Missoula Board of County Commissioners

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES COVER SHEET

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 05, 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:
Chair David Strohmaier
Commissioner Josh Slotnick
Commissioner Juanita Vero

Staff Present:
Cheryl Hartman, Administrative Assistant, Commissioners' Office
Patrick Swart, Planning, Development, and Sustainability
John Hart, Senior Civil County Attorney, Attorney's
Mika Grimmett, Budget Analyst, Finance
Chris Lounsbury, Missoula County Chief Administrative Officer
Andrew Czorny, Missoula County Chief Financial Officer
Christina Dewar, Administrative Assistant, Commissioners' Office
Melissa Fisher, Strategic Initiatives Manager, Commissioners' Office
Mattie Scott, Administrative Assistant, Commissioners' Office
Kyla Lehnerz, Office Administrator, Lands and Communities
Casey Gannon, Project Analyst, Communications and Projects
Shane Stack, Director, Public Works
Allison Franz, Communications Manager, Communications
Patricia Spotted Wolf, Administrative Support Specialist, Commissioners' Office
Melissa Richards, Grants Administrator, Grants
Carey Powers, Communications Coordinator, Communications
David Wall, Senior Auditor, County Auditors' Office
Pirrie Durkee, Financial Coordinator, Ecology and Extension
Erin Kautz, Grants Administrator, Grants
Vinnie Pavlish, Civil Attorney, County Attorneys' Office
Elisha Buchholz, Equity Coordinator, Commissioners' Office
Melissa Gordon, Grants Program Manager, Grants
Tim Worley, Senior Planner, Planning, Development, and Sustainability
Michelle Denman, Deputy Financial Services Director, Finance

1. **CALL TO ORDER** *[Time stamp – 0:00]*

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** *[Time stamp – 0:04]*

3. **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT** *[Time stamp – 0:25]*
Missoula County acknowledges that this event takes place in the aboriginal territories of the Salish and Kalispel people.

4. **PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS** *[Time stamp – 0:36]*
a. Closed Captioning
b. Proclamation: Suicide Prevention Week
c. Proclamation: 60th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act

5. **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA** *[Time stamp – 9:48]*

6. **CURRENT CLAIMS LIST** *[Time stamp – 10:00]*
Claims received as of August 14, 2024 to August 26, 2024 by the Commissioners' Office total $2,512,160.67.

7. **HEARINGS**

   a. **Lewis Family Transfer** *[Time stamp – 11:13]*
   Patrick Swart, Planner, Planning, Development, Sustainability

   Commissioner Vero made the motion that the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County hereby the request by Gary and Cheryl Lewis to utilize a family transfer exemption to create and transfer one track to their son, Paul C Lewis as presented in the exemption application and affidavit.

   Commissioner Slotnick seconded.

   [Motion Passed 3-0.]

   [Letter 2024-169 was sent in c/o Toby Dumont, PCI on September 24, 2024]

   b. **Vesel Family Transfer and Boundary Line Relocation** *[Time stamp – 17:26]*
   Patrick Swart, Planning, Development, and Sustainability

   Commissioner Slotnick made the motion that the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County hereby approve the request by Ralph and Mary Vessel to utilize the family transfer and boundary line relocation exemption as presented in the exemption applications and affidavits.

   Commissioner Vero seconded.

   [Motion Passed 3-0.]

   [Letter 2024-170 was sent in c/o Tamara Ross, IMEG Corp. on September 24, 2024]

   c. **Resolution: Seeley Lake Refuse District** *[Time stamp – 25:18]*
   Chris Lounsbury, Missoula County Chief Administrative Officer
   Andrew Czorny, Missoula County Chief Financial Officer

   Commissioner Slotnick made the motion that the Board of County Commissioners of Missoula County hereby approve the resolution setting the Seeley Lake Refuse District *fee at $210.00 per year for the residents of the district. Land Use Element, an element of the Missoula County Growth Policy, with any necessary editorial and formatting corrections.*

Commissioner Vero seconded.

[Motion Passed 3-0.]

[Resolution 2024-091 Book: 1104 Page:397]

d. **Resolution: Missoula County Fairgrounds District** *[Time stamp – 28:01]*
Chris Lounsbury, Missoula County Chief Administrative Officer
Andrew Czorny, Missoula County Chief Financial Officer

Commissioner Vero made the motion that the Missoula Board of County Commissioners approve the resolution setting the assessment of the Fairgrounds Special District for FY 2025.

Commissioner Slotnick seconded.

[Motion Passed 3-0.]

[Resolution 2024-092. Book:1104 Page:398]

e. **Resolution: Missoula Local Government Building Special District** *[Time stamp – 30:07]*
Chris Lounsbury, Missoula County Chief Administrative Officer
Andrew Czorny, Missoula County Chief Financial Officer

Commissioner Slotnick made the motion that the Missoula Board of County Commissioners approve the resolution setting the assessment for the Missoula Local Government Building Special District for FY 2025.

Commissioner Vero seconded.

[Motion Passed 3-0.]

[Resolution 2024-093 Book:1104 Page:395]

f. **Resolution: Rural Special Improvement District (RSID)** *[Time stamp – 31:50]*
Chris Lounsbury, Missoula County Chief Administrative Officer
Andrew Czorny, Missoula County Chief Financial Officer

Commissioner Vero made the motion that the Missoula Board of County Commissioners approve the RSID resolution setting special suspense and providing for their distribution in accordance with FY 2025 budget as adopted.

Commissioner Slotnick seconded.

[Motion Passed 3-0.]

[Resolution 2024-095 Book:1104 Page:396]

g. **Resolution: Final Budget Hearing Year 2025** *[Time stamp – 33:35]*
Chris Lounsbury, Missoula County Chief Administrative Officer
Andrew Czorny, Missoula County Chief Financial Officer

Commissioner Vero made the motion that the Missoula Board of County Commissioners approve and adopt the fiscal year 2025 budget resolution and the associated attachments ABC and D establishing the legal spending limits, the level of detail in the resolution and attachments ABC and D as well as the associated delegations of authority as specified in the resolution.

Commissioner Slotnick seconded.

[Motion Passed 3-0.]

[Resolution 2024-096 Book:1104 Page:399]

OTHER BUSINESS *[Time stamp – 1:22:46]*
[None]

8. ADJOURN
Chair Strohmaier – Called the meeting to adjourn at 3:22 p.m.

BCC Public Meeting September 05, 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.

BCC-Commissioners' Public Meeting-20240905_140202-Meeting Recording

0:00
Of the Missoula Port County Commissioners, please stand and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

0:04
Pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands.

0:14
One nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

0:25
Missoula County acknowledges that this event today takes place in the aboriginal territories of the Salish and Kalispell people.

0:31
I'm commissioner Dave Stromer.

0:32
I'm joined by commissioners Josh Slotnick and Juanita Vero.

0:36
And Cheryl, would you please provide us with some introduction to the meeting and closed captioning?

0:48
Hello, everyone.

0:48
If you're joining us for this meeting virtually today, instructions for turning on closed captioning are on your screen.

0:54
If you're joining us in person, we'll have closed captioning on all the screens here in the Sophie Louise room.

1:00
There will be an opportunity to speak during the meeting for public comment, virtually and in person.

1:05
We ask that all speakers today speak slowly and clearly.

1:07
This helps with the accuracy of the closed captioning if you are on Microsoft Teams.

1:12
If you like to speak when discussion has been open for public comment, we ask that you use the Raise Hand feature.

1:17
This is the small hand button.

1:19
If you're calling in on the phone, you'll need to hear it *5 to raise your hand.

1:23
Once called upon, you'll need to hit *6 to unmute.

1:26
If you have any questions, please find me during the meeting and let me know.

1:30
And we also have assisted listening devices if you need one.

1:33
Thank you, thank you, Cheryl.

1:35
We have two proclamations today and we'll begin with a proclamation recognizing Suicide Prevention Week.

1:41
Commissioner Barrow.

1:46
Whereas suicide is a community wide problem and suicide prevention requires a community effort.

1:51
And whereas Montana has the second highest suicide rate in the nation and has ranked among the top five states with the highest rates of suicide for the past four decades.

2:00
And whereas since 2018, Missoula County has experienced 157 suicides.

2:05
And whereas suicide by firearm accounts for 54% of all suicides in the United States and 63% of all suicides in Montana and Missoula and guns stored in the home are used for suicide 40 times more than more often than for self-defense.

2:22
And whereas it is important to support our National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and a nine 88 call center here in Missoula along with our mobile response units who can effectively and empathetically intervene in crisis situations.

2:34
And whereas our community will support suicide prevention efforts to the maximum extent possible with initiatives like Project Tomorrow Montana, which works to reduce Missoula County suicide deaths and attempts through educational programs.

2:46

Excuse me, which works to reduce Missoula County suicide deaths and attempts through educational programs and evidence based policy.

2:56
Now, therefore, in coordination with National Suicide Prevention Week, we, the Missoula County, we, the Missoula Board of County Commissioners in Montana, do hereby recognize the week of September 9th through 15th, 2024 as Suicide Prevention Week.

3:11
Thank you.

