

Missoula Board of County Commissioners

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES COVER SHEET



THURSDAY, JUNE 06, 2024 – 2 PM

Hybrid meeting – Missoula County Courthouse Annex Sophie Moiese
Room/Microsoft Teams

[Click here to view the meeting recording.](#)

Time stamps (in green) correspond to meeting recording above. Please click to
the time stamps listed to view a particular item in the meeting.

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners Present:

(Acting) Chair Juanita Vero
Commissioner Josh Slotnick

Staff Present:

Cheryl Hartman, Administrative Assistant, Commissioners' Office
Annie Cathey, Administrative Assistant, Commissioners' Office
Melissa Fisher, Strategic Initiative Manager, Commissioners' Office
Allison Franz, Communications Manager, Commissioners' Office
Emmie Bristow, Community Engagement Coordinator, Commissioners' Office
Christina Dewar, Administrative Assistant, Commissioners' Office
Kyla Lehnerz, Office Administrator, Lands and Communities

1. **CALL TO ORDER** [Time stamp – 0:02]
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** [Time stamp – 0:03]
3. **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT** [Time stamp – 0:17]
Missoula County acknowledges that this event takes place in the aboriginal territories of the Salish and Kalispel people.
4. **PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS** [Time stamp – 0:40]
 - a. Closed Captioning Available
 - b. Proclamation: National Gun Violence Awareness Day
 - c. Proclamation: Juneteenth Independence Day
 - d. Proclamation: World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
5. **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA** [Time stamp – 9:11]

6. CURRENT CLAIMS LIST [Time stamp – 15:06]

Claims received as of May 15, 2024 to May 28, 2024 by the Commissioners' Office total \$2,198,756.98.

7. HEARINGS

a. 2nd Hearing-Evaro-Finley-O'Keefe Community Council Dissolution [Time stamp – 15:35]

Kyla Lehnerz, Office Administrator, Lands and Communities

Commissioner Slotnick made the motion that the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County hereby approve the Resolution 2024-071 to dissolve the Evaro-Finley-O'Keefe Community Council.

Commissioner Vero seconded.

[Motion Passed 2-0.]

[Resolution 2024- Book:1100 Page:887]

8. OTHER BUSINESS [Time stamp – 15:19]

[None]

9. ADJOURN

(Acting) Chair Vero – Called the meeting to adjourn at 2:19 p.m.

BCC Public Meeting June 06, 2024 – Transcription

This transcription was produced by transcription software. There may be discrepancies between this transcription and meeting dialogue. You can view the recording of the meeting on the county's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/c/missoulacounty> or contact the commissioners' office to obtain a copy.

Dialogue in the transcription attributed to "Sophie Moiese Room" is for all speakers that attended the meeting in person. Attendees that participated virtually are labeled individually.

0:03

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

0:17

Missoula County acknowledges that this event takes place in the aboriginal territories of the Salish and Cleese Bay People.

0:26

Their public announcements.

0:27

Cheryl, Hello everyone.

0:34

If you are joining us for this meeting virtually today, instructions for turning on closed captioning are on your screen.

0:40

If you're joining us in the in person, we will have all we'll have closed captioning on all the screens here in the Sophie Louise room.

0:48

There'll be an opportunity to speak during the meeting for public comment virtually and in person.

0:53

We ask that all speakers today speak slowly and clearly.

0:56

This helps with the accuracy of the closed captioning if you're on Microsoft Teams.

1:00

If you like to speak when discussion has been open for public comment, we ask that you use the Raise Hand feature.

1:06

This is the small hand button.

1:08

If you are calling in on the phone, you will need to hit *5 to raise your hand.

1:12

Once called upon, you will need to hit *6 to unmute.

1:15

If you have any questions, please find me during the meeting and let me know.

1:18

We also have assisted listening devices if you would like one.

1:21

Thank you.

1:24

OK, It's Proclamation Day.

1:28

We'll begin with the proclamation for a National Gun Violence Awareness Day.

1:34

Would you like to read it?

1:35

I'll do it.

1:35

Thanks, Juan.

1:37

Whereas firearms are the leading cause of death for American children and teens aged 19 or under and in Montana, firearms are the second leading cause of death among children and teens.

