

Glacier County Commissioners
Tuesday, March 2, 2021
Regular Meeting (gotomtg)
Cut Bank, MT

The Glacier County Board of Commissioners met at a regular scheduled meeting at 9:00 am on Tuesday, March 2, 2021. Commissioners Mary Jo Bremner, Michael DesRosier and John B. Overcast were present and Austin Parrent taking minutes.

Present at the meeting: Nathan St. Goddard, Public; Jenny Krapf, Glacier County Health Director; Nancy Hjartarson, Glacier County Board of Health Chair; Brenda Schilling, Glacier County Regional Port Authority Executive Director; Sanford Stone, Public; LeAnne Kavanagh, Press; Kim Boy, Blackfeet Tribe Revenue Director

Present via GoToMeeting: (10) Callers; Ali Ray; Austin; Barbara Paul; BH; Caller 131; Carol Larson; Chancy Kittson; Colleen Marie Jones; Colleen O'Brien; Dancing Bears Inn; Dustin Beck; Elaine; Hiker's Haven; Hotel Guest; Jason Andreas; Judy Moats; Kathryn L Hiestand; Kevin Warrington; Larry; Leanne Zainer; Leslie Haggar; Linda Luther; Mike Kittson; Nathan St. Goddard; Rob Chaney; Ryan Sherburne; Sally Black Welder; South Fork ERC; Stefanie; Stephen & Jackie Conway; Susan Higgins; Susan May; TM; Tammi Ray; Wendy Gates; Terry

A. Roll Call

Meeting was called to order @ 9:04 a.m.

B. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner DesRosier motions to approve the 3/2/2021 agenda; Commissioner Overcast seconds the motion; motion carried.

C. Approval of the Minutes: 1/13, 1/21, 1/26, 2/2, 2/4 & 2/9/2021

The minutes approval was tabled to the next meeting on Thursday, March 4, 2021.

NEW BUSINESS:

D. Discussion/Approval: Glacier County Health Board Member Approval 3-year term – Glacier County Commissioners

Nancy Hjartarson, Glacier County Health Board Chair, states there is an opening on the Glacier County Board of Health for a three-year term. They had one application from Laura Upham. The current health board members had no concerns about her and thought she would be a good member. They recommend the commissioners approve her as she is their nominee for the position.

Commissioner Overcast motions to approve Laura Upham for the Glacier County Board of Health 3-year term; Commissioner DesRosier seconds the motion; motion carried.

E. Approval: Highway 2 Association Annual Membership Dues (\$100.00) – Glacier County Commissioners

Commissioner DesRosier states there are a lot of dangerous stretches along Highway 2. The Highway 2 Association spends a lot of time lobbying congress. They organize for better

transportation opportunities as well. The annual dues of \$100.00 allows Glacier County to be a part of this advocacy organization.

Commissioner DesRosier motions to submit the \$100.00 annual dues for the Highway 2 Association membership; Commissioner Overcast seconds the motion; motion carried.

F. Acknowledge: Emergency Health Rule/Order Relating to COVID-19 (February 16, 2021)

Jenny Krapf, Glacier County Health Director, states that in response to Governor Greg Gianforte rescinding the statewide mask mandate, the Glacier County Board of Health voted to keep the rules and regulations the same as they have been since the pandemic started. She further states that they are asking all citizens of Glacier County to continue supporting businesses that do require a mask to be worn inside their facilities.

Commissioner Bremner states that masks are still required in all Glacier County owned public buildings. She continues to say that all staff are still required to wear masks when dealing with the public and when they are closer than 6 feet from one another.

Nancy Hjartarson, Glacier County Health Board Chair, states that the Board of Health has always followed the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's guidelines and approves of people following them as well.

Commissioner Overcast motions to accept the new Health Board recommendations for COVID-19 protocol within Glacier County; Commissioner DesRosier seconds the motion; motion carried.

G. Discussion: Planning a Safe Reopening of Glacier Park – Sanford Stone, Glacier County Citizen

Sanford Stone presented the economic impact that the closure of Glacier National Park has had on the businesses currently operating within East Glacier. He would like to resolve the issue with the Glacier County Commissioners and try to move forward toward a safe reopening of the park.