3:11
Is there anyone who'd like to offer comment on this proclamation?

3:16
Miss?

3:16
Hey, Patrick, come on up.

3:19
And you'll need to hit the microphone base there.

3:23
Yes.

3:24
Turns the light green.

3:25
Look at me with the technology.

3:27
Good afternoon, I'm Susan.

3:28
Hey, Patrick, CEO of United Way of Missoula County.

3:32
Thank you for recognizing Suicide Prevention Week as a time to raise awareness of suicide and recommit to saving lives.

3:41
I didn't know the paparazzi were going to be here.

3:44
Since 2014, Project Tomorrow Montana, a collaboration between United Way and Missoula Public Health, has LED a network of a few dozen caring organizations focused on preventing tragedy and building a resilient community.

4:01
Despite the concerning statistics in the proclamation, we're making progress.

4:06
Suicides in Missoula are down over the past three years, with a consistent downward trend year over year.

4:15
That is very hopeful news.

4:18
In the past year alone, we've trained 500 people and how to recognize and respond to signs of suicidal thoughts and behaviors in their family members, friends, and colleagues.

4:33
People just like you and me can learn the skills that literally save lives.

4:40
Suicide is often an impulsive act and guns are the most lethal and common method.

4:46
As you have just heard of suicide in our city and state, they account for almost 2/3 of suicide deaths in Missoula.

4:55
Unlike other methods, suicide attempts with guns are almost always fatal.

5:03
We know that gun locks save lives.

5:06
That's why we've distributed more than 1000 free gun locks over the past 18 months alone.

5:12
Responsible gun owners want to keep their families safe, especially if someone in the household suffers from depression.

5:21
We know that the increasing number of calls to the 988 Crisis Lifeline launched in Missoula in 2022 reflects our community's growing willingness to seek help.

5:32
We're proud that our 988 call center has one of the nation's highest answer rates.

5:39
People want help, so Project Tomorrow strategies are working.

5:44
Things that this Commission has supported like 988, the new Riverwalk Crisis Receiving Center, the Mobile Support Team, training and suicide prevention, and gun locks all play a role in saving lives, building resilient communities, and ensuring that everybody has access to the care and connection they need during their most painful moments.

6:10
Every effort counts.

6:12
So thank you for proclaiming Suicide Prevention Week and for everything you do to foster a community where understanding, care, help, and hope are at the forefront.

6:25
Thank you, Thank you, Susan.

6:28
Thank you, Susan.

6:29
We're following your lead.

6:32
Is there anyone else in the audience here today or online who would like to comment on this proclamation?

6:40
OK, thank you.

6:43
Commissioner Slotnick, it is coming up on 60th anniversary of the Wilderness Act.

6:49
How about that?

6:50
You, me, the Super Bowl, MTPR and the Wilderness Act.

6:53
There we go.

6:55
That is good track.

6:57
Yeah.

6:57
I'm going to mention a couple names here, Bob Marshall and Lyndon Baines Johnson.

7:01
Hard to say these names without following them without paragraphs, because they're such interesting and powerful historical figures.

7:07
But I'm not going to do that because we have to talk about the budget.

7:11
Whereas, in August and September of 1928, Bob Marshall toured by foot the areas that would become the Bob Marshall and Mission Mountain Wilderness and came out of that experience fiercely advocating for the permanent preservation of these iconic landscapes.

7:26
And WHEREAS in 1964, the United States Congress passed the Wilderness Wilderness Act by an overwhelming part, a bipartisan vote, and President Lyndon B Johnson signed this farsighted legislation into law on September 3rd, 1964.

7:42
And WHEREAS, the Wilderness Act created America's National Wilderness Preservation System, which administers federal lands for the use and enjoyment of the American people, leaving the lands unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, and providing for the protection of these areas and preservation of their wilderness character.

8:02
And WHEREAS at set as set forth in 16 USCA 1131.

8:07
Quote.

8:08
It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.

8:17
End Quote.

8:18
And whereas the wilderness areas within Missoula County, including the Rattlesnake, Bob, Marshville, Mission Mountains, and Selway Bitter Wilderness Areas, provide immense value to our nation, our state, and our county as natural habitat for wildlife, as destinations for camping, hiking, horseback riding and fishing, as protectors of cold, clean rivers and watersheds, and as places that inspire our imagination.

8:42
Our iconic wilderness areas are lifetime destinations for tourists who visit Missoula County from across the country and around the world, bolstering local businesses and driving our economy.

8:53
And WHEREAS Missoula County residents and others from across Montana continue to be inspired to follow in the footsteps of Bob Marshall and protect wild places by expanding the Bob Marshall Scapegoat and Mission Mountain Wilderness areas.

9:07
NOW, therefore, let it be proclaimed that the Missoula County Commissioners do hereby commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act and recognize the significance of the National Wilderness Preservation System to America's cultural, scientific, historical, and spiritual heritage.

9:25
Dated this 5th day of September, 2024.

9:28
Thank you.

9:29
Josh, Is there anyone who would like to comment on this proclamation in recognition of the 60th anniversary of the Wilderness Act?

9:38
And you went online.

9:40
OK, Thank you for that.

9:45
Is there any public comment on items not on today's agenda?

9:48
This would be your chance if you want to speak to something that is not already listed under one of our many public hearings this afternoon.

10:00
OK, We will move on our current claims list and this would be claims received as of August 14th, 2024 through August 2020, August 26th, 2024 by the Commissioner's Office.

10:15
Total $2,512,160.67.

10:21
We have a number of public hearings today, most of which are budget related, but we do have to land use public hearings and without objection from my colleagues, I would like to move up on the agenda the the two land use items the family transfers so as not to require that folks sit through all of our budget hearings first.

10:46
But folks are certainly welcome to stay the entire meeting and and get your tax dollars worth out of the meeting.

10:55
So anyway, we will begin the two land use public hearings with a staff report.

11:02
And I believe in both of these cases they'll be followed by a set of questions to the applicants.

11:10
The Commission will then deliberate and take action.

11:13
So to begin with, we will begin with the Lewis family transfer and Patrick Swart will provide a staff report.

11:24
Good afternoon.

11:25
My name is Patrick Swart.

11:27
I'm a planner with the Office of Planning, Development and Sustainability.

11:30
Let me get my slideshow queued up here.

11:36
So today we're looking at a request from Gary and Cheryl Lewis to utilize the Family Transfer exemption on their property at 173 Abbey Road.

11:47
Here's a quick look at the location of the property.

11:50
It's right off a Boy Scout Rd.

11:52
just to the northwest of Seeley Lake.

11:59
The property is currently known as Lot 1 of Deer Creek Tracks.

12:03
It is unzoned and is part of the 2010 Seeley Lake plan and has a land use designation of Low Density Rural Residential which recommends a density of one dwelling unit per 5 acres and as you can see the lot is currently 5.04 acres.

12:23
The applicants are proposing to divide the property in half along this NS boundary and to gift Parcel 1B to their son, Paul C Lewis, who intends to build a vacation cabin on the property to stay in when visiting family up at Seeley Lake.

12:41
And then the applicants currently reside in the property.

12:45
Addressed 173 Abbey Road and would continue to retain ownership and reside on that property if this gets approved.

12:54
This was reviewed against the general evasion criteria and rebuttable presumptions in the Missoula County Subdivision Regulations, which ask us to consider if the division is being made for the purpose of speculation or resale for the benefit of the landowner.

13:09
And in this instance that we looked at the intended use here, they do intend to use it for family related purposes and to give the property to their family, an immediate family member, though the applicant does not intend to reside on the property.

13:24
And it was also noted that this proposed division wasn't compatible with the density recommendations from the growth policy and lane use designation, which recommends one for five, it would result in a density closer to 1 per 2.25.

13:42
But also we would note that statute does preclude us from making land use decisions based solely on growth policy recommendations.

13:53
We received one agency comment from Missoula Public Health and they just noted that the project would require sanitation review and or site applicable exemptions from sanitation review.

14:08
The applicants are here or would like to come up to the podium.

14:12
Just got a few questions for you.

14:17
And there's a button at the base of the microphone there.

14:19
If you could just hit that to turn light green.

14:22
There you go.

14:23
Thank you.

14:23
If you wouldn't mind stating your name for the record, please, Gary Albert Lewis.

14:29
All right.

14:29
Did you buy the property with the intent of dividing it?

14:32
No.

14:34
Do you or the transferee intend to transfer the property within the next year?

14:38
No Have you talked to anyone at the county about going through subdivision review in the county?

14:44
No.

14:46
Will the property be developed?

14:48
Hopefully.

14:50
And will the recipient of the property be residing on the property?

14:55
He'll be there off and on.

14:57
He currently resides in San Diego.

14:59
When he got out of the Navy, he stayed there for a while.

15:02
OK, thank you.

15:04
That's it.

15:05
Yep.

15:05
Gary, while you're still up there, do you have any, anything else you'd like to add?

15:09
No, I just want him to be able to have a piece of where he was born and raised.

15:13
And Seeley's getting really hard to find anything or do anything there.

15:18
So figured I'd give him a chunk now.

15:21
OK, And before you sit down, questions, Josh.

