

May 11, 2026 Regular Session of the Beaverhead County Commissioners

The Board of Commissioners, in and for Beaverhead County, Montana, met in session on May 11, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners Room of the Beaverhead County Courthouse. Present Commissioner Michael J. McGinley, Commissioner C. Thomas Rice and Rochelle Hoerning for the Commissioner Support Specialist Dana Basile.

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Updates on County Projects

County Attorney Sky Jones, Clerk and Recorder Stacey Reynolds, Human Resources Director Theresa Eathorne, Facilities Manager Shonna Graham, Landfill Manager Nick Hoem, Food Use Sanitarian Joyce Pollastro, GIS Coordinator Tracy Sawyer, MSU Extension Agent Jack Bazemore, Justice of the Peace Randi Braddock, Road Supervisor Bob Ferris, Fair Grounds Keeper Justin Kellabrew, and County Planner Tina Caron, joined the meeting.

Road Supervisor Bob Ferris was present and reported that they are blading roads, they plowed the byway, there was still some snow at crystal park. They plan to open the byway gates on Thursday night. Lemhi gates will be opening this afternoon.

The following Road Department Report was submitted and scanned into the minutes:

BEAVERHEAD COUNTY ROAD WORK
May 3rd to May 9th 2026
Dillon, Lima and Wisdom Areas

DILLON AREA

- Blade Trapper Cr, Bighorn, Cherry Cr, Browne's Bridge, Schoolhouse, Hogsback, Birch Cr, Old Armstead, Hwy 324
 - Plow Snow on Byway
 - Repairs and Maintenance
 - Road Check

WISDOM AREA

- Blade Gibbonsville, Miner Lake, Lower North Fork, and Big Lake
 - Pump Oil, Parts Run
 - Check Local Roads

LIMA AREA

- Bladed Rowe Ln, Kidd Ln, Ashbough Trail, Wolfe Ln, Bimat Ln, Dell Airport, Hansen Ln, Quarter Circle Trail, Fitters Ln, Sage Creek, South Valley Ln, and Medicine Lodge
 - Checked Local Roads

Stacey Reynolds reported that the ballots went out on Friday, May 8th.

Nick Hoem reported that he rebuilt a bucket on a loader. They have been busy picking up trash from all the wind. He got the siren up and going at the landfill but it still needs more work. Nick stated that he talked with Tom W. about moving the siren from the college to lima. Still ironing out the details on that.

Jack Bazemore reported that he got his level 2 certificate in shooter training. This week he will be working on grant applications. He has a meeting tomorrow with youth challenge to talk about a greenhouse project. He interviews on Monday for a Real Montana course. He will also be going to the elementary school with Amber Burch to talk about bugs and weeds.

Theresa Eathorne reported that the Weed Department will have 6 new hires, 4 returning. Everyone needs to get their insurance completed. Aflac will also be here for sign-ups.

Shonna Graham reported that an outlet will be put in for some wiring for the judge's chambers. There is an electrician working on it right now. This project goes with the grant. They also are helping Carly Anderson with her district court convention this week. They are working on mowing/yard work.

Sheriff Wendt had nothing to report.

Joyce Pollastro reported that Tom W. is in Africa until June 6th, but he is still available by phone if needed. Joyce remains busy with inspections.

Tina Caron reported that she is focusing on helping lima with their planning board. She will attend their meeting tonight.

Justin Kellabrew reported that he started painting one of the buildings at the fairgrounds. He will be de-winterize the bathrooms this week. He had a walk through with the fair board and he has some good projects coming up. He will also start replacing seating (benches) in the grandstands this week.

Tracy Sawyer reported that he is working on gravel pits to submit to DEQ. He hopes to get that all finished up before he retires at the end of the month.

Judge Braddock reported that the hearing for today has been continued. Bo was at conference last week. There is a bench trial coming up for a truck driver ticket. They will send out jury duty summons on June 1st.

Sky Jones reported that he hired Attorney John Gardner, he will start June 1st. He might go to a training with Margot next week. They are Prepping for some trials coming up.

