

# BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

## ADMINISTRATIVE PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

MISSOULA COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 199 WEST PINE STREET, ADMIN ROOM 206  
February 7, 2023

### ATTENDANCE

**Present:** Josh Slotnick, Dave Strohmaier, Juanita Vero, Violet Plummer, Emmie Bristow, Erica Grinde, Karen Harrison, Kyla Lehnerz, Mel Fisher, Chris Lounsbury, Dylan Jaicks, Anne Hughes, Allison Franz

**Other Attendees:** Carey Powers, Elisha Bucholz, Leidy Wagener, Slaven Lee, MCAT

### I. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None

### II. CONSENT AGENDA

**Moved:** Juanita Vero  
**Second:** David Strohmaier  
**Vote:** Yes 3, No 0, Abstained 0  
**Additional Info:** Consent agenda items approved as written

**1. Request board approve request for payment form for Big Sky Trust Fund grant awarded to assist DJ&A, P.C. (Four jobs created, \$20,000 requested).**

Electronically sent to Leidy Wagener, Missoula Economic Partnership.

**2. Request board approve agreement with Surf\_HL, LLC to conduct research around governmental structure in preparation for the 2024 election cycle.**

Agreement filed with Clerk and Recorder/Treasurer's Office; Book 1085 Page 1265. Electronically sent to Chris Lounsbury, Commissioners' Office.

**3. Request board approve amendment to agreement between Wellpath and Missoula County Detention Center.**

Agreement filed with Clerk and Recorder/Treasurer's Office: Book 1085 Page 1266. Electronically sent to Sheryl Ziegler, Sheriff's Office.

**4. Request board approve Human Resources Policies Changes, Additions, and Updates.**

Electronically sent to Karen Harrison, Human Resources.

### III. ACTION ITEMS

**1. Request board appoint Lori Blumenthal as alternate member filling the remainder of the term through Dec. 31, 2025 to the Food Policy Advisory Board.**

**Presenter:** Kyla Lehnerz  
**Moved:** David Strohmaier  
**Second:** Juanita Vero  
**Motion:** Motion passed as written.  
**Vote:** Yes 3, No 0, Abstained 0  
**Additional Info:**  
**Contract/Project Begin Date:**

**Contract/Project End Date:**

Letter 2023-009 JV and DS signed to Blumenthal. Electronically sent to Kyla Lehnerz, Commissioners' Office.

**2. Request board appoint Mary Manning to fill the remainder of a vacant term through Dec. 31, 2025 to the Weed Control Board.**

**Presenter:**

Kyla Lehnerz

**Moved:**

Juanita Vero

**Second:**

David Strohmaier

**Motion:**

Motion passed as written.

**Vote:**

Yes 3, No 0, Abstained 0

**Additional Info:**

**Contract/Project Begin Date:**

**Contract/Project End Date:**

Letter 2023-008 JV and DS signed to Manning. Electronically sent to Kyla Lehnerz, Commissioners' Office.

**3. Request board appoint alternate member to fill the remainder of a term through June 30, 2027 to the Missoula City-County Library Board.**

**Presenter:**

Kyla Lehnerz

**Moved:**

David Strohmaier

**Second:**

Juanita Vero

**Motion:**

To appoint Julie Edwards to fill the remainder of a term through June 30, 2027 to the Missoula City-County Library Board.

**Vote:**

Yes 3, No 0, Abstained 0

**Additional Info:**

**Contract/Project Begin**

**Date:**

**Contract/Project End**

**Date:**

Letter 2023-010 JV and DS signed to Edwards. Electronically sent to Kyla Lehnerz, Commissioners' Office.

**4. Request board reappoint Kathie Nygaard to a new three-year term of Feb. 1, 2023 through Jan. 31, 2026 to the Elections Advisory Committee.**

**Presenter:**

Kyla Lehnerz

**Moved:**

Juanita Vero

**Second:**

David Strohmaier

**Motion:**

Motion passed as written.

**Vote:**

Yes 3, No 0, Abstained 0

**Additional Info:**

**Contract/Project Begin Date:**

**Contract/Project End Date:**

Letter 2023-019 JV and DS signed to Nygard. Electronically sent to Kyla Lehnerz, Commissioners' Office.

