

COMMISSIONERS APPROVAL

IMAN 

CHILCOTT 

FOSS 

STOLTZ 

KANENWISHER 

Members Present.....Commissioner J.R. Iman, Commissioner Greg Chilcott,
Commissioner Suzy Foss, Commissioner Ron Stoltz and Commissioner Matt Kanenwisher

Date.....October 18, 2011

► Minutes: Glenda Wiles

► The Board met at 9:33 a.m. for the following administrative items:

- Draw No. 7 for Stevensville Pantry Partners (Community Development Block Grant Program) in the amount of \$63,397.10 - **Commissioner Kanenwisher made a motion to sign this Draw Request with signatures of Commissioner Chilcott and Glenda Wiles. Commissioner Foss seconded the motion and all voted “aye” (5-0).**
- Jenkins Agricultural Revocation - Planner Tristan Riddell was present to discuss this requested revocation of which the Planning Department recommended approval. **Commissioner Chilcott made a motion to sign the Jenkins Agriculture Revocation. Commissioner Kanenwisher seconded the motion and all voted “aye”. (5-0)**
- Budget Transfer Resolutions - Chief Financial Officer Klarryse Murphy and Comptroller Jana Exner presented numerous transfers for Fiscal Year 2011: Jana noted these resolutions clean-up the previous fiscal year budget line items. **Commissioner Kanenwisher made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2731 through Resolution No. 2757. Commissioner Stoltz seconded the motion and all voted “aye”. (5-0) (Due to the volume of budget line items these itemized Resolutions can be found within the Commissioners’ Resolution Files as well as the Clerk & Records Recorded Resolutions for permanent files).**
- Commissioner Reports - Commissioner Kanenwisher gave the Commissioners an update on the septic issue on the Robbins Property, as well as the enforcement issue on Hayes Creek (Paddock Property) from the Board of Health. Commissioner Foss stated she attended a Montana Livestock meeting in Deer Lodge last Friday. Discussion at that meeting included the wolf impact on livestock, economically as well as cattle weight due to harassment. Grizzly Bears were addressed, particularly the numbers here in the Bitterroot Valley. Commissioner Chilcott reminded the Board that he will be attending the National Academy of Science meeting Washington D.C. He also addressed an issue that the Joint Powers Insurance Authority just settled with a DUI Offender that was injured when he fell off a bench. Commissioner Chilcott also addressed the paving Knife

River started last Saturday morning during the rain that was subsequently shut down. He noted the SRS 5% budget decrease is being addressed by numerous legislators.

- **Commissioner Kanenwisher made a motion to continue the administrative items following the Treasurers update. Commissioner Chilcott seconded the motion and all voted “aye” (5-0).**

► The Board met at 10:09 a.m. with Planning Administrator Terry Nelson and Planner Tristan Riddell to discuss Tristan’s recent resignation. Numerous citizens were present. Tristan has been offered a position at Cascade County which he has taken. Terry noted he would like to increase the Office Manager’s job functions which should include an increase in pay. He asked to move forward in seeking a new planner. The Board concurred that Terry needs to work toward hiring a new planner. Tristan suggested the Planning Office prioritize their scope of work so the person hired fits that position. The Board felt that was a good idea. Tristan’s last date of employment will be October 21st so time is of the essence in finding a replacement and to authorize the expense for posting this position on the National Planning Association job site. The Board will meet October 20th at 10:30 a.m. to discuss the goals of planning in regard to staff replacement.

Public Comment was called for.

Citizen Phyllis Bookbinder stated the county seems to be strapped for money. The Commissioners have laid various employees off during the budget cycle and now since one employee is voluntarily leaving, that leaves no planners, so the Planning Administrator does not have anyone to administer. She suggested Terry start doing the job as planner, particularly since planning in the valley has declined. She also asked if the County even needs a Planning Department and if so Terry could be released from his job as he is still on probation. She felt Terry is not a qualified planner anyway, but if he stays he should be able to do the job of a planner.

Maggie Wright stated the Planning Administrator should do the work of this vacant position. If Terry is not qualified, then he should be let go and you need to hire a qualified planner. The Department Head should be an Administrator/Planner.

Pam Erickson stated she is an advocate of planning and it is important to have a planning department. However, the administrator does not have planning experience, and he does not have the capability to jump into this position. This is the Commissioners problem as they put Terry Nelson into that position. The Commissioners laid other county employees off which was devastating for the local economy and to those people who lost their jobs.

