



Doc #: 224077 Pages: 8 Book: Page:
STATE OF MONTANA MADISON COUNTY
Recorded 1/12/2026 4:30 PM K01: COM 18H
Paula McKenzie, CLERK & RECORDER
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**Madison County
Commissioners' Work Session Meeting**

January 12, 2026, 10:00 am Mountain Time until concluded
103 W Wallace St, Virginia City, MT 59755, United States
First Floor Public Meeting Room
Administrative Office Building, Virginia City, Montana

Present:

Duke W. Gilman, Commissioner, District 1
Ron E. Nye, Commissioner, District 2, Chairman
William A. Todd, Commissioner, District 3,

In attendance:

Ryan Wolter, IT Support Specialist, administered the Webex connection
Sarah Carlson, Commissioners' / Airport Assistant, was present to take minutes

Attendee List:

Duncan Hedges, Sheriff
Colton Lauer, Madison County Attorney
Emilie Saylor, Public Health
Pat Jacobs, Architecture Trio
Mati Bishop, The Madisonian
Joanne Galiger, Nursing Home Foundation
Kassie Marsh, TRMCC
Becky DeBoer, Resident
Dan Allhands, Resident
Margaret Bortko, Resident
Tony Tezak, Senate 35th District

1. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call

2. Public Comment (Please Limit to 5 Minutes Per Person)

None

3. Report of Committees

3.1. Madison County Courthouse Rehabilitation and Addition

Pat Jacobs, representing Architecture Trio, informed the Commissioners that last week's IT meeting with various departments was highly successful. There is an internal design meeting

every Tuesday. A meeting with Lindsay Tran is scheduled for next week. The interior finishes are also to be finalized. Engineers will provide their drawings on January 29, 2026. Commissioner Todd stated that he is reaching out to a company regarding the abatement removal.

Dan Allhands commented that there is a need for discussion and that work sessions should be held on Tuesday before the regular meeting, with times on the agenda.

Comment: Jacobs, and Allhands. Discussion: Commissioner Todd, Commissioner Gilman, and Commissioner Nye.

3.2. Payroll / UKG Discussion

The Commissioners discussed whether UKG should continue to be used, how the problems in the nursing homes persist, and whether, if UKG cannot perform as advertised, the county should get its money back.

Dan Allhands asked why payroll was being sent out for processing, commented on the changes in the finance department, and questioned whether the nursing homes were processing their own claims.

Commissioner Gilman noted that the county experienced the resignation of an employee who had dedicated thirty years of service to the county, as well as the departure of another key employee in the finance department in June. The finance department is beginning to show positive developments

Comment: Allhands. Discussion: Commissioner Nye, Commissioner Gilman, and Commissioner Todd.

3.3. Nursing Home Discussion

Kassie Marsh, a former nurse at TRMCC, commented that the nursing home has 39 beds and has always had a waiting list. She also expressed concerns about individuals being denied admission. Kassie asked whether the Commissioner had spoken with the independent survey company.

Commissioner Gilman informed the public that he has spoken with the survey company, which has worked with the county in the past.

Becky DeBoer, a registered nurse, had concerns about nursing home employees not wanting to come to the Commissioners or HR, and spoke in favor of hiring an independent survey company.

Margaret Bortko, a nurse practitioner, currently serves on the Madison County Board of Health Committee. She would like to see a County Commissioner attend the Board of Health meetings and support the county by using an independent survey company. Margaret also offered her professional assistance to the Commissioner and stated she is willing to help. She is concerned about individuals being denied admission to the nursing homes.

Commissioner Todd stated that the county will hire an independent survey company and is considering creating a Nursing Home Advisory Board composed of medical professionals and retired professionals. Commissioner Todd also shared a nursing census and the average employee turnover at the nursing homes.

Carrie Tree, an employee, messaged via WebEx and said that the information you are getting is not accurate.

Dan Allhands, a resident of Madison County, expressed concerns about the information available on the county website and the timeliness of its updates. He also provided remarks on job advertisements and compensation rates. He also suggested the idea of one nursing home becoming an assisted living facility.

Tony Tezak, a member of the Montana Senate representing the 35th District, expressed concerns regarding certain reports he has received and stated that the Commissioners must address and resolve the issue.

Commissioner Gilman conveyed that he has received numerous commendatory letters endorsing the current nursing home administrator and believes that she is conscientiously fulfilling her responsibilities. He also engaged in discussions concerning admission concerns and gained an understanding of the reasons behind the denial of certain admissions. Commissioner Gilman is of the opinion that the nursing homes are deficient in certain resources that require attention and advocates assisting the current nursing home administrator in identifying these resources to enhance the operational efficiency of the facilities.

Commissioner Todd expressed his support for the existing nursing home administrator and management team, reaffirming this stance until there arises a justified reason to withdraw such support. Our primary responsibility remains to support our employees.

Trevor Walters joined via WebEx, commented that the county is conducting a SWAT analysis to identify solutions and opportunities, and asked what the next steps are to move forward and what resources the nursing homes are lacking.

Commissioner Todd reported that the commissioners have received positive feedback, but those individuals are afraid to come forward because of backlash from the community.

Commissioner Gilman commented that the resources are professional resources, such as occupational therapists, and housing needs.

