

MACO DISTRICT MEETING MINUTES

District 4 & 5 Minutes MACo District Meeting May 13, 2005 Fort Benton, Montana

District 4 Chairman, Art Kleinjan called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. at the Club in Fort Benton. MACo Executive Director, Gordon Morris and Assistant Executive Director, Harold Blattie and the following counties were in attendance:

Glacier, Toole, Pondera, Teton, Liberty, Hill, Blaine, Chouteau, and Cascade.

Guests included Senator Jerry Black, Senator Ken Hanson, Representative John Musgrove, Clerk and Recorder Mary Ann Harwood, Mike Waite from Representative Rehberg's office, and representatives of MJTP and DNRC.

Minutes:

Cynthia Johnson moved and Kathy Bessette seconded to approve the minutes as posted on the MACo website. Motion carried.

Budget

Gordon and Harold discussed the preliminary budget documents as prepared by the MACo Budget Committee and offered an opportunity to those present to comment.

The PILT portion of the dues schedule has been reduced to .0075 of 1%. MACo requests that counties pay MACo, PILT Assessment, and NACo dues in the same invoice.

Legislature

Legislative Summary: Gordon reminded commissioners and other officials to be very aware of effective dates of bills which were passed in this legislative session.

The public defender bill will become effective on 7-1-06 and does include justice courts. The assessment outlined in the bill will be a one time outlay from counties and will permanently reduce, by a corresponding amount, the entitlement payment received.

Unless a county in one of the Big Six, there is probably not an opportunity for an audit of the amount of that assessment which was determined by 2004 public defender expenses.

Other bills highlighted included HB743, SB301, SB342, SB48, SB60, HB2, HB790 HJR10, HJR44, SB290, SB255, SB185, SB98, HB 395, SB499, SJR41, and SJR40.

Representative Musgrove spoke briefly about his disappointment that HB 148 did not pass. This bill, carried by Carol Lambert of Powder River County, dealt with the actuarial soundness of public pension funds.

Senator Ken Hansen from Blaine/Hill counties discussed Agriculture and Transportation bills.

Senator Jerry Black, Toole/Chouteau/Pondera/Glacier Counties, discussed his ethanol bill, BNSF issues and the RLF for branch rail lines, and the opportunity for private water users or private water associations to borrow larger amounts of state trust dollars for infrastructure updates or repairs. He also expressed disappointment in the amount of money spent this session and the desire to see more money allocated to education.

Senator Black said of all issues addressed at the legislature, his constituents seemed most concerned about the no-smoking and open container restrictions. Senator Black will request to be interim transportation committee.

Insurance

Gordon Morris talked about his upcoming retirement and his plan of work through the end of the year. He will work to bring Work Comp and Property and Casualty Claims in-house by January of 2006. This change will occur in order to save up to approximately \$200,000 currently paid out in claims administration. Gordon hopes to secure an office building for insurance services and legal services associated with the insurance businesses, adjacent to the MACo office building. He has recommended using insurance investment dollars to accomplish

the building project in order to incur no debt. Costs will be recovered through leasing out private office space in the new building.

EITC Project

Peggy Beltrone reported that the MANG unit located in Great Falls was relocated in today's BRAC recommendations. The economic impact will be significant for this small city. Peggy also reported on the success of the Earned Income Tax Credit Project, funded by the Kellogg Foundation and requested the commissioners from North Central Montana commit to meeting with the foundation in the future to discuss other potential anti-poverty projects we might be able to bring to the area. They did.

DNRC

Tom Hayes, Montana Department of Labor, discussed the Balance of State Workforce Investment Area. Shannon Harrison, Cut Bank One Stop Office, and Al Ekblad, AFL-CIO, talked briefly about their services to a 38 county region. On May 26, 2005, there will be "One Stop for a Day" at the Lobby restaurant in Conrad. Al has created a "virtual meeting room" for individual and businesses to use.

Clive Rooney and Gary Williams, DNRC, explained the Montana State Land Banking project. Land Banking is the sale of isolated, under-producing land to obtain higher producing (income for school trust lands) land. An isolated parcel lacks legal public access. Clive and Gary also discussed HB114 which extended the time limit for historic right of way purchases by counties of roads through state lands. Private landowners need the rights of way resolved so they can clean up title/access issues. Clive and Garry recommended public-private partnerships for the purchase of rights-of-ways. County concerns include the requirement to purchase state land easements will predicate

the necessity to purchase private easements or face litigation.

Gary Williams noted the legislature gave more funding to rural fire issues this term.

Pat Cross, DNRC, discussed fire restrictions and closures. Art Kleinjan, Blaine County, shared that counties should probably establish the restrictions of county fire permits by ordinance.

Nominations and Elections:

Chairman Art Kleinjan called for Nominations for 2nd Vice-President of MACo. He reported that other nominations from around the state were Jean Curtis, Missoula County, and Mark Rehbein, Richland County. Ken Evans moved these candidates be accepted. Russ Temple seconded and motion carried.

Chairman Kleinjan called for nominations for finance officer of MACo. Bill Nyby has been nominated from other Districts. Kathy Bessette moved that district 4 & 5 add Allen Underdal as a nominee for finance officer. Ken Evens seconded and motion carried.

Chairman Kleinjan called for nominations for District 4 Chairman. Doug Kaercher moved and Don Swenson seconded to cast a unanimous ballot for Art Kleinjan for Chairman of District 4. Motion carried.

Chairman Kleinjan called for nominations for District 4 Vice-Chair. Doug Kaercher moved and Kathy Bessette seconded to cast a unanimous ballot for Russ Temple for Vice-Chair of District 4. Motion carried.

Chairman Kleinjan called for nominations for District 5 Chairman. Cynthia Johnson moved and Allen Underdal seconded to cast a unanimous ballot for Arnie Gettel for Chairman of District 5. Motion carried.

Chairman Kleinjan called for nominations for District 5 Vice-Chair. Mike DesRosier moved and John Ray seconded to cast a unanimous ballot for Cynthia Johnson as Vice-chair of District 5. Motion carried.

Russ Temple moved to re-open the Nominations for MACo 2nd Vice-President. Kathy Bessette seconded and motion carried. Russ Temple nominated Cynthia Johnson as a 2nd Vice-President candidate. Kathy Bessette seconded. Motion carried.

Other:

Russ Temple announced a meeting at the Liberty County Courthouse on May 25, 2005 at 10:00 a.m., regarding the Fulton Oil issue, for all North Central Montana Counties.

Gordon and Harold announced that there were two positions on the Governor's Technology Council and one position on the Governor's Interoperability Council that should be filled by local government officials. They encouraged commissioners to apply as soon as possible.

There will a Public meeting at the Yogo Inn in Lewistown on June 14th to discuss the future of Wilderness Study Areas. The Annual meeting of the Montana Coal Oil and Gas Counties will follow with a Board meeting at 3:00 on the 14th and the Oil & Gas Association meeting is on the 15th.

There being no further business to come before the districts, meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

CJ