

MACo Districts 6 & 7

August 13, 2008

9:00 am

MetraPark Yellowstone Room

Pledge of Allegiance

Welcome by District 6 Chair Jerome Kolar and introductions of attendees.

Attending:

MACo Executives:

Harold Blattie, Executive Director and Sheryl Wood, Associate Director

MACo President and Officers:

Cynthia Johnson, MACo President - Pondera County Commissioner

Carl Seilstad, MACo 2nd VP - Fergus County Commissioner

District 6 Commissioners:

Ken Ronish, John Jensen, Carl Seilstad – Fergus County

David Paugh, Leslie Burroughs – Golden Valley County

Jerome Kolar, Cody McDonald – Judith Basin County

Larry Lekse, Sue Olson – Musselshell County

District 7 Commissioners:

Doug Tucker, John Prinkki – Carbon County

Jerry Friend, Dennis Hoyem, Maureen Davey – Stillwater County

Lloyd Berg, Rick Reed – Sweet Grass County

Jim Reno, Bill Kennedy, John Ostlund – Yellowstone County

Guests:

Mike Waite, Mary Heller – Congressman Denny Rehberg's Office

Kevin Gillen – Yellowstone County Attorney's Office

Karen Lekse – Roundup, MT

Bob Ross – SouthCentral Regional Mental Health Center

Pat Bellinghausen – Billings Gazette

Minutes Recorded by:

Paulette Turner-Byrd – Yellowstone County Commissioner Office Manager

Approval of Minutes for May 8, 2008 –

Sue Olson noted that Leslie Burroughs name is incorrectly spelled in the minutes at the bottom of the first page. Sue Olson moved to approve the minutes as amended. Ken Ronish seconded. Being no further discussion, motion carried with amendment.

District 6 Vice-Chair Election

Jerome Kolar noted he would not be running for re-election. Leslie Burroughs is currently Vice-Chair for District 6 and when he steps down on December 31st, Leslie will move to Chair. Jerome asked for nominations for District 6 Vice-Chair.

Ken Ronish moved to nominate Chris King as District 6 Vice-Chair. Sue Olson seconded.

Larry Lekse moved to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Chris King. Dennis Hoyem seconded. Question was called for and the motion carried.

Carl Seilstad questioned how to get on the same schedule as District 7 as far as nominating Chair and Vice-Chair at the same time. Harold Blattie gave a history on a past by-law proposal to make them automatic two-year terms to help supply continuity. The membership rejected that proposal, and each district can do as they choose. Harold stated it is important to have a Vice-Chair, because if the Chair can't attend a meeting, you won't have representation. Carl recommended that Leslie be elected now to a 2-year term. Sheryl Wood stated Leslie would be filling an unexpired term to 2009.

District 7 Chair and Vice-Chair Election

Jerome Kolar noted that Maureen Davey was nominated in the spring as Chair. Maureen said nominations are still open. John Ostlund moved to close nominations. Dennis Hoyem seconded.

Harold suggested clarifying if the nominations are for a one or two-year term.

John Ostlund moved to vote for a 2-year term. John Prinnki seconded the friendly amendment and to say this is a unanimous ballot. Moved, seconded and question has been called for, all in favor. Maureen Davey appointed District 7 Chair for a 2-year term.

John Ostlund moved to nominate Bill Kennedy for Vice-Chair. There was no second as Bill Kennedy was nominated in May. Jim Reno moved to close nominations and cast unanimous ballot for Bill Kennedy. John Ostlund seconded. Bill Kennedy appointed District 7 Vice-Chair for a 2-year term.

Nominations for MACo 2nd Vice-President

Jerome Kolar stated John Ostlund had been nominated for MACo 2nd Vice-President. Harold Blattie said John was nominated at all five district meetings. John Prinnki questioned Harold on the Nominating Committee. Harold said according to the by-laws the Nominating Committee must bring forward two names. Nominations are open until the MACo Annual meeting.

Staff Report-Harold Blattie

Harold said the trustees of the JPIA and JPA have approved the process of having a legal services division to handle some of the litigation with claims and lawsuits against the counties. Jim Reno asked if MACo was thinking about having a fixed term of employment. Jim's concern is, if you have an attorney who has a tendency to lose when we should be winning or settling when we should be fighting. MACo might want to have a base term of 5-years and then they would have to reapply.

Harold touched on the Supreme Court decision with deputy sheriff salaries and how they are calculated. Contact Jack Holstrom with any questions. Exposure for wage claims is 3 years.

Harold stated no one has applied to host the 2010 annual conference. Bill Kennedy stated the county has contacted the Billings Chamber and work with any other counties that would like help host. Carbon and Stillwater Counties offered their support

Harold reviewed the proposed by-law amendments that would 1) allow associate members voting privileges, 2) remove the requirement for two nominations for officer positions, 3) Change the name of the Budget & Finance Committee, and 4) note the date of the approved amendments.