Commissioner Nye noted that Twin Bridges received a grant to build some duplexes for some teachers at the school

Comment: Marsh, DeBoer, Bortko, Allhands, Tezak, and Tree (WebEx). Discussion: Commissioner Gilman, Commissioner Todd, and Commissioner Nye.

4. Unfinished Business

None

5. New Business

5.1. Nursing Home Survey Discussion

As noted in the previous discussion, the commissioners are in favor of hiring an independent survey company.

Comment: None. Discussion: None.

5.2. Creation of a Nursing Home Advisory Board

Commissioner Todd remarked that this is the largest department within the county and expressed a desire to establish an Advisory Board consisting of medical professionals and retired experts.

Paul March participated via WebEx and shared his comments, noting his prior experience and that such boards often serve merely as venues for grievances. The advisory board was ultimately abandoned, and the Nursing Home Foundation was created. He stated that an advisory board composed of professionals to help the Commissioners is a good idea.

Comment: Marsh (WebEx). Discussion: Commissioner Todd, Commissioner Nye

5.3. Madison Valley Manor - Kitchen Update

Deana Mabry and Becky Lawson of SMA Design joined via WebEx and provided background for the audience. SMA is at the completion point of the study, with three options for nursing home kitchen improvements. Currently, SMA is finishing the reports. Upon completion, SMA will send the reports to the Commissioners and Madison Valley Manor. The preliminary report will have cost options.

Comment: Mabry and Lawson (WebEx). Discussion: Commissioner Todd, Commissioner Nye, and Commissioner Gilman.

Commissioners recessed at 11:45 am until 11:50 am.

5.4. Community Crisis Response Discussion

Emilie Saylor, representing Madison County Public Health, provided an update concerning the recent crisis in Sheridan and outlined the subsequent actions to be taken. The school currently lacks an on-site counselor and is unable to appoint a new counselor until the upcoming academic year. Moving forward, Public Health proposes utilizing unspent funds from its budget to finance a health therapist position that remains unfilled within Public Health. The allocated funds would be used to establish a contractual agreement with a behavioral health professional, counselor, or therapist to visit the Sheridan school on a weekly basis. This initiative aims to address the needs of students and staff during this crisis and for the remainder of the academic year. The selected individual will be engaged through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) contract and will not be classified as a county or school employee. The primary purpose of this engagement is to provide grief counseling, rather than guidance counseling.

Comment: Saylor and Lauer. Discussion: Commissioner Gilman, Commissioner Todd, and Commissioner Nye.

5.5. Appeal for Boundary Realignment - Baitis-Lampert-Miller

Mr. Colton Lauer, the Madison County Attorney, informed the Commissioners that the boundary readjustment has been resubmitted. The attorney advises that this should be treated as a new application and that it complies with all standard procedures.

Comment: Lauer. Discussion: Commissioner Gilman, Commissioner Todd, and Commissioner Nye.

5.6. Virginia City Library Parking Lot Discussion

Logan Dunlap of Great West Engineering is preparing the contract booklet for the bidding schedule, with the goal of having it ready by January 30th. He has also requested information regarding the irrigation system at the site to ensure all special provisions are appropriately addressed. Additionally, bidding phase support is scheduled for March 20th.

Comment: Dunlap (WebEx). Discussion: Commissioner Nye.

5.7. Date Change for Virginia City / Madison County - Sheriff's MOU

Commissioner Nye indicated that the town of Virginia City has requested a modification to the MOU meeting date, now scheduled for Tuesday, January 27th, at 1:00 pm. The week preceding the meeting will serve as the briefing deadline for submitting all documentation to be shared with both parties. The briefing deadline is January 20, 2026.

Comment: Lauer. Discussion: Commissioner Nye, Commissioner Todd, and Commissioner Gilman.

5.8. Scheduling Times for Tuesday's Commissioner Agenda Items Discussion

Commissioner Gilman has received numerous requests for timed items on the agenda.

Commissioner Todd requested that, if the county adopts a system of timed agenda items, it should not cut individuals off prematurely to proceed to the next agenda item.

Comment: Lauer. Discussion: Commissioner Gilman, Commissioner Todd, and Commissioner Nye.

5.9. Potential Consolidation of Cemetery Boards

Commissioner Todd proposed establishing a countywide cemetery board, under which each cemetery would have a designated representative rather than maintaining numerous separate boards that seldom convene or undertake activities. Additionally, efforts would be directed toward recruiting individuals to serve on these boards. These boards need to be treated the same as all the other boards, with agendas and minutes.

Commissioner Gilman agreed that each local cemetery would need representation on the board.

Comment: Carlson. Discussion: Commissioner Todd, Commissioner Gilman, and Commissioner Nye.

Adjournment

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:57 am.

The upcoming Commission meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 26, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. in the Public Meeting Room of the Administrative Building in Virginia City, Montana.

Signed: *Ronald E. Nye*

Date: *1/27/2026*

Ronald E. Nye, Commissioner, Chairman

Date Approved: January 27, 2026

Signed: *Sarah Carlson*

Date: *1/27/2026*

Minutes prepared by:

Sarah Carlson, Commissioners' / Airport Assistant

Attest: *Paula McKenzie*

Date: *1/27/26*

Paula McKenzie, Clerk and Recorder, Madison County

