

**BOARD OF MADISON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
PRELIMINARY BUDGET HEARINGS
May 23, 2022, Minutes**

On Monday, May 23, 2022, the Board of Madison County Commissioners conducted Preliminary Budget Hearings beginning at 11:10 a.m. in the Second Floor Court Room of the Administrative Office Building in Virginia City, Montana, with Commissioners Dan Allhands, Chairman, Ron Nye, and John Heckler present. Laurie Buyan, Executive Assistant to the Board of Commissioners, was present to take minutes.

Those people in attendance at the hearings were Vicki Tilstra, Britani Allhands, Hannah Brook, Marilyn Ross, Jan Thomas, Jack Albrecht, Lucy Ennis, and Gail Nelson.

Grant Department Preliminary Budget Hearing: Hannah Brook, Grant Administrator, presented and reviewed the preliminary budget for the Grant Office. Vicki Tilstra and Britani Allhands, Finance, were present for this portion of the meeting. John Heckler asked what the biggest concern for the grant budget. Hannah responded that she really has no concerns. She reduced operating supplies because her set up is finished and she really needs nothing right now. John discussed the status of grants across the board and noted that her workload is going to increase and that most grants are on a timely, competitive basis. He asked if there was enough people-power to do it. Hannah responded that she discussed this with Lance Bowser, Robert Peccia and Associates, who told her he's never done this many grants at once, usually he does two to three grants at a time but because of ARPA he has done 6 at one time. There was further discussion about infrastructure funding. John asked about a line item for professional services. Hannah explained that the funding comes from the budget that is being served. He also requested grant costs over the last three years, stating that his guess is it will go up and that more help will be required. Dan stated that most grants include funding for submitting and the administration. There were no major increases to this budget.

Airports Preliminary Budget Hearing: Hannah Brook, Airport Board Secretary, presented and reviewed the preliminary budget for both airports. Vicki Tilstra and Britani Allhands, Finance, were present for this portion of the meeting. Hannah stated that she made some changes, not a lot, noting that prices will be going up so she increased some items but is being conservative. She stated that they are still working on land acquisitions so there are funds for that but a majority of it is reimbursable by the FAA. John asked about Lance's funding. Hannah responded that it comes from line 357. There was discussion about new wells; remodeling in Twin Bridges, taking out the old SRE building and landscaping that is not reimbursable. Hannah noted that Lance is working on the revenue side of the budget and it isn't complete yet.

Library Preliminary Budget Hearing: Jack Albrecht, Library Director, presented and reviewed the preliminary budget for the Thompson-Hickman County Library. Marilyn Ross, Jan Thomas, and Lucy Ennis, Library Board members, and Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, were present for this hearing. Jack stated that it looks like they've only spent about 50% of their budget but in reality it will probably end up closer to 75%. Because of that they have decided to stay status quo and just move a few things around. He stated they increased the publications line because it was over but decreased electric and telephone and hopes they don't go up. Jack also noted that the current archivist won't be coming back and they are hoping to turn this into a permanent, part-time, paid position that would also do some work in the Library when not needed in the archives. John asked how many libraries there are in the County and if there has been any consideration of opening the umbrella and improving the other libraries in the County. The response was that all libraries in the County have been receiving a portion of the mills for about 10 years. Vicki explained that the libraries get 1.5 mills equaling \$291,793 which is divided between the three libraries. John stated that the Ladies Club in Ennis and the Town helps with funding the Ennis Library. Marilyn Ross noted that libraries are the only departments the Commissioners have jurisdiction over that have federal requirements requiring that they be funded. She added that she is a trained archivist, which is even more boring than a being a librarian, and that she is very proud of our County libraries. Further discussion included the status of the restroom downstairs; grants for ADA compliance; and putting in an outside elevator.

Jack stated that he has been flirting with the idea of retirement but has not set a date yet, and noted that Christina is working on a masters for Library Management.

Tobacco Root Mountains Care Center Preliminary Budget Hearing: Gail Nelson, TRMCC Administrator, presented and reviewed the preliminary budget for the Tobacco Root Mountains Care Center. Vicki Tilstra, Finance Officer, was present for this hearing. Gail discussed private pay rates, stating that she understands the reasoning for raising the rates but doesn't think it's fair to charge more for private pay than Medicaid rates. Her proposal is to leave it the same. She reviewed the revenue portion of the budget which is based on a census of 24 residents. She stated she is hoping for more but the average has been 24. She did a break-down of private pay, V.A., Medicare, and residents needing skilled care. John discussed the option of using a percentage of maximum occupancy for budgeting purposes rather than an average census. Vicki stated she likes a conservative method of budgeting. She also stated that the nursing homes are now letting each department head help determine their budgets so if revenues are down they can make adjustments. There was discussion about trends in ageing, other counties in Montana with nursing homes, the cost of agency staff, and establishment of a sinking fund and long term strategy for sustainability of the nursing homes. Gail continued discussion regarding the expenditure budget, noting she would feel more comfortable with a 3% increase in wages, rather than 5% and reviewed the difference in the numbers. She noted that currently they can handle up to 33 residents with the current staff they have and discussed the increase in agency staff costs. Dan noted that if taxable values continue to increase, the nursing homes should be okay. If the values drop, they will have to make some tough decisions. There was discussion about the increase in food costs, computer hardware and software, the cost of fuel, unifying the purchase of food for both facilities to get a reduced cost, and getting the outstanding debt paid off. There was also discussion about getting part-time staff to work another day a week to help cut costs. Vicki stated that Gail is doing a great job watching her budget and is very conservative. Gail stated that the permanent staff has gone above and beyond, with some of them working five 12-hour shifts. There were adjustments to various line items with minimal increases.

With no further business, the hearings concluded at 2:10 p.m.

Dan W. Allhands, Chairman
Board of Madison County Commissioners

Date Approved: June 28, 2022

Minutes prepared by:

Laurie Buyan, Executive Assistant

Attest: _____
Paula McKenzie, Clerk and Recorder, Madison County