Discussion and Action-Gillis Family Transfer

Commissioner Rice read the Questions for Family Transfer Claimants to the property owner John Gillis. A copy of this signed document can be found filed with the COS in the Clerk & Records Office.

MOTION: Commissioner McGinley moved _____ and Commissioner Rice seconded to approve the Gillis Family Transfer. A verbal vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Discussion- Review Property Casualty Trust with Hope Barker

Hope Barker with MACo was present to review the PCT. She provided a presentation packet to the group. A copy of this presentation can be found in the Commissioners Admin. Office.

Commissioner McGinley asked for the appraisal list. Per Josh, he is still going through it and should have it ready tomorrow for each department. McGinley wants to know more about the buildings and contents list.

Hope explained the benefits of pooling. They make sure the pool is in a stable rate. They work closely with their actuary to keep contributions low while still maintaining the health of the pool. She went over the Deductibles and stated that they did add Zoning, Ethics and Flood Plain to the deductibles. She went over the renewal Summary and explained that the liability had a 7.5% increase to base rate. No change for Vehicles and Equipment and the Fidelity and Crime is at \$23.86/employee. Property has a 4.0% decrease to rate.

She went over the PCT-Property & Casualty loss ratio and the liability graphs. She stated the Sheriff's Department is a higher liability due to inmates and patrol officers having the potential to hit deer, etc. while on duty in their vehicles. She

went over the projected net position and risk capital target range graph. She explained that we are getting closer and closer to that green target area.

She went over the services provided and informed the group that the risk management team/attorneys are there for guidance and advice but they are not our personal attorneys so there is no confidentiality. She continued to go over the other services provided such as general counsel, county litigation group, public safety risk management, finance management and MCT. Josh and Hope explained that the Jail Review program goes hand in hand with Lexipol. She also mentioned a new zin pouch program that gives the inmates incentives.

She mentioned that the Builders risk is required, 5 million but can be quoted outside of that though and its usually included in the bid.


Josh and Commissioner McGinley talked about the building appraisal and replacement costs. In Josh's opinion he thinks we can decrease some buildings costs if we don't use them and don't need them to be built back to how they were. Commissioner McGinley would like to see the appraisal values. He stated that they just about doubled and so he wants to look more into that. Josh stated that he can get a side by side excel sheet of what the building use to be compared to what they are now after the appraisals. They have until the end of June for the renewal, so there is still time to discuss things more in depth.

Drought Task Force

The meeting convened at 11:00 a.m. This portion of the meeting is recorded on Teams.

A copy of the sign in sheet can be viewed below: **It is noted that individuals who signed in are not federally employed nor paid to be here.**

JURISDICTION USING SOFT MATCH: Beaverhead County DES				Training/Ev. Roster
POINT OF CONTACT OR LEAD INSTRUCTOR: Tom Wagenknecht				
EVENT /OR MEETING NAME: Drought Task Force				
LOCATION: Beaverhead County Courthouse, Commissioners' Room				
DATE AND TIME:	CONTACT HOURS:			
Name / Title	E-mail or Phone #	EMPG/Federally Funded?	Trp Miles	T
Cathy Elliott Dillon Tribune		Yes / No <input checked="" type="radio"/>		
Tom Wagenknecht Commissioner		Yes / No <input checked="" type="radio"/>		
Rochelle Hoerning Bevhd. Co DES		Yes / No <input type="radio"/>		
Nancy Mayne		Yes / No <input checked="" type="radio"/>		
Jim Mayne		Yes / No <input checked="" type="radio"/>		
TRAVIS WILSON LVFD		Yes / No <input checked="" type="radio"/>		
Julie Dillasto Bevhd County	For Tom W.	Yes / No <input checked="" type="radio"/>		

