

Glacier County Commissioners
Monday, March 30, 2020
Special Meeting
Cut Bank, MT

The Glacier County Board of Commissioners met at a special scheduled meeting at 10:00 am Monday, March 30, 2020. Commissioners Michael DesRosier, Tom McKay & John Overcast was present and Clerk & Recorder Mandi Bird Kennerly taking minutes.

Present at the Meeting: Janine Scott, Clerk of District Court; Don Wilson, GC Treasurer; Terry Matt, GC Attorney; Chancy Kittson, GC CFO; Afiq Danial Bin Hisham, Public; Angie Haas, Public; Betsy Seglem, Public; David Anderson; Public; Eric Dietrich, Public; Erin Kittson, Public; Jimmy Racine, GC Weed Dept.; Kimmet, Public; LR, Public; LeAnne Kavanagh, Press; Leslie, Public; Linda Burley, Public; Maurice RedHorn, GC Undersheriff; Pat Thronson, Public; RG, Public; Tauna Evans, GC EMS; Val Vermulm, Public; Shannon Pepion, GC Maintenance & 14 additional attendees.

Meeting called to order @ 10:05 a.m.

SPECIAL MEETING

A. Discussion/Approval: Consideration for Employee Layoffs

Commissioner DesRosier advised that they are going to readdress the meeting from 3-24-2020, there was some concerns and questions about proper noticing of that at meeting and some could not get logged on. In the last meeting they discussed temporary furloughs to get Glacier County through the fiscal year. Commissioner DesRosier stated that the county is struggling financially, we do not have enough revenues or cash on hand to operate until the end of the fiscal year. He stated that they talked about a plan last June and there was a meeting held with the Department Heads. One of the items discussed was a temporary furlough plan. He stated that they have monitored and made a plan to get through. There was a lot of hard work from the CFO, Human Resource, Treasurer and Clerk & Records offices.

As a plan was formulized, they had to make the decision, it was decided approximately to go ahead with the furlough plan to implement April 1st, 2020. Then the Covid-19 hit us and the recommendation of the State and the closures, other counties in the state started shutting down operations, limiting personnel, closing office and/or limiting public into the offices. They then decided to implement the furloughs about a week and a half earlier than planned. Commissioner DesRosier stated that with everything happening they took action last Friday to immediately close our offices and eliminate unnecessary services and implement them with our furlough and shut down plan to save money. He stated that the furlough plan was put into place because of the budget concerns, which followed in line with some of the COVID -19 recommendations but are two separate issues.

Commissioner DesRosier stated that they tried to get all the information out to everyone, it was sent out to all the department heads and public. There is a spreadsheet that shows the different cut backs to each office. They are going to implement the layoffs through May 31st and it will be reevaluated at that time. The plan is a living document it is being worked on and changes made daily. All employees laid off will be eligible for unemployment benefits, there is talk of stimulus money and when it goes through wages will be paid at 100% thru unemployment and the state has waived the waiting week. During the temporary layoff employees cannot use paid time off, this is from the opinion of the Glacier County Attorney.

Commissioner DesRosier stated that non-essential services and purchases will be discontinued. Non Essential services are stated wide, closure of the library and museum was a concern. No purchases will be allowed, really need to limit operation cost and no pre-approval purchases. He advised to go to the Clerk & Recorder if it is necessary and she will let the commissioners or CFO know if it's needed. Commissioner DesRosier stated that the figures were based on the high cost month of December and it does include the benefits of a high cost month, monthly cost for two months. He also stated that it does account for unforeseen costs.

Commissioner DesRosier talks about Glacier County Sheriff's Office and the change with the force. District Court there will be cut back's but will have necessary staff to do cases, received guidance from State Supreme Court. Justice Court felt they needed to be at full capacity, direction from State Supreme Court. One of the questions that was received from the media that was stating that these questions are employee questions. Commissioner DesRosier would like the employees to go to their employer with questions no the media, allow the CFO, Treasurer, Clerk & Recorder or Commissioners to answer these questions don't go to someone without the correct information. Commissioner DesRosier stated again that this is a living document and maybe changed at any point.

Commissioner DesRosier stated that Glacier County Health received an increase of \$34,000 unanticipated revenue to deal with Covid-19. It immediately to fund for a couple more EMS staff. EMS staff is on standby will get regular pay with this grant if called out. Commissioner DesRosier stated that it is changing daily with revenues and this fiscal plan is based on not receiving revenues. One question was monthly compensation on the plan, he stated that they were using December with the 3 pay periods and the total compensation package was included. Health insurance was included in the plan, the employees who are laid off the county will still be paying the health insurance regardless of the hours they are putting in.

There were questions on our expenditures that we may have for the Federal Election, Superintendent of Schools, Rural Fire Departments, Transit and Cemetery those things were not in the plan they are being studied. We have another contract employee that was

not mentioned in the questions the contracted employee with the School Superintendent, Clerk & Recorder School Superintendent is an elected position and they have a contracted employee. That is be reviewed right now since the schools are shut down it is a contracted employee which also receives state retirement and health benefits. Federal Election money we are currently operating to follow timeline that is laid out and as we go forward some of it is being changed by the state. Some of the direction we are taking from the state will determine how we move forward with that. Rural Fire Departments have been talked to and we are wanting to cut back on expenses as much as we can. No monthly payment made until 30 days is up they will be compensated and trucks will be fueled, we will pay any expenses needed to respond to fires or emergencies. We are working with the Tri-County Transit office to determine if there are going to be any cut backs or relaxing of hours since people are not traveling as much with Covid-19. We pay monthly payment with that and we are working with transit to suspend monthly payment for 30 days so they may have some payments withheld just a suspended payment not an eliminated payment. Cemeteries are being asked to just conduct burials there is not going to be payment for maintenance, upkeep and regular hour working hours with cemetery employees other than burials.

