

## **FEBRUARY 23, 2026 Regular Session of the Beaverhead County Commissioners**

The Board of Commissioners, in and for Beaverhead County, Montana, met in session on February 23, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners Room of the Beaverhead County Courthouse. Present Commissioner John H. Jackson, Commissioner C. Thomas Rice and Acting Commissioner Support Specialist Rochelle Hoerning.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

At this time, those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance aloud to begin the day.

### **Updates on County Projects**

Clerk and Recorder Stacey Reynolds, Facilities Manager Shonna Graham, GIS Coordinator Tracy Sawyer, Sheriff David Wendt, Superintendent of Schools Mike Miller, County Attorney Sky Jones, Food Use Sanitarian Joyce Pollastro, Justice of the Peace Randi Braddock, Weed Manager Amber Burch, Jail Commander Ian Ternes, Landfill Manager Nick Hoem, Planner Tina Caron, and MSU Extension Agent Jack Bazemore joined the meeting.

Road Supervisor Bob Ferris was not present, however the following Road Department Report was submitted and scanned into the minutes:

### BEAVERHEAD COUNTY ROAD WORK February 15th to February 21st 2026 Dillon, Lima and Wisdom Areas

#### DILLON AREA

- Plow Snow Local Rods
- Repairs and Maintenance
  - Road Check

#### WISDOM AREA

- Haul Scrap
- Plow Skinner Meadows, Miner Lake, Little Lake, Big Lake, Upper North Fork, Lower North Fork
  - CAT to Wisdom for Cutting Edges
    - Check Local Roads

#### LIMA AREA

- Plowed Snow on South Valley Road
- Equipment Repair, Maintenance and Cleaning
  - Checked Local Roads

Nick Hoem reported that he is training the two new hires, they are learning quickly. He went to Idaho with Sheriff Wendt to pick up electronics.

Jack Bazemore reported that he has a meeting tomorrow with Rural Fire fighters. He had the 4H shooting event over the weekend, it was well attended.

Sheriff Wendt stated that they have 18 inmate's downstairs. Like Nick mentioned, they went to Idaho to pick up 6 repeaters from Idaho Power. They also got a box of 12 radios.

Ian Ternes reported that the population downstairs is slowly climbing again. They have been short staffed. They are working on a check in system. Kegan is now working down there. Sheriff Wendt stated that he will introduce him at the next meeting.

Amber Burch reported that they had an annual conference two weeks ago. Last week grants were released. She put in for 8 to 9, she will give some presentations on those.

Stacey Reynolds reported that candidates for elections opened last week, closes March 4<sup>th</sup>. She will be heading to Helena today and for the next 3 days for a Conference.

Joyce Pollastro reported that she has completed a lot of inspections already this year. She will be going with Land Use Sanitarian Tom to inspect a septic system that is failing.

Shonna Graham reported that two weeks ago the blower for the furnace in the Law annex was replaced, along with the breaker and some outlets. Northwest Energy and West Electric completed the work for the generator. The start up for the generator is scheduled for March, there is an electrical issue so they are fixing that. Cameras went down, switch went bad, so Redtail fixed that. She has received some applications for the new job posting.

Tina Caron reported that Beaverhead County was picked to participate in a Rural Energy Academy. Today is the kickoff for that. She will be in Great Falls for a Floodplain Conference the rest of the week.

Tracy Sawyer returned from vacation today. He didn't have anything to report.

Mike Miller reported that he went to two rural schools last week for observations. This week he will be attending a board meeting at Fairmont.

JP Braddock reported that she received two new felonies over the weekend. They are currently in the jail. They have some people that have been sentenced, but they aren't doing what they need to do so they are revoking.

County Attorney Jones reported that his office is busy, they have some trials they are prepping for.

#### **Discussion and Action- Resolution 2026-10 Sheriff Grant Application**

Sheriff Wendt is applying for a grant to purchase a new Coroner Vehicle.