1:49

And it is estimated there are more than 1100 suicides on college campuses in the United States every year.

1:55

And whereas gun violence kills 120 Americans every day, on average, 70 women are shot to death by intimate partners in an average month.

2:04

And in Montana, 228 die and 259 are wounded by guns in an average year.

2:11

Whereas Montana has been in the top five states for the highest rate of suicide for the last 40 years, and 57% of firearms death in the United States are by suicides, with suicides being the number one preventable death for 10 to 14 year olds and LGBTQ youth being four times more likely to attempt suicide as they're straight peers.

2:34

And whereas, June 2nd, 2024 would have been the 27th birthday of Hadiya Pendleton, a teenage girl who was shot and killed in a neighborhood park, And we honor the lives and lost human potential of Americans stolen by gun violence on this day.

2:50

And WHEREAS anyone, anyone can join this campaign by pledging to wear orange on Friday, June 7th, 2024, to help raise awareness about gun violence, encourage responsible gun ownership and storage, to help keep our children safe, and to do all we can to keep firearms out of the wrong hands.

3:09

And now, therefore, we, the Missoula Board of County Commissioners and the City of Missoula in the State of Montana, do hereby proclaim June 7th, 2024 as National Gun Violence Awareness Day, signed by Andrea Davis, the Mayor of the City of Missoula, and Dave Wan and I, the Board of County Commissioners.

3:29

Thanks, Commissioner Slotnick.

3:30

And we have some folks here.

3:34

Would you like to speak?

3:36

Wonderful.

3:44

Here we go.

3:47

Hello, I'm Roxanne Weikl, and first of all, I want to thank you for your service and for joining the rest of Montana and the nation with this proclamation for National Gun Violence Awareness Day.

4:01

I'm a volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense.

4:04

We are a grassroots, nonpartisan organization of mothers and others started by one mom, Shandy Shannon Watts, after the Sandy Hook shootings.

4:16

There are 10 million supporters nationally, over 8000 here in Montana and over 3000 here in Missoula.

4:25

We wear orange to demand a future free of gun violence.

4:30

Orange symbolizes the value of each person's life and we wear it to honor those killed, wounded or impacted by gun violence and call for an end to this crisis.

4:43

As before in Missoula, there are numerous well over 25 businesses that are providing information at their stores about where orange.

4:52

And as an example, once again, Big Dipper is making orange ice cream and Rock and Rudy's is has donated space for yet 3 full page ads.

5:02

So our community is definitely behind this effort.

5:06

You've just heard some sobering statistics about Montana.

5:11

So think about this.

5:13

Montana currently ranks #2 in the nation in suicides per capita by gun.

5:21

In Montana, the rate of gun deaths increased 51% over the last 10 years compared to 39% nationwide.

5:31

These are statistics, but these statistics are really real Montanans with heartbreaking stories that affect a wide circle of families, friends and their community.

5:45

And our children now, as you know, have lockdown drills, and many have been in real lockdowns.

5:52

These drills and lockdowns are often very traumatic.

5:56

You probably know, as I do, of several students who have texted their parents about their fear or with messages, I love you, I'm scared.

6:06

And teachers in Missoula who have texted their parents saying I will protect your children.

6:14

We aren't here today to discuss solutions, but let me take this opportunity to remind everyone how important it is for adults to store guns securely.

6:24

Best practice is to keep all guns unloaded, locked up, and separate from ammunition.

6:31

The reasons seem obvious, such as preventing a person in crisis from having easy access to a firearm, preventing curious children from finding a gun and shooting themselves or someone else unintentionally.

6:45

But you may not know that nearly 80% of the guns used by youth in school shootings were from a parent or relative's home.

6:55

So I ask you to reflect on gun violence and what it matters and means to you.

7:01

For many of us, we think of our kids, our grandkids in our youth wear orange.

7:07

The National Gun Violence Awareness Day was started by youth.

7:11

We can do better for our youth and we can honor them by raising community awareness.

7:18

To raise awareness this year and to honor victims and survivors, we invite you to join us at 10:00 AM Saturday as we line the Bear Tack Bear Tracks Bridge and wear orange all weekend.

7:32

We hope to see you at the bridge and we thank you for your time.

7:36

Thank you Roxanne, anyone else online or in the room?