JURISDICTION USING SOFT MATCH: Beaverhead County DES		 Training/Event/Meeting Roster					
POINT OF CONTACT OR LEAD INSTRUCTOR: Tom Wagenknecht							
EVENT/OR MEETING NAME: Drought Task Force							
LOCATION: Beaverhead County Courthouse, Commissioners' Room							
DATE AND TIME: _____ CONTACT HOURS: _____							
Name / Title: <i>Commissioner McCartney</i>	E-mail or Phone #: _____	EMPG/Federally Funded? Yes / No	Trip Miles	Total Hours	Cost Per Mile	Hourly \$ for Volunteers	Total Soft Match
Organization: <i>Byhd. Co.</i>	Address: _____	Yes / No					
Name / Title: <i>Joe Brummell</i>	E-mail or Phone #: _____	EMPG/Federally Funded? Yes / No	Trip Miles	Total Hours	Cost Per Mile	Hourly \$ for Volunteers	Total Soft Match
Organization: <i>Madison Co. (via Teams)</i>	Address: _____	Yes / No					
Name / Title: <i>Jane Fogelman</i>	E-mail or Phone #: _____	EMPG/Federally Funded? Yes / No	Trip Miles	Total Hours	Cost Per Mile	Hourly \$ for Volunteers	Total Soft Match
Organization: <i>NWS (via Teams)</i>	Address: _____	Yes / No					
Name / Title: _____	E-mail or Phone #: _____	EMPG/Federally Funded? Yes / No	Trip Miles	Total Hours	Cost Per Mile	Hourly \$ for Volunteers	Total Soft Match
Organization: _____	Address: _____	Yes / No					

National Weather Service

Jane Fogleman, Hydrologist from the National Weather Service joined the meeting via Teams and began her presentation. A copy of the presentation can be viewed in the DES Office.

Bureau of Rec/East Bench Irrigation/Clark Canyon Water Users

Kaycie Mikunda was not present, but provided a report via email. Commissioner Rice read the progress report aloud (a copy of which can be viewed below).

**EAST BENCH IRRIGATION DISTRICT
Drought Task Force**

May 11, 2026

PROGRESS REPORT

CLARK CANYON RESERVOIR:

	<u>ELEVATION</u>	<u>STORAGE</u>		
YEAR: Apr 2026	5532.12'	110,069 a/f	63% Full,	82% of avg.
YEAR: Apr 2025	5540.64'	147,181 a/f	84% Full,	110% of avg.
	Difference	- 37,112 a/f		

Present Elevation: 5631.44 feet: 107,326 a/f Storage: 62% Full, 80% of avg.
 Inflows (Last five (5) days Average: 89 cfs/day
 Present releases: 395 cfs

INFLOWS FOR:	Apr 2026	5,024 a/f	84 cfs/day	33% of avg.
INFLOWS FOR:	Apr 2025	5,062 a/f	85 cfs/day	33% of avg.

RELEASES FOR:	Apr 2026	2,120 a/f	Storage Gain:	2,094 a/f
RELEASES FOR:	Apr 2025	3,098 a/f	Storage Gain:	1,964 a/f

SNOW PACK: Above Beaverhead Basin
 May 10, 2026 14% of avg.
 May 10, 2025 48% of avg.

Above Red Rock Basin
 May 10, 2026 18% of avg.
 May 10, 2025 26% of avg.

Lima Dam:

May 10, 2026:	Elevation:	6,579.21 ft	Storage:	64,063 a/f	75% Full;	106% of avg.
May 10, 2025:	Elevation:	6,580.78 ft	Storage:	72,290 a/f	85% Full;	121% of avg.
		Difference		-8,227 a/f		

Inflows last five (5) days Average: 119 cfs/day
 Present releases: 17 cfs

Safety team Meeting

The minutes for the Safety Team meeting will be filed with the Clerk and Recorder and stored in the Human Resources Office.

Discussion- Workers Comp Review with Seitz Insurance

Theresa Eathorne, along with Jamie Larson, David Seitz, and Cami Skinner were present to discuss Workers Comp. David provided a renewal proposal packet. A copy of this packet can be found in the Commissioners Admin. Office.

Commissioner McGinley stated that we have been kicked from Blue to Gold. David scheduled credit onto the account that gave \$18,000 credit to help so we didn't get hit as hard. Commissioner McGinley asked about the Sheriff wreck, is that causing us issues? Per David, no indemnity loss, only taking 30%. The Weed Department accident (that occurred 3 years ago) is what is affecting us right now. He is on wage loss. State fund is still paying him. David asked if this individual still works for Beaverhead County. Commissioner McGinley called the Weed Department Coordinator, Amber to ask. Per Amber, he does not work here anymore. He left the County in September 2023. The Mod factor is up because of this incident. There will be some follow up about this.

