

## STILLWATER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MINUTES

**Notice:** These minutes reflect the proceedings of the Board of County Commissioners. The official minutes were approved and are on file with the Clerk and Recorder (MCA 7-4-2611(2)(b)).

### REGULAR MEETING AUGUST 11, 2015

**Present:** Commissioners Dennis Shupak, Chair; Maureen Davey and Gerald W. Dell, Members; Lori Dobitz, Administrative Assistant; Carol Arkell, Fire Warden; Jerry Friend, Treasurer; and Rick Hanners and, Stillwater County News.

**Public Comments:** Public Comment on matters within the Commissioners jurisdiction pursuant to §2-3-103, MCA, public comments will be accepted on any public matter that is not scheduled on the Agenda. No comments were heard.

**Stillwater River Road:** Rockslide update - Commissioner Dell reported that at 9:00 am on today's date, Mark Schreiner, Road and Bridge Superintendent, will meet with GSI to conduct a more thorough evaluation of the rock overhang. At 12 noon, the three commissioners will meet with GSI and the Road Superintendent, at the rock slide site, to discuss what he is proposing.

**2015 Fire Season:** Each week during the fire season the Commissioners will discuss the current status of fire conditions and/or fire restrictions within the county. Action will be taken if conditions warrant. Carol Arkell, Fire Warden, reported following her weekly fire group call, three counties will be entering into Stage I Fire relieve (Big Horn, Yellowstone, Carbon). She is not recommending entering restrictions for Stillwater County at this time, as statistics do not warrant the need. There have been no reports of human caused fires - have had some rainfall, and the humidity levels are up. The predictions for the rest of the week include higher temperatures, and low humidity which she will then shut down the burn permit system for hottest days rather entering into restrictions.

Commissioner Davey expressed the confusion the Sheriff's web page is causing for the public. Davey stated their web page is not updated with information on the new burn permit system and the old message to call dispatch remains on the page. One of the reasons we went with the burn permit system was to relieve dispatch taking the calls, she said. Carol said the dispatch has not received any calls from individuals wanting to burn since the permit system has been in effect. Davey asked how the public is informed on exempt fires such as a recreational fires/camp fires allowed in a fire ring without a permit. Arkell said she will work on getting the information on the website.

**Courthouse Facility Space Project:** Commissioner Davey asked for this item to be placed on the agenda saying it would be valuable information to have the old hospital and the assisted living building appraised. She said we have two buildings the county owns since the hospital left. What do we do with these buildings? We have an appraised value for insurance purposes, but we need to see what the value of the buildings and the land is. She said we need an official appraisal of the complete building. We have talked about this in the past, she said. Yes, it needs a new roof, but it is not leaking. We had a structural engineer firm evaluate the building, and a few things need to be looked at, she said. We need the information on value if we choose to sell it.

Commissioner Davey **MOVED** to have the old hospital and the assisted living building appraised. Commissioner Dell **SECONDED**.

Discussion: Commissioner Dell said at the time the county elected to pay off the bonds for the assisted living facility and keep both the old hospital and assisted living facilities together for the county, there were two public hearings we held before making that decision. In both of those public hearings, he said, the question was asked and answered, if the county was thinking of using the old hospital for office space. At which time we answered yes, he said. Commissioner Dell said he still feels the building has the potential and can be used for office facilities for the county. He knows there have been a lot of controversial comments on that proposal from various people in the county and elected officials of the county feeling that we are wrong in doing that, Dell said, but I as a Commissioner still feel that it is in the best interest to still look at that facility as a possible office space.

Commissioner Shupak said the structure report showed the building is fixable. The building currently has water, sewer, electrical, telephones, and it has a good foundation.

Commissioner Dell said dollar wise of what the tax payer will be faced with - a new building vs some remodel. It is a viable option. There is a neighboring county that did exactly the same thing with their old hospital, same vintage as our old hospital. He would ask the people to go see for themselves how that turned out.

Commissioner Davey said with all due respect for our law enforcement, we heard some very good reasons not to go with the previous plans, but she said she thinks there could be a future with other offices going over there. She also said she has heard from numerous taxpayers that say, let's use it (the building). We own two buildings, let's use them, that is what people have voiced to Commissioner Davey, she said.

Commissioner Shupak said he too has heard comments in favor of using the old building for county office space. Although some would like to see a brand new building for the courthouse, we need to look at the future and keep costs down as much as we can, he said. If we lose our biggest taxpayer in the county (Stillwater Mining), if they close, then those taxes would revert to the taxpayers.

Commissioner Davey stated that this last tax year, the Davey Farms taxes increased a third in taxes, and that is significant. Commissioner Shupak said they would raise considerably more if we go out for a new building. **Vote:** Commissioner Shupak called for a vote on the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Consent Agenda:**

1. DES/Fire Warden - request to purchase old surplus cell phone from county.
2. Economic Development Coordinator - request to extend the Economic Development Committee an additional three-years. Commissioners to re-advertise for positions.
3. Human Resources - New Hire - John Rutledge, Justice Court Clerk, Part-time, effective Aug. 13, 2015.

**File Items:**

1. Commissioners -
  - a. MDT Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan
  - b. Local Department of Revenue - Commissioner request to conduct a revised assessment of Stillwater Mining Co. gross proceeds for tax year 2013.
  - c. Department of Revenue Distribution of Oil & Gas Production Tax for 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr. 2015
  - d. DEQ - the departments intent to issue waste discharge permits to Stillwater Mining Company - East Boulder Mine.
2. Clerk & Recorder - Fees in the amount of \$8,909.90 were collected for month ending July 31, 2015.
3. Sheriff -
  - a. Fees in the amount of \$450 were collected for month ending July 31, 2015.
  - b. Victim Witness Financial Status Report.

Commissioner Davey **MOVED** to approve the consent agenda and place the file items to file. Commissioner Dell **SECONDED**. Motion passed unanimously.

**Meeting Adjourned:** Hearing no further business, Commissioner Shupak adjourned the meeting at 9:21AM