

**MACo DISTRICT MEETING**  
**DISTRICTS 8,9, & 12**  
**MAY 15, 2008**  
**WHITEHALL TOWN HALL, WHITEHALL MT. 59759**  
**10:00A.M.**  
**MINUTES**

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS: Commissioner Tom Lythgoe, Jefferson County, opened the meeting with a welcome to all present.

Commissioner Ken Weber, Jefferson County, led the Pledge to the Flag.

Commissioner Lythgoe asked the Commissioners from each county to introduce themselves.

Present were:

Dist. 8

Gail Vennes, Broadwater County; Ken Weber and Tom Lythgoe, Jefferson County; Ed Tinsley and Mike Murray, Lewis & Clark County

Dist. 9

Joe Skinner, Gallatin County; Jamie Doggett, Bernice Lucas and Herb Townsend, Meagher County; Jim Durgan, Park County

Dist. 12

Mike McGinley and Garth Haugland, Beaverhead County; Maureen Connor and Suzy Browning, Granite County; Marilyn Ross, Dave Schulz and Jim Hart, Madison County. There were no representatives for Anaconda-Deer Lodge, Butte-Silver Bow and Powell Counties.

Commissioner Lythgoe then asked the following to introduce themselves:

MACo President and Officers:

President Cynthia Johnson, Pondera County

Vice President Mike McGinley, Beaverhead County

MACo Executives:

Executive Director Harold Blattie

Associate Director Sheryl Wood

Guests:

Doug Kaercher, MT. State Tax Appeal Board

Pam Haxby-Cote, Senator Testers Office

Mike Waite, Representative Denny Rehberg's Office

Vern Petersen, Joint Powers Trust.

Gary Larsen, Montana Dept. Of Transportation (MDT), STIP Coordinator

Wayne Noem, MDT Secondary Roads Program

Susan Bomstad, Assoc. of Public Safety Communications Officials (APCO)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jamie Doggett made a motion to accept the August 25, 2006 minutes. Mike McGinley seconded. The motion carried.

Jamie Doggett made a motion to accept the June 14, 2007 minutes. Ken Weber seconded. The motion carried.

#### NOMINATIONS FOR MACo 2<sup>ND</sup> VICE PRESIDENT

Jamie Doggett motioned to nominate John Ostlund for MACo 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. It was seconded. The motion carried.

Jamie Doggett then made a motion that the three districts join in support of changing the by-laws to eliminate the requirement of a minimum of two people being nominated for a position. Ken Weber seconded. The motion carried.

#### NOMINATIONS FOR DISTRICT CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

##### District Chair - Nominations

Tom Lythgoe for Dist. 8  
Andy Hunthausen for Dist.8  
Bernie Lucas for Dist. 9  
Tom Rice for Dist. 12

##### District Vice-Chair - Nominations

Gail Vennes for Dist.8  
Steve White for Dist. 9  
Susie Browning for Dist. 12  
Jim Hart for Dist. 12

#### MACo PRELIMINARY FY 09 BUDGET

The budget and revenue/expense reports were distributed and Harold Blattie reviewed and discussed them. Travel costs had gone up which caused some concern, but he felt that MACo would be finishing the year well. There would be a projected increase in dues based on a 2.8% cost of living increase (COLA). Harold pointed out that the increase in proposed travel costs, i.e., gas, flights, hotels etc., was noteworthy. Also the budget would be going to the Board of Directors for final approval on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June.

Ken Weber proposed that the cost of living increase at 2.8% was not enough and made a motion to recommend as districts to support a 1% increase to 3.8%. Jamie Doggett seconded. There was some discussion as to the difficulty for some counties at 2.8% but it was decided that with a 31.76% unrestricted cash balance there was room for the 1% increase. Harold clarified that it would amount to an approximate \$2000.00 increase. There was more discussion regarding the labor markets and salaries. The motion was then carried.

#### STAFF REPORT

Sheryl Wood presented:

- A proposal concerning the updating of MACo's Information Technology (IT) system. She listed the shortcomings related to protecting data, the lack of security, firewalls, and virus protection. It is a 4-year proposal with a 4 year reserve plan, and they will be presenting a proposed budget to the Board for approval for implementation.
- A proposal for money (\$10,000) incentive package regarding legislative interns to be presented to the Board of Directors.

