October 26, 2026 Regular Session of the Beaverhead County Commissioners

The Board of Commissioners, in and for Beaverhead County, Montana, met in session on October 26, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners Room of the Beaverhead County Courthouse. Present Commissioner C. Thomas Rice, Commissioner Michael J. McGinley, and 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

Road Supervisor Bob Ferris was present and reported the following. They spent last week putting in culverts in the Big Hole and they will be working more on that this week.

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

BEAVERHEAD COUNTY ROAD WORK
October 18th to October 24th 2026
Dillon, Lima and Wisdom Areas

DILLON AREA
- Blade Hwy 324, Mansfield, Bannack Bench
- Culverts in Big Hole
- Repairs and Maintenance
- Road Check

WISDOM AREA
- Blade Rock Ck
- Culvert Install Lower North Fork, Upper North Fork, Gibbonsville
- Check Local Roads

LIMA AREA
- Blade Chute Canyon Rd
- Flood Control on Big Sheep Creek
- Equipment Repair/ Moved Equipment
- Checked Local Roads

School Superintendent Mike Miller, Clerk and Recorder Stacey Reynolds, Landfill Supervisor Nick Hoem, Facilities Supervisor Shonna Graham, County Attorney Sky Jones, Public Health Director Lilia Gullien-Sanchez, MSU Extension Agent Jack Bazemore, Justice of the Peace Randi Braddock, Food Use Sanitarian Joyce Pollastro, HR Director Theresa Eathorne, Clerk of District Court Carly Anderson, Sheriff David Wendt, and Weeds Supervisor Amber Burch, joined the meeting.

Nick added he has the crushers at landfill working on steel pile.

Jack mentioned he attended the Extension Annual Conference in Bozeman last week.

Mike commented he will be at Reichle today doing an observation.

Shonna added that they have been working on elections set up to take ballot boxes around the county. Boilers fired up.

Lilia mentioned that they are back to a normal schedule this week. Wednesday clinics have been steady. Mental Health first aid training is Wednesday for county employees.

Stacey commented that Kelsey has been filling in as a temp and they are recommending her be hired on full time as a deputy. They are 1 week out from general elections.

Theresa added that she has been busy with the application and hiring process. She will be in Missoula for Black Mountain software training.

Joyce mentioned she has been handling complaints and working through a few inspections. She is finalizing the FDA grant and end of year. There will be a ServeSafe training in February.

Carly added that court is on Friday so be aware with Halloween celebrations to be quiet.

Amber commented that she is working on grants, reports, and paperwork.

Sheriff mentioned that he was helping game warden all weekend. 16 inmates this morning.

Randi added that there are a few cases, civil hearings and compliance hearings this week. There is a jury trial set in mid-December. There were 2 felony warrants this weekend.

Sky commented that they have some hearings this week. Working on violations. Busy for the next few months with trials and prep.

Discussion and Action- Appoint County Representative to Lima Planning Board

The City of Lima sent a letter requesting the Commissioners to appoint a representative to Lima Planning Board. The commissioners would like to appoint Kristen Bailey.

Motion: McGinley moved to appoint Kristen Bailey to the Lima Planning Board. Rice seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

Discussion- Collections Bill from Barrett Hospital

Present: Tracy Sawyer, Lilia Guillen-Sanchez, Damian Guillen, Taylor Rose, Shane Puyear, Sheriff Wendt, Mark Boka, Jim and Nancy Mayne, Casey Elliott, Hagan Hurst, George Warner

McGinley added the county received a bill from collections for services from the detention center inmates for approximately $57,000. When inmates are taken into custody, they lose their medical coverage and the county is then liable. There is current legislation moving to help address the issue.

He has gone through the bills and worked with the Jail Commander going through them. Some are not our responsibility, about $27,000. Some of the other packet of claims, after being reviewed, it is about $21,000 that could be Beaverhead County liability. He elaborated on the claims and using CRS.

He added that this amount of money we owe Barrett Hospital we believed were always "written off" until last year we paid $66,000. This is coming out of tax payer money if the county pays this bill. The county hospital district needs to put in a claims request to add levy to the tax bills. The budget process in June needs to include the hospital district to decide levy on the tax bills for bills due.

Taylor added that they have been working with the county for 2 years. He quoted MCA on the 120 days trying to collect from the patient. He also stated that they have previously billed the county but there has been an increase in services. The county is the payer of last resort. If the inmate comes from out of county, the other county is the payer. They are working with CRS per the county which does offer a discount to the county. He discussed the public hospital district and current private board in relation to the tax burden on the public.

McGinley added that the county does not have the authority to raise taxes, the districts are formed to have the authority to raise taxes such as fire districts and ambulance district to pay. The board of jurisdiction can assess the mills to pay the hospital. He

shared the proposed resolution and packets of information of the claims. He elaborated on the packets he has put together with Ian for the billing company and what CRS says we owe. He elaborated how much historically we have budgeted for inmate bills for the last 25 years. He added comment on this as a legislative issue on the bills coming back to the county instead of being on the state.

Taylor commented that the county needs to look into better insurance for the inmate medical.

McGinley added comment on the hospital district adding a line to the tax bills.

Taylor added that there is another $77,000 coming from the hospital that has not gone to collections yet. He said the hospital is working on the bills with the county to lower it.

McGinley added it is a serious issue- if the county is paying bills, it is the taxpayer that is paying it.

George Warner added that he is a board member and he agrees with Mike that the board needs to get together and the board needs to determine something to budget for the year. He doesn't believe the existing budget can cover this so it will likely have to go to the voters.
McGinley added he believes the board has the authority to assess 3 mills. The hospital board requested to stop assessing mills a few years ago.

