

Glacier County Commissioners
Thursday, April 14, 2022
Regular Meeting
Cut Bank, MT

The Glacier County Board of Commissioners met at a regular scheduled meeting at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, April 14, 2022. Commissioners Mary Jo Bremner and John B. Overcast were present. Commissioner Michael J. DesRosier was absent and Austin Parrent taking minutes.

Present at the meeting: Del Blaney, Glacier Care Center Maintenance; Laurie Elhard, Public; Carol Larson, Public; Austin Castle, Glacier County Library Director; Kristi Rowell, Glacier Care Center Administrator; Becky Kimmert, Glacier County Library Board Member; Claire Stone, Glacier County Library Board Member; Jake Gustafson, Leavitt Group – Leavitt Great West Insurance; Marlene Luedtke, Public

Present via GoToMeeting: Brenda Schilling; Elaine; Gloria; Linda; Linda Luther; Sanford Stone; Sarah Converse

A. Roll Call

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

B. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Overcast motions to accept the agenda with changes; Commissioner Bremner seconds the motion; motion carried.

C. Approval of Minutes: 10/5, 10/12, 10/14, 10/18, 10/26 & 10/28/2021

Commissioner Overcast motions to accept the 10/5, 10/12, 10/14, 10/18, 10/26, & 10/28/2021 minutes with changes; Commissioner Bremner seconds the motion; motion carried.

D. Review/Sign: Payroll/Claims

Dated for April 14, 2022

CLAIMS APPROVED FOR PAYMENT

<i>FUND</i>	<i>ACCOUNT</i>	<i>AMOUNT</i>
1000	General Fund	\$ 48,719.25
2110	Road Fund	\$ 11,346.88
2140	Weed Control	\$ 182.53
2180	County District Court	\$ 1,542.74
2220	Library	\$ 2,966.61
2230	Ambulance	\$ 2,415.64
2300	Public Safety (Law)	\$ 19,001.05
2850	911 Emergency (Sheriff)	\$ 42.09
2968	Chronic Disease Prevention Grant	\$ 510.69
2991	American Rescue Plan Act	\$ 3,721.30
7302	West End Cemetery	\$ 278.90

	TOTAL CLAIMS	\$ 90,727.68
	PAYROLL	\$ 191,926.70
	TOTAL PAYROLL & CLAIMS	\$ 282,654.38

NEW BUSINESS:

E. Discussion/Approval: Glacier Care Center Roof & Siding Repair – Glacier County Commissioners/Kristi Rowell, Glacier Care Center Administrator

Glacier Care Center Administrator Kristi Rowell and Commissioner Bremner and Commissioner Overcast discuss the contracts between Welcov, Lantis, and Glacier Care Center. The conversation was regarding the Glacier Care Center roof and whose responsibility it is to repair the damaged portion of the roof and siding of the building. Both parties discuss Welcov filing for bankruptcy, which was the company that managed all the properties for Lantis and was subcontracted by Lantis to oversee the Glacier Care Center facility. There is a brief discussion on who is responsible for paying for the roof due to Welcov dissolving its business.

Commissioner Bremner states she would like to have Kristi Rowell return when Glacier County Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Chancy Kittson and Glacier County Attorney Terryl Matt can both be available to answer questions at a later commissioner meeting. The Glacier County Attorney is currently reviewing the contracts involved between all three parties to determine who is responsible for the expense. She would also like Kristi to contact the Glacier County Maintenance Department Supervisor Shannon Pepion to help with any repairs that need immediate attention.

Kristi mentions this problem has been going on for years and partial repair attempts have been made to try and mend the damaged areas of the roof and areas where the siding has been blowing off. She requests to have something put up on the building to cover the damaged areas and pieces of the building that are falling off. Kristi also states that the nursing home does not make money, and she wishes they could pay to get it fixed themselves, but they are not able to. She states they are going to be cut financially soon as well.