Harold Blattie reported:

- \* The lower floor of the 2<sup>nd</sup> building came in under budget.
- \* The Trustees did approve legal services and the law firm would be in place January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- \* JPA rates were approved July 1<sup>st</sup>. And the On Track program has been very successful. Risk Management now has a thermal camera that has been instrumental in saving claims and is available for use.
- \* Discussion was held regarding fees charged by the counties which cannot be kept personally by the clerk who collects them. It has been suggested that a resolution be established to clarify where the monies should go i.e. the general fund.
- \* Addressed the bridges issue over sportsmen's access to rivers and streams, and the battle being litigated.

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The 2008 Ballot Issues hand out was reviewed with special emphasis on CI-99 and I-156.

CI-99 amends the Montana Constitution to limit increases in a homeowner's residential property tax to no more than 1.5% a year. The limit continues to apply after a home is transferred to the owner's spouse, child or grandchild. When a home is transferred to anyone else, the home is valued for tax purposes at either the purchase price or the assessed value, whichever is greater. CI-99 is effective January 1, 2009.

I-156 prohibits political contributions by persons and organizations with certain state or local government contracts until two years after the end of the contract. It prohibits political contributions by labor unions that have collective bargaining agreements with state or local governments. It prohibits political contributions by persons or organizations awarded state or local government contracts without the solicitation of at least three bids. It requires persons with state or local government contracts exceeding \$25,000 (or \$75,000 of building contracts) to file public reports with the Commissioner of Political Practices. I-156 costs approximately \$100,000 annually to operate a system for tracking and publishing information about persons and organizations with state or local government contracts.

There was a discussion about SRS & PILT funding and their status. It is hoped that they might be attached to the War Supplemental Bill for extension. Harold felt PILT might stand alone, and that Baucus and Reid are working hard for some resolution for the issue.

Sheryl addressed the following issues and/or proposed legislation:

- \* The legal advertising rate increase to \$2 per folio of 100 words or less, and that budgets would

have to be adjusted accordingly for the increase.

\* Raffles and the monies to be made from them, a survey of the counties who participate and highlighting Madison Counties success.

\* 14 bills in committees posted on the website. She touched briefly on:

Law and Justice – The treatment of the mentally ill in county jails and the consideration of mandatory jail standards.

Involuntary Commitment - Costs falling to Dept. of Public Health.

Transporting of the Mentally Ill - Unanimous that restraints are necessary.

Medical Costs for a Detainee - The cost for immediate medical attention when injured by a deputy whether or not there is an arrest falls to the County.

Harold addressed:

\* Fee's on gravel pits and provided a brief history of legislation pertaining to the issue, and how the situation looks now with private gravel pits in litigation forcing DEQ to stay within the time line required for issuing permits.

\* MACo was pushing for stand-alone authority pertaining to the need for counties to adopt Wildland Urban Interface Fire Plans.

#### MACo PRESIDENT/OFFICER REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Cyndi Johnson, MACo President, said that it had been a great year, and applauded Harold and Sheryl's work and the growth of MACo.

Mike McGinley, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, emphasized that the rules of engagement are changing, and encouraged the counties to respond and to take part in issues, to support each other, and to work together.

#### MT. STATE TAX APPEAL BOARD

Doug Kaercher explained that the deadline for legislative mandated reappraisals was June 30, 2008. He referred to Residential, Forest Lands, and Ag Ground. The Ag Ground reappraisals were comprehensive and included maps, use, ownership, and productivity. He was urging the Counties to advertise the necessity for citizens to look over their appraisals carefully, with time to ask questions, and cutting down on the number of tax appeals as a result.

Mike McGinley made a motion to support and endorse the advertising of notification of reappraisals by the Dept. of Revenue. Mike Murray seconded. The motion carried.