Commissioner Rice asked about the Term Premium Factors on the quote proposal page. Commissioner McGinley clarified that this rate will come into effect starting the new fiscal year July 1, 2026. David stated that the quarterly update is both pretty good regardless of what group you are in (blue or gold).

There was some discussion about what they put together 5 years ago with MACo and State Fund.

Discussion- Beaverhead Trails Coalition Update from Dan Downey

Dan Downey was present to discuss the kids bike course. He stated that the new trail head called the West trail was sculpted and vegetation. They held a public hearing in February 2025 to ask the public what they would like done at the trail head. Number one request was a kid's bike course. They received some funding from (3) entities for this project. They are putting out a proposal for a bid to have this constructed. It will be like a BMX course, non-electrical course. This is a gravity flow course and they will start construction once the funds are available. The project deadline is fall of 2027. The land that they purchased for this through the grants is in perpetuity. Dan is excited to have this bike course constructed for kids.

Dan hopes to keep working with the County for all these trails, walking paths. Jamie Cottom stated that she believes there is about 17 miles of trails and provided a pamphlet with a map of the trails called "High Trails System Map".

Action on Previous Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the May 4, 2026, meeting were not read.

Public Comments on Subjects Under County Jurisdiction Not on Agenda

Forest Service- Dillon District Ranger Sara Rouse, and Jennifer Nickelson the new RAC Coordinator joined to discuss the (RAC) Resource Advisory Committee and (SRS) Secure Rural Schools on the title 2 money. Sara explained that the charter is still not signed, but she was told that the federal register had to be published prior to the charter being assigned. Once it is signed, we can get moving. We don't have to start from scratch, for Beaverhead we do have 15 nominees and there are 13 being moved forward as recommended with 2 alternates. Those 15 people just need to resubmit their application since their signatures expired from 2024. Jennifer and Sara will meet later this week to start pulling everything together with contacts and phone numbers so that they can reach out once the charter is signed. Per Commissioner McGinley, he has been reaching out to people already and said that Linda Marsh retired from schools but might still be interested to serve under another position such as member at large.

Commissioner Rice asked how they advertise to get people on the committee. Per Sara and Jennifer, they publish in the paper, website,

other outreach. Commissioner McGinley stated that this 4 county RAC that we have, most of the money comes from Beaverhead and it's been in agreement that since we put in more, we should get more of the projects.

Sara stated that we are a priority since it's been sitting in process for so long. She is hopeful for a quick turnaround. She is anticipating about 6-9 months out.

Commissioner McGinley stated that if we don't change our formula, we should plan our budget for these projects. Per Jennifer, yes. Commissioner McGinley asked about monitoring and reports. He just reviewed some prior projects and wants to know if they got done. Per Sara, she will look into it. He stated that there were very few reports coming back to the RACs. Jennifer clarified that this is a requirement and she will ask about them. McGinley referenced the projects from 2023 and Jennifer said that she will try to track them down. Sara explained that any of the money that wasn't expended in those old pots are still available to use before 2029.

Sara stated that the intent to establish (SRS) Secure Rural Schools resource advisory committee notice that Commissioner McGinley received caused a lot of confusion and that the dates are not correct. She is not sure why that was sent out. She will keep in contact with the County to ensure they are all on the same page.

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 #220280 MT Dept Revenue \$1,446.82 (Browns Bridge)
 Ck #220281 R Rhodes Construction \$143,235.67 (Browns Bridge)
 Ck #220282 Safeway \$4,175.00 (Detention Meals)

The Commissioners reviewed and approved invoices for a total of \$86,919.80 beginning with check #220283 and ending with check #220349. The Invoice Payment Schedule is located in the Financial Administrator's Office.

Public Comments on Subjects Under County Jurisdiction

None.

Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Board; the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Attest:  Clerk of the Board
 by Shannon Burkenpas, deputy

Approved:  Chairman of the Board