Sheriff Wendt stated that this grant is for a brand-new Suburban for the Coroner. The Grant will pay \$50,000. This vehicle will also be a crime scene vehicle.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Jackson moved and Commissioner Rice seconded to approve Resolution 2026-10. A verbal vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

#### **Discussion and Action- Appoint to Fair Board**

Jackie Sutton has resigned from the Beaverhead County Fair Board. A letter of interest was received from Olie Else to be appointed to the board.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Jackson moved and Commissioner Rice seconded to appoint Olie Else to the Fair Board. A verbal vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

#### **Discussion – MVD Change of Schedule**

Derek Tedrick from Montana Vehicle Division was present to discuss a change of schedule to the MVD in Dillon. The schedule is currently Monday thru Thursday and Derek would like to change it to be only open 3 days a week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday).

Derek stated that they will go from 31 hours to 23 service hours. He explained that the numbers reflect why they are needing to cut down on the hours. They simply do not have the volume of appointments as they once did. In 2023 there was a new system implemented that cut appointment time down from 20 minutes to 5 minutes per

appointment. There is a kiosk in the Treasurers office to allow people to set up appointments, as well as online and a call center. Moving forward with this change, if we see that things need to be adjusted, they can do that. He will post the new hours in the paper and also post flyers. These new hours will not impact the CDL licensing at all.

### **Discussion- Study Commissioners Present the Final Report**

Brooke Erb was present to discuss the local government study.

Brooke explained that they have not finalized the report. They will have another meeting to finalize and approve the amendment of the report. Sky stated that there might be some comments or questions on how this will get onto the ballot. Brooke stated that they have met with Stacey and are aware of the time frames.

### **Action on Previous Meeting Minutes**

The minutes of the February 2, 2026 meeting will be read and approved at the next Commissioners meeting.

### **Public Comments on Subjects Under County Jurisdiction Not on Agenda**

Bryant Jones attended the meeting to discuss a fencing issue. He runs cows next to the solar farm and landfill. He leases the land from the Solar farm company. He has fixed the fence approx. 10x this year. His cows keep pushing through the old broken-down fence. He stated that there needs a new fence on both the Solar Farm and the County side. He talked with the solar farm folks and they approved to pay for 50% of the project. Commissioner Rice stated that we will need a letter from the solar farm (Clean-Air). The proposed fence replacement runs about 1.5 miles. Commissioner Rice explained that we would have to put it out for bid. There was some discussion about fence on line and surveying. Commissioner Rice encouraged Brian to get the proposal and bring it back to the Commissioners.

Rick Hartz attended the meeting to discuss the Beaverhead County Wood Bank Ministry, Inc. He hopes to get a letter of support from the Commissioners in order for the Wood bank to be able to apply for the Federal and State Surplus. They need to replace their 2021 Ford delivery truck. Rick explained that the Wood Bank serves impoverished. He believes this will help them qualify for Federal or State Surplus property. He provided a summary of client applications to show the baseline of the poverty guidelines. Rick also provided a template as an example of the type of letter of support the Wood Bank needs in order to submit their application. Commissioner Rice stated that he will discuss this with the County Attorney to see if the County can provide a letter to this non-profit.

### **New or Unfinished Business/Other Topics of Discussion**

Routine matters occupied the attention of the Board for the remainder of the day.

### **Payment of Invoices**

CK #219664 Motorola \$1,513.00 Sheriff Dept.  
 CK #219665 Stockman Bank \$341.22 Public Health  
 CK #219666 Safeway \$1,385.00 Detention Meals  
 CK #219667 Stockman Bank \$421.52 Bob Ferris  
 CK #219668 Stockman Bank \$2,511.27 Public Health

The Commissioners reviewed and approved invoices for a total of \$54,072.93 beginning with check #219669 and ending with check #219711.

CK #219712 Mt Assoc Extension 4-H Youth \$10.00  
 CK #219713 Internal Revenue Service \$1,501.20  
 CK #219714 Safeway \$1445.00 Detention Meals  
 CK #219715 Madison County Justice Court \$285.00  
 CK #219716 Deerlodge Justice Court \$500.00

CK 219717-219719 Void Printer error  
CK #219720 Missoula County Justice Court \$285.00

They also reviewed and approved invoices for a total of \$25,036.60 beginning with check #219721 and ending with check #219749.

The Invoice Payment Schedule is located in the Financial Administrator's Office.

**Public Comments on Subjects Under County Jurisdiction**

No comments.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business to come before the Board; the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Attest: _____	<i>R. Reynolds</i> Clerk of the Board <i>by Shanna Burkemper</i>	Approved: _____	<i>C. Thomas Rice</i> Chairman of the Board
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