



DISTRICTS 6 & 7 MEETING MINUTES

JULY 12, 2022 | DISTRICT 6 HOSTED | FERGUS COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS, LEWISTOWN

COUNTIES IN ATTENDANCE

District 6

- Fergus
- Golden Valley
- Judith Basin
- Musselshell
- Petroleum
- Wheatland

District 7

- Big Horn
- Carbon
- Stillwater
- Sweet Grass
- Yellowstone

CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE

Chair Youngbauer called the meeting to order and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Deputy Director Jason Rittal called the roll. There was one county absent in each District; however, a quorum was still present in both.

DISTRICT BUSINESS

Minutes

Chair Youngbauer called for a motion regarding approval of the minutes of last year's meeting. Commissioner Wallace moved to approve—second by Commissioner Hajenga. There was no discussion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Next Meeting Location

The 2023 host and location were discussed. Carbon County offered to host in Red Lodge. There were no objections.

District Chair & Vice Chair Elections

District 7 Chair and Vice Chair nominations were solicited by Chair Youngbauer. Commissioner Ostlund nominated Commissioner Wallace for Chair—second by Commissioner Blain. Commissioner Ostlund nominated Commissioner Real Bird III for Vice Chair—second by Commissioner Wallace. Both nominations were approved unanimously.

MACo Officer Nominations – 2nd Vice President

MACo Staff reported that one nomination had been received during the Districts 1, 2 & 3 meeting the previous day—Commissioner Joette Woods of Liberty County. Staff stated that a motion was not necessary to nominate Commissioner Woods, because she had already been nominated; however, Districts 6 & 7 wanted to convey their consensus of support, so they asked Staff report their endorsement during the upcoming meetings, to

which Staff agreed and concluded that nominations remained open until the closing business session during the membership annual meeting in September.

MACO PRESIDENT'S & OFFICERS' REPORTS

President Strouf provided an update on his year in office thus far including attendance at the County Leadership Institute, replacing Commissioner Hart on the NACo Board of Directors, and attending the NACo Board Meeting in Atlanta along with the Presidents & Executives meeting and NACo's Conference where he additionally served on some committees. President Strouf also attended MACo's Broadband Summit and served on the MPERA Board of Directors.

2nd Vice President Butcher reported on his new experiences with NACo. He also spoke about the importance of Commissioner and other elected official participation during the upcoming legislative session.

MACO UPDATES & FY 2023 BUDGET

Executive Director Bryson gave a staffing update including a report on the cybersecurity/IT initiative, the retirement of Karen Houston who was replaced by Meagan Gallagher. Karen Alley is on board as Associate General Counsel/Land Use with an eye toward the pending retirement of Tara DuPuy.

The MACo budget as approved by the Board of Directors was included in the handouts. Director Bryson went through some highlights including Professional Services which is up due to MPERA lawsuit, CI-121, and the county salary survey. Other expenses of note are the printed county elected officials directories which were done as a result of feedback from membership, the Broadband Summit, and the accounting around the downsizing of the vehicle fleet.

The Board has approved a 4.6% CPI dues increase in accordance with the bylaws, resulting in a 6.46% revenue increase due to changes in tiers of some members who have grown in taxable value.

MACO LEGISLATIVE REPORT & DISCUSSION

Director Bryson and Deputy Director Rittal gave an overview of the legislative process for MACo, and the new makeup of the lobbying team. Shantil will not lobby but will be helping from the office. Jason will be the Legislative Director with a focus on appropriations and orchestrating our efforts. Eric will take Clerk & Recorders and Tax and Karen Alley will take land use, some local government, and fill in where needed.

They then outlined the resolutions that had come forward thus far as well as those that are anticipated and followed with a discussion on the types of legislation that can be expected including elections and property tax reform as well as possible attacks on the Entitlement Share and MACo's ability to lobby. The group had a robust conversation about pending legislation, other issues such as the use of the marijuana tax, mental health, state mandates, and county budget issues.

Also discussed was the Stockgrowers' bill, which would allow gates on county roads. As written MACo would again oppose their bill—Deputy Director Rittal asked for any ideas that members might have to work with our Stockgrower friends on this issue.

Other concerns included the settlement of centrally assessed property and its impact on county budgeting, the cost of gathering criminal justice data, as well as the consistency with federal definitions and possible public notice changes.

RESOLUTIONS

Nepotism – Big Horn County – Commissioner George Real Bird III

Deputy Director Rittal indicated that a draft resolution had been received yesterday from Big Horn County. Unfortunately, Commissioner Real Bird III had a family issue that prevented him from attending, and Commissioner Fitzpatrick had to step out of the meeting.

The body did not have a copy of the resolution because it was not received before Staff left Helena, so Deputy Director Rittal read the resolution as received and gave the limited amount of background that he had related to the issue. The resolution intended to provide more leeway—while protecting against abuse—for hiring as it relates to the nepotism statute.

Members discussed whether this was an issue in other counties and debated whether opening a discussion about more latitude for nepotism was something MACo should take on at this point—consensus was no. There was a motion and second made to table the resolution—motion to table carried.

MACo staff departed to embark on the journey to their next destination, and MDT along with their Consulting Team working on the Bridge Study took over.

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

Secondary Roads, Federal Lands Access Program & STIP: Andy White, MDT
Off-System Bridge Study & Implementation Plan: Lisa Gray, HDR