7:49

Hi, I'm Shelley Meyer and I've been a member of the local chapter of Moms Demand Action here in Missoula for eight or nine years, can't recall exactly.

8:01

I've been involved each year with the wear Orange commemoration and with the business outreach part of that that tells you who I am.

8:12

Now, the important statistic I want you to know because you're county officials, OK?

8:18

And this is a statistic from every town website.

8:22

Every town, If you go to that website, you'll see a little tab at the top for states.

8:29

You can click Montana, get the current Montana information.

8:33

And one of the most startling pieces of information there is that Montana has the ninth highest societal cost of gun violence in the US at \$2.8 billion per resident this year.

8:53

I'm sorry, 2.8000 per resident this year in Montana, but gun deaths and injuries cost Montana \$3 billion each year, of which \$30.9 million of that is paid by taxpayers.

9:17

I thought you should know that as county officials.

9:19

Thank you.

9:24

Anyone else?

9:27

OK, well, second proclamation.

9:33

Juneteenth.

9:34

Juneteenth.

9:35

OK WHEREAS Missoula County in the city of Missoula acknowledge the lasting impacts of racism in the United States, fueled largely by the horrific institution of slavery.

9:47

And WHEREAS, news of the end of slavery did not reach frontier areas of the United States for more than two years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of Jan 1/18/63 and months after the end of the Civil War.

10:01

And whereas, on June 19th, 1865, Union soldiers arrived in Texas with news that the Civil War had ended and the enslaved were free.

10:11

And African Americans have celebrated this anniversary, known as Juneteenth Independence Day, for more than 150 years to honor African American freedom while encouraging self development, respect and dignity for all people.

10:24

And whereas, the character demonstrated by former slaves should inspire us in this country to give thanks for the freedom won by so many people in all nations and to strive for the goals of bringing freedom and democracy to people of other countries, no matter what their race or religion.

10:41

And whereas, although Juneteenth Independence Day is starting to be recognized as a national and even global event, the history behind the celebration should not be forgotten and Montana proudly joins the 50 States and the District of Columbia in observing Juneteenth as a state or ceremonial holiday.

10:59

Therefore be it resolved, we the Missoula, we, Missoula County and the City of Missoula do hereby proclaim the 19th of June as Juneteenth Independence Day to commemorate African American emancipation from slavery, to celebrate the freedom won by people in many countries, and to rededicate ourselves to the cause of liberty.

11:19

And we invite members of the community to take part in our Juneteenth celebration at Fort Missoula on June 19th, 2024 at 10:00 AM.

11:28

It's going to be good.

11:30

Dated this 8th day of June 2024.

11:34

Signed by Andrea Davis, Mayor of the City of Missoula, and Dave Juan and myself, County commissioners from the from Missoula County.

11:43

Thank you.

11:43

Would anyone like to speak to Juneteenth Proclamation online or in the room?

11:54

OK, we don't see anyone, but we'll hope to see you at Fort Missoula on June 19th.

12:00

We will be there.

12:00

We will be there.

12:01

Yes.

12:02

Newly painted gazebo.

12:03

Yeah, I'm excited for that.

12:07

The third one.

12:08

Do you want to read the third one or?

12:09

I'll read the third one.

12:10

Here we go.

12:13

Whereas, older adults deserve to be treated with respect and dignity to enable them to serve as leaders, mentors, volunteers and vital participating members of our communities.

12:22

And WHEREAS, June 15th, 2024 marks the 17th annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, recognition of which will promote a better understanding of this problem, which can include financial exploitation, physical or emotional abuse, neglect, and other negligent acts.

12:39

And WHEREAS, the National Center of Elder Abuse, Adult Protective Services of Montana, Missoula County, Missoula Aging Services, and the Western Montana Chapter for the Prevention of Elder Abuse recognize the importance of taking action to raise awareness of and prevent and address elder abuse.

12:56

And WHEREAS it is up to all of us to ensure proper social structures exist so people can retain community and societal connections, reducing the likelihood of abuse.

13:06

And whereas preventing abuse of older adults through maintaining and improving social supports like senior centers, Human Services and transportation will allow everyone to continue to live as independently as possible and contribute to the life and vibrancy of our communities.

