



PUBLIC MEETING

June 4, 2020
MINUTES

The Lewis and Clark County Commissioners Public Meeting was held on Thursday, June 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, Nancy Everson, Dan Karlin, Charles Lane, Audrey McCue, Eric Merchant, Steve Hagen, Leo Dutton, Jessica Makus, Calob Marquis, Brent Pilon, and Nadine McCarty, Recording Secretary.

Pledge of Allegiance

Everyone recited the pledge.

Consent Action Items

There were no consent action items.

Bid Opening. 2020 Skyview Subdivision Drainage Improvements Project. (Dan Karlin)

Dan Karlin, County Engineer, presented the bid opening for the Skyview Subdivision Drainage Improvements project. One bid was received. The only bid is from Mockel PreCast & Excavation of East Helena, Montana for a total bid amount of \$90,461. Mr. Karlin gave a brief overview of the Skyview Subdivision Drainage project and noted it is Rural Improvement District funded.

A motion was made by Commissioner McCormick for staff to take the bid under advisement and make a recommendation to the Commission on June 11, 2020. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunthausen. The motion Passed on a 3-0 vote.

Grant Award to Lewis and Clark Public Health from the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. (Eric Merchant)

Eric Merchant, Disease Control and Prevention Division Administrator, presented the grant award from the Department of Public Health and Human Services through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) program in the amount of \$5,000. The grant period begins upon approval and ends October 16, 2020. Mr. Merchant gave an overview of the program that focuses on the complex and changing nature of the drug overdose epidemic. The funds will support an evaluation of the feasibility and potential effectiveness of a local integrated syringe services program. It

would pay for the professional facilitation of a collective impact project with local stakeholders and decision makers to evaluate such a program in the community. The 2017 Montana legislature passed Senate Bill 228 that revised drug paraphernalia laws exempting certain persons that provide needle and syringe exchange services from drug paraphernalia laws. This provided an opportunity for public health officials to use syringe services programs to limit the transmission of HIV and Hepatitis C among those that inject drugs. And also to potentially lessen the overall impact of the OPIOD and methamphetamine crisis. Mr. Merchant noted this discussion suggests the most effective strategy for preventing and controlling HIV and AIDS would include prophylactic, therapeutic, and behavioral change strategies. He gave an overview of the syringe exchange program noting it represents a long standing and proven behavioral prevention strategy for HIV and AIDS that facilitates opportunity for: local referral to other important services such as mental and behavioral health services; medically assisted treatment; overdose prevention; communicable disease testing and treatment; addiction counseling; access to housing; and other services. Evidence shows that decriminalizing mental illness and the co-occurrence of substance abuse disorders is a necessary first step to potentially redirect them away from chronic substance abuse. Because local law enforcement represents the frontline in addressing many of the issues associated with substance abuse and injection drug use he has reached out to local law enforcement throughout this process seeking their concurrence and the leaders have responded affirmatively. Mr. Merchant is also coordinating with the Criminal Justice Services Department and plans to bring the discussion to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council in the near future. As a result of COVID-19 the grant period begins upon approval and has been extended from August 31, 2020 to October 16, 2020. Staff recommends acceptance of the grant award from the Department of Public Health and Human Services.

Leo Dutton, Sheriff, stated this is controversial to him personally, but noted he is willing to listen. His profession looks at this differently as they focus on the behavior, the actual injected drug use. Sheriff Dutton is a proponent of mental health services and reducing recidivism. The issue of giving new needles he will have to listen and make an informed decision. The health issue is one thing and the criminality of what comes from the drugs is the other half of the equation. As an elected official he must step back and listen to the facts.

Steve Hagen, Helena Chief of Police, stated his opinion is similar to Sheriff Dutton. Law enforcement looks at things through their own personal experiences and discussion with other stakeholders that look at things differently than they do is a good thing. Whether or not the community wants or needs this program and whether or not it is best for the community is what needs to be considered. He is open to the discussion and once completed they can make an honest and informed decision.

Commissioner McCormick stated he is not in favor of needle exchanges, but after conversations with Mr. Merchant he is willing to listen.

