

**STILLWATER COUNTY  
COMMISSIONER MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING  
March 12, 2019**

- Present:** Commissioners Mark Crago, Chair; Dennis Shupak and Tyrel Hamilton, members; Heidi Stevens, Admin
- Others Present: Mikaela Koski, Stillwater County News, Mark Schreiner, Road Department, David Gauthier, Bridget Gauthier, Wynter Goldy, Chris Southworth, Mark Obryant, Kellan Kamerzel, Wade L. Adams, Justin Streck, Myron Gross, Nancy Gross, Gordon Hirschi, Vickie Hirschi, Roger Hill, Lee Goldy, Citizens
- Public Comments:** Commissioner Crago stated that there was a letter from citizen, Joan Middleton, that was dropped off concerning the road erosion. The commissioners said that they would take it into consideration and talk about a solution with the road department. Commissioner Hamilton acknowledged Marissa Hauge who left the county after 10 years of service and thanked her for a job well done. Citizen Myron Gross asked if we would be replacing her. The commissioners said that we would be amending the job description and would then advertise for a new Economic Coordinator.
- Minute** Commissioner Hamilton **MOVED** to approve the minutes for March 5th, 2019. Commissioner Shupak **SECONDED**. Motion passed unanimously.
- Claims:** None
- Recognition:** None
- Announcements** None
- Consent Agenda** Commissioner Hamilton **MOVED** to consent the Consent Items and to file the File Items. Commissioner Shupak **SECONDED**.
- 1-Memorandum of Understanding between Stillwater County and the Absarokee Civic Club. Discussion- Commissioner Hamilton asked for clarification. Commissioner Crago stated that it meant that the Civic Club no longer had the responsibility of cleaning up and taking care of Hawkins Park in Absarokee
- File Items:** 1-Notice of Community Block Grant Award for Montana Silversmiths.  
2-Clerk and Recorder monthly report  
3-Justice of the Peace monthly report.  
Motion passed unanimously.
- Regular Business:**
- 1. Board Appointment-** Commissioner Hamilton **MOVED** to accept the application of Phil Davey and appoint him to the Airport Board. Commissioner Shupak **SECONDED**. Discussion-Commissioner Hamilton stated that we had two applicants based on the recommendation from the Airport Board we should appoint Phil Davey. Motion passed unanimously.

**2. Montana Department of Transportation-** yearly Certification of Roadway Mileage. Mark Schreiner from Road and Bridge gave a brief description of this certification. He stated that the county can apply for a gas tax on every mile of county road. If it is posted private road, we do not get that tax, the State will receive that gas tax. When we receive that money, it is used for road and bridge improvements. Citizen Chris Southworth asked for clarification as to where the money goes and if it is strictly for county roads, even those in a subdivision. Commissioner Crago stated that we will take it to the Planning Department for further input. Citizen Myron Gross asked for more clarification on where the money went. Commissioner Crago said the money is only available to work on public roads. It will repair culverts, bridges or put gravel on the roads. We can apply to receive the tax on private roads but we will not work on those private roads. Commissioner Shupak **MOVED** to accept the Montana Department of Transportation Certification of Roadway Mileage. Commissioner Hamilton **SECONDED**. Motion passed unanimously.

**3. Stair Bid Award** Courthouse Front Steps- Commissioner Crago stated that when we first took this stair remodel into consideration, we were told that it would cost somewhere between \$180,000 and \$240,000. We have since received bids in the amounts of \$626,800 from Diamond Construction and \$575,000 from AV Construction with alternates included on both of those totals. Commissioner Shupak **MOVED** that we deny all stair bids. Commissioner Hamilton **SECONDED**. Discussion-Citizen Kamerzel asked why it would cost over a half a million dollars. The Commissioners all agreed that they did not understand the high cost either. The only thought they had was that this was a fairly small project and we did not get all the bids we should have. Commissioner Crago then talked more about the fact that it also has historical value and that he thinks that they over bid this project knowing that they would be working with a historical building. Commissioner Crago also stated that these bids far exceed the realistic concept at \$180,000 and that it made a lot of sense to use this money for future improvements and we could incorporate the stairs into the overall remodel project if that is what we decide to do. Citizen Obryant did clarify that these stairs were a second story set of stairs. Citizen Southworth asked how this compared to installing an exterior elevator. Commissioner Crago said that it is all being taken into consideration. We have recently formed a FCIP (Facilities Capitol Improvement Plan) Board that will meet every week and discuss these issues. We all agreed that we are tired of paying for studies, we want action. Commissioners have decided instead to use citizens to make a plan and move forward. They are currently working on a plan for a Courthouse remodel with the stairs incorporated. The Courthouse will be 100 years old next year so we need to plan for the next 100 years. Motion passed unanimously.