Mary Barton asked if the Commissioners would have time to lay out a new plan for planning. She asked if hiring a half time planner could occur and then Terry could job share with the new planner. A little compromise might be in order since so many women just lost their jobs.

► Chief Financial Officer Klarryse Murphy met with the Board at 10:28 a.m. for an update. Discussion included the fleet vehicles and the possibility of adding another 4-wheel drive vehicle that carries more than two passengers; an employee that will be moving from cash in lieu to the

health insurance; invoice from CPA Cynthia Dooley for the Stevensville Tax Increment Finance District which Klarryse will visit with Stevensville to see if they will cover this invoice.

► Treasurer Marie Keeton met with the Board at 10:44 a.m. for an update.

- The Board continued their administrative issues at 11:09 a.m. which included the following:
- Letter of Authorization Commercial Account: Northwestern Energy request an authorization for access information for the Road Department account. **It was concurred to have the Chair sign the form giving full authorization to accounting and Commissioners and staff.**
 - Discussion of board openings and dates for posting

► The Board met with Fair Manager Deb Rogala at 11:25 a.m. in order to appoint three Fair Commission members. The Commissioners received applications from five citizens, those being Rebecca Campbell, Dori Tintzman, Quinn Kirkland, Joy McClure and Margaret Yuhas.

Commissioner Kanenwisher made a motion to appoint Margaret Yuhas to a four year term ending 9/30/15. Commissioner Stoltz seconded the motion. Discussion: It was noted Margaret is industrious and a superintendent for the sheep & swine board. She is dedicated to adding kids and improving the grounds. All voted “aye” (5-0).

Commissioner Chilcott made a motion to appoint Quinn Kirkland to a three year term ending 9/30/14. Commissioner Kanenwisher seconded the motion. Discussion: It was noted Quinn has run an entertainment business in Ravalli County and has strong marketing acumen. All voted “aye” (5-0).

Commissioner Kanenwisher made a motion to appoint Rebecca Campbell to two year term ending 9/30/13. Commissioner Stoltz seconded the motion. Discussion: It was noted Rebecca has a good commitment to the valley, having a family business here that takes care of the elderly, thus she will have a good handle on the handicap needs at the fairgrounds. All voted “aye” (5-0).

It was noted RAN Pigman and Jeff Carter’s term will be up next year, so the terms will continue to be staggered.

► The Board met at 1:05 p.m. to give a Commissioner Report on the wolf issue in Ravalli County. Numerous citizens were present which included RC Watch Dog Maggie Wright, Bitterroot Star Publisher Michael Howell, Kevin Maki of KECI TV, and Ravalli Republic Reporter Whitney Bermes. Commissioner Foss stated in June the Commissioners requested public information on wolves as they interact with the residents and how they impact our community. It was noted a group of citizens have prepared a document that is being circulated and Commissioner Kanenwisher has prepared a power point presentation.

Commissioner Kanenwisher stated the document the citizen's prepared has nothing to do with his power point then presented the following items:

- Statement of Authority given to the Commissioners as a General Powers County with relevant MCA statute 87-1-217 (which gives the county the ability to work with the state and federal government in regard to large predators); He noted the Board passed Resolution No. 2565 on September 23, 2010, in order to ask Fish and Game to invoke the ESA 10(j) Rule and in August the Board adopted another Resolution to study the wolf issue; Public comment received includes those that see benefits which include personal appreciation for the species, those that have encountered losses of livestock or pets, as well as those who have taken clear steps to change their lifestyles as a result of the predators, and some that support the county efforts to advocate for more aggressive measures for large predator control; He noted some public comments show a close encounter with wolves, and with those comments received Commissioner Kanenwisher began some research on dispersion and pack size. He finds that pack size is relevant to prey size. Packs are territorial, and as the prey diminishes you will end up with more packs. A thriving pack of 3-9 members produce 6 pups each year and those pups will leave the pack and develop their own packs.

