

**GLACIER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SUMMER MEETING
BABB AMBULANCE BARN
Wednesday, June 24, 2009**

The Glacier County Board of Commissioners held a regularly scheduled Babb summer meeting on Wednesday, June 24, 2009 at the Glacier County EMS Barn. Commissioners Michael DesRosier, Ron Rides At The Door and Tony Sitzmann were present. Clerk & Recorder, Glenda Hall was present to record the proceedings.

In attendance throughout the day: James Laidlaw, GC EMS Chief; Larry Mires, SMRWG; Bud Gray, Community member; John Sanders, DNRC; Patrick Strand, Babb/St. Mary VFD; Mike MacDonald, MDT Havre; Stormy Burns, Babb/St. Mary VFD; Georgia Burns, Babb/St. Mary VFD; Wayne Noem, MDT Helena; Dustin Rouse, MDT Helena; Joe Fisher, Blackfeet Tribe; Don White, Blackfeet Tribe Transportation Planner; Bill Bandel, GC Road Supervisor.

At 10:00 a.m. Commissioner Michael DesRosier called the meeting to order.

10:00 a.m. Discussion ó Community Issues

Commissioner Tony Sitzmann gave an update on his conference call with the Hi-Line Recovery. They have \$5.00 in the bank and expect approximately \$5,000.00 in income, but expect \$20,000.00 to \$25,000.00 in expenses. The Director, Bill Martin said the State informed them that they were overpaid by \$37,000.00. They worked out a repayment plan of 10 equal quarterly payments of \$3,700.00. Mr. Martin is willing to make a pay cut.

Babb community member, Bud Gray was present to discuss where GC was during this past winter. GC treats them like the Blackfeet Tribe and Babb is the forgotten community. Asked why the county doesn't leave a plow out here, there are people that can operate. Commissioner Ron Rides At The Door pointed out that it's not an option because of the liability issues it creates for the county. Commissioner Michael DesRosier points out that the GC Road Supervisor, Bill Bandel is actively seeking to place someone out in the Babb area, even if only for the winter months. Patrick Strand, Babb/St. Mary VFD member complained that during that last storm there was no communication with anyone from the Blackfeet Tribe or GC. There was an emergency operations center established and he was not called from either Nora Kennedy or Robert DesRosier. He doesn't care about money, but the county is responsible for providing the quality of care that these people would receive at home. We need to meet the demands of the general public. Commissioner Michael DesRosier asked Patrick if he had met and to contact Charles Farmer, DES Coordinator.

11:00 a.m. Approval ó EMS Captain Wage

GC EMS Chief, James Laidlaw presented his notes on putting Brian Williams up to \$45,000 annually after his probationary period. His department's wages used to mirror the Sheriff's department. Paramedics are required to have a 2 year degree and Brian has a 4 year Health Administrator Degree. James still hasn't been able to take a vacation because of staffing issues,

but he is planning 2 weeks in August. Commissioner Tony Sitzmann pointed out that GC is getting out of the hospital business and wondered how that would work of getting out of EMS as well. James says a private company would not make it here and GC is ultimately responsible for the County ambulance service, according to MCA (Montana Code Annotated). Commissioner Ron Rides At The Door voiced his concerns, again for James's lack of following commission direction and recruiting to lessen the workload on the current staff. This would solve the employment issue. James claims he has increased staffing and it isn't fixing the problem. Each EMT is 8720 hours annually and the conversion of the volunteer pool. He routinely puts a third truck on the street, usually at 1:00 a.m., so he or Brian has to take the call. Commissioner Ron Rides At The Door reiterated that he does not recall the \$5,000 bonus to Mr. Williams.

Concerned citizen, Georgia Burns asked what was going to happen out in Babb. The people out here that have worked for James were promised a \$.50/hour raise last year and no one has been paid yet.

James has a new paramedic in the area that was from here before and returned. He is hiring her. Brian Williams's specialty is in training and that will help. When James has to get on an ambulance the administrative portion of his job doesn't get done. Patrick Strand questioned James as to what he was operating a business or providing a service and he is trying to maintain an ALS (Advanced Life Support) "business" when he can get by with a BLS (Basic Life Support) "service". In his defense, James stated that they have a niche market being paramedic responsive.

