

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 27, 2011

► Minutes: Glenda Wiles

► The Board met with Extension Agents Bobbi Roos and Katelyn Anderson at 9:03 a.m. to review and approve of the Extension Service Agreements. Present were RC Watchdogs Maggie Wright & Lee Tickell and Citizen Bill Menager. It was noted this Extension Service Agreement matches the FY 2012 county budget. **Commissioner Chilcott made a motion to approve the FY 2012 Extension Service Agreements between MSU and Ravalli County. Commissioner Stoltz seconded the motion and all voted “aye”. (5-0)**

► The Board met at 9:30 a.m. for the following items. Present were numerous citizens as well as KECI & KPAX TV, RC Watchdogs Maggie Wright and Lee Tickell, Bitterroot Star Publisher Michael Howell, Ravalli Republic Whitney Bermes, Human Resource Director Robert Jenni, and Chief Financial Officer Klarryse Murphy.

- Budget Resolutions for FY 2012 – Klarryse reviewed each Resolution which are line item transfers within each budget. Commissioner Chilcott stated since some of these Resolutions address a reduction in work force in both Environmental Health and the Treasurer’s Office, he wants to make sure those Department Heads are aware of these potential layoffs. Robert Jenni indicated he had visited with those Department Heads, but within that visit he did not to relay any Board decision or consensus. It was concurred to adopt the first seven resolutions of which none of them addressed the reduction in work force. **Commissioner Kanenwisher made a motion to adopt Resolutions No. 2779 thru 2785 for Budget Year 2012. Commissioner Foss seconded the motion and all voted “aye”. (5-0) Resolution breakdown as follows:**

- Resolution No. 2779 – Jail Commissary Fund
- Resolution No. 2780 – Clerk & Recorder Fund
- Resolution No. 2781 – Road Department & Secure Rural Schools Funds
- Resolution No. 2782 – Public Health Funds
- Resolution No. 2783 – Treasurer’s Office
- Resolution No. 2784 – Open Land Bonds Proceeds
- Resolution No. 2785 – Planning Department Funds

- The Board then discussed the Resolution that would address the reduction in work force with Treasurer Marie Keeton and Environmental Health Director Lea Guthrie. Marie stated her staff sees the citizens at least once a year (paying taxes and registering their motor vehicles). She stated right now they barely have enough people to work the four windows and she does not think her office or the citizens can afford to lose another employee. She feels losing another person in tax or motor vehicle would severely handicap their office. Her office is about to send out 25,000 tax bills and November will be a busy time for their office. She also noted her office has already lost one employee in the reduction of work force a month ago. She also anticipates the time they spend with each motor vehicle customer to increase due to some upcoming state requirements. She stated on line services for motor vehicles can be done if no changes are required, such as an address change. She asked the Commissioners to take a second look at removing another employee from her office. Commissioner Kanenwisher noted the person they are talking about removing is from the tax side. Marie stated that person works on the tax side and is the last one hired, but the employee is being cross trained in motor vehicles as well as general office work. Klarryse noted the previous employee let go by the reduction of work force was a temporary position. Marie noted that person was brought in due to the problems and issues created by the State Merlin Software System. Commissioner Chilcott noted the revenues and local option tax has decreased significantly, and he assumed that the number of new title functions are diminished, thus a reduction in services by the staff. Marie stated that is a faulty assumption because, while people are not buying as many new vehicles, they are still buying and driving older vehicles. Commissioner Stoltz addressed the number of permanent plates. Marie stated she does not know those numbers but not everyone opts to take the permanent plates. Commissioner Kanenwisher stated they are aware that when the staff is reduced there is a reduction in services.

Commissioner Iman asked what Marie's total staff is. Marie stated including herself there are 10 employees. She also looked at the service to the customers finding that necessary service equates to four employees/windows being open for 8 hours per day. Having three employees working only three windows would be (about) a 25% reduction in services and it would take three employees twelve hours a day for to supply those services. Commissioner Kanenwisher noted her calculations assume a steady stream of citizens in need of assistance, so he does not feel her hours for services are a fair and accurate characterization. Commissioner Foss suggested Marie educate citizens about the on-line services which would reduce the load of work.

Lea Guthrie stated at this moment they could absorb the loss of one person, but when spring time comes their workload will increase. She suggested the Board look at a seasonal temporary position when their activities increase. She stated the employee they are looking at in regard to a layoff is qualified for another job within the county. She also noted the employee lives here and is committed to this valley. She felt we owe it to that employee to see if we can retain them in another department. Discussion included qualifications, complying with labor laws and vacancy. Robert noted the position in the planning department has been advertised both in house and with the American Planning

Association web site. Commissioner Iman stated the employee should be encouraged to apply for the planning position.