Commissioner Hunthausen asked if there is significant data that shows the program helps reduce the numbers of addicted individuals, those contracting HIV and other diseases, and those with addiction to get help or reduce drug-related crimes.

Mr. Merchant noted there is data in certain scenarios and situations from the healthcare side that shows disease transmission is limited, there is connection to mental health and behavioral health systems, and it has an impact on getting people out of substance abuse scenarios. There is available data regarding the reduction of criminal behaviors and recidivism and they will be discussing it. There is data in the state being collected now, but not on a large scale as Montana's population is not large enough in many circumstances to statistically show things. The data across the country is pointing to positive outcomes.

Commissioner McCormick noted he is interested in the medical aspect of how the needle exchange will improve the addicted individual's situation. Mr. Merchant noted the process will include the medical

aspect and they are looking at working with PureView Health Center and other clinical settings around the county.

Commissioner Good Geise noted she is a skeptic, but will also listen and asked that there be a community-wide discussion. Mr. Merchant, Sheriff Dutton, and Chief Hagan agreed to have such a meeting.

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.

Contract Between Lewis and Clark Public Health and Halliday and Associates, LLC (Eric Merchant)

Eric Merchant, Disease Control and Prevention Division Administrator, presented the contract with Halliday and Associates, LLC to provide for professional facilitation of a Collective Impact Project with local stakeholders and decision makers to evaluate a local integrated syringe services program. Ms. Halliday is recognized nationally as an expert in the collective impact model. Mr. Merchant gave an overview of the collective impact training services that will be provided. The project takes all the information such as: who is doing what in the community; what are the impacts from a law enforcement perspective, a community perspective, an insurance perspective; is the program ethical; is there a need for the program. This is a thorough evaluation professionally facilitated so community leadership understands benefit and potential downside could be, does it make sense for the community. The model relies on five conditions: common agenda; shared measurement and data centered work; mutually reinforcing activities; continuous communication; and a backbone organization, one that is clearly responsible for keeping the separate members on task and on the same page. The contract is in an amount not to exceed \$5,075, of which \$5,000 will be from the recently approved grant. Any additional necessary funding will be from the Public Health Department's FY21 Public Health Emergency Preparedness grant, also previously approved by the Commission. Work will begin upon approval with completion no later than October 16, 2020. Staff recommends approval of the contract with Halliday and Associates, LLC.

Commissioner McCormick asked if this will go deep into many data elements and segmentations or will it be a high level overview with some data and Mr. Merchant stated the facts need to be out and understood. That will lead everyone, based on the data to what questions need to be answered. Ms. Halliday will guide the group to ensure the necessary information is received.

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.

Board Appointment. (Audrey McCue)

Audrey McCue, Elections Supervisor, presented the board appointments for the La Casa Grande Water/Sewer District Board of Directors. The election for the district was canceled pursuant to 13-1-502, MCA because the number of candidates that filed was less than the number of positions to be filled. When an election is canceled and there are no regular or declared write-in candidates for a position, the Board of County Commissioners shall fill the position by appointment.

Mark O'Dell and Linda C. Wilson requested appointment to the open positions on the La Casa Grande Water/Sewer District Board of Directors. The elections office verified that both are registered voters of the

district and are eligible to fill the board member positions. The recommendation is to appoint Mark O'Dell and Linda C. Wilson to four-year terms on the La Casa Grande Water/Sewer District Board of Directors.

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.

Resolution 2020-25 Authorizing Participation in the Board of Investments of the State of Montana Annual Adjustable Rate Tender Option Municipal Finance Consolidation Act Bonds (Intercap Revolving Program), Approving the Form and Terms of the Loan Agreement and Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of Documents Related Thereto. (Nancy Everson)

Nancy Everson, Chief Financial Officer, presented the resolution and closing documents for a \$750,000 Intercap loan, authorized by the Commission a couple of years ago to finance the air conditioning system recently installed in the City-County Building. The loan will be paid by the City-County Building, if closing documents are authorized, the County will receive the funds, transfer them to the City of Helena for the costs, and the City will pay back the loan over a ten year period. Staff recommends approval of the resolution and all closing documents.

Ms. Everson explained the Intercap loan program operated by the Montana Board of Investments for local governments.

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.

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 10:01 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