(Clerk & Recorder, Glenda Hall exits the meeting to retrieve lunch)

Commissioner Tony Sitzmann made a motion to table any decision on the issue of the Captains Wage until further study of the budget and background on the issues. Seconded by Commissioner Ron Rides At Door, motion carried.

11:30 a.m. Discussion of Babb EMS Staffing Issues

James Laidlaw addresses the issues of reporting and recording items. He has been talking with the NPS (National Park Service). They are requesting an extra ambulance in the area, possible at Many Glaciers. The current staffing budget allows only 40 hours per month and Georgia Burns is requesting more than the 40 hours of staffing dollars. Georgia asked why the Cut Bank staff can't cover Babb more in the summer. James says he is trying to keep 2 people available 24 hours per day, but the revenues generated from the area don't pay their salaries.

Again, Commissioner Ron Rides At The Door brought up the issue of local recruitment. He told James he should review the demographics of reaching the local audience for part time and permanent staffing with First Responders and EMTs. Commissioner Tony Sitzmann says if the issue is funding for staff upgrade in Babb and East Glacier Park there is money available and the County is offering to provide money for the staff upgrades. James agrees to concentrate on this issue and will utilize the radio and advertise locally to increase staff. James assured the commission that paramedic level is fine and he will work with the Babb First Responders and

finish the living quarters for the staff. The Babb staffing issue will be set for budget action at a future budget meeting. James was given approval to move forward on the staffing issue.

James requested that Clerk & Recorder, Glenda Hall send a notice to Sylvia Meineke on the commission decision over her health insurance.

1:00 p.m. Tour of Spider Lake Area

Larry Mires, St. Mary's Rehabilitation Working Group presented the current standing on the St. Mary's project. There is \$2,500,000 to do the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) statement on the diversion. He is working with Senators Max Baucus, Denny Rehberg and John Tester to complete the EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) on the whole project and will be requesting another donation from GC to keep the SMRWG going.

During this past Legislature the Governor signed SB8. This bill creates a governing body, RRA (Regional Resource Authority) to complete the project. By doing so it allows the entity to generate outside revenue. Tribes are excluded unless they request, in writing, to be involved. Commissioner Tony Sitzmann inquired if all Counties were in agreement. Don White, Blackfeet Tribe Transportation Planner asked if there was any Tribal participation. Mr. Mires said that Don Wilson, Blackfeet Tribe has been involved. There will be a meeting of the SMRWG on July 14, 2009 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Great Duck Inn, in Havre, Montana. Commissioner Michael DesRosier confirmed that GC will continue with our contributions. We want to see a small recreational area at Spider Lake as a future plan and we will collaborate with the different agencies involved.

Dustin Rouse, MDT-Helena presented design and engineering maps of different versions. As it stands the project is running at approximately \$2,200,000 with a siphon at the end of the lake. Commissioner Tony Sitzmann inquired if GC can competitively bid. Wayne Noem, MDT-Helena responded that they can not transfer the funds to a local agency. The original wording for the project should be Highway 89 to Spider Lake and Erosion Control. Mr. Mires interjected that if we can save money in the construction phase there may be enough to do the re-route of the existing road. In the current plans, Highway 89 to the bridge are improvements only, but then there won't be enough money left to do the whole thing. It all depends on what version GC selects to go with, either Plan A or B. Plan B is the plan that GC wants, but in order to select Plan B the chief engineer has to first sign off on the lower design standards. Second we need approval for the additional improvements from Highway 89 to the siphon. The GC Commission may have to request a site visit for all parties involved on approving the changes.

The group departs from the Babb Ambulance Barn to transport to the Spider Lake site.

There being no further business for the day, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m. with a motion by Commissioner Tony Sitzmann and a second by Commissioner Ron Rides At The Door. The motion passed by Board vote.

BOARD OF GLACIER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Michael J. DesRosier, Chairman

ATTEST:

Glenda M. Hall Clerk and Recorder