Commissioner Chilcott addressed the last reduction of work force and litigation; they realized they would need to address this \$43,000 (approximate) shortfall. By email the Commissioners asked Department Head to come up with further savings so another reduction in work force would not occur. Commissioner Chilcott suggested they hold an actual meeting with the Department Heads and it should be done quickly. Commissioner Kanenwisher stated he is hesitant to have Department Heads come together and advocate one against the other for their staff. Commissioner Chilcott stated the Department Heads might be able to nickel and dime their budgets so the latest rounds of layoffs might not have to occur.

Commissioner Foss stated she does not want to put the burden on the Department Heads and department line items are down to bare bones.

Robert stated while they did not receive a lot of response from the email sent out to Department Heads, there was conversation about it. He also noted with the two reductions they would still be \$10,000 in shortfall.

Commissioner Kanenwisher noted in the last 10 years the number of employees doubled compared to the citizen growth. Accounts were not set aside for the maintenance of the buildings, and the number of county buildings has also grown. He is baffled when he hears the assertion that the county does not need any reserves. He stated if the balance of the Board wants to continue to look at this with Department Heads he will agree to that meeting.

Commissioner Stoltz stated every day the Commissioners put this off we continue to go into the hole (financially) and that might mean a third position will need to be laid off. He stated the Department Heads had an opportunity when the last email went out and at this point it is up to the Commissioners to make that decision.

Commissioner Foss addressed the letter submitted from the citizens in regard to mileage and reduction of commissioners. She would be willing to not take her mileage but does not want to go against the law.

Commissioner Iman stated that conversation is for a later time, this meeting is for the single resolutions put forth here today.

Commissioner Chilcott made a motion noting while it is hard to do another reduction in work force, he would approve of Resolution No. 2786 for a reduction in work force in the Environmental Health Department (removing \$24,901 out of the \$41,192 (Resolution would not include the Treasurer's Office, thus remove lines 7,8 & 9 of the proposed resolution). Commissioner Stoltz seconded the motion. Klarryse noted when she decreases a line she has to increase on other lines. Commissioner Chilcott withdrew his motion. Commissioner Stoltz approved of this

It was agreed that this resolution will be brought back at a later time for approval.

Commissioner Chilcott stated he wants a date certain to meet with the Department Heads. It was agreed to meet 1:00 on November 1, 2011, Tuesday.

- Commissioner Kanenwisher also discussed the potential to go from five Commissioners to three Commissioners, seeking legal opinion from County Attorney and Clerk & Records Office. Commissioner Iman stated this is a legitimate question. Maggie Wright asked for a point of order; wanting separate comment periods. Commissioner Kanenwisher stated one comment period could include all topics. Commissioner Stoltz stated the time calendar for that discussion is already over.

Commissioner Chilcott noted he was an opponent of transitioning to five commissioners, and this is a good question to pose. He noted the transitioning would be difficult.

Commissioner Iman stated this is a budget discussion and he will not allow any public comments at this time.

Bill LaCroix stated the Commissioners have only allowed 30 minutes with people waiting in the hall to make comments. Bill felt this is not a democratic process.

Commissioner Foss stated she would like to seek the legal opinion but they need to discuss this more fully.

Public Comment was now called for on the reduction of Commission Members and the reduction of work force.

Rich Morrisy of Corvallis asked for clarification of \$25,000 in a budget shortfall noting if it is that amount it is less than .5% of the budget, then he felt the Department Heads should be allowed to look at their budgets and see what else might be cut. He also stated the Commissioners mileage (to and from work) is not mandatory. Citing 7-4-2108 MCA and 7-3-1221 MCA, he noted Commissioner Chilcott was in error about the cite using the word "must". Rich stated the recently hired Planning Administrator does not have planning qualifications. Commissioner Stoltz advised Rich not to utilize any names, just refer to the position. Rich stated this Planning Administrator person is still on probation with a \$45,000 per year salary and the previous qualified planner only had a salary of \$37,000. He stated if the Planning Administrator was let go while on probation there would be a cost savings of his salary which would more than cover the budget shortfall. He agreed another good discussion is the reduction of 5 to 3 Commissioners. Rich also stated that Commissioner Stoltz has been saying that "this was the best part time position in the county". Commissioner Stoltz stated he objects to that comment as he has never said that to anyone. Commissioner Chilcott suggested Mr. Morrisy review MCA 7-3-1221 (2).