15:24
Thanks a lot, Gary First for answering those questions.

15:29
Given that this is a vacation cabin, why not just allow your son to build a vacation cabin in in your backyard?

15:35
Why go through the the process of a land division, Missoula City County Health Department?

15:41
It will not let me put in a second septic unless the property is cut in half because one house means one septic per property and you can't run 5 acres into one septic tank.

15:56
Along with that, he wouldn't be able to have any more than one bedroom.

16:01
So the only way I can get a septic to put him his cabin on that property is to split it, make it a separate piece.

16:09
I see, thanks.

16:10
I didn't know that the health department's difficult.

16:15
Thanks.

16:16
That it that is it.

16:18
Thank you.

16:18
You bet.

16:20
Any other questions?

16:23
OK, this is a public hearing.

16:25
Is there any public comment on this proposed family transfer either of folks in the room or anyone online?

16:33
OK, we will close the public hearing discussion motion.

16:40
I move that the Board to request or approve the request for Gary and Cheryl Lewis to utilize a family transfer exemption to the Montana Subdivision and Planning Act in accordance with 76-3-2O72 BI.

16:53
I'll second that any further discussion on I'm sorry, I didn't Patrick.

16:57
I'm I didn't even see that that's on the screen.

17:00
No, that's all right.

17:00
It's just a slightly different variation, but both motions work.

17:03
So that should I'll I'll use yours.

17:06
I moved to approve the request by Gary and Cheryl Lewis to utilize a family transfer exemption to create and transfer one track to their son, Paul C Lewis as presented in the exemption application and affidavit.

17:17
I'll second that.

17:18
Any further discussion now seeing none all in favor.

17:22
Aye, OK, good luck with your project there.

17:26
Bet our second public hearing land use related is the, I'm not sure if I'm pronouncing it correctly, the Vessel family transfer and boundary line relocation.

17:42
All right, thank you.

17:43
This is a request from Ralph and Mary Vessel to utilize the family transfer and boundary line relocation exemptions to the Subdivision and Planning Act.

17:52
And this is for their properties at 1435 and 1475 Petty Creek Rd.

17:59
Here's a look at those two properties outlined in red directly off of Petty Creek Rd.

18:04
just South of the Clark Fork River.

18:10
The properties are currently known as Tract A and Tract 3A2 of Certificate of Survey 6427.

18:17
Both of these parcels are unzoned and are part of the 2002 Regional Land Use Guide to the 1975 Comprehensive Plan and that has a land use designation of open and resource with a recommended density of one dwelling per 40.

18:33
And it is also noted here that the the majority of existing Tract A does fall within the Alberton area activity circle, which is kind of like an overlay to that land use designation and just identifies an area that may be suited for more intense development than the land use designation suggests.

18:54
The applicants are proposing to relocate a portion of the shared boundary between the two parcels so that an existing shop will be included on the parcel that they intend to create through the family transfer exemption, which would be identified as Parcel 2 on the exhibit.

19:08
I'll pull up in just a moment here.

19:11
They plan to gift Parcel 2 to their son Kevin, who intends to reside on the property, and then they would retain ownership of the remaining Parcel 1, which currently has a rental home on it.

19:23
And the intent stated in the application is to retain ownership of that and keep it as a rental property.

19:32
Here's a little bit of a closer look at that exhibit here.

19:38
See if it'll let me pull up my my laser pointer buttons hidden.

19:45
So I'll try to make do with my mouse.

19:48
The dotted line illustrated here would be the old boundary under the boundary line relocation intended to be moved just to what would be the north here so that the shop is on this parcel 2.

20:00
And then this is the parcel boundary that would be established through family transfer exemption.

20:04
So Parcel 2 here with the shop would be going to their son.

20:08
The applicants currently reside on this parcel identified as Parcel 3 and would continue to do so.

20:13
And then the home here at 175 Petty Creek Rd.

20:17
Is the rental that would continue to be a rental property.

20:24
We reviewed this against the rebuttable presumptions and general vision criteria in the sub regs, which again ask us to consider whether or not this division is being made for the purpose of speculation or resale for the benefit of the landowner.

20:38
One kind of subset of that is asking if the applicants own multiple tracks within Missoula County.

20:44
In this case, it was noted that they do the two neighboring parcels here, but the intent for using the boundary line relocation stated was that they would like to keep the rental and also create a parcel to give to their son to live nearby.

20:57
And also noted here it was stated that the recipient doesn't tend to reside on the parcel.

21:01
So we did not find that this request was being made for the purpose of speculation or resale for the benefit of the landowner.

21:11
It also asked asked us to consider if the parent parcels were created through certain subdivision exemptions that may indicate a pattern of exempt transactions that reflect a subdivision.

21:24
It was noted that there were two parent parcels created through subdivision exemptions, Cos 1049 which was an occasional sale and Cos 2144 which was a mortgage slash security exemption parcel.

21:38
Both of these were done in the late 1970s, shortly after the passage of the Subdivision and Platting Act.

21:45
The applicants weren't involved in either of those and it doesn't appear that the use of this exemption would result in a pattern equivalent to a subdivision.

21:55
And then a few general evasion criteria.

21:57
As well was noted the incompatibility with the land use designation recommending one per 40, which you can see here is that boundary of the Alberton area activity circle and it's this division would be right on that periphery here and would fall in line with the density seen just to the north along the river.

22:18
Though there is kind of a there isn't a clear development pattern up Petty Creek, which is mostly open and resource.

22:24
There's, there's a range of parcel sizes similar to this all the way up to 640 plus acres.

22:33
And lastly, we did, we're asked to consider whether or not an equivalent subdivision would require certain review criteria.

22:43
And in this case it was noted by the Missoula County Floodplain Administrator that an equivalent subdivision would require a flood study.

22:50
Even though this parcel, these two parcels don't fall within a designated flood hazard area.

22:57
Matt Heiml, the floodplain administrator, did note that the proposed development is physically in line with existing development up on a bench above Petty Creek and wouldn't necessarily encroach further into that riparian boundary, but did comment that the flood risk and inundation boundary is unknown.

23:16
We did receive one other agency comment from Missoula Public Health just stating that sanitation review is required or they will need to cite applicable exemptions.

23:27
We do have a few questions for you as well if you wouldn't mind coming up to the podium or we can bring a microphone to you if that would be easy.

23:34
OK, you bet.

23:37
Ralph Thistle.

23:41
Did you buy the property with the intent of dividing it?

23:43
No.

23:45
Do you or the transferee intend to transfer the property within the next year?

23:49
No.

23:50
Have you talked to anyone at the county about going through subdivision review?

23:53
No.

23:55
Will the property be developed?

23:56
Yes, the house And will the recipient of the property be residing on the property?

24:03
Thank you.

24:03
Mr.

24:04
Vessel, anything else that you'd like to add?

24:07
OK, questions from?

24:09
OK, Thank you.

24:10
Mr.

24:10
Vessel.

24:12
This is a public hearing also, is there any public comment on this proposed boundary line relocation and family transfer from folks in the room or anyone online?

24:23
OK, we will close that public hearing, Joshua.

24:26
Anita.

24:26
Motion.

24:27
Thanks.

24:27
I would move to approve the request by Ralph and Mary Vessel to utilize the family transfer and boundary line relocation exemption as presented in the exemption applications and affidavits.

24:39
Second, any further discussion on the motion?

24:43
C None.

24:43
All in favor.

24:45
All right.

24:47
Good luck with the completion of your project.

24:49
Thanks, Patrick, for doing this.

24:51
Thank you.

24:52
Thank you.

24:53
And so concludes our family transfers and land use items today.

24:58
We will now roll into our five public hearings related to budgetary matters, beginning with four public hearings on resolutions, proposed resolutions and concluding with our final budget public hearing.

25:18
So I will turn it over now to Chris and Andrew to kick things off with the Seeley Lake Refuse District.

25:26
Good afternoon.

25:26
Thank you, commissioners.

25:27
So you are right, we have several different public hearings that will culminate in the final budget hearing.

25:33
The first one today is related to the Seeley Lake Special Refuse District.

25:36
But just as a quick reminder for folks of where we are today, so back in February is was our budget kick off.

25:42
That's the internal work that happens with all of our departments that ran through the budget reviews in March and April up to our budget presentations in May and June here in the community, the commissioners hearings on budget enhancements in June, July and August and then our preliminary budget hearing back on August 1st.

25:59
We did receive our certified taxable values from Dor on August 5th and we've been working with them on that project.

26:05
And then today we're here for final budget presentation, hearing and adoption.

26:10
So the Seeley Lake Refuse District is located obviously in the Seeley Lake area.

26:14
It is designed and set up for the special purpose of collecting the refuse and trash inside that district.

26:19
And this year they are adding a recycling service to that.

26:22
Previously recycling had been a pay for youth service.

26:25
And this is just going to become part of the base services for the Seeley Lake Refuse District.

26:29
And I believe we do have our Chief Public Works Officer, Shane Stack on.

26:33
I believe Kim might have had to drop off prior to for a prior commitment, but she may be on as well.

