

CITY OF GREAT FALLS/CASCADE COUNTY SPECIAL COMMISSION MEETING
November 17th, 2014
COMMISSION CHAMBERS
COURTHOUSE ANNEX, ROOM 111
4:00 pm

NOTICE: THESE MINUTES ARE PARAPHRASED AND REFLECT THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS. MCA 7 – 4 – 2611 (2) (b). THESE MINUTES WERE OFFICIALLY APPROVED AT THE NOVEMBER 25TH, 2014 MEETING. ALL EXHIBITS CAN BE FOUND AT THE CLERK AND RECORDERS' OFFICE.

PRESENT: Chairman Bill Salina, Commissioner Joe Briggs, Commissioner Jane Weber, Commissioner Elect, Jim Larson, Mayor Michael Winters, Commissioner Bill Bronson, Commissioner Bob Kelly and Commissioner Fred Burow.

STAFF: Rina Fontana Moore

ELECTED OFFICIALS: Mary Sheehy Moe, Ed Buttrey, Steve Fitzpatrick, Jean Price & Mitch Tropila

PUBLIC: Dan Payne

The meeting was called to order at 4:06 pm by Chairman Salina. The purpose of this meeting:

MONTANA 2015 LEGISLATION AFFECTING THE GREAT FALLS REGION

Commissioner Weber opened the meeting by noting that everyone present had a packet that would have the issues for today's discussion.

The first issue up was MACo Resolution 2012-02: Board of Adjustment Appeals. Commissioner Weber noted that the Board of Adjustments consists of five (5) board members that are appointed by the commissioners. It is the opinion of the Cascade County Commission that the additional steps outlined in the MACo Resolution are not necessary.

Ed Buttrey asked if the commission could override the decisions of the board.

Commissioner Briggs stated that the commission could indeed override.

Commissioner Weber commented on the second issue.

MACo Resolution 2012-20: State Agency Coordination. She noted that Cascade County also opposes this legislation. She said that some counties do not have the specialists necessary to deal with these situations. The commissioners said that they believe that this is 'a solution in search of a problem'.

Commissioner Briggs spoke about issue three in the agenda packet. MACo Resolution 2014-02: Assignment for road Street Addresses by Local Governments. Commissioners Briggs noted that in 2013, the MDOT unilaterally decided to change the address numbering on Eden Road. This triggered extensive changes to maps, confusion for first responders and undue hardship to residents.

Commissioner Briggs spoke about issue four in the agenda packet. MACo Resolution 2014-09: Extend Sunset on Enhanced 911 Fund Distribution. He spoke about the fact that everyone pays a fee on their wireless phone for enhanced 911 – location services. We still need the funding as part of

the money goes to the carriers and the remaining goes to the PSAPs. The next generation 911 will go out into the rural areas by utilizing both text messaging and face book. We must not lose this funding and it should be extended for at least ten more years.

Commissioner Weber spoke about issue five in the agenda packet. MACo Resolution 2014-11: Generally Revise Laws Applicable to County Government. She stated that there were 17 clean-up items in this bill involving everything from public notices, minutes for special districts, commission candidates and how to distinguish 2 years in the district and the language pertaining to the surveyor.

Commissioner Weber spoke about issue six in the agenda packet. MACo Resolution 2014-12: Historic Road Right-of-Way Deed Purchase. It was noted that the counties had to inventory all of the county roads leading to the trust land. Cascade County has already spent \$58,000 on this process and the deadline is October of 2015. Many of the counties have not done this as they simply cannot afford it. This would extend the dead-line and also allow for a reimbursement.

Commissioner Briggs spoke about issue seven in the agenda packet. State Funding Support for Land Mobile Radio. He stated that because of the way the grants were written, we do not have a statewide radio system. There is also no central maintenance or management. Cascade County owns two trunk sites but they are not used by Cascade County. He noted that the SIGBY committee was expanded by Gov. Bullock and they are working on a pathway forward so that the system can be utilized statewide. They believe that the highway patrol would be good keepers. There are 56 towers in all, but not in every county. The commission believes that we are better off moving forward with what we have.

Bob Mehlhoff asked if there was any federal funding available.

Commissioner Briggs said probably not. He said that the highway patrol has the technical support to manage the process. He said that there is a need to update the equipment and help the counties that host the towers but cannot afford to fix them.

Mitch Tropila asked if the money would come out of the general fund.

Commissioner Briggs noted that that was an unknown at this point. He said that the SIGBY Committee will have to put together a bill if the governor doesn't include it in his budget.

Brian Hoven asked if this was the system that the highway patrol used and Commissioner Briggs responded that it was.

Commissioner Briggs said that this was the correct technology for moving forward. He mentioned that the City of Great Falls can currently talk to the Highway Patrol, but the Sheriff's Department in Cascade County cannot. He said that the legislature must fund this very important project.

Commissioner Bill Bronson stated that the city is different than the county because of its charter. We are not guided by the legislature like the county is. However, there is some limited power in two critical areas and that is finance and environmental quality. He stated that everyone wants clean water, but how clean is clean? He said that the state and the feds have imposed regulations that are very costly and it does not pencil out. They are forced to ask their constituents to pay higher rates, but cannot show where the water quality is any better.

Bob Mehlhoff asked if the new regulations were coming from the feds as he has been dealing with Vaughn and Sun Prairie.

Greg Doyon mentioned that some was from the feds.

Commissioner Bill Bronson said that Great Falls property tax does not bring in enough money for core services. He said that the city will need a new fire station and improvements to the civic center. He noted that they will have to seek a bond for this. They are also looking at additional funding streams like the local option tax.

All noted that it was important that there was better communication with the governor's office and that there has been tremendous progress in this area.

Commissioner Burows spoke about the I-15 study.

Mitch Tropila inquired if there was any money in the governors MDOT budget.

Commissioner Burows said that it was not but that there was a feasibility study that is on-going.

Commissioner Weber congratulated all of the elected officials and thanked them for coming.

Chairman Salina closed the meeting at 5:05 pm.