Larry Campbell of Darby stated if they reduce the Commissioners hours (thus salary) they could do that immediately, and not wait for a vote. He felt this would help the Commissioners be fiscally responsible.

Dec Arvish of Hamilton stated the rest of the counties in the State have three Commissioners with just a few city/county combinations of more than three. He noted all of the larger counties such as Missoula and Cascade get along well with three commissioners and he feels Ravalli County should have three that are non partisan with staggered terms.

Mary Barton stated there seems to be a lack of knowledge by the Commissioners in regard to the mileage issue. She stated if the Commissioners must take their mileage, there is no law that says they can't donate it back. She felt that would be a great showing to the citizens.

Pam Erickson of Hamilton stated she came here in 1970 and she has raised her family here. This number change may or may not be a good idea. Missoula has a large city council where a great number of the population is. She feels the Commissioners should represent a district, the 5-0 votes is not healthy. She stated it is important for minority opinions to be heard.

Phyllis Bookbinder of Corvallis supported Rich Morrissey's concept of relieving the Planning Administrator of his duties and hire someone capable of planning. She also supports reducing the Commissioners hours and pay and she would like clarification of the mileage issue. She also suggested they look at having three Commissioners who are non-partisan. When there were two democrats, one Independent and two Republicans there was good dialog. It was her opinion that having five Republicans don't present good dialog for the citizens of the county.

Dave Hurtt of Florence advocates going back to three commissioners. He stated the larger counties have three Commissioners; some counties have 133,000 people with the same issues of roads, planning and environment and they only have three.

Chris Hockman addressed the mandatory mileage going to and from work. He thinks the intent was that individuals be paid fairly.

Bill LaCroix of Victor read a statement he had presented earlier. He asked if the Commissioners are going to address the citizens grievances noting this is the time the Commissioners allotted the citizens and if they don't discuss these issues they are denying the citizens their rights. Commissioner Kanenwisher and Iman advised Bill this is the time for public comment, not the time to have a discussion. Commissioner Iman then advised Bill he was dismissed because any subsequent discussion will be calendared at a meeting.

Bob Frost of Hamilton stated his concern is the plan of government, noting there is no checks and balances for our government, so the plan of government should be changed.

Ren Cleveland has lived here 80 years stating he has never seen such discontent in county government as he is seeing now. When we had three Commissioners they were in their offices, they met with citizens with friendliness and were 'not on the fight' like what is happening now. He wants to see the commissioners go back to a board of three who have the county at heart with 3 year staggered terms. Too many of the Commissioners have the same term expirations.

Marilyn Saunders does not long for only having three commissioners, she remembers how it worked. She wanted to talk about mileage indicating that this issues needs to be studied well. Other employees or people do not get mileage going to and from work. She supports keeping the two positions they discussed rifting today.

Lee Tickell, RC Watchdog stated he has an issue with the process. He stated there was not a single person aware of what was going to be discussed today. Therefore there is not a meaningfull discussion about this subject if we don't know what is being discussed. In regard to the budget issue, there seems to be propensity to cut people's position thus their families. He stated he went and asked department heads if they could cut 1% of their budget and they all said yes. He supports going from five Commissioners to three Commissioners. There are 53 counties that operate with three county commissioners and it works just fine, however he realizes the short term strategy is to cover the budget shortfall. He then presented a letter he had presented prior to this date which addresses how they can avoid the reduction in work force.

Board discussion: Commissioner Kanenwisher pointed out that a couple of days ago he saw the Budget Transfer Resolutions on the calendar and felt this was a good time to address this issue. He stated everyone knew what this agenda item was about that is why you are here. He stated when we ran for office we expected to be paid. Being a Commissioner is a full time job and it warrants full time pay. He has no interest in a reduction of his salary, but has an interest in the discussion of pro and cons for reducing the number of commissioners. The Commissioners did ask the Department Heads if they had any ideas about the budget shortfall and received a few comments. This year the FY2012 budget deliberations started out 1.2 million dollars in the hole. The Commissioners also recognized the necessity of having adequate reserves.

Commissioner Foss stated being a Commissioner is beyond a full time job as it entails weekends and evenings, noting they have all given up something to serve our community. She finds it interesting that citizens think they know the depth of what goes on in this county. She stated the Commissioners are taking on things that have been passed on from previous years, and while it is not popular, it is the right thing to do. She felt the Board of County Commissioners are blessed that we agree on issues. She is not interested in reducing the hours of the Commissioners; it would be a disservice to the citizens to reduce Commission hours.