26:39
So the intent this year is to increase the flat annual fee from the district from $200 to $210.00 for folks who reside in that district.

26:47
And that $10 increase would then remove the fee that pays for recycling.

26:52
So folks would no longer have to pay to drop off their recycling.

26:54
It would just become part of the regular fee for folks who are in that district.

26:59
And because we do have to have a hearing when we talk about special districts, I would ask that you open the public hearing and take public comment on this section now and then.

27:08
If it's the commission's will to increase that fee, then there is a recommended motion at the bottom of this slide for the Seeley Lake Refuse District only.

27:17
Thank you.

27:18
Chris, is there any public comment on this Seeley Lake Refuse District resolution?

27:27
OK, seeing then I'll close that public hearing questions or a motion move to approve the I would move to approve the resolution setting the Seeley Lake Refuse District fee at $210.00 per year for the residents of the district.

27:49
Second, any further discussion on the motion?

27:53
Seeing none, all in favor, Aye, thank you.

27:58
Missoula County Fairgrounds District, Yes.

28:01
So just as a reminder for folks, several years ago the Missoula County Commission created a special district at the fairgrounds.

28:06
The specific purpose of that district is to allow it to assist in the reconstruction and redevelopment and renovations of the Missoula County Fairgrounds.

28:14

And folks who may have had a chance to go out just to our record-breaking fair yet again this year about 120,000 folks visited the fair.

28:22
We saw record sales both in concessions and carnival and other areas, and overall I think a pretty successful fair.

28:30
So as part of that special district, Missoula County does assess a fee to itself as well as use revenue from the fair to help pay for those those renovations at the fairgrounds, including the beautiful new grandstands that were used this year during the rodeo and other events there.

28:44
So the special district budget for this year to cover the debt service and the ongoing improvements at the district is set at $2,147,556 to cover that.

28:55
And that does include the cost from the renovation of the grandstands.

28:58
And so I would ask you to open the public hearing and take public comment on this.

29:02
Again, this property is only this, the Fairgrounds special district.

29:06
And then there is a recommended motion at the bottom should you choose to accept the district budget.

29:12
Thank you Chris, I'll open the public hearing and entertain any comments from the public on the Missoula County Fairgrounds Special District Resolution.

29:21
OK, see now I'll close that public hearing.

29:24
Questions from the Commission or a motion.

29:26
Not only are the grandstands beautiful, but they are very sturdy and withstood the July 24th storm whereas the previous grandstands probably wouldn't have.

29:37
I moved to approve the resolution setting the assessment of the Fairgrounds Special District for FY20 25.

29:43
I'll 2nd that.

29:44
I also want to add on those grandstands.

29:46
Not only are they sturdy and beautiful, they are in large part the result of a donation from Missoula concrete.

29:54
That's not local taxpayers.

29:55
Well said.

29:57
Thanks.

29:57
All right.

29:58
Any further discussion on the motion?

30:00
Seeing none.

30:01
All in favor.

30:02
Aye, aye.

30:05
OK.

30:06
All right.

30:06
Yes.

30:07
The Next up is the Missoula County Local Government Building Special District.

30:10
So as a reminder that Missoula County and the City of the Missoula received the former federal building located in the 200 block of East Broadway as opposed to the 200 block of West Broadway.

30:21
We're sitting today for local government offices and we have been working with the city, Jackson Contracting and A&E Architects on a renovation plan for that.

30:30
But as we wait, we do still have some associated cost to just maintain the structure of the building, things like paying for the lights and the heat so that pipes don't freeze, those kinds of things.

30:38
And so for the fiscal year 25, we're proposing to continue that.

30:42
This budget is made-up of a contribution from the city and the county.

30:46
Again, it only encompasses the Angen Building located in the 200 block of East Broadway, as well as the proceeds from the rent paid by the US Post Office, which is in the front part of that building.

30:57
So in fiscal year 2025, Missoula County is proposing to provide $74,501.00 towards the operation and maintenance of that special district to maintain the Engen Building when we get to the point of renovation and restoration.

31:11
Of course, those budgets would come back to you as capital improvements in the future and there's a recommended motion.

31:18
Thank you, Chris, I'll open the public hearing on the Missoula County Local Government Building special district resolution.

31:23
Is there any public comment on this item?

31:27
Seeing none, I will close the public hearing and entertain questions or motion from the Commission.

31:35
Move to adopt the resolution setting the assessment for the Missoula Local Government Building Special District for FY20 25 Second.

31:43
Any further discussion on the motion?

31:45
See none.

31:46
All in favor, aye.

31:49
All right.

31:50
The last section before we get into the meat of the actual fiscal year 2025 budget.

31:54
Missoula County is responsible for overseeing a number of rural special improvement districts.

31:59
These include things like the Lolo Sewer and Water District, lighting districts throughout the county, Special Rd.

32:04
Improvement districts, as well as sanitary sewer and water in various parts of the county including Elmar Estates, the Lewis and Clark Trailer Court out in Clinton and other areas.

32:15
The intent is this year to hold all of those assessments flat with the same rate that was paid in fiscal year 2024.

32:22
Even when there is no rate increase required for those districts, we are still notified, We still need to notify each of those land owners by mailing and then we are required to include a hearing for them to be able to comment should they wish to, on the fact that the rates are being held flat.

32:37
And so for fiscal year 2025, again, we're proposing to hold those rates flat at the same amount as fiscal year 2024.

32:44
So I'd ask that you open the public hearing and take any public comment on that.

32:47
We did not receive any written public comment prior to the hearing today on this particular one.

32:52
And there is a proposed motion for those rural special improvement districts.

32:56
Thank you, Chris, I'll open the public hearing on the rural special improvement district's resolution.

33:01
Is there any public comment on that?

33:05
Seeing none, I'll close the public hearing and entertain a motion from the Commission.

33:10
I'm happy that we can keep the rates flat.

33:12
I move to approve the resolution setting special suspense and providing for their distribution in accordance with FY20 25 budget as adopted.

33:23
I'll second that and just reiterate keeping the rates flat.

33:28
OK, Any further discussion on the motion seeing none, all in favor.

33:33
Aye, aye.

33:35
OK, now to the main item, which is the final budget hearing for fiscal year 2025.

33:43
Chris and Andrew, Yes, thanks again, Commissioners for your work on the special districts and rural special improvement districts.

33:49
So as we jump into the budget, Andrew and I are going to tag team this just a little bit and Andrew's going to give the overview, fiscal analysis and kind of economic outlook.

33:57
And I'll go through the actual changes to the fiscal year 2025 budget and the impacts that will have for taxpayers.

34:04
So I started out just talking briefly about the process and where we are today.

34:08

Just as a reminder for folks, these are the focus areas that Missoula County looked at as we were planning our fiscal year 2025 budget.

34:14
And these statements come directly from Missoula County's mission, vision and values.

34:19
So I'm not going to spend a lot of time on any of these next couple of slides, but I just want to hit the highlights for them.

34:24
So we've worked really hard this year to improve our our engagement and our transparency around our budget.

34:29
We've, I think made some good strides there with the Budget 101 presentations as well as our work on the Missoula County Voice and our items for the preliminary budget.

34:38
We've also continued some really important commitments to our quality workforce and resource stewardship and economic development.

34:44
As we look at this fiscal year 2025 budget, as I've talked about a few times and I'll talk about in a few minutes, we've had some real recruitment challenges, especially in the areas of public safety, which is one of our main charges.

34:55
And so we've attempted to address those both in fiscal year 24 and 25.

34:59
So I'm going to start off here talking a little bit about our criminal justice work.

35:04
And so underneath those mission, vision and values, we then have our departments broken up into areas of focus that they work on.

35:10
So criminal justice would include things like the Sheriff's Office, county attorneys, our courts of those things.

35:15
So this year, we're making some targeted investments in our criminal justice folks.

35:19
As we talked about last year, retention and recruitment at in particular at our detention facility, but also in our Sheriff's Office was a real challenge.

35:26
In fiscal year 2024, we started off with 19 openings and our detention center, 6 openings in our Sheriff's Office and four or five openings in our county attorney's office.

35:35
And we've worked to kind of close that gap.

35:37
And as we entered fiscal year 2025, we were able to close that gap.

35:41
We had no openings in our sheriff and detention officers.

35:44
That is the first time the detention center has been fully staffed since the detention facility opened a little over 20 years ago.

35:51
So that was a pretty major achievement for us to be able to do to fill 19 positions over that about 18 month period starting in fiscal year 2024 and as we come into the 2025 budget.

36:01
But we do still have some challenges out of the detention facility and in those programs.

36:05
So we are continuing to make investments in that.

36:07
In this fiscal year 2025 budget.

36:10
We're also addressing some of the space and location challenges.

36:14
We talked about the fact that we're purchasing the building directly across from the detention facility to allow us to Co locate our detention and Sheriff's Department on one larger campus out on Mullen Rd.

36:24
So there's some costs associated with that this year.

36:26
In the fiscal year 2025 budget, we're also making some investments in two of our really effective new programs, treatment courts through our Justice Court departments headed by Judge Holloway and Judge Beal.

36:39
That's the DUI or Rd.

