

**Glacier County Commissioners
Thursday, January 21, 2021
Regular Meeting (GoToMtg)
Cut Bank, MT**

The Glacier County Board of Commissioners met at a regular meeting scheduled meeting at 9:00 am on Thursday, January 21, 2021. Commissioners Mary Jo Bremner, Michael DesRosier and John B. Overcast were present and Austin Parrent taking minutes.

Present at the meeting: Kim Stoltz, Public; LeAnne Kavanagh, Press; Marilyn Lotvedt, Public; Carol Larson, Public; Brenda Schilling, Port Authority; Laurie Elhard, Public; Tom McKay, Public; Roger Larson, Public; Linda Luther, Public; Terry Matt, Glacier County Attorney

Present via GoToMeeting: (1) Caller; Austin, Public; Cut Bank Airport Authority; Elaine Mitchel, Public; Gloria, Public; Mandi Bird Kennerly, Clerk & Recorder; Mike Kittson, Human Resource Director; Janine Scott, Clerk of District Court

A. Roll Call

Meeting called to order @ 9:03 a.m.

B. Approval of Agenda

C. Approval of the Minutes: 12/10, 12/21 & 12/22/2020

Commissioner DesRosier motions to approve the minutes for 12/10, 12/21 & 12/22/2020; Commissioner Overcast seconds the motion; motion carried.

D. Review/Sign: Payroll/Claims

Dated for January 21, 2021
Payroll & Claims Approved for Payment

<i>FUND</i>	<i>ACCOUNT</i>	<i>AMOUNT</i>
1000	General Fund	\$ 28,050.47
2110	Road Fund	\$ 13,976.08
2140	Weed Control	\$ 2,644.92
2180	County District Court	\$ 489.50
2220	Library	\$ 306.01
2230	Ambulance	\$ 1,817.93
2250	City/County Planning	\$ 1,000.00
2300	Public Safety (Law)	\$ 5,057.68
2360	Museum	\$ 295.94
2410	Glacier Park Lights	\$ 529.44
2863	Glacier County Transit	\$ 295.61
2918	Sheriff Law Enf Grant - Stonegarden	\$ 1,083.75
2960	Health Grants - Emerg Prep	\$ 25,190.06
2971	WIC	\$ 51.85
2979	Immunization Reimbursement	\$ 79.00
7302	West End Cemetery	\$ 429.84
7901	Hospital/NRMC Fund	\$ 129,500.00
	TOTAL CLAIMS	\$ 210,798.08
	PAYROLL	\$ 185,878.70
	TOTAL PAYROLL & CLAIMS	\$ 396,676.78

NEW BUSINESS:

E. Discussion: Update on Browning Satellite Office Potential Office Tours – Glacier County Commissioners

Commissioner DesRosier starts the discussion on the buildings currently being considered for purchase as a new satellite office in Browning using the Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL) grant funds that were received for elections. This will relieve Glacier County from paying rent at the current satellite office location: 12 Starr School Road at \$1,000.00 per month. There were several buildings that were looked at as potential satellite office sites, however, the one that stood out was the property formerly known as Blackfeet Construction Supplies, owned by Harry Barnes. The property consists of several individual lots and the building is large enough to meet Glacier County's current and future needs. The building is move in ready. There is a large area for record keeping and the adjoining property has a 150' by 40' warehouse. The parking lot will need to be renovated but, out of all the buildings considered, this building will require the least amount of renovation.

There was discussion had between Crystal Cole, Deputy Elections Administrative Assistant, and the commissioners. The amount remaining in the CTCL grant was brought up. As of the last payroll in December of 2020, the remaining amount left in the grant funds was \$24,930.00. This is the remaining balance if the grant was used to cover the costs of the elections department's current expenditures for fiscal year 2021. Crystal mentions that Chancy Kittson, Glacier County C.F.O., was going to see what could be taken out of her current report and put back into the original elections budget that was created at the start of the fiscal year.

Some of the concerns Commissioner Bremner had about the buildings that were viewed were that the buildings might have possible existing problems. They could be too old and their renovation costs could be too high as a result. She had doubts on whether most of them would be move in ready. The owner of the building formerly known as Blackfeet Construction Supplies talked with the commissioners and reassured some of their doubts. He put a new roof on the property. The shop in the back is heated. The entire upstairs was open and available for storage. The building was clean and move in ready. A concern Commissioner Bremner brought up was the potential for flooding since the building has a hill next to it. The only problem the owner had was water coming in through the back door which could be fixed by leveling the hill and adding a parking lot in that space. Most of the other properties would require a building to be built on them in addition to the purchase of the properties themselves.

Commissioner Bremner opens the meeting for public comment.

