March 30, 2020 Regular Session of the Beaverhead County Commissioners

The Board of Commissioners, in and for Beaverhead County, Montana, met in session on March 30, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Room of the Beaverhead County Courthouse. Present: Chairman C. Thomas Rice, Commissioner Mike McGinley. Commissioner John H. Jackson attended via conference call and their Assistant Cindy Decker was absent in quarantine.

Updates on County Projects:

Road Supervisor Scott Jones and Road Secretary Jamie Flynn did not join the meeting but sent in Road Report.
The crew has been hauling gravel on Carter Creek Road. They have also been working on equipment repair. The crew has also been doing some gravel pit reclaim work.

Tom reported on Senator Daines' call on Friday, March 27 regarding the SBA grants for private businesses that are less than 500 employees. There really wasn't anything discussed regarding local governments.

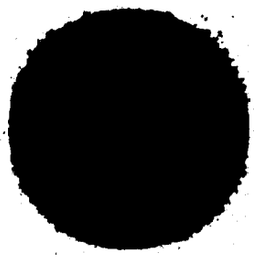
At this time, Commissioner Jackson left the conversation and will call back later.

No Road Report was filed today because of COVID-19 absences.

Discussion ~ Local Public Health Preparedness Update

Public Health Director Sue Hansen joined the meeting and stated that she doesn't have the update printed out quite yet, but will email it soon. She asked if Mike would sit on the local ICT (Incident Command Team 1) and he agreed. He will attend any meetings via Zoom Meeting.

Casey Elliott from the Tribune joined the meeting.



Beaverhead County Public Health
41 Barrett Street
Dillon, Montana 59725-4000
Phone: (406)683-4771
Fax: (406)683-3168

March 31, 2020

RE: Public Health Update

To: Beaverhead County Commissioners

As of today, March 31, 2020 at 0930; there are 184 confirmed cases in Montana. Gallatin County continues to be hit the hardest with 69 of the positive cases. There has been 14 hospitalizations and 4 deaths. One week ago, there were 34 positive cases in Montana. That is over a 5X increase in cases.

Beaverhead County has tested 57 individuals with 6 pending. We do not have any positive cases in Beaverhead County residents. Beaverhead County Public Health will be notified immediately when a test is positive so we can begin contact investigation. We continue to test only those who follow agreed upon criteria and must have COVID-19 symptoms. We are unable to test those who are not symptomatic because of limited availability of tests and testing supplies. There should be relief coming in the near future for healthcare facilities and clinics to perform rapid COVID-19 testing where results are available in about 15 minutes. At this time, we do not know when these will be available to Beaverhead County providers. Barrett Hospital is the only entity at this time providing testing. Healthcare providers with advice from public health, have put into place testing criteria. At this point, we are not testing anyone who are not symptomatic, even if they were a close contact to a positive case. Hopefully that will change when the rapid testing becomes available and we can test a wider range of the population. People are asked to call their health care provider if they are ill. They will be assessed for symptoms to determine what testing options should be ordered. Not everyone with respiratory symptoms will be tested for COVID-19.

Incident Command was initiated last week to help manage the COVID-19 response for the county. We are still in the startup phase as we continue to look for assistance from other agencies that have ICS experience. So far, we have not had luck with the Forest Service, BLM, or DNRC. We really need an experienced Planning Section Chief as that is a very critical position. This person is responsible for providing planning services for the incident. Information is collected from the other section chiefs to determine the situation and resource status. The information is evaluated and processed for use in the developing action plans for the operational period which is a 24-hour period, 10:00am to 10:00am. We are also working on liaisons from law enforcement and the hospital to provide important information to the IC so the Public Information Officer can get press releases out. We want to develop press releases on a consistent basis, whether its daily or 3 times/week. ICS will be meeting Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 9:00am via ZOOM. The Incident Action Plan will be updated and the management structure expanded as needed. ICS is currently structured:

Unified Command:
- Sue Hansen RN, Beaverhead County Public Health (BCPH)
- Tom Wegmann, Beaverhead County Disaster & Emergency Services (DES) Coordinator

Public Information Officer:
- Sadie Calzadar, Beaverhead County Disaster & Emergency Services (DES) Deputy
  Assistance: Lilia Guillen-Sanchez, BCPH

Finance/Administration Section Chief: Vacant

Planning Section Chief: Vacant

Operations Section Chief:
- Scott Monk, retired Fire Warden

Logistics Section Chief:
- Erin Montgomery, Tobacco Prevention Specialist for Madison/Beaverhead and also a veteran Marine experienced in ICS
- Assistance: Kara Mapelthorpe

Liaisons:
- Sheriff Office: Paul Craft
- Police Dpt.: Jeremy Alverez
- Hospital: Dirk Acker
- County Commission: Mike McGinley
- City of Dillon:
- City of Lima:

We are tracking people and organizations who have volunteered to help so we can fit them into our structure as needed. Many people are doing many activities on their own to help our community, we just need to know what they are doing so we can coordinate with them.

The PIO is working with BCPH to develop a media template to help with communicating to the public when the county has its first positive COVID-19 case and death (if it happens). There has been concerns from the media that they are not receiving information about the recent Madison County patient death. Public Health is bound by the Montana relevant statues and rules regarding confidentiality of health care information. We are struggling with what information can be released without the patient/family's consent and still be within the rule of law. It is a fine balance between confidentiality and the public right to know. I will be asking the state for help as it seems each county is providing information differently. Some are pretty specific where others are vague. A news release was sent out yesterday about the set up of ICS and confidentiality and sharing of information.

BCPH is also preparing for the first positive case and the processes that need to be in place to provide contact investigation. Calls from the public continue to flood in and we are trying our best to field them. However, I sometimes don't get back to people for several days. Much of the information the public is requesting is found on the Montana and CDC COVID-19 website and we continue to ask people to look at the websites. We provide information via Facebook videos a few times per week. We have great ideas but not always the time. Crisis communication must be priority and we are working hard to get the process in place. Now that ICS has been set up, the proper steps need to be followed to get press releases out. We will not do "on the spot" interviews with the paper. If need be, we may need to set up scheduled press briefs.

BCPH also had 2 reported pertussis cases in minors last week. The public health nurse was very busy dealing with contact investigation and coordination with healthcare providers. This was very work intensive as well as frustrating because the spread occurred with people blatantly not following social

distancing and advise allowing gatherings of people at their homes. With COVID-19 being easier to spread than many communicable diseases such as influenza and pertussis, this is very concerning that some of our community members are not taking the steps seriously to reduce the spread. This very well could have been COVID-19 and not pertussis. Again, our biggest threat is complacency about the virus.

BCPH sent a letter to law enforcement and the fire department requesting them to not use N95 masks and to give them to healthcare. N95 masks are not necessary for anyone who are not performing aerosolizing procedures. Law enforcement and firemen are considered low risk for COVID-19 exposure if they wear PPE when necessary. N95 may give a false sense of security. To work properly, they need to be fit tested to ensure a seal around the face. Facial hair does interfere with that ability. Law enforcement has developed policies to limit their exposure. Unfortunately, Paul Craft was not happy with our request and felt we are not thinking of officer safety.

On March 26, the Montana Youth Challenge program Director called us to consult about closing the program. We tried to close down the program the week before but the State Health Officer and the General felt the cadets were safer where they were at. We agreed on that IF they could more effectively monitor their staff. The people entering the building were the threat to the cadets. Once COVID-19 gets into the cadet population, it would be a very bad situation. His concern was that the patients had entered their facility even with stringent employee assessments occurring before they could enter the building. He felt their ability to keep out COVID-19 from the cadets was not feasible. They began sending cadets home but said it would be several days or even a week or longer to get all the cadets out of the building.