County has a couple other contract employee's which is the County Planner and the County Sanitarian they will be asked if their monthly payment could be suspended for 30 days, they will be contacted by phone. There is contracts with Magda Nelson and Rita Neuman they are going to continue to be funded, Magda is working with DOA she is being paid \$35.00 an hour to put together our case with DOA to have some funding released. Rita Neuman is working under a contract for \$65.00 an hour working on claims against I.H.S. The contract with Carlyle Consultant has been dropped and is on hold no renewal there.

Mandi Bird Kennerly, Clerk & Recorder stated that with school being out and the school wanting them to homeschool she does not think she is going to be able in her office for the full weeks so she will be working from home. Commissioner DesRosier asked if the office will be open there has to be staff in each of the office, she replied yes her office is open every day. Commissioner Overcast asked Mandi if she was going to be able to pull off the School Election. Mandi explained that with the Governors directive Browning is going with an all-mail ballot she is not sure about the rest dates have been moved back for late registrations, have ballot plans to submit by Friday at 5:00 pm all of the publication dates have to be redone ballot plan has to be accepted by Secretary of State before we can move forward.

Commissioner DesRosier explains about getting ahead of the pandemic. We need to focus going forward with COVID-19 and the layoffs. He also stated that it is not what any of them wanted to do. Commissioner DesRosier stated that their action today is for fiscal/budget reasons. Commissioner DesRosier calls for a vote and action on furlough plan retro to 3/25/2020.

Commissioner McKay motions to approve temporary furlough plan retro to 3/25/2020; Commissioner Overcast stated that he does not want to second to get it on the table he Commissioner Overcast stated that he didn't realize that Tauna was on the litigation, he stated the he has been told that she was strictly day to day basis and billing. He asked what happens after the 2 weeks is she down to 20 hours and if they are going to put Rita in on operations. Commissioner DesRosier stated Rita wouldn't do day to day she is strictly litigation. Chancy Kittson, CFO stated that Tauna and Jerry are gathering information on billing on our claims that are in question and they are pulling it up out of the network of paper mess. They are gathering for Glacier County Attorney to get suit in order. Giving were we are at on the budget side of thing and at the end to litigation after that then can cut to 20 hours a week for EMS operations. Chancy explained that no one can predict the fate of EMS, as of today EMS is \$100,000 estimated over in expenses vs revenue and the county can't come up with that cash flow.

Commissioner Overcast asked how much money was in the bank. Chancy stated as of 3/26/2020 there was just under 1.6 million. Commissioner Overcast also asked in that figure is there also protested taxes, Chancy replied yes. Commissioner Overcast also asked out of that how much is the county and how much is the schools. Don Wilson, Treasurer stated that the schools have all been paid for the month and it goes on a monthly basis. What we do now is we collect taxes and we pay it to them. Commissioner DesRosier asked if any of the protested taxes sitting there belong to the schools. Don stated yes a portion does go to the school everyone gets a cut of that roughly 40% goes to the county. Terryl Matt, County Attorney stated from the order in February 2019 that the tax pay cannot protest the full amount. She also stated that her office is working to determine what, following Judge Pinski's Order which was the amount that could be protested was the difference between the tax bill of 2012 and 2018.

Commissioner Overcast had another concern which was the county saying one thing and School District #9 saying another. He stated that we need to get this figured out and he believes that Don Wilson is right. Commissioner DesRosier stated that under state statue when our books are balance the school has to balance to our balance. Was pointed our years ago by accountants and auditors. Commissioner DesRosier asked why the school is saying that we owe them money. Don Wilson stated that there is a couple of things, one is if you total all of the schools money it does not total what is in our accounting system which was ready by the superintendent in the newspaper which was not correct. He then called Blackmountain and asked how that could happen so then they went through a month by month basis starting 2015 forward what happened was a journal voucher was done and every time you do a JV that affects the school it goes to the school system and post in there to. Don also stated that there was some incorrect entries and on the 15th I didn't have time to go in and correct them. I went through to see if any of the entries was going to short the schools which he did not see any. He stated that his estimate was that we overpaid the school. Once the JV's are corrected that will put the accounting back in order and then they should match. Terryl Matt stated that their understanding was that

after the 15th the school district took their money mainly here and they would take care of their bills, they have been running their unemployment and payroll taxes thru the county. Don stated that the total amount that was charged to the county as of 3-15-2020 was about \$300,000 so the school owes us money and it also violated the court order of everything being settled on the 3-15-2020.

Chancy stated it is temporary a living document and re-access every day and in 30 days there could be a lot of change. Commissioner McKay asked Chancy if he thought the budget addresses the DOA's concerns of this problem. Chancy stated that he believed so the first plan they were happy with.

All in favor Commissioner McKay motion; Commissioner DesRosier second; Commissioner Overcast opposed; motion carried.

Commissioner McKay motions to adjourn @ 11:00 a.m.; Commissioner Overcast second; motion carried.