#### ASSOC. OF PUBLIC-SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS OFFICIALS/20 YEAR RETIREMENT PROPOSAL

Susan Bomstad, President of the Montana Chapter of APCO, presented a proposal for 20 year retirement for Public Safety Telecommunicators (dispatchers). She handed out copies of a 20 year retirement survey, and a written composite of the proposal. She expounded on the responsibilities, difficulties, and demands placed on dispatchers. Susan pointed out the negative impacts these issues have over a long period of time on the worker and their families resulting in high turnover in the occupation. She pointed out the reality that dispatchers realize the

probability of staying in this field for 30 years until retirement is not realistic. With the high turnover rate she also shared the expense of training and replacement of personnel. Susan emphasized that most dispatchers in Montana belong to the PERS retirement system, which requires that they work for 30 years for full retirement. And that APCO recommends that be replaced with a 20 year retirement plan as incentive for dispatchers to remain in their field.

Ken Weber made a motion to support Public Safety Telecommunicators (dispatchers) in their goal to obtain a 20 year retirement plan. The motion was seconded. A discussion followed and when the vote was taken by county there were 4 ayes, 4 nays. The motion failed.

Dave Schulz moved to table the issue until more information could be provided and discussed at the MACo Conference in September. Suzy Browning seconded. The motion carried with 7 ayes and 1 nay.

#### MONTANA DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION -Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) - Gary Larsen, STIP Coordinator

Gary explained how vital and informative the STIP document is. It includes definitions, fund categories, tables, work systems, project phases are broken down by district categories, and it covers transportation activities, programs, public lands, transportation grant programs, and Forest Hwy. Funds. If there are any questions about where the obligated funds are going you can find the answer in the STIP document. It is the state wide plan for the next 5 years. In order to cut costs in the production of the new STIP document this year (cut by 1/3) you will be able to go on line to access the document. He will be sending a card to notify that the document is available and if anyone wants a hard copy they can put a check mark on the card and return it. Gary encouraged everyone to look over the STIP document carefully to clarify phases and to see what programs are available.

#### SECONDARY ROADS AND STIP ISSUES - Wayne Nome, Secondary Roads Engineer

Wayne passed around a 3 page Secondary Roads handout using Butte District as the example. The 1<sup>st</sup> page listed all the projects in the program. The 2<sup>nd</sup> page showed what phase the projects were in. The 3<sup>rd</sup> page listed projects approved and waiting for funding to happen. He emphasized the effect inflation was having on the program and how difficult it made getting the projects out.

There was discussion about rest areas. Gary's response was that rest areas aren't ignored, but it was a matter of juggling priorities and balancing the check book. Wayne explained an option of setting aside funds for emergency projects each fiscal year that if not used would be put back into the core program and used for projects like rest areas.

#### RESOLUTIONS AND CONCEPTS

There was discussion regarding:

- \* An amendment to Resolution 2007-3 that would include Elk with Buffalo in the buffer zone around Yellow Stone Park.
- \* Senate Bill 98-2005 The Land Information Act regarding a \$1 recording fee.
- \* MACo in support of NACo's Clean Water Restoration Act.

- \* Hard Rock Metal Mines License Tax
- \* Land Use Committee
- \* Drug Testing
- \* Money to Wildlife Corridor
- \* Airport Authority
- \* Funding Juvenile Detention Centers
- \* Montana S. Rail Route
- \* Food Inspection Fees
- \* Extended ballot language, programing in Auto Mark, additional costs, mail-in ballots/MACo in support of Clerk & Recorder's position that more funding is needed.
- \* Mill Levy in support of university systems

Jamie Doggett made a motion for Districts 8,9 & 12 to support NACo's language in the Clean Water Restoration Act. Mike Murray seconded. The motion carried.

Mike Murray made a motion to support the language in the Amendment to Resolution 2007-3 to include Elk. Jamie Doggett seconded. The motion carried.

Jamie Doggett made a motion to support the Mill Levy. Mike McGinley seconded. The motion carried.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments to be made.

#### OTHER ITEMS

There was a discussion about where the next District meeting would be held in August. It was decided it should be held in White Sulphur Springs, Meagher County.

#### MEETING ADJOURNED

It was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 4:00.