**Special Discussion- Local Issue Roundtable** – While no action will be taken the floor is open for discussion and public comments.

Chris Southworth stated that the sidewalk in front of the Post Office specifically the handicap spot has created a dam and all the water is backed up and has turned to ice. Can the County put a pit or dip in for the water to run off and have a place to go? Chris stated that he noticed a couple of days ago a gentleman had to park his car in the handicap spot all the way up to the door so he would not have to step in the water or on the ice. Mr. Southworth is afraid that someone will fall and break a leg and if that happens who is responsible? Commissioner Shupak stated that the Post Office would be the one who owns the sidewalk and is responsible for the maintenance of the sidewalk. Mark Schreiner agreed that it would be the Post Office that would be responsible for the water and or the ice. Mr. Southworth again expressed his concern for safety of the public and wondered if the Post Office had permission to fix it. Citizen Myron Gross stated that if there was a swale cut at the end of Clark it would flow, but we need a place to put the snow. Right now, the school is responsible and Citizens of Park City have to haul the snow. He feels that the County does not want to plow

the streets, but if they could remove the piles on the corners allowing the water to have a place to go that would help. Commissioner Crago said if we were to cut a ditch what is to keep the residents from filling it in again like they have in the past? Citizen Myron Gross said at some point there was a dip on each side and people have filled it in. Commissioner Crago reiterated that if we did do something, we would need to make sure people do not fill it in again. Citizen Gross asked if Road and Bridge would be responsible for telling people they can't do it and for monitoring it and issuing fines if it happens.

Citizen Mark Obryant asked about the relationship between County and County roads and what all we can do. Mark Schreiner with Road and Bridge department said we are responsible for all county roads. Citizen Obryant asked what roads are the county responsible for in Park City? Citizen Goldy stated that there used to be a dip and a trench that drained water. Everyone filled it in so it would be flat. Now we can't get the water to flow. He stated that 1<sup>st</sup> Ave to 7<sup>th</sup> Street is an issue and that a grader filled in a hole to get into a driveway. He also said that it used to drain but now it sits in front of the school. He also expressed his concern for the fact that he watched the road crew driving with his blade up on 1<sup>st</sup> Ave W to 1<sup>st</sup> St E. He also stated that 1<sup>st</sup> Ave E and Clark are busy streets. He is not sure why the road crew would drive down these streets with the blade up when there is snow to be plowed. He stated that if we allow someone to operate a machine, they should use it. Commissioner Shupak stated that when there is this much snow, we could plow but then people would complain that we blocked their driveways. Citizen Goldy stated that we are not Billings. Citizen Kamerzel asked what is the counties plan and how much do we intend to do? Mark Schreiner said that we plow Clark Street and School Bus routes. Commissioner Crago asked where do we go with the snow once it is plowed? He also explained how Billings and Columbus used 3 times their budget to remove snow. There is not a good solution. The Commissioners recognize the problem and are working on a new method and procedure with Road and Bridge to make this a better situation for all. He also stated that no community is more important than the other. We know there are issues and we are working on it. It's complicated and we only have 11 people, plow trucks and graders. Mark Schreiner then stated that each of those has 100-130 mile to get to. The graders are out on the roads where people are literally stuck at home and snowed in. School bus routes and main roads into towns and the road to the mine are first. They have a lot of miles to cover and get as much covered as quickly as possible. They are in the hills getting drifts moved and people snowed in, out first, before they come into the town streets. Commissioner Hamilton stated that he echoed what Mark said and that they were a new Commission. While old policies are in effect, they are reviewing them. He also brought the conversation back to drainage. He stated that he had visited with Myron and they want to help prioritize and plan projects. He stated that Park City needed to form a RSID (Rural Special Improvement District). This group could then decide and prioritize the needs of the community. If we have a plan we can go out and get grants. We need to have a good working relationship between citizens and the county so things can get done. Citizen Goldy inquired about Ctep, He wanted to know what happened to that and the money they had to put up. Commissioner Hamilton stated that the State Government had gotten rid of that. Citizen Goldy stated that the community paid and no maintenance was ever done. Sidewalks were put in but not maintained. Commissioner Hamilton stated that this is a good example of why we need to form the RSID and they could jump start these projects and make sure the ball is not dropped. He said all they would need is 3-4 citizens to form a board so they can move forward on these projects. Absarokee has a RSID and they hashed out a great plan and have had great success with creating an updated sewer project.