Commissioner Bremner would like to try to find a solution when the Glacier County CFO and Glacier County Attorney can be present. She mentions an informal meeting might be better suited than a commissioner meeting for everyone to compare notes and discuss it further. Commissioner Overcast states that he drives by the Glacier Care Center daily and is aware of what the building looks like and would like to get the situation figured out quickly.

Public Comment:

Carol Larson, Public, asks if Kristi Rowell spoke with Glacier County CFO Chancy Kittson to get help with grant writing in order to apply for more funding. Kristi responds that she was working the floor at the assisted living facility and has not had a chance to call him yet. Commissioner Bremner apologizes and lets Kristi know she will probably have to wait a little longer because Chancy is currently out of the office and she will have to contact him once he returns.

F. Discussion/Approval: Glacier County Library Update – Glacier County Commissioners

Austin Castle, Glacier County Library Director, updates the commissioners on concerns regarding the Browning Library building. On March 17, 2022, a certified mold inspector tested the facility and found the building was positive for mold. The building was also tested for asbestos and the flooring came back positive. Austin and the library board are currently waiting for more reports to be received before they will decide on a course of action to address the current issues with the building. He would like to meet with Glacier County Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Chancy Kittson when more information becomes available.

Commissioner Bremner states that there will not be a quick fix to resolve the current issues with the building and that the library director and board will be in it for the long haul. She continues to say that Glacier County would still like library services to be available to the public. She recommends that Austin Castle meet with the Blackfeet Community College Library Director Aaron Lafromboise in order to try and consolidate library services to help accommodate the public.

Austin Castle states that he has spoken with Clerk & Recorder Mandi Kennerly about using the elections trailer to help transport the books that have been removed from the Browning Library to Cut Bank. He states that he does not believe the Blackfeet Community College Library Director would be comfortable with moving the books into her building due to the potential mold exposure risk. There is brief mention by Commissioner Bremner of an earlier plan to move the books into the tin building behind the Browning Library which is secure and has heat. Austin mentions that he spoke with CFO Kittson and they decided it was not a good idea to move books or furniture from the Browning Library into that building due to the potential mold exposure risk.

Austin Castle explains that the Blackfeet Community College Library Director is willing to let the public check out books at the college library. She would also be able to allow the public to check out books available at the Glacier County Library which could then be sent up to the college library so that the public will not have to travel. They are also going to work on collaborating for a summer reading program where participants can go to the college library to sign up, check out books, and pick up prizes. Austin discusses additional book sharing services that the Blackfeet Community College Library and Glacier County Library could collaborate on to expand services that are missing in Browning due to the Browning Library building being unusable in its current state. He also states that they may lose the Browning Library's book collection due to contamination from the mold in the building.

Commissioner Bremner commends Austin Castle and the Library Board for their hard work and for continuing to offer services to Browning residents through collaboration with the Blackfeet Community College Library.

Commissioner Overcast asks how similar the book collections are between the Browning Library and the Blackfeet Community College Library. Austin Castle responds that he is unsure of how close the book collections are but states that the college library will probably have books that the Browning Library does not currently have. There is additional

discussion between the commissioners and the director and library board members on possible catalog sharing options between other libraries to expand the book collection that is currently being offered to the Browning public.

Commissioner Bremner asks Jake Gustafson, Leavitt Group, if it's possible to consider the Browning Library as being totaled, similar to how a vehicle would be considered totaled after enough damage has occurred to it. Jake states that they would like to see a report on the building first and then discuss it afterwards with Montana Association of Counties (MACO) on a process or procedure for how to move forward with the building. Commissioner Bremner states that it's good that the building is made of brick which would allow the damaged portions of the library to be taken out while the structural portion of the library would still be sound. Jake continues to say that when you have older buildings, this building included, you are going to run into asbestos issues when you start tearing the building apart. Claire Stone, Glacier County Library Board Member, states that the bathroom in the building is also not A.D.A. (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) compliant. If the building were to be remodeled in the future, then this would be an improvement to the current layout of the facility. It has also been added to the library's capital improvement plan. Claire continues to say that any help with funding, including American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding that can be contributed towards renovations of the building would be a big help.