36:40
court that's been very successful, has about an 8780 plus percent effectiveness rating for folks who go through that court not becoming repeat offenders.

36:48
And we started the domestic violence court with Judge Beale and hoping to have that same success there.

36:53
These help to get folks out of our criminal justice system faster, but also put them on a shore footing, footing not to be back in our detention facility or back through that court system.

37:02
We're also making some pretty significant investments in our pre trial services program as we brought that in house from being a contracted service across Missoula County that is temporarily located in the federal building.

37:12
But we'll move into this building hopefully in fiscal year 2025 as the Sheriff's Department transitions.

37:19
And that is going to allow us and has allowed us to more interactively work with the courts which are located in here in this building and work with the District Court judges to again, have folks who might have low level offences not be incarcerated while they're awaiting trial, which is in the long run is a cost savings for Missoula County as incarcerating folks is extremely expensive.

37:38
We're continuing to make some investments in our own organizational healthier.

37:41
We have made some investments in our grants and community resources department this year, including the addition of one FTE to allow them to continue to bring in grant funds to Missoula County.

37:51
We have a very successful grants department bringing in more than $11 million each year and outside funding to help support staff and critical programs in Missoula County.

38:00
And we're working to expand that.

38:03
We are also making some investments in the health and well-being of our first responders by providing some targeted mental health and other services to those folks.

38:12
They have very difficult jobs, see very difficult things.

38:14
And this gives them an opportunity to connect with professionals to help keep them in the job and keep them healthy in the work that they do for our community.

38:22
The other one I want to hit on here is aerial imaging for GIS.

38:25
Folks might wonder what that is.

38:26
And so if you go on to the Missoula County Property Information System, or if you go on to any of our mapping tools that we have on the website, you'll see that there's an overlay that outlines houses.

38:35
You might be able to see some trees or outbuildings.

38:38
That imaging is about 15 to 20 years old, so it hasn't really kept up with our growth.

38:43
That's a critical piece for our responders.

38:44
That's also the imaging that they use in their cars as EM TS or firefighters or our law enforcement officers, as well as our nine and one folks when they answer calls for emergencies.

38:54

And so updating that imagery really provides us the ability not only for the public to have better access when they're looking at properties of what's been developed, but it's really critical to our emergency responders.

39:03
And so we've made an investment in that this year as well as we are tackling our challenges around recruitment and retention by bringing on board, looking at bringing on board a new human resource information system.

39:15
And that covers really everything from the time that we recruit somebody all the way through the time that they might retire or leave.

39:20
Our organization allows us to centralized the record keeping for that piece.

39:25
And as the Commissioner heard earlier this week, right now when we hire somebody, even though that process electronic, it takes about four manual entries into different systems to get those people paid to get their benefits out correctly.

39:36
And so the hope is to bring 1 holistic system to that that will eliminate some of the stresses and result in US not needing to look at adding staff and some of those internal services departments like both human resources and benefits.

39:51
So just a couple more slides, I promise.

39:52
Before we get into the meat and potatoes of it here, Health and well-being here, we are making some strategic investments in our foster child foster child care services piece.

40:03
This is a service provided by our health department for kids who are taken into foster care.

40:07
It helps to provide coordination of all the medical records and treatment plans to make sure that our most vulnerable citizens are taken care of if they happen to be in foster care.

40:16
And helps to provide those treatment plans both during the time that they're in care and as they get back to their families.

40:23
This is a really critical piece because it allows them to gather all the records and make sure that they get appropriate targeted treatment to make sure that the needs of those children are met while they're in foster care.

40:33
So we're making an investment there as well as tomorrow we will have a ground breaking for the expansion of the animal control facility out to the West on Butler Creek Rd.

40:42
This facility currently does not have adequate space for either dogs or cats or the other animals that they have to take in, nor does it have space for the number of wonderful citizens who come out and want to adopt dogs and cats from that space.

40:56
Right now there's no place inside during the winter for them to meet those animals.

41:00
So often those are happening out in cold parking lots.

41:03
We have dogs that unfortunately in cats where sometimes diseases are transmitted because we can't separate them and we don't have a good on site facility to be able to provide medical care for those for those.

41:13
So we're looking at an expansion there.

41:15
And then I'll touch really briefly here on the mental health services contract, which ties into our inmate medical, dental and behavioral health.

41:22
We're making some strategic investments in that area because when we have people incarcerated or in our care, we have a great duty of care for those individuals and we need to make sure that we are providing for their mental health and well-being as well as their medical needs.

41:36
So we are making some targeted investments again in that and you saw that in the increase in the Wellpath contract.

41:41
Wellpath is the medical provider at the detention facility to be able to provide additional services around behavioral, dental and medical health out of the detention facility.

41:52
So we do also have some additional things that came in.

41:54
We were really successful this year in securing grants, as I mentioned, about $11 million.

41:58
One of those that you'll see wrapped into the budget is around climate change in the Ecology and Extension program.

42:04
That was about $1,000,000 grant that will be available to assist citizens in helping to look at different ways to adapt to Missoula's changing climate, including providing assistance to folks in that area.

42:14
We're completing the transition of Larchmont Golf Course from being a contract with a service provider to being run in house.

42:21
Had a very successful golf year this year, even with the devastation that occurred to some of the trees out there on the July 24th wind event.

42:28
The garden program at the Missoula Ecology and Extension Building, which is the Rocky Mountain Exploration Center or the Jerry Marks Building, is also getting ready to wrap up and be fully available and open to the public, which is an exciting thing coming up.

42:42
And we extended the fair this year to six days, which was a big accomplishment.

42:46
Great work by Billy and the others, Monty out at the fairgrounds and getting that up and running for a six day, which led to a record-breaking fair again this year.

42:56
Believe this is our last one and then we'll get into some numbers.

43:00
So we are making some modifications as we continue to look at Missoula County's buildings and making sure that we're providing security here, as we're required to for our District Court and justice court judges.

43:11
So there will be some changes coming to this building.

43:13
There'll be some modifications to the entrance of the building to help with that security Folks who came to the meeting in public today noticed that there's construction fencing up around the east wall that divides the lawn from the sidewalk at Missoula County Courthouse.

43:28
That wall was crumbling, and so we're making some repairs to that wall.

43:31
That retaining wall upgrade is in this year's budget as well.

43:35
There will be ongoing investments out of the Y and Grant Creek crossing.

43:39
Ted, as well as we were really successful and you heard during your admin meeting today and securing about $4.8 million to help homeowners address hazards around their homes related to wildfires.

43:49
That's a super exciting thing.

43:50
Again, reaching beyond that 11,000,000 that we brought in last year, that's going to be really important for citizens and their homes and that is included in this year's budget as well.

44:01
I'm going to give Andrew a chance here to kind of give the overview and the economic outlook for Missoula County and how that breaks down to over the total budget.

44:10
And then we'll talk about the kind of specifics of what that means to each homeowner in Missoula County.

44:16
Thank you, Chris.

44:17
Andrew, it's all yours.

44:31
Yeah, this year we had some interesting developments from the Department of Revenue.

44:37
They implemented the property tax exemption from HP 212.

44:42
As you may remember, last year the personal property exemption for business equipment was raised to $1 million and which resulted in a reduction in our taxing ability in the county wides we lost 149,886.

45:02
The total taxable value for this year was 382 six 14897 and excuse me, 382 nine 16924 when a slight increase and the total tax will value the TIF districts actually went down in value 3.8% and tax value per mil came up to 359 to 16 or $12150 increase .3% increase is much lower than we anticipated.

45:47
Andrew, could you hang on just a second right, if I just ask you some questions?

45:50
Sure, sure, thanks.

45:52
So we know that taxable value is the result of the assessed value multiplied by the tax rate.

46:01
This seems like a really, really modest increase point O 8% given what we know about the general increase in real estate value.

46:10
Even though it's a non appraisal year.

46:13
We have new growth, new newly taxable property coming online and we also have property that where their appeals.

46:22
Yeah, the owners appeal their valuations.

46:27
Does this seem strange to you, this point O 8%?

46:29
It just feels strange to me as someone who lives here, not just as a public official, that this is the very, very small increase in taxable value when you go out in the world.

46:39
And it feels like every chunk of real estate is soaring in value at a rate far greater than point O 8%.

46:47
I couldn't agree with you more, Commissioner.

46:49
We had a number of discussions with the Department of Revenue, especially in the light of what was going on in Gallatin County and some of the other counties in the state.

46:58
They assured us that the newly taxable property for our county was included as of May 1st of this year.

47:06
We had some additional discussions.

47:08
There were some modifications to the numbers it I, I have to believe them, but it does seem odd.

47:21
What, what would you or Chris, either one of you guys, what would you attribute this very, very modest gain to?

47:29
Why not?

47:29
Why not a, why not a gain that looks a lot more like what real estate values look like.

47:35
Yeah, that's a great question.

47:36
Commissioner Slotnick.

47:37
I I don't know that we have a very satisfying answer unfortunately.

47:40
So what we typically see in a non reappraisal year is growth somewhere between 1 1/2 and 2 1/2 percent.

47:46
So that's kind of what we expected and obviously .8 is significantly less than that.