Citizen Goldy stated that he feels that there is a lack of communication. Commissioner Hamilton stated that that is exactly what these community agenda meetings are for. Citizen Southworth asked Mark Schreiner with the Road department if he had one guy over each area? Mark said yes. Commissioner Crago agreed that there does in fact need to be more communication. He also said that they can't change the past but we can affect the future. He reiterated that the Commissioners door is always open. He said that they are available on Tuesdays and Thursdays during what they are calling Walk In Working Sessions. Citizens can come in and the commissioners will talk and with better communication we can get things done before they get to bigger problems and everyone is mad. These sessions are posted and recorded then they are not in violation. He also said that we as commissioners are also tax payers in the county and want to see change and success and that they encourage interaction between the citizens and the Commissioners. Citizen Gordan Herschi asked if they are able to communicate with the commissioners on line. Commissioner Crago encouraged them to email but that currently the website was not equipped for that but that they are working towards that. Commissioner Hamilton stated that he brought several business cards to hand out and that they

should feel free to email Heidi their Admin at [Commissioner@StillwatercountyMT.gov](mailto:Commissioner@StillwatercountyMT.gov) and she would forward all communication to the commissioners.

Citizen Myron Gross asked about tree removal. The Commissioners said that would be directed to the Road and Bridge Department. Citizen Gross said that he had a tree that is dropping limbs and it is causing damage. The whole tree just needs to go. Commissioner Crago told him to contact the Road and Bridge Department and they would identify those trees. Mark Schreiner agreed and said that they would cut down the tree as they do not want it to be an issue again.

Commissioner Shupak redirected the conversation back to drainage and stated that it really doesn't matter what they do this time of year it would be a problem.

Citizen Bridget Gauthier said that she drives between Park City and Laurel and that she would much rather drive in Park City, she in fact thinks that the streets in Park City have held up well and would like to thank everyone for what they do. She also stated that last year they had a person put up a shed and when she called the county, she was told that because Park City was not incorporated there was nothing the county could or would do about it and that they didn't have any rights in the county or road right away. Commissioner Crago agreed that there is a specific area that the Law Enforcement keeps an eye on. He stated that the commission would look into it further and find an answer. He stated again that they are aware of the area and know the issues. He also stated that he would love to know what Department on the County level she contacted because that is definitely not the response he would like to have had her receive.

Commissioner Hamilton stated that in fact Columbus was the only incorporated town and that he was not pleased with the response you received.

Citizen Gross stated that he would like to see a decay ordinance put into place. Commissioner Crago stated that there does need to be a cleanup but how do they collect those vehicles? Crago said there is a program in place and it works it is just not currently working. He said that they know there is an issue and they are trying. When working with the government we are the low man on the totem pole. Citizen Gross agreed but said that the citizens are lower than them. He said that a couple of years ago there was a big plan to get things cleaned up but nothing happened. Commissioner Hamilton said that they just hired a new Deputy Attorney and that they were going to be addressing each of these issues. Most of these issues are not criminal issues and therefore they have been put on the back burner. He also stated that the county has been under staffed in some departments and now that they are getting these positions filled, they are confident that they can get some of these issues resolved.