Tom McKay, Public, comments that he was involved with the satellite office as a former commissioner. For the past 6 years he delivered paperwork back and forth between the courthouse and the satellite office daily. He states that once Chancy Kittson transfers elections expenditures to the original elections budget, there should be over \$200,000.00 available in the CTCL grant funds.

Kim Stoltz, Public, raises a question about how much money is available to spend and what the cost of the building is.

Since Chancy Kittson was not currently apart of the meeting, no official amounts were given as to the amount that could be spent out of the CTCL grant funds currently or the cost of the Blackfeet Construction Supplies building.

Crystal Cole states that the original amount of the CTCL grant was \$283,830.00. There was some additional discussion on the remainder of the grant and clarification for members of the public on how the remainder was going to increase if expenditures were put back onto the original elections' budget.

Commissioner Bremner mentions that there was a suggestion to have a satellite office built onto the back of the Glacier County shop in Browning considering the county already owns that property. Her concern is that there would be no road access as people would not be able to drive in where Glacier County's equipment is coming in and out. The other concern was that a building would have to be built however this would get into expenses that would have to be paid out of Glacier County's budget rather than the CTCL grant funds, effectively taking the option off the list for consideration.

There was additional discussion on properties that are owned by Glacier County near Browning. They are all either inaccessible or too far out of town to be centrally localized for a satellite office. Commissioner Bremner states that the 3 Rivers Communications building was brought up as a potential location however that was purchased by Siyeh Communications when they took over 3 Rivers Communications. The Radio Shack building owned by 3 Rivers Communications was also asked about, however, it was already being purchased by someone else that same day. There was another property considered downtown, however, the property sits next to Ick's Bar. Commissioner Bremner mentions that this may cause issues especially around important dates, like when an election is being held. Glacier County would likely need to fence the area off which is not something she would like to do for a county satellite office.

There was additional discussion on several other properties that Commissioner DesRosier considered that were unfit and would require additional renovations and financing to purchase.

LeAnne Kavanagh, Press, asks Glacier County Attorney Terryl Matt if there would need to be a public notice where a bid would need to be put out before a decision is made. Terryl Matt confirms that a public notice would need to be done. This would add a few weeks to the process before the building could be purchased.

Commissioner Overcast raised his concerns about where the additional money would be coming from when there is only about \$24,000.00 left in the CTCL grant fund, especially since Chancy Kittson has not given any information as to the official amount remaining in the fund yet. He states that he will not make a decision today.

There was additional discussion on where the money would be coming from and how the current elections expenditures would be shifted to the original budget to free up the CTCL grant fund to purchase a satellite office building.

Laurie Elhard, Public, questions whether any grant money was going to go towards repairing the voting center here in Cut Bank. Commissioner Bremner states that Elaine Mitchell asked about a new rug for the building, however, at this time there are not any plan or money to do so.

Marlene Luedtke, Public, asks if the commissioners have considered using the CTCL grant funds to add on to the property next to the Browning Library that Glacier County already owns. She questions why this has not been considered further.

Commissioner Bremner states that she and Chancy Kittson did look at the property at the library. It would require tearing down a wall and adding in the proper size that would be needed for elections. The biggest concern had to do with parking space. The library is next to the firehall and a church. Commissioner Bremner states that you would not want people parking in front of the firehall's fire trucks. Commissioner DesRosier states that it would completely block off the street next to the church if people were parking there.

Elaine Mitchel, Public, comments that she is not against having a satellite office in Browning and she understands the need for it. She is also not against transferring election grant money to reimburse the general fund for expenses for the election. Elaine states that she does not understand how Glacier County can purchase anything, on or off the reservation when Glacier County is broke. She states her concern for the five year plan that Chancy Kittson submitted to the State of Montana and continues to state that the county is not out of the woods financially and is not in a position to be buying property anywhere.

Commissioner Bremner replies that the grant must be spent on what it was meant for in elections. Either way, Glacier County would have to use that money for elections. She continues to say that we would not want to turn any of that grant back without using it.

Elaine Mitchel states that since it must be used for elections, and since libraries are especially important to elections, why not use the available grant money to reopen the library in the City of Cut Bank. Libraries provide a lot of people with the only information they will have to decide who to vote for.

Commissioner Bremner states that they will have a meeting to talk about reopening the library. She states that she will close the discussion since no motions are being made at this time and they will make sure to go over every logistic that the public is concerned about.

F. Discussion: Department Reports, Executive Meeting & Logistics Meeting – Mary Jo Bremner, Glacier County Commissioner Chair

Commissioner Bremner would like to bring in each department head and discuss their department reports. Being a new commissioner, she would like to meet each of them individually, as well as their staffs. This will include: the Clerk & Recorder, Clerk of Court,

Treasurer, Commissioners, Glacier County Attorney, Justice of the Peace and the C.F.O., as well as other departments within Glacier County.

