



PUBLIC MEETING

February 4, 2020
MINUTES

The Lewis and Clark County Commissioners Public Meeting was held on Tuesday, February 4, 2020, at 9:00 AM in Commission Chambers Room 330.

Roll Call

Chair Susan Good Geise called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

Commissioner Andy Hunthausen and Commissioner Jim McCormick were present. Others attending all or a portion of the meeting included Roger Baltz, Nicho Hash, Kevin Horne, Ann McCauley, Eric Griffin, Jeni Garcin, Ray Prill, Reese Martin, Andrew Long, Kyle Sturgill-Simon, Tyler Manning, Sara Hartley, Amy Teagarden, Kevin Wright, and Nadine McCarty, Recording Secretary.

Pledge of Allegiance

Everyone recited the pledge.

Consent Action Items

There were no consent action items.

Resolution 2020-7 Setting Seasonal Weight Limits on Specific Roads Under the Jurisdiction of Lewis and Clark County for 2020. (Kevin Horne)

Kevin Horne, Road and Bridge Superintendent, presented the resolution for seasonal weight limit restrictions on specific hard surfaced roads within the jurisdiction of Lewis and Clark County for the fiscal year 2020.

Due to unseasonably warm temperatures across Lewis and Clark County seasonal weight limit restrictions are necessary as the frozen ground begins to thaw. The base gravel within the road bed becomes saturated and ultimately causes surface break up and premature failure. The current experienced freeze-thaw cycles have the potential to cause severe damage to the roads with heavier loaded vehicles. The roads' abilities to carry fully loaded vehicles is substantially reduced during this period. Staff has worked closely with the County Attorney's Office to develop the resolution to protect the County's investment and keep the roads safe and serviceable for public use for the period beginning February 10 through March 31, 2020. Public Works staff will work closely with Jeni Garcin, County Communications Coordinator, to assist in all public notices prior to posting and enforcement of the seasonal weight limit restrictions. Public notice will begin upon approval of the resolution and will be given via social media, news media and also by fax and email to the current list of contractors and heavy haulers within the County. Staff recommends approval of the resolution.

Mr. Horne stated during the timeframe of the thaw specific arterial roads are monitored and the restrictions fall off after that period. He added once approved the signage goes up, a five-day timeframe for public notice occurs with enforcement being by the State of Montana after the five days.

No public comment was received.

A motion to Approve was made by Commissioner McCormick and seconded by Commissioner Hunthausen. The motion Passed on a 3-0 vote.

Resolution 2020-8 Setting Permanent Weight Limits on Specific Roads Under the Jurisdiction of Lewis and Clark County for 2020. (Kevin Horne)

Kevin Horne, Road and Bridge Superintendent, presented the resolution for permanent weight limit restrictions on specific hard surfaced roads within the jurisdiction of Lewis and Clark County. Permanent, year round weight limits are needed on roads that have sub-standard base material or a double shot of chip seal. The roads will not withstand normal highway loading. He added normal highway loading has the potential to cause severe damage and ultimately lead to costly repairs. Staff has worked closely with the County Attorney's Office to develop the resolution to protect the County's investment and keep roads serviceable and safe for public use. Staff recommends these roads remain permanently restricted. Public Works staff will work closely with Jeni Garcin, County Communications Coordinator, to assist in all public notices prior to posting and enforcement of the seasonal weight limit restrictions. Public notice will begin upon approval of the resolution and will be given via social media, news media and also by fax and email to the current list of contractors and heavy haulers within the County. Staff recommends approval of the resolution.

No public comment was received.

A motion to Approve was made by Commissioner Hunthausen and seconded by Commissioner McCormick. The motion Passed on a 3-0 vote.

Grant Award from Montana Disaster and Emergency Services. (Ann McCauley)

Ann McCauley, Grants Administrator, presented the grant award from Montana Disaster & Emergency Services (DES) for Phase I of the City of Helena south hills fire mitigation project. The grant is in the amount of \$199,229.93 with a local match of \$66,409.98 for a total project cost of \$265,639.91. The funds will be sub-awarded to the Tri-County Fire Safe Working Group to carryout Phase I of the project. The sub-recipient agreement will be before the Commission in the next week or two. The grant period is January 24, 2020 through January 24, 2022. Phase I activities include: outreach and education efforts; fire risk assessments of structures and properties identified for mitigation. Upon completion of Phase I the County will begin working with Tri-County regarding Phase II, which will be implementation of the identified and assessed mitigation projects from Phase I. The anticipation of completion for Phase I is approximately one year with Phase II being two to three years with the potential to be a little longer. Staff recommends approval of the grant award from Montana Disaster & Emergency Services.

PUBLIC COMMENT -

Ray Prill, Tri-County Fire Safe Working Group Executive Director, gave an overview of the project that started in 2017 and noted the grant is a direct result of the fires of 2017. He noted that the houses, fences and growth under the eaves become the fuel of the fire. It is estimated that every dollar spent in mitigation up front saves \$6 during a disaster. Tri-County submitted a proposal to Montana DES that went to FEMA for work inside the City limits of Helena. FEMA informed them it needs to go through local government and because of the existing County relationship they chose the County. He added Amy Teagarden has been hired to run the program.

Sarah Hartley, Montana DES, introduced her colleagues, Kyle Sturgill-Simon and Andrew Long, noting that Andrew Long will manage the grant at the state level and will be the contact.

Amy Teagarden, 35 Big Dipper Drive, Clancy, stated she is a partner as Jefferson County is part of the Wildland-Urban Interface. She noted she retired from the City of Helena about 18 months ago and is excited to be working with everyone regarding wildland prevention and education and she looks forward to moving forward with the project.

Mr. Prill gave an overview of his passion about fire mitigation of fuels around development after building a home surrounded by woods, studying fires and the consequences of fire. He noted there is more to building in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) than just removing the fuels of the trees. The development needs to be looked at inside the WUI. After the Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire (CPAW) study was done regarding building and subdividing in the forest the County has been proactive about working with developers, but until some state laws are changed there is no way to enforce it. He added they currently manage five grants, mostly for fuel mitigation on the landscape level. This grant looks at vegetation around homes and ignition resistant construction upgrades. He noted there has always been concern about the number of shake roofs in the south side of Helena and codes still allow the construction of shake roofs. Every home owner that they work with signs a contract that commits them to 10 years of maintenance. The City of Helena is looking at maintenance for properties they have done and the Forest Service on the larger landscape are looking at prescribed burns every so many years.

Mr. Prill added match commitments were secured from both the County and the City.

Commissioner Good Geise asked if the mitigation is occurring within the City of Helena and Mr. Prill explained most of the mitigation is in the south side of the City limits with some just outside the limits.

A motion to Approve was made by Commissioner Hunthausen and seconded by Commissioner McCormick. The motion Passed on a 3-0 vote.

Public comment on any public matter within the jurisdiction of the Commission that is not on the agenda above.

Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:41 am.

LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS


Susan Good Geise, Chair


Andy Hunthausen, Vice Chair


Jim McCormick, Member

ATTEST:


Paulette DeHart, Clerk of the Board

Paulette DeHart, Clerk of the Board