Becky Kimmet, Glacier County Library Board Member, talks about a \$10,000.00 grant that the Glacier County Library has received. She asks Claire Stone to talk more about the grant and states that the library board has been working on obtaining additional grant funding to try and hire more employees so that the library here in Cut Bank can be kept open full-time.

The Library Board and Commissioners discuss the challenges of the library board members taking their positions at the time that they did due to the Browning Library building being damaged. There is additional discussion about making sure the public knows that the only reason the Browning Library is closed is due to health concerns regarding the mold and asbestos.

Library Director Castle states that they've applied for a network and cabling equipment grant which if received should help the Cut Bank Library have stronger Wi-Fi. He states that they may not receive funding from the grant for the Browning Library's network and cabling equipment due to the building's current condition, but they would like to apply for future rounds of funding.

There is additional discussion regarding when the commissioners will meet with Stahly Engineering & Associates to discuss the county's Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP) that the departments were required to individually submit. There is discussion around the Glacier County Cut Bank Library roof having trouble and needing repairs. The A/C unit also leaks when it rains or when snow melts and has for the past few years. Commissioner Overcast and Commissioner Bremner would like Library Director Castle to submit maintenance repair requests in writing and to include both of them in the correspondence with Maintenance Department Head Shannon Pepion.

Library Director Castle mentions that there is a library board vacancy due to a board member resigning. They will begin advertising for the opening shortly and will be meeting with Human Resources Director Mike Kittson to work out the details. They plan to advertise for the position through paper classifieds, handing out fliers, and posting on the library's social media pages.

G. Discussion/Approval: Commissioner Meeting Rule Announcement – Mary Jo Bremner, Glacier County Commission Chair

Commissioner Bremner reads a public participation announcement:

“Because we have enjoyed six plus months of respect, intelligent conversation, respectful debate and so forth we, Glacier County Commissioners will be lifting the stringent time limit and subject matter on comments.

We will revert back to Robert's Rules of Order leniency standards whereby each person has a maximum of ten minutes. If the subject matter is introduced by a member of the public, and not an agenda item, then that person shall enjoy the rules for debate. Those rules are ten minutes for the opening comments, everyone else receives their ten minutes maximum and then the closing comments by the original commentator for a maximum of ten minutes.

The Chair will reserve the right to halt any comment that does not follow Robert's Rules of Order.”

H. Discussion/Approval: March 2022 Cash Report – Glacier County Commissioners

Commissioner Overcast motions to approve the March 2022 Cash Report; Commissioner Bremner seconds the motion; motion carried.

I. Discussion/Approval: Babb REPP Solar Project – Sarah Converse, Sweetgrass Development

Sarah Converse, Sweetgrass Development, states that Glacier Electric is currently working on a project in Babb, MT. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development has a rural development pilot program right now for energy efficiency in disadvantaged communities. Glacier Electric has done something similar in Heart Butte and so they've been working on the project in Babb as well. USDA has a lot of reporting requirements, and you need to be able to accept federal funds, etc. so the Glacier County Port Authority expressed its concern about managing the grant. Sarah Converse took it to Sweetgrass Development's Board of Directors meeting on March 24, 2022, where they agreed to be the applicant for the grant. The purpose of the grant is to complete upgrades, but it is also to have the communities create a community partnership moving forward. There is no funding request from the partners but it's an agreement to participate and help however that entity can.

Jonnalea Tatsey and Sweetgrass Development are writing the grant. There is a two-step process; a letter of intent that is due next week, where you must show the need for the project, the community partnership, the cost of the grant, and why it's important in the

region. A bigger piece of that is how this project can be a catalyst and be a part of a greater outreach. We have communicated with residents in Babb. Jonnalea has been the driving force with coordinating with people in Babb and Sanford Stone has been helpful with figuring out all the different partners involved. The Tribe, Glacier County, the firehalls, the school, Glacier Electric, and the State of Montana to see if they will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/Charter for the group. It will be called one of the following: Glacier County Energy Efficiency Committee, Glacier County Energy Committee or Glacier County Energy Commission. If they make this program permanent in Babb, they could reach out to other places within Glacier County to do the same thing using this consortium as a template.