Last week was very busy with Directives from the Governor's Office.
March 23, 2020:

- Public Health put out a letter regarding clarity on business closures as there was push back from hair salons.
- Beaverhead County Emergency Declaration
- Executive Order from the Governor's Office providing measures to ease the procurement of medical supplies and hospital space

March 24, 2020:

- Executive Order from the Governor's Office extending closures and updating social distancing requirements
- Public Health put out a second letter regarding clarity for businesses regarding closures

March 26, 2020:

- Executive Order from the Governor's Office providing measures to stay at home and designating certain essential functions
- Public Health Order on specific business closures and healthcare non-essential services

March 27, 2020:

- Public Heath ordered closure of the Montana Youth Challenge Program until April 10th or further notice

Sue Hansen RN
Director
Beaverhead County Public Health

Discussion & Action ~ Appointment of 2020 Election Counting Judges

Clerk & Recorder Stacey Reynolds joined the meeting and passed out a letter with the details of who she would like appointed to serve on the Beaverhead County Counting Judge Board for the 2020-2022 election cycle.

After brief discussion, the following motion was made:

MOTION: Commissioner McGinley moved and Commissioner Rice seconded that Shannon McWilliams, Susanna Ruby, Jeanette Pittman and Barb Hall be appointed to serve on the Beaverhead County Counting Judge Board for the 2020-2022 election cycle with Heidi Schwandt and Kathy Hilton to serve if needed. A verbal vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Discussion & Action ~ Governor's Directive on Mail Ballot Election for Primary

Commissioner Jackson called back in for this agenda item.
Clerk & Recorder Stacey Reynolds passed out a letter she had prepared to the commissioners stating that yesterday (March 25, 2020) Governor Bullock issued Executive Orders 2-2020 & 3-2020 providing alternative measures to implement the 2020 June Primary Election. Stacey is asking for the commissioners' support in favor of changing the 2020 Federal Primary Election from a polling place election to an all-mail ballot election. Resolution 2020-07 – Calling for the June 2, 2020 Primary Election to be Conducted by Mail Ballot was reviewed.

After brief discussion, the following motion was made:

MOTION: Commissioner McGinley moved and Commissioner Jackson seconded that Resolution 2020-07 – Calling for the June 2, 2020 Primary Election to be Conducted by Mail Ballot be adopted. A verbal vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

A copy of the Resolution can be viewed below:

[redacted]
100633 Fee:$ 0.00 File: 2020-07 Page:1
BEAVERHEAD COUNTY Filed 3/30/2020 At 11:06 AM
Stacey Reynolds, Clerk and Recorder
By: [redacted]

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-07

A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE JUNE 2, 2020 PRIMARY ELECTION TO BE CONDUCTED BY MAIL BALLOT

WHEREAS, due to the global outbreak of COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus, on March 25, 2020, Governor Bullock of the State of Montana issued a directive implementing Executive Orders 2-2020 and 3-2020, permitting counties to conduct the June 2, 2020 primary under the mail ballot provisions of Title 13 Chapter 19, and suspending Section §13-19-104(3)(a), MCA, this purpose only; and

WHEREAS, Governor Bullock's directive recognizes that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has urged states to "encourage voters to use voting methods that minimize direct contact with other people and reduce crowd size at polling stations"; and

WHEREAS, on March 18, 2020, C. Thomas Rice, Chair of the Beaverhead County Board of Commissioners, declared that a state of emergency existed in Beaverhead County, Montana, as a result of the threat of the outbreak of the communicable disease COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, conducting a polling place election poses an enhanced risk to public health and human safety due to the COVOID-19 pandemic by promoting community transmission of the virus and endangering voters, poll workers, and non-voters alike; and

WHEREAS, §13-19-202, MCA, allows a governing body to request that the election administrator conduct an election by use of mail ballots; and