47:52
We do know there were some properties that were moved between the county and the city as the city annexed, which could explain some of the changes in our county only mills that Andrew was talking about, because again, that property left the county and, and entered the incorporated city limits.

48:08
But that would not explain the minimal growth in the county wides because the county wides include the city.

48:13
And so I, I don't think Andrew, who's been working really hard with the OR probably has a very satisfying answer, as I mentioned, But Andrew, if you have more you want to add to that.

48:22
But I think that's been the been the challenge all along is that it's been really difficult to get to ground truthing what we know we're seeing on the ground versus what we're getting back in numbers.

48:32
And some of that again could be explained by appeals, some of it in the county onlys can be explained by movement of land between the city and the county through annexation.

48:41
But that would not explain the the minimal growth in county wides.

48:45
We do we have any option at our disposal when dealing with the Dor?

48:56
Not that I've found truth.

48:58
Thanks for looking.

49:01
I've had a number of discussions.

49:03
I've talked to people on home, I've talked to the reappraisal folks, I've talked to the centrally assessed folks and I'm getting the same answer all the way around.

49:13
In fact, the oddly enough, you saw last year where I showed you the spreadsheet where it showed the, the tax shift, the big tax shift.

49:27
I asked for the same document this year and it it was changed.

49:33
You mean last year's numbers are different now?

49:38
Well, how can that possibly be?

49:40
The central assessed apparently didn't get as very big a break as they were said said they got.

49:48
So there's a lot of suspicion.

49:50
It's.

49:54
And they haven't been able to reproduce the document for me, and it came from their office and they don't know how I got it.

50:03
Where's Griffin?

50:05
Well, that is a rather unsatisfying.

50:09
Not at at.

50:10
To be clear, not unsatisfying from you.

50:12
We very much appreciate all your diligence.

50:14
I know that's not what you meant at all, Sir.

50:15
No, it is what?

50:16
I don't know.

50:18
Thank you for doing all that digging.

50:20
And maybe someone from the Dor can get back to us.

50:23
Yeah, I'm going to continue.

50:25
Thanks, Thank, thank you.

50:27
I'm probably going to interrupt some more.

50:30
Carry on Andrew.

50:31
On the county only mills, we again saw a 4392 thousand 4392 dollar decrease from HB 212.

50:45
Total taxable value actually decreased in the county.

50:50
It went down point 3% or just or $521,000.

50:58
And yeah, just how could that possibly be?

51:02
And I mean, we, we, you, if you would go out into the world of real estate, we are in a an absolute boom time, so much so that anyone who watches housing would say we are in a housing crisis.

51:13
Again, taxable value is a result of tax rate multiplied by assessment, so assessed value.

51:19
So is there any way, any way to, at a more granular level, determine which properties actually contributed to such a decrease?

51:34
It would be a long and very tedious task with a gazillion properties.

51:39
I think it it would, it's, it's possible, certainly.

51:44
I mean, even finding one example would perhaps shed some light in, in terms of what might be going on.

51:51
I was kind of wondering about the Amazon facility out there, out in the county.

51:55
Why?

51:55
Why the Amazon facility?

51:56
When did that come on the tax rolls and how much did that add because of its newness?

52:02
Yeah.

52:04
Jane, does this make sense to you?

52:05
All right, carry on, Andrew.

52:11
OK, taxable value went down.

52:15
The increment districts oddly enough went up and taxable value went down and after the removal of increment districts, we ended up with a lower taxable value per mil of 152,000 versus 153,000.

52:34
So mil value went down.

52:36
Yes, it's the first time it's since 2015.

52:39
This again defies logic.

52:41
This is what we would expect in a in a time of a property recession, not not a time when real estate is booming.

52:48
This this just doesn't make any logical sense.

52:51
No, it really No, it certainly doesn't.

52:54
And newly taxed went down $294,000 Is is there more on this green there that's cut off Is there?

53:06
I may maybe not.

53:08
Oh Oh yeah, I think there is.

53:10
I'm sorry or really tech, can we scroll up?

53:20
No, OK, sorry.

53:22
That that's OK.

53:23
Oh, better on the other.

53:29
Yeah, Cheryl, can can we collapse the closed captioning in the room without or not Will will people online still be able to see it even if we close that?

53:52
There we go.

53:53
Thank you.

53:59
Assuming the folks in the room are OK without the the closed captioning words.

54:03
OK, thank you.

54:04
Just ask if you would like it.

54:09
Oh.

54:10
Oh, you want it on?

54:11
OK, we will turn it back on then.

54:13
It's totally just fine.

54:14
In terms of the tolls for the final budget for this year in expenses we have 256,798 thousand $256,798,655 and revenue 282,009.

54:40
By the year we had expenses 224 and revenue of 300 seems skewed, but it it it what happens is it crosses.

54:53
So for instance, when we built the new grandstands out at the fairground, we spent the money ahead of of getting reimbursed.

55:06
So we spent about 4 million before the end of the fiscal year, but I'm issuing $5,000,000 in the new fiscal year for that grandstand.

55:16
So even though I'm not spending that money in new fiscal year, it looks like I have a lot of additional revenue, but we're paying ourselves.

55:24
So there's a number of those issues that that come into play here.

55:36
And then looking to comparison of the 24 and 25 revenues, transfers in and transfers out, those are only done within the county books.

55:45
So they're not really isn't useful information that would put it in just because it's required Internal service funds.

55:55
They went from 21,005 O 8 down to 21,375 and those were the funds, those are the telephone service charges, the facility charges that we charge ourselves, the county charges themselves within the the county investment earnings.

56:14
It went from 3635 to 3769.

56:23
Miscellaneous revenues 11 to 13.

56:29
What's an example of that?

56:31
Of what a miscellaneous revenue is?

56:34
Yes.

56:36
What is miscellaneous?

56:44
I'll come, I'll come back to it.

56:46
OK, OK.

56:46
We'll come back to that one.

56:49

Find some forfeitures, that's JP court handing out all their fines, charges for services and we've got 44,000 this year, 50,000 last year and or this year.

57:08
Wait, that's backwards.

57:09
I'm assuming that's backwards and I'm assuming that's millions.

57:12
Yeah, yeah, yeah, OK.

57:14
Intergovernment revenue, we had 35,000,000 last year, 33 this year.

57:20
License revenues million seven and about a million seven are probably even.

57:26
Another taxes, absolutely even that's was the local option taxes and property taxes went up from 70,565 to 73,578 million.

57:42
Go ahead.

57:43
I'm sorry, 70 million, so about a 3,000,012.

57:56
Yeah, looking in terms of capital last year we had we're spending quite a bit and now we're slowing down a little bit.

58:06
Transfers out it's those are all internal.

58:10
The debt service is about the same we we had, although we went ahead and built the facilities last year we're we incorporated the associated debt service because we thought we were going to get out in the market earlier.

58:26
So the debt service is there and we don't have to raise any additional tip property taxes for that existing debt service operations went down slightly and the big one personnel it went from 97 to 106 and that's just a matter of keep employees and and competing with the private sector unfortunately.

58:53
So I'm just going to add briefly to that, that also included in that personnel number is some of the services like pre trial services and Larchmont that move from contracted services into the counties.

59:05
And so those were actually attributed.

59:07
Not all of those are attributed to a property tax increase this year because those were paid previously through a contracted service and showed up in an operational line and now have transferred over to the to the personnel line.

59:18
But those revenues move with them as well.

59:19
So the increase is not, while the increase is larger than what we're projecting for an increase in the total of the county, which Andrew pointed out was about 3.1 million in additional cost to the county this year.

59:29
That's why those numbers are different even though you see such a large jump in the personnel line.

59:33
Yeah, Largemark continues to generate enough revenue to cover its costs.

59:37
Yes.

59:38
Well, real quick then with the the increased staff with detention or the Sheriff's Department, were they already budgeted for or is those?

59:48
Yeah, so some of those costs came online in fiscal year 24 and some of them are in fiscal year 25.

59:53
And we have that in a future slide when we get into Yeah, each of the categories.

59:56
So I wanted to also compliment the Commission on keeping the Holden line on this year's budget, keeping 2.8 million of of newly requested enhancements for a future year, and we took out another 2.5 million from the finance department and digging in.

1:00:19
Deep into this budget.

1:00:21
So this was a, this was a, this was a tough one.

1:00:24
This was a painful 1.

1:00:25
So we said no to 4 million something.

1:00:29
We said 2 1/2.

1:00:30
Yeah, it said notice, sorry, I would two and a half million.

1:00:33
And then Andrew and his department working with departments in those first steps to the budget were able to move costs around and again, moving those personnel items, those operational line items to find about another 2 million in in savings.

1:00:46
So Chris or Andrew, does this personnel line that's displayed here also reflect the increases to the sheriff's retirement?

1:00:56
OK, Yes, thank you.

1:00:57
Which is not insignificant.

1:00:59
No, and we'll talk about that.

1:01:00
Yeah, OK, thank you.

1:01:01
Just a future slide.

1:01:02
Here we go, Andrew.

1:01:05
OK, so we're going to jump back to me here for a minute.