During this discussion there was debate if the Glacier County Commissioners have the authority to allow businesses to be open if they are non-members on fee land within the Blackfeet Reservation. Sanford Stone stated that Glacier County has jurisdiction over non-members on fee land. Glacier County Attorney Terryl Matt offered legal advice to the commissioners that they did not have the authority and should defer to the Blackfeet Tribe given the fact that the pandemic affects the health, safety and well-being of the people living on the reservation.

There was additional discussion and debate on regulatory jurisdiction and which entity has the authority to use it over non-members on fee land.

Commissioner Bremner stated she would take all non-member business owners concerns to the meeting being held by the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council on Thursday, March 4, 2021 and give voice to them if given the opportunity.

H. Discussion: Assisting Shuttered Glacier County Businesses – Sanford Stone, Glacier County Citizen

Sanford Stone states that the business owners are prepared to shutter their businesses for as long as is needed, however, there has been a lack of communication while their businesses have been shut down for nearly a year. Moving forward he would like there to be a stronger line of communication so that business owners are not left in the dark as to what decisions are being made about whether the park will remain closed and if businesses will be allowed to reopen.

OTHER BUSINESS:

I. Public Comment

There was brief mention of water testing in which the Glacier County Sanitarian Ron Andersen clarified that it is up to the business establishment to take water tests. The State of Montana does the licensing and Glacier County endorses that license. If it is a public water system that serves 25 or more people or has 15 or more connections, then that sampling is monitored by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). It is up to the business owner to do the sampling and submit the proof of results.

Noel Stewart, Public, comments that she is for reopening businesses. She has a question regarding vaccination prioritization within the county and asks if enrolled members that live within the county are able to get the prioritized vaccine in Cut Bank. Commissioner Bremner responds that the Glacier County Health Director Jenny Krapf has been vaccinating all people within Glacier County regardless of tribal enrollment and has been following the COVID-19 protocol.

Susan Higgins, Public, asks if out-of-state employees arriving during the summer will be able to get vaccinated if they have not already. Kim Boy, Blackfeet Tribal Revenue Director, responds that it depends on the supply at that time and to call Roberta Wagner at Southern Piegan as she has been getting front line workers vaccinated. A second question was asked regarding out of state tourists and potentially contentious encounters with business owners who require masks to be worn and whether or not there will be an increased police presence to assist if needed. Commissioner Bremner states that they will need to ask the sheriff to see if they can offer additional assistance.

Claire Stone, Public, mentions that an immediate action that the commissioners could take is to work with the Glacier County Regional Port Authority to assess the needs of businesses within Glacier County to provide meaningful assistance towards the economic recovery of the region.

John Ray, Public, asks the commissioners what assistance they can offer to businesses within Glacier County and if they can give financial relief in terms of 2019 and 2020 taxes. Commissioner DesRosier responds that it would need to be a state mandated rule before

taxes could be adjusted and mentions that there has been financial assistance in the form of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) loans, as well as COVID-19 grants from the state that have been given out. Brenda Schilling mentions that the PPE loans are called loans but are forgivable.

Nathan St. Goddard, Public, states that business owners would like to stay in business and need to be open to do so. We are going to be living with COVID-19 moving forward and doing so requires safety to be taken into consideration, but does not mean all businesses should remain closed. He would like Glacier County to offer whatever support it can to businesses to help them remain open. He also states his concern that the Tribe is receiving COVID-19 money and Glacier County is as well, yet business owners who rely on their businesses' revenue are not able to survive due to being closed.

Commissioner Bremner states she will express these concerns to the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council.

J. Next Meeting – Thursday, March 4, 2021 – Cut Bank

Commissioner Overcast motions to adjourn the meeting @ 11:01 a.m.; Commissioner DesRosier seconds the motion; motion carried.

ATTEST:

GLACIER COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Mandi Bird Kennerly, Clerk & Recorder

Mary Jo Bremner, Chair