WHEREAS, the mail ballot provisions of Title 13, Chapter 19, MCA, still allow for in-person voting if the June 2 primary is conducted by the use of mail ballots and, consequently, Governor Bullock's March 25, 2020 directive includes measures required for safe registration and voting, such as the adoption and enforcement of social distancing policies at polling locations; and

WHEREAS, for a county choosing to conduct the June 2 primary by mail ballot election, Governor Bullock's March 25, 2020 directive requires the county to expand opportunities for early voting by: (1) making ballots available at the election administrator's office or other designated location from May 4, 2020 until the end of the election; (2) allowing voters to apply for, receive, and mark a ballot in-person in a manner consistent with § 13-13-222, MCA; (3) sending mail ballots 25 days before the end of the election, on May 8, 2020, consistent with the timeline for absentee ballots at § 13-13-205, MCA; and (4) including a prominent notice with instructions sent to voters with mail ballots that a postage stamp is not necessary to return the ballot by mail; and

WHEREAS, Governor Bullock's March 25, 2020, directive also requires that a county conducting the June 2 primary by mail ballot election submit a written plan to the Secretary of State under §§ 13-19-201, MCA, et seq. by April 2, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Beaverhead County finds that conducting the June 2 primary by mail ballot election is necessary to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of Beaverhead County.

NOW THEREFORE, it is hereby resolved as follows:

169633 Film 2020-07 Page:2
BEAVERHEAD COUNTY Filed 3/30/2020 At 11:06 AM

1. The Board of County Commissioners of Beaverhead County, Montana, hereby requests that the Beaverhead County Clerk and Recorder, as election administrator for Beaverhead County, conduct the June 2, 2020 primary election by mail ballot.

2. The June 2 primary mail ballot election shall be held consistent with Governor Bullock's March 25, 2020 directive, including the requirements that the election administrator:

   A. Make ballots available at her office or other designated location from May 4, 2020 until the end of the election;
   B. Allow voters to apply for, receive, and mark a ballot in-person in a manner consistent with § 13-13-222, MCA;
   C. Send mail ballots 25 days before the end of the election, on May 8, 2020, consistent with the timeline for absentee ballots at § 13-13-205, MCA;
   D. Include a prominent notice with instructions sent to voters with mail ballots that a postage stamp is not necessary to return the ballot by mail; and
   E. Submit a written plan to the Secretary of State under § 13-19-201, MCA, et seq. by April 2, 2020.

3. The election administrator shall establish, implement, and enforce the safe registration and voting measures identified in Governor Bullock's March 25, 2020 directive for all in-person voting for the June 2 primary election.

DATED this 30 day of March, 2020.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
BEAVERHEAD COUNTY

C. Thomas Rice

C. Thomas Rice, Chairman

ATTEST

Stacey Rappold
Clerk and Recorder, Beaverhead County

At this time, Stacey commented that she will be needing extra help for the mail ballot election. She also stated that she will need a ballot drop box for ballots and courthouse documents. Facilities will order those boxes to be placed outside near the cluster boxes. These will be bolted down for security purposes.
Commissioner Jackson left the conversation.

Public Comments on Subjects Under County Jurisdiction Not on Agenda
None

Recess
At 12:00 noon, Chairman Rice recessed the meeting. At 1:30 p.m., Chairman Rice reconvened the meeting with Commissioner McGinley present. Their Assistant Cindy Decker was absent and in quarantine.

Unfinished Business/Other Topics of Discussion:
Routine matters occupied the attention of the Board for the remainder of the day.

Payment of Invoices:
The Commissioners reviewed and approved invoices for a total of $59,247.94, beginning with check #204319 and ending with check #204399. The Invoice Payment Schedule is located in the Financial Administrator's Office.

Public Comments on Subjects Under County Jurisdiction:
There were no public comments.

Adjourn:
There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Attest: _____ Approved: _____
Clerk of the Board Vice Chairman of the Board