**5. Request board appoint members to the East Missoula Community Council.**

**Presenter:**

Kyla Lehnerz

**Moved:**

David Strohmaier

**Second:**

Juanita Vero

**Motion:**

To appoint Chad Larrabee to fill the remainder of a vacant alternate term through May 31, 2023 to the East Missoula Community Council, and to appoint Stephanie Lemberg to fill the remainder of a vacant term through May 31, 2024 to the East Missoula Community Council.

**Vote:** Yes 3, No 0, Abstained 0

**Additional Info:**

**Contract/Project**

**Begin Date:**

**Contract/Project**

**End Date:**

Letter 2023-015 JV and DS signed to Larrabee / Letter 2023-016 JV and DS signed to Lemberg. Electronically sent to Kyla Lehnerz, Commissioners' Office.

#### **IV. CORRESPONDENCE**

None

#### **V. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

##### **1. Legislative Update**

Missoula County Chief Administrative Officer Chris Lounsbury provided the below legislative updates to the commissioners.

House Bill 391 - Would require local user fees on certain exempt property. It would require exempt properties to pay a fee based on something other than assessed value of the property. The specific purposes for the funds would be public safety and county roads. Any 501(c)(3) would be affected. Most nonprofits will come out against the bill and want Missoula County to oppose it. Sherry Eastman, Republican - House District 52, is the bill sponsor. Fees for public safety could include the Sheriff's Department, Detention Center, County Attorney's Office and Clerk of District Court). Commissioner Strohmaier asked what MACo's opinion was, and Lounsbury answered that they will likely remain neutral.

Commissioner Strohmaier asked what is happening with the non-partisan elections bill. Lounsbury answered that there are currently two bills related to this. One is specifically for Clerk and Recorders/Treasurers, and would not allow those positions to be non-partisan. In many communities, the Clerk and Recorder also serves as the Elections Administrator, and there is a desire to have that position run as a partisan position. The second is a bill that would allow for candidates to state their political party, which would be required to be run on the ballot next to their name, even in non-partisan races. Commissioner Slotnick asked if it could go the other way- where, in partisan races, a candidate can declare they are non-partisan. Lounsbury answered no. Commissioner Vero asked what the Missoula County Elections Office's opinion was on the Bill, and Lounsbury answered that it would have a minimal impact on elections operations in Missoula County, so Missoula County has largely stayed out of it. Commissioner Slotnick said it was potentially dangerous for small counties. Vero asked whether MACo was engaged at all on this bill. Strohmaier said that he reached out to MACo on the second bill, and the executive board had not taken a position on it. Commissioner Vero asked if it could be seen as a state overreach. Lounsbury said that it could be seen as such for the city (which has self-governing powers and determined that their races will be non-partisan), but not the county.

Commissioner Strohmaier asked about House Bill 324. Lounsbury explained that the bill would attempt to upend the way that local governments budget by taking the average three years of inflation plus the average growth in population as the way to calculate how much money the county can raise. You would take the previous year's dollar amount that was raised (excluding some factors, like grants) and apply the new formula to determine what the counties can levy in the next year. After that was done, you would still need to calculate how many mills you can actually levy, because this bill would not change the mill cap.

Lounsbury stated that the bill is overly complicated because it is proposing to take a system that isn't great and add more complications to it. The way this bill is structured would encourage governments to always budget at the maximum. The way it's written does not replace the current system. Lounsbury said that he believed MACo was in opposition to the bill. The bill only applies to counties with populations over 20,000. Missoula County will be watching the hearing with interest to see what happens. Commissioner Slotnick asked whether each system could just come up with its own number, and then which number will be the right number. Lounsbury answered that that is why Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 15-10-420 is still in there. Also, since rapid population growth is still happening, they are looking for a way to temper that number. Property taxes are roughly one third of the county's overall budget, from which you must subtract anything related to debt service. It is very complicated to get to a number, because it treats all of those categories differently. Slotnick asked if the bill has any push behind it. The sponsor is Caleb Hinkle. None of the sponsors are in the appropriations world, so Lounsbury is not sure what the drive behind it is. Strohmaier asked if it would limit the ability of the electorate to vote in a levy or bond. Lounsbury said no.

#### **VI. UPCOMING EVENTS AND INVITATIONS**

None

#### **VII. SIGNING OF ITEMS APPROVED AT PUBLIC MEETING**

None

#### **VIII. OTHER COMMENTS/INSTRUCTIONS**

None