

**Glacier County Commissioners
Thursday, March 4, 2021
Regular Meeting (gotomtg)
Cut Bank, MT**

The Glacier County Board of Commissioners met at a regular scheduled meeting at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 4, 2021. Commissioners Mary Jo Bremner, Michael DesRosier and John B. Overcast were present and Austin Parrent taking minutes.

Present at the meeting: Elaine Mitchell, Public; LeAnne Kavanagh, Press; Neal Bartleson, Public; Carol Larson, Public; Lockley Bremner, Press; Laurie Elhard, Public; Terryl Matt, Glacier County Attorney; Don Wilson, Glacier County Treasurer

Present via GoToMeeting: (2) Callers; Brenda Schilling; Cut Bank Airport Authority Executive Director; Denny; Donna Taylor; GC; GC2; Jimmy; Mike Kittson; TM

A. Roll Call

Meeting called to order @ 9:00 a.m.

B. Approval of Agenda

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

Commissioner Overcast motions to approve the minutes from 1/13, 1/21, 1/26, 2/2, 2/4 & 2/9/2021; Commissioner DesRosier seconds the motion; motion carried.

D. Review/Sign: Payroll/Claims

**Dated for March 4, 2021
CLAIMS APPROVED FOR PAYMENT**

<i>FUND</i>	<i>ACCOUNT</i>	<i>AMOUNT</i>
1000	General Fund	\$ 36,270.80
2110	Road Fund	\$ 12,630.44
2140	Weed Control	\$ 325.03
2180	County District Court	\$ 565.74
2220	Library	\$ 4,170.72
2230	Ambulance	\$ 95.00
2300	Public Safety (Law)	\$ 7,058.94
2360	Museum	\$ 310.82
2850	911 Emergency (Sheriff)	\$ 501.93
2865	DNRC Grant	\$ 9,900.00
2960	Health Grants - Emerg Prep	\$ 105.02
2979	Immunization Reimbursement	\$ 51.00
7302	West End Cemetery	\$ 242.81
	TOTAL CLAIMS	\$ 72,228.25
	PAYROLL	\$ 195,268.75
	TOTAL PAYROLL & CLAIMS	\$ 267,497.00

NEW BUSINESS:

E. PUBLIC HEARING (9:00 A.M.) INTENT TO PURCHASE A BUILDING FOR USE AS A SATELLITE OFFICE

Commissioner Bremner starts the meeting with a statement she prepared prior to the meeting:

“I stood in the presence of a president, probably as close as this room to him. I stood among great senators and representatives from across our nation, those from Montana. I’ve worked alongside governors and the leaders of the great state of Montana. I rendered seven years of public service to the Montana Board of Public Education and worked alongside fine educators where we established rule, MCA on the education system in Montana so I understand how it works. I’ve been a dedicated teacher and have worked alongside dedicated teachers for thirty years and we’ve taught elected officials, some that even work in this building, some that are tribal councilmen, some that are legislatures and senators in the State of Montana. I also taught doctors, lawyers, doctorates, teachers, nurses, social workers, police officers, soldiers, janitors, café owners, workers, fathers, mothers. I handed out diplomas to the students of the Montana State School for the Deaf and Blind. I’ve even handed out, or taught, those people that sit on our corners and feel like maybe I have failed those kids a little bit.

One of the things that honored me more than all of those things, is to be elected to this position and to be able to serve the people of Glacier County. To serve alongside these gentlemen and their hard work has been an honor, just in two months, I’m honored. Then they elected me chair person, which is even more of an honor. It’s humbling to have the constituents and to have the people trust what this commission is here to do. We already know the standing of our finances, and the debts, ...and the work we have before us. We haven’t taken any of these things lightly and we’ve been working for the best interest of our county and we’re asking every day for the people in this building to perform at the top of their abilities to help this county improve and to help us reach goals and our vision for Glacier County. Along with these gentlemen, we have set forth a goal, and we want to make sure that we strive for it daily. Sometimes we flounder, sometimes mistakes are made, but we want to correct them, not ...six years from now when I’m gone. We want to correct them as soon as possible.

We are not ignorant nor in the dark concerning entities that exist within the county that would like us to fail and forever grasping the things that do not benefit the county but only cast a pall of doubt over our efforts. We hear the whisperings of groups that feed on ill will and feed them to the good people of this county. There are those who choose to look on us as if we need custodial guidance, and are not capable of taking care of our duties and business. We are well aware that not everyone wishes us to succeed and would like to see us fail, and to point out that they do not want Native Americans to lead this county. But the many, many good people of our county that voted for me, that voted for these gentlemen, are the people that we are looking to, and the people that we are happy to serve every day. We’re going to serve those naysayers, we’re going to serve those that appreciate us, we’re going to serve the citizens of this county the best we can. We will never use illegal means to run this county. We will protect the citizens and their rights and their money and what they have. We will work hard to correct and put things that in the past have put us behind. We like to invite you to cheer our progress and our success for the future. We would move forward in this county and not backwards. This county is purchasing a satellite office. Made possible by a [Center for Tech and Civic Life] C.T.C.L. grant and has followed the requirements set up in the grant for this purchase. A satellite office that will provide a safe, accessible place, where the people on the west side of the county to vote. The grant will pay the full purchase of the building and the regulations of this grant and this purchase have been

followed to a T. There are certain civil liberties that we have to follow for all the citizens of this county and one of those is the ability to vote. Under Wandering Medicine case, Wandering Medicine V. [Montana Secretary of State] ... the decision was made by the supreme court that satellite offices must be provided for citizens to be able to vote freely and not have any obstruction to their vote. So, there are also some other cases that I won't quote that justify us having a satellite office.