Commissioner Stoltz stated he is getting tired of being misquoted. He works long hours, and invests a lot of time in an issue before he makes a decision. He stated the 'extreme

left' continually make comments against the Commissioners and he is tired of the lies being told. He was voted in and he knew what his pay was. He is not looking at taking a salary cut. He stated it is outrageous to him that people think they should be different from any one else as he too has bills to pay. He stated it looks like a double standard from the people who complain.

Commissioner Chilcott stated he has always been an advocate to go back to three Commissioners; the trick will be transitioning back to three. He stated at the last change, there was some unfairness due to a (Missoula) court's ruling. He felt the Commissioners need to send this issue to the County Attorney for legal opinion; letting the citizens make their comments. He also agreed that being a Commissioner a full time job and the citizens get what they pay for. Some counties meet 4-5 times a month, and large counties have managers, assistant managers with a lot more people on the payroll that perform the duties that this Commission does. Right now our CFO is only a .8 position. We too have families to take care of. He understands Bill LaCroix wants to meet with the Commissioners and while he is willing to do that, he knows what he believes and any further discussion will probably not change his mind. He does not like the election of Commissioners from a district because that makes for a dysfunctional board. The Commissioners need to look at the county as a whole and not divide the county up.

Maggie asked about a conflict of what she thought had been said. Commissioner Iman asked her to hold her comments until the end when "Comments otherwise not on the agenda are opened".

Commissioner Iman stated he will defer to Commissioner Chilcott's opinion on the number of Commissioners because he had served on a board of three. He did feel the Commissioners need to consider short term and long term solutions. He feels they need to start this process in open meetings and have the information necessary for discussion prior to the next election.

Commissioner Kanenwisher felt they should seek County Attorney and Clerk & Recorder opinion. The Board concurred.

► Public Comment for items not on the agenda: Maggie requested they place an item on the agenda for discussion; how do we take five full time Commissioners and go to three full time Commissioners when you are saying this is full time for five Commissioners. Commissioner Chilcott stated this is a Commissioner Committee and the question posed is that everyone does their own research.

Pam Erickson also noticed the discrepancy of the full time position yet wanting to reduce to three Commissioners. She feels they should wait until the Local Government Study Commission is elected.

Commissioner Kanenwisher noted this is what is on the agenda now, noting they are behind in their schedule so they need to move along. Pam stated the Commissioners do not give the public enough time to speak. Looking at the agenda she sees no time given for public comment. She

also notes when she follows the agenda many times the Commissioners are absent, so she thinks five Commissioners are good. She stated she does not like Commissioner Stoltz comment about the 'left' coming in. She is a member of this community, considers herself a conservative and does believe in the democratic process.

Charlotte Gray commented about the Treasurer and Environmental Health Directors being concerned about losing their employees due to the amount of work. She felt the Commissioners should look to solutions rather than problems. She likes three commissioners versus five. She felt the Commissioners should deal with county issues, and they should not address issues like wolves that are handled by other agencies. She would also like 'at large' commissioners rather than being elected from a district.

Bill LaCroix does not like the comment about the 'extreme left' coming in to make comment. He suggested they look at the names on the petition and they are not 'extreme left'. He stated they might not like Commissioner Stoltz characterization of them. Bill then asked the Commissioners what they think about those 'extreme left' citizens who pay their taxes, working in the county and volunteering their time in the community. He asked if they felt these citizens have the right to have their grievances redressed and more than just being able to make a two minute comment.

Lee Tickell asked about the Web Ex software not being utilized yet.

Danny Troutline of Corvallis stated the county needs to look at the pay scales of the Commissioners and Department Heads compared to what the other employees make as they too have families.

Bitterroot Star Publisher Michael Howell echoed Lee Tickell's comments stating the citizens have paid for this software so they can participate in county government. He stated he has been to numerous Commissioner Meetings over the past three decades and this Commission Board goes backwards in regard to the transparency of local government.

Mary Barton of the Bitterroot Citizens for Responsible Government stated their group gave a \$1,000 donation towards this Web Ex several months ago and to please respect that donation by at least giving the citizens an answer to why it is not being utilized

After no further public comment the meeting adjourned.

