

**Glacier County Commissioners
Tuesday, December 29, 2020
Special Meeting (GoToMtg)
Cut Bank, MT**

The Glacier County Board of Commissioners met at a special scheduled meeting at 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, December 29, 2020. Commissioners Michael J. DesRosier, Tom McKay & John B. Overcast were present, and Crystal Cole taking minutes.

Present at the Meeting: LeAnne Kavanagh, Press; Elaine Mitchell, Marlene Luedtke, Donna Poe & Laurie Elhard, Public; Chancy Kittson, Glacier County Chief Finance Officer, Mary Jo Bremner, Commissioner Elect

Present via Go To Meeting: (?) Treasurer Don Wilson,

A. Roll Call

Meeting called to order at 10:18 a.m.

B. Approval of Agenda

C. Approval of the Minutes: n/a

NEW BUSINESS:

D. Discussion/Approval: Purchase Browning Satellite Office with CTCL Grant (Elections Grant) – Michael DesRosier, Glacier County Commissioner

Commissioner DesRosier states with this election year being a Presidential Election, the anticipation was there would need to be extra funding to cover the cost, therefore, this FY budget was set at \$240,000.00. He also stated that the elections department received \$28,880.69 in HAVA grant funds as well as the \$263,830.00 from the CTCL, which is a privately funded organization. DesRosier explains the past hardship of losing the satellite office and the process it took to gain a contract to another building to bring services back, that contract is a monthly expense. He also states that the owner of that building is now wanting to adjust the monthly rent, as well as made comments of selling the building, DesRosier states that leaves Glacier County in limbo. DesRosier suggest that after talking to and receiving a letter back from the CTCL people that the idea is to use the excess funds on purchasing a permanent satellite office to continue to provide services to the Browning community, he advised some of the idea's that has been kicked around as to what to purchase. DesRosier states that Crystal Cole, the Deputy Assistant Election Administrator, has until January 31, 2021 to submit her report to CTCL, and that Glacier County Chief Finance Officer (CFO) Chancy Kittson got some correspondence back from them as well, stating that a 6 month request to spend the excess funds can be submitted with the report; DesRosier went ahead and read a letter form CTCL which states that purchase falls under their categories.

Commissioner DesRosier stated that Commissioner Elect Mary Jo Bremner previously stated that granting agencies urge to spend the allocated amount given, he states that Bremner worked with grants in her past and is familiar with the spending of grants. Commissioner Elect Bremner, expressed the possibility of not getting a high amount of grant monies the next time

applying, due to given money back. Commissioner DesRosier stated that he would like for CFO Kittson to work with both Cole and the Clerk & Recorder Mandi Bird Kennerly to start identifying some of the funds that can be coded to the elections budget as well as what could stay on the CTCL budget report, he also states that the excess funds left over from the grant is an allowable cost to purchase a rent free facility; He added that he would like to see a full amount number come January 31, 2021.

Commissioner Overcast asks what full number we would be looking at, Commissioner DesRosier advises that is unknown at this time. Commissioner McKay describes his understanding, which is being that the original \$240,000.00 Election budget was not touched according to Cole's CTCL grant report, that she has all of the purchases made by elections on her grant report, but, once original budgets get coded back onto the elections budget, there would be a bigger final number left over from the CTCL grant.

Crystal Cole stated that this is a private organization that gets donations from private donors, Commissioner elect Bremner states that more than likely the donations come from wealthy individuals who can write the amount off on their taxes. Cole states that she has back-up e-mails from CTCL for every purchase she made just to "CYA" herself as she does not want her name or reputation ruined, and each time CTCL got back stating "yes" it is an allowable cost. Cole also stated that she feels like there is two different reports going on, there is her report and CFO Kittson's report, and there is lack of communication going on. Commissioner Overcast pointed out that he feels like things are being done behind Cole's back and that she should be involved in the process more. Commissioner DesRosier states the report should be done with the CFO and that he was talked to him, he states that the CFO has reached out to Cole, however, Cole states that no one has reached out to her. They agreed to meet and coordinate their efforts going forward.

Treasurer Don Wilson, on the phone, explains that if we lose the satellite office again, how much of a burden it would be for the folks not living in Cut Bank to get the services they need, including voting. Wilson states from his stand of point, Browning office does 10 times the amount of work then there is done in the Cut Bank Office, he states at some point we have to put feelings aside and say "ok what can we do and how can we do it".

Commissioner DesRosier states his concern with too many individuals contacting the granting agency will throw red flags and eliminate "us" from future grants, he then asks CFO Kittson to explain his role in the process and cover the communication issues. CFO Kittson states the idea was brought to him two weeks ago by Commissioner McKay, who asked if it was plausible to use the non-expended funds to purchase a satellite office. Kittson stated he reached out to the granting agency through e-mail discussion to ask if purchasing properties in the Browning area would be an allowable cost, he states in the discussion that CTCL got back to him stating a purchase like that is an allowable cost being it falls under their broad categories. Kittson states that he and Cole went over her report and back then there seemed to be a large amount of funds left over, however, going over her updated report there is roughly \$78,000.00 Kittson states with the Commissioners directive, he would sort thru the cost's with both Cole and Clerk & Recorder Mandi to identify what the eligible costs to be coded to the election fund under the general fund and what cost's would remain on the CTCL budget report. Cole states

how important communication is, and agrees that there needs to be a satellite office, however, her other concern is if the Treasurer's office will be paying for half a new satellite office, being those services will be in the building as well. Commissioner DesRosier stated that the administrative team, which involves the Treasurer, the Clerk & Recorder, the Commissioners, the CFO and possibly the HR, deal with the financial issues that affect the county over all; He also states that any communication to CTCL should be coordinated between Cole, Kittson and Mandi.

Commissioner DesRosier states this is confusing with the short time the CTCL funds became available, Cole reminded him that the funds were made available back in October, Kittson stated the satellite office discussion started just "2 weeks ago". DesRosier states that overall, the excess funds need to be spent in the community. Commissioner McKay states his thought was to motion to allow the expenditure, give 1 to 3 options to CFO Kittson to look into, so that he can come back to the commissioners with recommendations as to which one he chose and why, he also states that he wants to assure they take action to purchase a building with the excess funds of the grant because it is an allowable costs. Commissioner Overcast states he agrees with McKay.

Commissioner McKay motions for Commissioner Overcast's participation, and to go ahead as the commission to allow funds from the CTCL Grant for the purchase of the Browning Satellite Office in Browning, MT with the balance of the CTCL money after CFO Kittson and Crystal Cole work out the final report that is due. Commissioner Overcast seconds motion; motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS:

E. Public Comment

LeAnne Kavanagh expresses her curiosity if it is feasible to get the satellite office up and running in the current Browning Library; she also states there might be some Montana codes that needs to be followed. Commissioner DesRosier stated the County Attorney has been involved and they are following the MCA codes.

Elaine Mitchel expresses her gratitude and thanks to Crystal Cole for her work on the grant money and states Cole should be included and in agreement in the process. Commissioner DesRosier stated Cole would be as she is the reason the meeting is taking place and the reason why elections went the way it did as she took the bull by the horns early on and she transformed elections into something that was professionally done and she deserves a raise.

F. Next Meeting – Tuesday, January 05, 2021 – Cut Bank

Commissioner McKay motions to adjourn at 11:16 a.m.; Commissioner DesRosier seconds the motion; motion carried.

GLACIER COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Michael J. DesRosier, Chair

ATTEST:

Mandi Bird Kennerly, Clerk & Recorder