G. Discussion/Approval: BSTF & LinkOne Holding, Inc Press Release – Glacier County Commissioners

Commissioner Bremner starts off this agenda item by stating that this is a grant that was issued from the State of Montana to hire thirteen employees. This grant was awarded to BSTF and LinkOne Holdings. Lewis Gray is the owner of LinkOne and has already invested equipment that is worth well over what the grant is for. The three employees currently working for him was sufficient to start the grant in motion. There was an issue with the contract that Glacier County would need to sign that states that if the company does not meet the requirements of the grant, that Glacier County would be responsible for paying back the \$97,000.00. The commissioners signed an agreement saying they would be responsible for that. Commissioner Bremner stopped it before it could go further. She read about other counties who had gotten similar grants like this one and learned of a claw back clause that is in all their contracts. She would like Glacier County Attorney Terryl Matt to review it and compare it to the other counties once it is finished.

Brenda Schilling, Glacier County Regional Port Authority Executive Director, states that one thing she wanted to clarify was that the \$1.00 to \$2.00 match does not come out of the county. It passes through the county and comes from the grant. For every \$1.00 Lewis Gray spends, the grant will match \$2.00. No money comes from the county.

Commissioner Bremner states that she asked Lewis Gray about his commitment to the county and to hiring people from Glacier County as well. She states that he plans to stay in the county and keep people hired. After he was asked about who would be responsible for their wages after the grant is finished (between Dec 29, 2020 and Dec 29, 2021) he stated that he was committed to applying for another grant but regardless of whether a grant was received, he would be committed to keeping those people employed.

Glacier County Attorney Terryl Matt states that there are three contracts in play. The management plan, the contract Glacier County signs, and a separate contract between Glacier County and LinkOne. LinkOne will pay for everything first. If they purchase equipment, they will pay for it and they will pay all their employees first and provide proof of those purchases to Glacier County before receiving grant money which will be a protection for the county.

Commissioner DesRosier states that the third contract between Glacier County and the business will handle the liability concerns that he brought up. He states that the press release will show Glacier County's support for job creation if the grant funds are spent on wages.

Glacier County Attorney Terryl Matt states that the process was a little odd in that all she received was the proposed resolution with a few guidelines for how the process worked. She suggests that a possible improvement for the process in the future would be to provide more information or even a sample contract that gives information about the company applying for the grant.

Commissioner Bremner states that Lewis Gray said he would come in and meet everyone. She further states that Chris Reeder apologizes for not giving the county attorney the contract. He recently sent the application part and will make sure Glacier County Attorney Terryl Matt receives everything.

Laurie Elhard, Public, questions if all Glacier County residents are eligible to be employed by the company. Commissioner Bremner confirms that potential employees can be anyone within Glacier County.

Commissioner Bremner states that Lewis Gray, owner of LinkOne, can start the people he hires out at a lower wage but must raise their wages to \$18.88 before he can apply to be reimbursed through the grant. He is currently starting with three employees and plans on adding thirteen, totaling sixteen employees. For him to apply for reimbursement, he must pay the employees those wages first.

There was additional discussion on Glacier County's lack of a grant manager. LeAnne Kavanagh, Press, suggested that once the county gets into a better position financially it might be a good idea to raise the Port Authority's funding back to what it was originally considering a lot of this type of work is what Brenda Schilling, Glacier County Regional Port Authority Executive Director, is familiar with.

Commissioner DesRosier motions to consider a press release for BSTF & LinkOne Holding, Inc that mentions Glacier County's support; Commissioner Overcast seconds the motion; motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS:

H. Public Comment

Kim Stoltz, Public, comments that as a taxpayer and a community member, she feels strongly that Glacier County should not spend any more money until the Glacier County Library is reopened. It was troubling to hear that Glacier County planned to spend three hundred thousand dollars on software. Now, several hundreds of thousands of dollars are being shifted towards the elections budget to be able to pay for a satellite office building using grant money. She feels strongly that the Glacier County Library needs to be reopened and any debt that currently exists needs to be taken care of first before any additional expenditures are paid for.

Elaine Mitchell, Public, states that there is a newly elected president in the country and his theme is America united. She believes this should apply to Glacier County as well. She mentions that she was very upset with the letter that went out with the tax statements and would suggest that no other letters like that go out from Glacier County in the future.

I. Next Meeting – Tuesday, January 26, 2021 – Browning

Commissioner Overcast motions to adjourn the meeting @ 11:03 a.m.; Commissioner DesRosier seconds the motion; motion carried.

ATTEST:

GLACIER COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Mandi Bird Kennerly, Clerk & Recorder

Mary Jo Bremner, Chair