1:01:07
So I wanted to talk about where some of those increases in efficiencies and where we looked at cost savings and also talk a little bit about where those additional costs are.

1:01:16
So as an example, as Andrew was working with staff this year and working with our benefits team headed by Erica Grindy, we were able to make changes to, for example, our pharmacy benefits contract, which will result in about a $500,000 a year savings for the Missoula County insurance plan.

1:01:34
That our health insurance costs will still go up because health insurance costs are going up faster than the rate of inflation.

1:01:39
But that 500,000 meant we got to reduce how much that growth would happen by.

1:01:44
And the same is true when we talk about ERP is really our finance system.

1:01:48
It's called an enterprise records package.

1:01:50
Andrew has to remind me of what that acronym is all the time, but that's what it stands for.

1:01:54
And so and our human resource system again will result in our ability to limit the need to grow staff by actually using software tools more efficiently.

1:02:04
We also, as Andrew pointed out, as we went through this process were able to more closely accurately match actuals to projected revenues or needs in departments.

1:02:14

And that combined with these things here as well as some other changes that we were able to make, resulted in about a $2,000,000 reduction in what would be needed to maintain the same operational level for the county next year as this year.

1:02:29
So just a quick overview here again.

1:02:31
So when we talk about the total property tax increase last year in fiscal year 2024, we were at about 70.6 million.

1:02:38
This year we're at about 73.6 million to provide that same level of service and those modest additional investments that I talked about in some of those earlier slides.

1:02:47
Of that increase, 1.8 million of that was actually what we planned in fiscal year 24 to take on the changes to be able to fill the recruitment deficiency that we had at the Sheriff's Department both in detention and patrol.

1:03:00
And because the Legislature for the last several sessions has increased the sheriff's retirement contribution that's necessary to pay for the retirement system for the sheriff's deputies, that meant an additional 1.8 million of that 3.6 million this year is actually a statutory requirement.

1:03:16
And so we didn't have any choice but to make sure that we were covering those costs.

1:03:21
So when we look at all of the other personnel changes across Missoula County and those modest increases, adding one FTE to the grants staff as an example, and those kinds of things, that was about $1.2 million that was actually inside the control of Missoula County this year.

1:03:36
So of the four point 2% increase that we're talking about in in overall increased taxes, 2.5 of that alone is the Sheriff's retirement system.

1:03:45
And then the rest 1.7% is all the other increases.

1:03:49
So we'd set a goal of 3.4%.

1:03:51
As you can see, we fell short of that goal.

1:03:54
We did as much as we could to bring down that discretionary piece, that 1.7% and we were able to get that down to 1.2 thanks to the hard work of Andrew, the Commission and others as we really worked through those potential needs for departments.

1:04:09
We kept the increases for all of those.

1:04:12
The goal was to keep it below the cost of one additional mill which is about $380,000 and we were able to do that not even though we did fall short of our our hopeful goal there.

1:04:24
So as a summary, Missoula County will collect an additional 4.2 million in total tax revenue.

1:04:29
That revenue represents the county's commitment to recruit, recruitment and retention of staff, vital services like crime victims advocates, where we added some additional funding, investments in our grants department to again seek additional revenue as well as investments in the courthouse security and diversionary programs like our DUI and road court as well as pre trial services in in Missoula County.

1:04:55
So I apologize for the clunkiness of the next two slides, but they are statutorily required even though they are difficult to read.

1:05:02
So for folks who reside inside the city limits of Missoula and pay taxes for those general government services that are provided to both city and county residents.

1:05:11
So things like the 91 center, justice court clerk and recorder treasurer, the Commissioner's Office, those kinds of things, they will see an average of $10.15 per year per $100,000 of home value.

1:05:26
And we show that in increments of 100,300 and 600,000, which is the requirement under state law.

1:05:31
So that works out for the average home in Missoula County, which is a little less than $600,000 to be about $5.08 per month for that total increase or about $60.90 per year.

1:05:45
So just as a reminder for folks, when you're a city resident, some services are provided only by the city and those are primarily separate from the county services and those are county roads, animal control and the health department.

1:05:57
So if you live in the county, this next slide talks about yours.

1:06:00
So in addition to the city increases which apply or sorry to the county wide increases which apply to all residents and homeowners in Missoula County, you also have three special line items on your taxes related to county roads, animal control and the health department.

1:06:15
And for those you'll see an additional $2.72 per $100,000 of home value.

1:06:22
So for an average $600,000 home, which is again a little bit higher than the average home in Missoula County, that would be about an additional $16.33 a year or $1.36 per month.

1:06:34
So if you're a county resident, I have it, we have examples here, your total increase.

1:06:38
So countrywide, you're paying for all those general government services and then those three special services that city residents don't contribute to because they contribute through the city instead of through the county.

1:06:47
Again, those are county roads, health and animal control.

1:06:50
You'll pay that additional amount and so you would pay be $60.90 on a $600,000 home that are applied countrywide and $16.33 for those county only services of Rhodes Health and Animal Control or $77.23 per year or $6.44 per month of additional taxes in fiscal year 25 over what you paid in fiscal year 24.

1:07:14
And I want to pause there for just a moment because this is the way we are statutorily required to provide it.

1:07:19
But it is also probably the most complicated way in my opinion of doing this.

1:07:24
And so I just want to re emphasize for folks and then commissioners, if you have anything to add or Andrew if you do before we go to the last little bit here.

1:07:30
So if you are a county resident living outside the city limits, you will pay an additional $16.33 for a $600,000 home plus the county wide ones for all the regular county services, Sheriff's Department, detention center 911 general government services of $60.90 for a total of 7723 per year or $6.44 a month.

1:07:55
And I'm going to pause just a second in case there are questions just on that part commissioners or if Andrew has anything to add before I do my wrap up slide.

1:08:03
I I would just highlight that this is this is county taxes.

1:08:07
So if you look at, I live within the city of Missoula, my taxes are, are going to be way higher than if I was residing in a similarly priced home outside of the city limits because I am paying for those additional city services.

1:08:24
So initially it might look like, oh, if I live outside the city, I'm paying more taxes, well, maybe to Missoula County, but overall your tax burden is going to be larger inside the city of Missoula.

1:08:37
I just want to add to what you're saying.

1:08:40
We all also pay taxes to a school district.

1:08:42
I say a school district, not the school district, because it depends on where you live as to which school district you pay into.

1:08:49
The larger the school district, the greater the cost.

1:08:52
If a person lives in a very rural part of our county with very small school district, the amount they pay to that school district will be less than if they lived in the heart of the city, though the percentage of their total tax bill may be similar.

1:09:06
It's really worth going to Missoula property tax information system.com or.org.

1:09:13
We are a dot USDOT US.

1:09:15
So go there, type in your name or your address, click on taxes and then click on pie charts and you can see of the amount you pay to the county in property taxes.

1:09:25
What portion is going to your school district, to the city if you live in the city like Dave does, and to the county and special districts and special districts.

1:09:32
Thanks and fire districts.

1:09:33
You can really see what portion of the total goes where and if you want to dig deep, you can click on the county piece and of the money that goes to the county you can see exactly what you're spending on, which is quite helpful.

1:09:46
Had one other last thing to say.

1:09:48
So this increase of 4.2%, this isn't an increase on every homeowner of 4.2%.

1:09:57
This is an increase in the total amount we collect from every property in the county.

1:10:03
You take all that together and add it up, do that in 2023 and then do it again in 2024.

1:10:09
I know the tax year's a little different.

1:10:11
It's 4.2% bigger.

1:10:13
That's the increase.

1:10:15
How much you pay as a homeowner of that portion is not dependent on the county at all.

1:10:20
It's dependent on the state's assessment of your house and the state's assessment of every other property in the county.

1:10:28
If you take the tax rate for your class, in this case it's residential property multiplied by the assessed value, you get a taxable value.

1:10:37

If you add up all the taxable values of all the property in the entire county and look at what percentage of that is yours, that's the same percentage of all that money we collect that belongs to you.

1:10:49
Property taxes are much more a question of distribution of burden than they are a question of accumulation of money stacked up after you fill out your form like they are with income taxes.

1:10:59
I get that there's a lot there that's worthy of like half an hour of unpacking, but I just couldn't help but saying it last little piece, You, you, you might have lost track of time, but you just went on for half an hour then no, that took me like a blur.

1:11:13
So I'm personally really unnerved by the Department of Revenue's assessment of property.

1:11:20
And I also, I know that I don't believe that there's any malice here.

1:11:23
I'm not saying that or corruption or conspiracy.

1:11:26
I'm not, I don't know why this happened.

1:11:29
But if, if those property values, if those assessed values had gone up in a way that is consistent with our historical moment, what do you think our actual increase of the total collection would be?

1:11:41
Or is that too hard to that's that'd just be a guess And well, I'm, I'm going to believe it would be less than 4%.

1:11:48
Yes.

1:11:51
I wanted to mention though, you remember a few years ago we were near 0 mills available to U.S.

1:11:59
tax and through your prudent financial management we've accumulated 14.17 county wide mills and 26.78 county only mills.

1:12:11
We use 7.52 mils in the county county wides this year at what value?