I just have a couple of more things to say. One of them is, that people are concerned by the cost and like I said our debts, ...which we are working on diligently daily trying to catch up, trying to find a solution and do this. Grants cannot be used for anything but their purpose that they were made for. This grant was given to Glacier County and it was also given to other counties for the specific use to find a safe and accessible place for people to vote. We rent a building that is too small in Browning, it is very small and it has some boxes in there otherwise we have to rent larger buildings. In this case, if we own this building then we no longer have to rent, nor do we have to try to find space for people to vote. So with that, thank you, sorry for my emotional outburst but I feel so proud to serve the people here in Glacier County. And you know what, it's not just the reservation that elected me. I won two precincts here in Cut Bank. And from the other precincts I got a lot of votes. I'm honored to be able to serve the whole county not just half a county. Not just the county that says it separates at the crick but this is Glacier County. We three here serve Glacier County and are working for the best interest of that county. With that I would like to open it to public comment and keep it close to two minutes."

Commissioner DesRosier states that he thinks Commissioner Bremner covered the purpose of the hearing very well and states the nature of government is to continuing moving forward.

Commissioner Overcast states he is for a satellite office; however, he is concerned about the additional costs that are going to happen after the purchase of the building. He also has staffing concerns in terms of needing additional staff to maintain the building.

LeAnne Kavanagh, Press, questions if the election grant can be used to cover all the expenses of elections and then a line-item transfer to a building fund can be made so there is a clean trail for the grant.

Treasurer Wilson states that it was a question they had as well and they asked the auditors for their recommendation. They asked if it would be a continual or long-term grant but because it was a one-time grant, they said not to bother with it. Creating a separate account to do it is not necessary.

There was additional public comment that involved answering questions the public had. Commissioner Bremner states that the satellite office is used by the treasurer's office and the clerk and recorder's office to offer services from both departments. She also clarified that the Center for Tech and Civic Life (C.T.C.L.) grant has to be used by June 2021, any money that is not used for expenditures will need to be sent back. They did respond and are allowing the money to be used to purchase a satellite office building.

Elaine Mitchell, Public, states that the county is not in a financial position to purchase any property at this point. She is concerned about taking a taxable piece of property off of the tax rolls at a time when Glacier County needs all possible tax revenue.

Elaine also mentioned the possibility of using the remainder of the grant after the majority of it was put towards elections expenditures to remodel or add on to a property with delinquent taxes or build onto and expand something that is already owned by Glacier County. Commissioner Bremner responded that they looked into the Glacier County owned properties and a recurring issue was the accessibility, location, and parking availability along with the size of the buildings were all issues involved with currently owned property.

There was discussion on the Glacier County trails being purchased through a separate grant years ago, an approximate amount of \$600,000.00 was mentioned.

There was additional discussion on the cost of making Glacier County property exempt from paying taxes.

Lockley Bremner, Public, comments that he is in support of the purchase of a satellite office building and states that having one has increased the number of people who vote on the reservation.

Carol McDivitt, Public, questions if the building that is being purchase has too much space for the services that are being requested and if in the future the building itself could end up being a large financial burden for the county to maintain. She thinks the county does need to have a satellite office but states that it is difficult as a tax payer to make informed decisions unless the county's finances are publicly accessible.

Elaine Mitchell adds that everyone recognizes the need for a satellite office and that the issue is not the need for one but the fact that the county is broke. She states that the last plan that Chancy Kittson submitted to the State of Montana put Glacier County in a negative financial position at the end of 2025. Glacier County is not currently in a position to buy property at this time.

Terryl Matt, Glacier County Attorney, states that the Cut Bank Trails was purchased through a \$600,000.00 grant back in 2017 and states there were no questions from anyone in the community at that time. Glacier County was also in a financial crunch back then as well.

Commissioner DesRosier mentioned it was a matching grant as the downtown park. Commission met a number of times on the trail.

F. Discussion/Approval: Glacier County DUI Taskforce – Eileen Henderson, DUI Coordinator

Commissioner Bremner states that Eileen Henderson, Glacier County DUI Taskforce, would like to initiate the process to start a scholarship program.

Commissioner DesRosier states the money we receive comes from the State of Montana for the DUI task force, the county acts as a pass through. He also states that Eileen has been a great representative and advocate and he thinks we should offer the scholarship to reach out to the youth and prevent drinking and driving in order to save lives.

Treasurer Wilson states that there is additional funding for the DUI taskforce that Eileen will have to apply for but in order to do so she needs permission from the commissioners.

All three commissioners express their consent and approval.

Commissioner Overcast motions for the DUI taskforce to move ahead and initiate their scholarship offer; Commissioner DesRosier seconds the motion; motion carried.

G. Discussion: Browning Satellite Office – Mary Jo Bremner, Glacier County Commission Chair

Commissioner DesRosier motions to table this agenda item to the next meeting on Tuesday, March 9, 2021; Commissioner Overcast seconds the motion; motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS:

H. Public Comment

I. Next Meeting – Tuesday, March 9, 2021 – Browning

Commissioner Overcast motions to adjourn the meeting @ 10:48 a.m.; Commissioner DesRosier seconds the motion; motion carried.

ATTEST:

GLACIER COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Mandi Bird Kennerly, Clerk & Recorder

Mary Jo Bremner, Chair