Citizen Kallan Kamerzel said that he had three more issues or questions that he would like addressed. 1- He would like to see the entrance and short stretch in front of the Fire Station plowed and that he would hope that the county would take that into consideration. Mark Schreiner said while he understood, the Road Department didn't do any of the fire stations in any of the towns. He also said that the department would look into this policy and review it. Kamerzel said 2- he would appreciate it if the Road and Bridge department would label weight limits on bridges. He is most concerned about the Big Ditch bridge. He is worried about driving the Fire Department Tenders across them. Mark Schreiner said that there are currently only three bridges in the County that are not legal. One being the Cemetery Bridge. Citizen Kamerzel said that he did call Road and Bridge and no one could find him answers. Commissioner Crago suggested that we save on sign costs for each bridge and just post the limits in the fire station. Citizen Kamerzel agreed that that would be a good solution. The 3- He asked if we could do anything about the railroad crossing. Can the county write the railroad and tell them that it is not fixed? Commissioner Crago said this is a good example of other people doing things and not telling the Commissioners or the County what they are doing.

Commissioner Hamilton assured that they would for sure give the railroad a call. Citizen Southworth also stated that he would like to see the railroad fix the section up by the quick stop. Citizen Goldy said that is what the Ctep project was about sidewalks and the railroad said no to helping. Commissioner Crago said that Columbus had been working with the railroad and have good success with some trails.

Citizen Hirschi asked about culverts collapsing. He stated that we fixed it but he was wondering about more and what the plan was. Commissioner Crago said that we try to observe all roads on a regular basis but he is sure that we miss some issues. He stated that he believes 2007 was the last time the county had an engineer drive every road and come back with an evaluation. Road and Bridge does the best they can. He also stated that Great West Engineering is going to do a full analysis soon. While he understands this is not a great answer, we can review these issues and we will continue to do our best to fix the problems. He also stated that we would rather be proactive and not reactive.

Citizen Southworth commented on the fact that flatbed trucks with the extended hitches and fancy grill guards and bumpers are unable to park in front of the school with out blocking the sidewalks. He is wondering if we could restripe or have people park at an angle. Commissioner Hamilton said we can, however we can not ensure that people will do it. He did say that the Commissioners and Road department would for sure look into it.

Citizen Myron Gross asked about a discussion on fire review fees. He stated that there is a \$100 fire review fee made to the County. Where does this money go and does it come back to this fire district?

Commissioner Crago stated that yes, it is supposed to come back to that fire district. Citizen Gross asked if they had to request it? There was some discussion and clarification between citizens and Commissioners ending with Commissioner Crago agree to research the difference between dry hydrants and the fire review fee and where the money goes, who is responsible and the commission will report back. It was agreed that they are separate and that the County Planning Department has some input and depending on lot size they can give a recommendation. The Commissioners expressed how grateful they were that the Citizens came to the meeting and brought these issues up. Commissioner Hamilton said that he was new and had a laundry list of things he needed clarification on. Commissioner Crago stated that while we can not fix everything we will try. He also commented on the fact that we can not fix something that we do not know is broken. He encouraged the Citizens to not wait till it is a problem that we can not fix and to come to us while we can address it together. Commissioner Hamilton echoed what Commissioner Crago said in that we need to open the line of communication before things escalate. We want to continue to have fruitful conversation. He also said that he was drinking from the proverbial fire hose. He is learning and will work hard to represent his constituents. Commissioner Shupak agreed by saying communication, communication, communication! Communicate with us so we can do something about it.

Commissioner Crago also asked the citizens to please let us know when things socially are happening in Park City. It is a two-way line of communication and we want to be involved and come to the happenings in the community.

Citizen Gross wanted to know when the Commissioners would be back in Park City for another meeting. The Commissioners explained that this was a new way of meeting and that the next seven months there would be one meeting each month in a different community. They will always be on the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 PM at a community hall or civic center of sorts. He also said that while there would not be another official Agenda meeting back in Park City until possibly next March it did not mean that the Commissioners would not be open to coming back and meeting with the Citizens. They just need to ask and tell us of their needs. Commissioner Hamilton reiterated that he would continue to work with Citizen Gross and get a RSID in place. He also joked and said that the Fireman's lunch needs to be on a better day. The last two years the weather has not been that favorable.

Commissioner Shupak said thank you to every <https://m.media-amazon.com/images/I/71ggrRDxsNL. SX960 .jpg> one who came and announced that we have 20 boards and need volunteers and to consider getting involved that way.

**Meeting Adjourned:** Hearing no further business, Commissioner Crago adjourned the meeting at 8:00pm.

APPROVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner Crago, Commissioner Chairman

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Heidi L. Stadel, Clerk and Recorder