #16 to complete the preliminary engineering report and the MCEP Grant Application for the South Main

Street Bridge project with GreatWest. No public comment was received. The motion passed unanimously.

**HDR ENGINEERING'S PRE-INSPECTION REPORT ON FLINT CREEK PROJECT'S COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT;** Jessica Rudd with HDR Engineering joined the Commissioners for this portion of the meeting. The speaker from HDR Engineering provides an update on a pre-inspection preparation report (PIPER) that was recently submitted to the county. This report is required by FEMA (FERC in transcript context) ahead of an upcoming inspection scheduled in about a month. They explain that the document demonstrates the county is ready for the inspection and must be submitted by April 17. The Commissioners were asked to review the report and provide any comments by around April 8, so revisions can be made in time. The plan is to place the item on the next Commission meeting agenda for formal approval and signatures, after which it will be e-filed with FERC by Jeremiah Theys. The team also offers to return for a future meeting to walk through the inspection process in more detail. Some brief technical difficulties interrupt the meeting, but overall the update is informational, with next steps clearly outlined.

#### **MEETING WITH THE FAA; DISCUSSION ON COUNTY AIRPORTS**

Kevin Jagoda, Jason Garwood, and Summer Rippingale of the FAA joined the Commissioners for this portion of the meeting. The FAA asked the County to clarify its plans for Riddick Field Airport after learning the Commission had voted to make it daytime-use only except for emergencies. County officials confirmed that decision and explained it was driven by strong public opposition to expanded night operations and airport development, especially after controversy over the beacon light.

FAA staff said they mainly wanted to understand whether the County still intended to pursue airport development with federal funding requests. The county said it does not currently want expansion, though basic runway maintenance is still necessary. FAA explained that accepting federal airport funds can bring long-term obligations, but some limited funding for safety or maintenance might still be possible, depending on the project.

A major point of discussion was whether the beacon and runway lights could be remotely activated, since local officials said they had previously been told they could not. FAA indicated there may be options, including pilot-controlled lighting in some circumstances, which several local participants said was new information.

The group agreed the airport board should continue reviewing these issues and help recommend next steps. FAA asked the county to keep its office informed and said a follow-up letter on the County's future plans could wait until the Airport Board has had time to meet and organize. The meeting ended with a reminder that Airport board meetings must be publicly noticed and open, even if limited portions of the meetings are closed for privacy reasons.

**Meeting Adjourned at 12:33 p.m.**