► The Board met at 11:33 a.m. to review and approve of the Winter Roadway Operations Guidelines. **Commissioner Stoltz made a motion to adopt this policy. Commissioner Chilcott seconded the motion. Discussion: Commissioner Stoltz stated there were a few changes that were not significant from the previous years. All voted "aye" (4-0). Commissioner Foss was not present for this vote.**

► The Board held a meeting at 11:35 a.m. to continue the discussion and decision on the Airport Task Order and Sponsor Certification - Commissioner Kanenwisher explained why this meeting was continued from the previous Monday. He noted the FAA determines the scope of work.

Commissioner Iman also addressed two engineer applicants and that the requirement of the Task Order follows guidelines of the FAA. This engineer (Robert Peccia & Associates) was the successful bidder.

Public Comment was then called for:

Dennis Moore addressed himself as a Doctor and expressed his feelings that he thinks the Commissioners need to understand the facts. If the Commissioners want to address the safety of the airport then they need to look at the facts. First fact: is that Option 2A has been approved by the FAA; second fact that the Commissioners have received the FONSI for Option 2A; third fact is that the Commissioners have a record of that decision; fourth fact is that the Commissioners know what the cost will be; fifth fact is that the Commissioners have no idea if the cost is for this change. Dennis likened this to a baseball game. In 2003 the Commissioners stood up to the plate, the citizens ran the bases and now the Commissioners are at home plate to publish the FONSI ROD but the Commissioners have now stopped this process. Dennis stated Option 2A could start next year and 1,000' of runway could be added at a later time. The process has taken a lot of time and now the Commissioners are adding more time.

Lee Tickell asked about the process of a Request for Qualifications noting it was without a competitive bid, with no price tag. Both engineering firms could do the job. He also felt the Task Order leaves some open ended things, for example the cost.

Judy Stewart thanks the Commissioners for making the county airport safer. The notion that this has not been opened for public discussion is not true. She feels the Commissioners have been taking a lot of flack by the 'bullies'. She stated there are a lot of 'innuendoes' about the costs since the early 70's. Currently all the Commissioners are doing is addressing the necessity of a 5,200' runway. She stated they would not be here today had the previous Commissioners done their jobs. Judy commends the Commissioners for their fortitude.

Pam Erickson respects Judy's comments and while not an expert on this issue she does see that we did have an option approved by the FAA and it did meet the safety requirements. Her question is when the county does have a tight budget; she does not see the reasoning to go ahead with a different plan. How can they say this is the way to go? While money has been donated for study, a health care clinic was closed down which provided necessary services for 700 people. How many people will benefit from this new Environmental Assessment? We have no idea of what the costs will be for another study and the work to be done.

Tex Irwin stated money seems to be a big detractor for doing this project. He felt people are misinformed of where this money is coming from. It is from the Aviation Trust Fund which comes from people who use the airports; aviation fuel taxes; and airline tickets. The funding does not come from county tax payer resources. The Aviation Trust Fund program was developed to keep these types of General Aviation Airports open which then keeps the larger international airports free of small aircraft congestion.

Brian Hawkes appreciated Tex's comments on the facts. He felt the best thing to do is to have a functional airport with a minimum runway length of 5,200'. He stated the discussion for this has

occurred a hundred times, but today's agenda is to have the Commissioners sign the Task Order. He feels the pilots need that separation of runway and additional length for safety purposes. He does not define himself as a Doctor; he works in a convenience store. Most importantly in this discussion are the facts and the economic benefit of having a safer airport. While Option 2A does meet safety concerns, many of the other 'facts' being presented are not true. He sees the airport as a fundamental piece of infrastructure within our county.

Airport Board Member Dave Hedditch stated in 2001, the Commissioners chose Alternative #4. Then new Commissioners came in and spent more money going to 2A. Now this Board goes for a revision and it is not costing the county any money. This is not just for safety but for growth in the future. The average rate of growth is 4% per year and it is that way at the airport. Option 2A will do nothing but move the runway 90' to the east, and he does not feel that is looking to the future.

Public Comment was then closed.

Commissioner Kanenwisher made a motion to approve Task Order Number 1 and the Sponsor Certification signed by the Chair. Commissioner Foss seconded the motion.

Discussion: Commissioner Chilcott suggested they review the Task Order. Commissioner Foss noted the county just lost rail link services so this is important. Commissioner Iman then read tasks number 1 -10 on the Task Order. Commissioner Chilcott then addressed the Scope of work in regard to what do they anticipate and would there be options for the Commissioners?

Commissioner Kanenwisher stated the task order addresses the phasing and forecasting, revising the draft of the environmental assessment etc. **All voted "aye". (5-0)**

► Public comment other than items not at the agenda:

Dave Hedditch stated the Commissioners are not getting paid enough for what they do.