Today, Sarah Converse is asking for Glacier County's participation in the program as a partner. The funding will run through Sweetgrass Development since they've had federal funding before and are able to deploy the funds. The county is in no way fiscally responsible. It's just an agreement to work with all entities involved on the project. The estimated cost of the project is \$750,000.00. The project is roughly twice the size of the similar project that was done in Heart Butte. Jonnalea Tatsey has been in contact with Bonneville Power, and they have a grant available for \$50,000.00 which requires a 20% match. With that, Sarah and the consortium are looking to find another \$100,000.00 to go towards the project. She asks if the commissioners have any available American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding that they could allocate towards the project. They are also checking with the State of Montana, the Blackfeet Tribe, and other entities to see if they would be willing to assist with the energy upgrades for the community of Babb.

The consortium is having another conference call on Friday to finalize everything to have the letter of intent submitted. After the letter of intent is submitted, USDA will go through all the projects that were submitted and determine which ones are viable and then decide which ones they would like to request an application for. That application will be due in June or July of 2022. Sarah would like to ask for Glacier County's participation in this community partnership.

Commissioner Bremner think's it's a great idea as she is familiar with the Heart Butte project. She would like a breakdown of the other entities participating in the funding of the \$100,000.00 that Sarah and the consortium are seeking to go towards the project. Commissioner Bremner will need to discuss it further with Glacier County Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Chancy Kittson before any financial decisions can be made but would like to contribute something if possible. She asks if it is possible to start with the letter of intent and discuss potential contribution amounts later.

Sarah Converse states that will be fine. They do have to have an estimation of funding for the submission, and it is due next week. They are going to see if the Blackfeet Tribe and the State of Montana can work with that as well. She will work with USDA to see if they can put the potential funding sources in so that they can narrow it down with the project later.

Commissioner Overcast asks who will be responsible for the maintenance of the solar panels after the project is complete. Sarah states that there is some required maintenance and Jonnalea was going to investigate it further. Part of it is done by Glacier Electric. On the

homes that are owned by the Blackfeet Tribe, the responsibility would fall to the tribe. There is also mention of possible coverage for some of the materials that works like a warranty, but this will have to be researched further. Commissioner Overcast clarifies that he is asking because of high winds in both areas which could contribute to an increased need for maintenance of the equipment.

Sarah Converse states that the letter of intent needs to be submitted by Tuesday. She would like the commissioners to agree to be a member of the consortium and support the letter of intent that is being submitted.

Commissioner Overcast motions to support the REPP Solar Project Community Partnership in Babb, Montana; Commissioner Bremner seconds the motion; motion carried.

J. Discussion/Approval: Thane Johnson Legal Co-Counsel Conflict of Interest, GC vs. State of Montana Lawsuit – Mary Jo Bremner, Glacier County Commissioner

Thane Johnson was approved to begin working as a legal co-counsel on the Glacier County vs. State of Montana lawsuit in the commissioner meeting held on Thursday, March 31, 2022. The lawsuit was regarding Glacier County funds being withheld by the State of Montana.

Commissioner Bremner states that they were waiting for a resolution to be finalized, but due to a possible conflict of interest, she would like to retract their earlier decision to approve Thane as legal co-counsel until it can be decided if a conflict of interest exists or not.

Commissioner Overcast motions to rescind the approval of Thane Johnson as legal co-counsel in the GC vs. State of Montana lawsuit, which was approved in the commissioner meeting held on Thursday, March 31, 2022; Commissioner Bremner seconds the motion; motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS:

K. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

L. Next Meeting – Monday, April 18, 2022 – Cut Bank

Commissioner Overcast motions to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Bremner seconds the motion; meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.