Taylor questioned the hospital board paying the county bill. McGinley responded the board is the county- it is an elected board for the county.
Discussion ensued regarding the MCA code, the hospitals 501c3 status, and the difference between the elected county board and the Barrett Hospital board.

McGinley added comment on the county being a collection of organizations that have taxing authority in the county. (public health, search and rescue, hospital district, etc)

Shane added comment on if anyone has asked other counties about inmate insurance above this catastrophic insurance.

Taylor asked why does the hospital have to "write in off" because it is the county.

McGinley answered we are the payer of last resort; we just need a funding source. The legislation moving through right now is to have the inmates keep their insurance coverage until they are tried and incarcerated and become wards of the state.

Lilia added that she would like to suggest looking into an insurance solution- look into what other counties are using for inmates.

Shane and Taylor commented on the hospital's cost standing.

McGinley added that the board needs to meet.

Hagan added that he has heard that other counties have inmate Medicaid coverage if they stay longer than 24 hours- that is what he believes happened with the inmate that was recently taken to Butte.

Discussion ensued about the 3 mills being directly applied to the hospital bills. McGinley elaborated on the funds being applied to the detention center budget for medical.

George added that the board can meet and say they want to delegate that money to the hospital but it is a short-term solution not long term.

McGinley added comment on if the money comes in and is not spent, it stays with the hospital district.

Taylor added he wants to make it known that the hospital is not requesting funds from the hospital district.

Discussion and Action- Resolution 2026-36 Intent to Request Levy Authority for Hospital District

McGinley read the resolution and discussed the language on it. This will take a budget amendment to give authority to spend the funds.

With no further discussion, the following motion was made:

MOTION: Commissioner McGinley moved and Commissioner Rice seconded to approve Resolution 2026-36. A verbal vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

BEAVERHEAD COUNTY CLERK & RECORDER DILLON MONTANA BEAVERHEAD WIDE OPEN SPACES STATE OF MONTANA

116924 Fee:$ 0.00 File: 2026-36 Page:1
BEAVERHEAD COUNTY Filed 10/26/2026 At 11:07 AM
Stacey Reynolds, Clerk and Recorder
By: Shannon Burkenpas

RESOLUTION NO.: 2026-36

RESOLUTION OF INTENT TO REQUEST LEVY AUTHORITY FOR BEAVERHEAD HOSPITAL DISTRICT

WHEREAS, the Beaverhead County Hospital Board has not requested monies for five (5) years; and

WHEREAS, in FY26, Beaverhead County had budget amendments to cover around $66,000 for hospital debt; and

WHEREAS, as of October 15, 2026 (FY27), Beaverhead County Jail has received collection debt of approximately $57,000; and

WHEREAS, when Beaverhead County approved mill levy authority on September 8, 2026, the hospital district had not requested mill authority.

THEREFORE, Beaverhead County will work through the budget amendment process to access 1.5 mills county wide to raise the approximate $57,000.

FURTHERMORE, the Beaverhead County Commissioners will require the Beaverhead County Hospital District to review the budget process by June 30th of each fiscal year to be able to request the proper mills matching the bills due.

ADOPTED THIS 26th day of October, 2026.

BEAVERHEAD COUNTY COMMISSION

MICHAEL J MCGINLEY
COMMISSIONER

C. THOMAS RICE
COMMISSIONER

VACANT-Commissioner District 3

ATTEST:

STACEY REYNOLDS
BEAVERHEAD COUNTY CLERK & RECORDER

Discussion continued on the topic.

Recess

At 12:00 noon, Commissioner Rice recessed the meeting. At 1:30 p.m., Commissioner Rice and Commissioner McGinley reconvened the meeting with Assistant Dana Basile present.

Action on Previous Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the October 19, 2026 meeting were read and the following motion was made:

MOTION: Commissioner Rice moved and Commissioner McGinley seconded that the minutes be approved. A verbal vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments on Subjects Under County Jurisdiction Not on Agenda

Sheriff Wendt made comment about the roads being a mess due to mud. There's a big herd of elk and destroying fences. He is wondering if they can close Munday Lane and West to help stop the flow of traffic.

McGinley motioned to put in place an Emergency declaration of road closure to close Munday Lane and West Road to Little Sheep turnoff down in Lima area. Rice seconded. All in favor. This will be signed at the next Commissioner Meeting.

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#221556 Meriweather Metalworks LLC $2250 (Airport Sign)
CK#221557 Jonathan Lee $18,000 (Rd Dept 1998 Kenworth)
CK#221558 Beaverhead Motors $54,140 (Landfill 2026 Chevy Silverado)
CK#221559 Madison County Justice Court $1,085 (Bond Fe Sheriff Dept)

The Commissioners reviewed and approved invoices for a total of $155,024.33 beginning with claim warrant #221560 and ending with claim warrant #221616. The Invoice Payment Schedule is located in the Financial Administrator's Office.

The Commissioners reviewed and approved payroll warrants for the pay period September 19, 2026 through October 17, 2026 in the amount of $161,354.33, beginning with check # 37775 and ending with check # 37792.

Public Comments on Subjects Under County Jurisdiction
Stacey brought Kelsey Swartsfager to recommend for hire as deputy Clerk and Recorder. Rice signed her letter of recommendation.

Closed Session for Interview
The Commissioners closed the session to conduct interviews for the Commissioners Assistant position.

Adjourn

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

Attest: _____ Approved: C. THOMAS RICE
Clerk of the Board Chairman of the Board