Commissioner Kanenwisher addressed the historical and cultural impacts; Environmental and economic impacts by wolves and mountain lions; The decline in outfitting industry (high volume of monies earned for low impact tourists called Geotourists who spend more than other tourists); Direct revenues from hunters throughout the state, specifically noting that a local hunter that utilizes an Outfitter spends an average of \$10,695.00 per trip; The difference between 2004-2010 is a decline of \$6 million dollars to our county; Darby check station shows a 38% reduction in Elk and total harvest under a 5 year average, mule deer is a 61% reduction; Elk numbers in West Fork which are affected by climate and habitat as well as wolves being a significant component in elk mortality; Wolf to Elk ratio in the West Fork (in areas with higher wolf density – the elk populations are not sustainable); Elk herd numbers and establishment of Wolves bringing the elk population below elk sustainability (inability to recover);

Commissioner Kanenwisher then asked “where do we go from here? With some Findings of Facts as follows:

- While wolves certainly are not the only cause of elk mortality, they are obviously a component
- We cannot control the weather, we have very little ability (cost prohibitive) to control habitat
- There appears to be significant economic impact to Ravalli County citizens and to the county tax base
- Additional pressure on ungulates may be relieved by reducing total predator load including lions and bears
- Bitterroot Ungulate herds are a crucial natural resource
- While the level of which is unclear, wolves appear to be a threat to livestock and pets, and may require additional measure to ensure safety in rural areas with high wolf density

- Article IX Section 7 of the Constitution guarantees the preservation of game harvest; Article XI Section 4 states that the county has powers either provided or implied by statute. Article XI Section 7 states that a county may cooperate in the exercise of any power or function of the State or U.S; MCA 87-1-217 states that FWP shall consult and coordinate with counties.

Commissioner Kanenwisher stated this power point simply shows the research that he has done thus far. In regard to what the upcoming process and timeline, it can be to:

- Further develop information relative to economic impacts of failing ungulate herds; (2 weeks concurrently)
- Request input from stakeholder groups to develop plan, policy or position statement proposing criteria and weight to FP for development of future predator hunts (3 weeks concurrently);
- One of two commissioners to meet with any group who wishes to participate or accept proposals from groups and publish them online (3 weeks concurrently);
- Request input from groups to develop “Living with Wolves” policy for county residents (3 weeks concurrently);
- Compile group meeting input, public comment, and publish draft of policy for public comment (previous 3 week period plus two weeks);
- 2nd Public comment after draft is published (2 week period);
- Publish Final Draft (1 week after 2nd public comment period finished)

Commissioner Kanenwisher stated, in his opinion, the Commissioner could continue to seek advice or opinion from the FWP field staff and when the final policy or position paper is completed it will provide a copy to FWP and develop a process for follow up and future communication. The Commissioners would stay up to date on FWP action, policies and projects in Ravalli County. He stated a lot of the research and numbers he presented today come from FWP documents. He feels the County should:

- Address predator components of elk population as a singular issue. Pursue enhancement of wolf, lion and bear hunts
- Adopt currently legal measures such as trapping
- Advocate for legislation which will legalize other measures which are currently legal and employed in Idaho
- Address the maximum allowable predator population to minimum ungulate populations. Attempt to arrive at wolf/elk ratio with a guarantee of minimum wolf numbers which are consistent with management goals, and
- Clearly state goals and criteria for goals within the policy

He stated he would advocate FWP’s objectives such as maintaining a viable and connected wolf population, gaining and maintaining authority for the State of Montana to manage wolves, maintaining positive and effective working relationships with livestock producers, hunters, and other stakeholders, reducing wolf impact (and lions) on livestock, reducing wolf impacts and other predators on ungulate populations, maintaining sustainable hunter opportunities for wolves, maintain sustainable hunter opportunities for ungulates, increase road acceptance of hunting as a component of wolf conservation, enhance open and effective communication to enhance decision making.

He also stated there is no decision to be made today, but the Commissioners need to come to a conclusion that there is significant impact to the county and that further action needs to be taken. Commissioner Foss noted they need to consider the hunting season this year as that information needs to be considered in the numbers. Commissioner Kanenwisher stated the time line continues as well as the damages. He feels the county cannot ignore the process of representing the issues.

Public comment was received from a number of individuals about the process and responses to Commissioner Kanenwisher's presentation. Glenda had to leave the meeting due to another scheduled item so the comments were not recorded. At the close of meeting, 2:40 p.m., it was agreed to place further discussion on the agenda Thursday, October 20th at 3:00 p.m. with possible decision on development of policy by county government regarding predator issues.

► Commissioner Foss attended an All Valley Fire Counsel Meeting in Florence at 6:30 p.m.