13:20

NOW therefore, we, the Missoula Board of County Commissioners do hereby proclaim June 15th, 2024 as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and encourage all of our communities to to recognize and celebrate older adults and their ongoing contributions to the success and vitality of our communities.

13:38

Your Board of County Commissioners, Dave Strohmeier, Juanita Varro and Josh Slotnik would anyone like to speak to that's thank you.

13:51

My name is Renee Labrie Shanks and I represent Missoula aging services.

13:55

I've been there for 23 years.

13:56

I'm aging in place myself.

13:59

It's a nonprofit in Missoula County.

14:00

It's been there since 1982.

14:02

And we promote and promote the independence, dignity and health of older adults and those who care for them.

14:08

And I would argue that elder abuse would impact everybody's independence, dignity and health.

14:14

And June 15th, next week is actually on the heels of right now, the program I'm the statewide director of Montana SMP, which empowers seniors to prevent Medicare fraud.

14:24

And this week is about focusing on the activities that everyone can do to help raise awareness and prevent Medicare fraud, which costs our country about six, \$60 billion a year.

14:36

So I appreciate that you're reading this proclamation and we're making it noticed that it's important to protect our seniors this way.

14:44

So thank you.

14:45

Thank you, Renee.

14:48

OK, we oops.

14:51

Would anyone else like to speak?

14:54

OK, don't see anyone online either.

14:56

And we have, oh, I'm sorry, public comments on items not on the agenda.

15:06

OK, current claims list receive.

15:10
Oh, go ahead.

15:10
Oh, I was just saying.

15:11
Oh, yeah.

15:12
Thank you so much.

15:18
Claims list received as of May 15th, 2024 to May 28th, 2024 by the Commissioner's Office.

15:24
Total of two million, \$198,756.98.

15:29
We only have one hearing today, Skyla Leonards.

15:35
Good afternoon Commissioners.

15:37
I will just share my screen and we'll get started.

15:47
All right, so we are here today for the Evro Finlay O'Keefe Community Council.

15:52
This is the second hearing.

16:00
We're here today.

16:02
I skipped.

16:03
Hold on, let me go back.

16:06
OK.

16:06
So we're here today because of the lack of interest in membership resulting in the inability to meet quorum and host meeting since 2019.

16:16
We opened public comment on this potential resolution of dissolution on May 23rd of this year.

16:23
We open public comment through Missoula County Voice.

16:26

We received a few comments at the first hearing through e-mail and through the voice page.

16:32

Overall, we had two opposed to the dissolution and one in favor of the dissolution.

16:38

And I just wanted to make note that there are four of five seats that are currently vacant since the past last meeting.

16:45

One member seat expired on May 31st, 2024.

16:50

That member has since submitted a new application for the council.

16:54

So overall, since the last meeting we have had one new application.

17:03

Here is the resolution that outlines the timeline of the Council.

17:09

So in July of 2009 there was a meeting that was held by the Board of County Commissioners to put this on the ballot for a community vote.

17:19

In November of 2009 the voters did approve the creation of the Community council.

17:25

March of 2010 the Board of County Commissioners appointed the first community council members.

17:30

April of 2015, the council had held its first meeting, and then in 2020, due to lack of interest on serving on the board and attendance of the meetings, the council was unable to meet quorum and we have been unsuccessful in recruiting members since that time.

17:50

So I am here today for you to close public comment, hear any final public comment, and consider this resolution of dissolution for the Afro Finley O'Keefe Community Council.

18:02

Thank you.

18:04

Thanks, Scott.

18:07

I feel like we're well immersed on this.

18:09

I'm I'm happy just making a motion.

18:12

OK.

18:13

I I agree and I bring him back back up.

18:15

Appreciate Kyla's efforts.

18:17

Yeah.

18:24

We were just reminded by good counselor.

18:28

Is there any public comment on this decision?

18:36

OK.

18:37

Hearing none.

18:37

I would move.

18:39

We I would move.

18:42

We close public comment and approve the resolution to dissolve the Evereaux Finley O'Keefe Community Council.

18:50

Second.

18:51

Any further discussion All in favor.

18:55

Aye.

18:57

Thank you.

18:59

Thanks for all your work.

19:00

Highland chasing us down.

19:02

Thank you.

19:04

Any other business, we're adjourned.