Discussion was held regarding other association representatives being eligible to run for executive positions. Harold said the by-laws state that only a commissioner can run.

Harold reported that the District Court Council did a workload study and found there is a significant shortage of judges and are bringing forth a legislative proposal to create a number of new judge and staff positions in Yellowstone, L&C, Missoula, Cascade, Gallatin and Flathead Counties. In Yellowstone County there would be two judicial positions created. The issue for counties is providing space, for courtrooms, judge's quarters, or staff. Bill wants to make sure that any type of legislation that goes through, the only responsibility is providing existing courtroom space, and if they decide they need more space, it would be the state's responsibility. Harold would like to see a unified position of the counties. John Prinkki said we need a resolution.

Harold said the funding for District Court Security grants has been transferred to MACo, so it did not revert back to the general fund. Jim said this came up at the last DCC meeting and he asked the DCC about uniform or baseline security standards and they didn't know. Jim will ask that they develop standards for security. Jerome Kolar said he is discouraged with the program as Judith Basin uses a handheld metal detector and they would have liked an alarm system. Harold suggested going back to the legislature for additional appropriations.

Harold asked how the on-line registration for the MACo Annual Conference worked for everyone. Maureen said Stillwater County was the first to use, and everything worked fine.

Harold discussed the State Investment Pool. Principal is guaranteed under state law. Senator Lewis has a draft bill that will split the pool into two pools; cities/counties and schools. Losses incurred would be pro-rated. Harold has set up a meeting at the MACo Legislative Conference to inform attendees on how pools are structured. John Prinkki stated the MACo Board of Directors had considered an investment pool and expanding the role of MACo. Bill asked how much more MACo could do with existing staff. Harold agreed MACo is understaffed but gave an example of how the North Dakota Association of Counties provides and pays for services with dues collected. Jerome said to make a MACo Investments Pool work, there is a need to involve other counties. Bill suggested surveying the other counties as to what services they need.

Add-On to Agenda

Bob Ross, Executive Director for the Mental Health Center (MHC) stated there are a lot of requests to the Mental Health Center to provide more services. The state is now asking the centers to sign a three-year contract with no increase in dollars. The MHC receives block grant money to cover 11 services. The MHC over served their contract by \$82K. Chemical Dependency is run at a loss, which is covered by mental health dollars. Bob has drafted a letter to the department that he doesn't feel he can sign a three-year contract, and would ask to sign a one-year contract, or extend last year's contract. Larry Lekse suggested the counties get together and sign a letter in support of the mental health directors not signing this contract. Carl recommended the MACo District 6&7 Commissioners and MACo Board of Directors recommend not signing this three-year contract. Bill recommended asking for more alcohol dollars in the next legislative session. Leslie Burroughs made a motion for MACo District 6&7 Commissioners to support Bob's draft and send a letter to the state recommending mental health providers not sign a three-year contract. Carl Seilstad seconded. Cynthia asked if just alcohol dollars or all chemical dependency programs. Leslie made a motion to change language to chemical dependency. Carl seconded. Passed unanimously.

Staff Report-Sheryl Wood

Sheryl discussed resolutions. She also said the MACo online evaluation would be ready around the middle of next week and the results will be presented at the MACo Annual Conference. The MACo Board of Directors approved the budget for MACo and the three insurance trusts. They include

legislative interns for bill tracking only, no lobbying. The insurance pools will use digital imaging to go paperless. The new server system was also approved.

Legislative Update

Sheryl Wood said there are 329 bill drafts so far, and will probably be around 500 by September 1st. There will be a draft bill that if you hire a retiree, the employer pays the retirement portion to help fund PERS. HB131, from 2007, includes the increased contribution portions for PERS and SRS. A legislative resolution would be preferable for stream access, to keep it simple and straightforward. The Wildlife Federation supports the bill, while the Stockgrowers are holding back. There was discussion on the Open Cut Legislation ideas that DEQ Director Richard Opper has been keeping track of. The commissioners would like to go to the legislature as a unified voice and show up in mass. Harold stated MACo does not support an annual fee. Carl Seilstad suggested keeping a close look at the proposal that requires an EA and public input process on pits. Harold said it is very important for the commissioners to read information that MACo sends to them.

MACo President/Officer Reports and Comments

MACo President and Pondera County Commissioner Cynthia Johnson thanked Harold and Sheryl for the good job they do at MACo.

MACo Resolutions

Bill Kennedy said Yellowstone County Attorney Kevin Gillen has been to several hearings on the detainee bill. Sheryl Wood encouraged counties to get engaged now as the hospital association has been pushing this in committee, and its passage would have a significant fiscal impact to counties. Bill Kennedy made a motion to support a resolution opposing any change in the definition of detainee or Inmate (LC7776). Seconded by Ken Ronish. Motion carried. Bill will write the resolution.

Meeting was adjourned.