1:12:17
Leaving at at $359,000 and that leaves the 6.65 mils for next year in addition to what we may generate next year and if in the county wides and 26.76 in the county only.

1:12:35
So what this means?

1:12:36
I'm just speaking to Jane because you and your friend are the only people here.

1:12:40
This means we don't even come close to maximizing the potential for our taxation.

1:12:45
Other counties do.

1:12:47
We don't.

1:12:48
We do our best to hold back and keep these in reserve if they're needed.

1:12:53
And this is a a healthy accumulation of potential.

1:12:56
It really is.

1:12:58
The city's at its Max.

1:13:00
Most of the counties in the state are at the they're not at our Max.

1:13:03
No, anything else, just just one briefing here, which is that we did receive three public comments online through the Missoula County voice system.

1:13:17
One was specifically targeted towards the library's additional request for books and it was a request that they buy physical books and not ebooks.

1:13:24
The person did not like ebooks.

1:13:25
And then the other two generally were hope that the county would as much as it could increase any or decrease as many line items as they could to offside any potential increases.

1:13:36
Which again as Andrew mentioned, while we weren't successful in hitting our goal of 3.4% through his hard work and the work of the Commission, we did you know find about $2.8 million in savings throughout various departments and then another sorry, about $2,000,000 in savings through other departments and then work that they did to move some of those contracted services around.

1:13:56
So we, we did attempt to meet those as best we could, even though we did fall short of our goal.

1:14:02
And with that, I'd ask that you take public comment on this piece and then I do.

1:14:05
My last slide is just the recommended motion for the budget should you choose to adopt.

1:14:10
Mr.

1:14:10
Splotnick wants to do one more thing.

1:14:12
So I appreciate the sentiment behind that first comment.

1:14:15
And, and we absolutely are being as financially prudent as possible.

1:14:18
The issue I have with this sentiment is it puts too much influence on our budget in terms of a person's ultimate tax liability.

1:14:28
Far greater impact on your tax liability is the assessed value of your property, the tax rate on your property, and the assessed value and tax rate of every other property.

1:14:40
Last year, I don't have all these numbers added up in my head, so I can't do that yet for this year.

1:14:44
But last year, if our tax increase of the total had been zero, your property taxes still would have gone up because that burden so shifted from the other fifteen classes onto the residential property tax class.

1:14:58
Certainly our budget or that the amount of money we ask for in taxes has an impact on your property tax liability.

1:15:04
But a far greater impact comes from those other two pieces of policy which belong to the state, the tax rate set on residential property and the assessed value of your property.

1:15:13
And they're really hard to understand, I know, just by saying this and putting people to sleep, but that's where the weight of this is.

1:15:22
Thank you, Josh.

1:15:24
That is why I have a triple espresso here in in my hand.

1:15:27
So with that, this is a public hearing.

1:15:30
I will open the public hearing and invite beginning in the Sophie Moeys room here in the courthouse.

1:15:36
If anyone in the room would like to comment on the FY25 budget, please come on up to the microphone, state your name for the record, and share your thoughts with us.

1:15:49
I just wanted to make note, I talked to Cheryl when it first arrived.

1:15:52

Jane, if you could stay here for the record, Jane Van Fossen, I'm a city resident, so I get to pay both city and county taxes.

1:16:03
I did mention to Cheryl when I when I arrived that online, none of the attachments for the agenda were available.

1:16:12
So as of as of this morning.

1:16:15
So I would just appreciate if that would happen in the future because it would make the hearings a lot more useful.

1:16:24
The other point that I I was wanted to comment on is this presentation is just incredibly valuable, pulls together an awful lot of facts that are of interest to those of us, those very small number of us who are students of local public spending.

1:16:43
And I would appreciate if the if the presentation would be also posted on the online please.

1:16:51
And the other point is that you did talk about the efforts that you've made at belt tightening and as a taxpayer, I just wanted to express my gratitude.

1:17:01
I played that game.

1:17:02
I know it's a tough game and it's music to my ears to hear you're doing it.

1:17:09
Thank you.

1:17:10
Thank you, Jane and point well taken.

1:17:12
As far as having documents available in advance, we will work on that.

1:17:16
Where this will be on Missoula County Voice or where, where will this presentation be?

1:17:21
Yes.

1:17:22
So right after this meeting, we will get everything uploaded to the Missoula County Voice page.

1:17:26
We did try to get attachments done before the meeting today.

1:17:31
The schedule ABC and D, which are the main charts with all of the the spending in those and unfortunately weren't able to get them done ahead of the meeting, but we will make sure those are up.

1:17:42
Thank you.

1:17:43
Any OK additional public comment, we'll open it up online.

1:17:50
Is there anyone online who would like to comment or on the phone?

1:17:58
OK seeing none, we will close the public hearing and additional questions or comments from the Commission.

1:18:05
I just want to give the comms team and finance team a shout out with what is on Missoula County voice on the budget page.

1:18:12
It's incredibly thorough and really appreciate that.

1:18:17
So I yeah, thanks for all their work.

1:18:21
If I if I could add just one thing, thanks to Andrew, Michelle, Casey and Micah, who are the ones specifically who worked really hard this year.

1:18:29
While we are always trying to make improvements and we we still missed getting everything up this year.

1:18:34
We did actually for the first time in a number of years have a fiscal year draft 24 full budget book up for folks which had actual line item detail in it.

1:18:44
We did learn some important lessons and thanks to Jane for her comments and feedback back on that of some things we can do to make it easier in the future including APDF version as opposed to the online 1 so that folks can actually download and look on it.

1:18:57
So we learned some great things this year that we will incorporate again into next year as we as we work on fiscal year 26, which will start in, believe it or not, just a few short months.

1:19:09
And I really appreciate Andrew's microphone.

1:19:12
We can hear you so well.

1:19:13
Yes, way to go.

1:19:14
Thank you.

1:19:15
You are set up to like sing the Star Spangled Banner for us today or something.

1:19:21
Josh, thanks.

1:19:21
I'm, I'm only going to echo most of what was said really.

1:19:24
First of, thanks to you, Andrew and Michelle and Mike and Casey and anybody else who helped that you guys could really dig deep and find nearly $2,000,000 in savings.

1:19:35
Just fantastic.

1:19:36
It's more than what we could have expected.

1:19:38
And thanks, Chris, for all the work you did with other department heads to get those asks down to a reasonable amount and present us with really good information so we can make a decision.

1:19:50
So you, you guys did great.

1:19:51
I relentlessly hope that we are worthy of you all.

1:19:56
Last thing, I got one other thing.

1:19:58
I'm sorry.

1:19:59
No, go, go for it.

1:20:00
You can go to like 8:00 tonight, right?

1:20:05
Our state has recently put a ton of effort.

1:20:08
I say our state, I'm talking about our governor, the property tax task force, interim committees on local government, interim committees on taxation, put effort towards property tax reform.

1:20:18
And if that happens, all of this will be greatly improved.

1:20:25
A great improvement.

1:20:26
I would say this to you, Jane, and to your friend, because you're the only people here.

1:20:28
What I would love to see is where we raise taxes by 3 1/2 percent or 4% and your county taxes go up by exactly that amount.

1:20:37
That would be the goal.

1:20:38
That is not the situation we're in right now.

1:20:42
We have some classifications losing value as we saw in the beginning of Andrew's presentation and other classifications gaining in value.

1:20:49
And that means when you pay our 4.2%, you're paying some other classifications increase as well.

1:20:57
You are funding, you personally are funding a tax break for other property owners.

1:21:02
It's completely wrong.

1:21:04
And I look forward to the state addressing this and I'm confident and I'm, I'm optimistic, cautiously optimistic, as the gentleman said to me in the door walking in here that they'll make some gains.

1:21:15
But really the, the time for action is now.

1:21:17
Legislature, I think you've just about said it all.

1:21:23
I, I, I'll throw an exclamation point on there though that yes, at the end of the day, we sorely in the state of Montana need property tax reform.

1:21:34
And I, I'm not sure if I'm cautiously optimistic.

1:21:38
I'm, I'm cautious for sure that our legislative session and legislators will roll up their sleeves and actually try to get some work done in Helena to that effect come January.

1:21:52
Thank you also to all of our county staff who have spent many, many months working on what is a kind of a Herculean effort to put this budget together.

1:22:04
And I think that brings us to the point where we are right now, where would anyone entertain a motion like to make a motion?

1:22:11
I moved to adopt the fiscal year 2025 budget resolution and the associated attachments ABC and D establishing the legal spending limits, the level of detail in the resolution and attachments ABC and D as well as the associated delegations of authority as specified in the resolution.

1:22:30
I'll second that.

1:22:31
Any further discussion on the motion seeing none all in favor, Aye, aye, aye.

1:22:38
OK, Thank you.

1:22:40
So take half a day off to catch your breath and then start on next year's budget.

1:22:46
So all right, is there any other business to come before the Commission today?

1:22:51
See none.

1:22:52
We will stand adjourned.

1:22:53
Thank you, everyone, and thank you for great work, 2 of you for coming out, for your continued attention.

1:22:58
Jane.