Prairie County Board of Commissioners Meeting

December 30th, 2025

Prairie County Court House Court Room

217 West Park St Terry, MT 59349

www.prairiecounty.org

Prairie County Board of Commissioners, Todd Devlin, Christine Keltner and Dennis Teske met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. In attendance Administrative Assistant Harry McNall.

9:00 a.m. Pledge of allegiance and call to order. Public Comment. Sheriff Kieffer joined the meeting.

Todd Tibbets: Ask about 1:00 p.m. agenda item, what is it about. Commissioner Devlin explained what he believes it's about. Todd Tibbets ask that commission don't make processes more difficult than it needs to be for the citizens concerning petitions and freedom of information acts. Also, he believes it should not include fees or processing fee's to have the procedures done. Freedom of Information Acts should be open and transparent concerning all offices of the county.

Todd Tibbetts: had a few comments about the County Growth Policy. He believes as a member of the board they are not ready to present the growth policy today; it needs more attention. They have a meeting today at 1:00 p.m. to discuss the Growth Policy.

Commissioner Teske; explained he thought back in August that some simple changes were left back then like grammar, sentence structure etc.

Todd Tibbett: When changes were tried to be made, it changed all the formatting and created errors. We need to fix many issues.

Jeannie Rosseland: Broker with Montana Land Agency. She is a real estate professional and had a question about the TV tower, is it being used?

Commissioner Teske; follow up with Todd Tibbets comment. Commented on the Federal Registry having 1.3 million laws. He explained his time with the DEQ advisory board, and a discussion on septic tank installation permitting, when he was a part of the advisory board. There was a discussion back and forth between Commissioner Teske and Todd Tibbets about dissolved salts within the Yellowstone River.

9:30 a.m. Road Supervisor Todd Henry, has Chris Koppenhaver in to speak about helping the county with snowstorms etc. Emergency situations like EMT, Sheriff, etc. There was discussion on how to use him as emergency help. He would need to be an employee to use county property and have a contract for use of his own equipment.

Discussion on road conditions on 10-mile road, and cabin creek road, ruts and need for attention. The road department is addressing these as best as they can currently. The road department

currently has two employees, two temporary employees (works as needed), and one new employee starting the first of the year.

10:00 a.m. Clerk & Recorder Shari Robertsons, and Treasurer Garrett Lapp spoke to the commissioners about snow removal, it has not been happening until a call has happened and not before the opening of the business. They have reached out to a couple of people about taking it over. But would like the commissioners to reach out to the current person and see what we need to do to get it done.

10:25 a.m. Commissioner Keltner read the minutes from December 17th, 2025, commissioners meeting.

10:32 a.m. Commissioner Devlin made a motion to accept the minutes from the December 17th, 2025, Commissioners meeting as corrected, second by Commissioner Keltner, "all in favor" motion passed.

10:33 a.m. Doug Rein with the TV Board provided an estimate for updating the transceiver to provide more channels. The cost for those is just over $15,000. This will come in on fiber optic instead of radio antenna. Jeannie Rosseland: Broker with Montana Land Agency has questions about the TV station tower. The owners of the property are selling and wanting to know what is currently being used up there. What would it take to have a lease put in place on that property with the county? The current owner wants something on paper that could be transferred to a new buyer.

Discussion on trying to get the TV Board back as a levy. It could be a special levy district. More discussion will be needed.

11:07 a.m. Clerk & Recorder Shari Robertson provided the commissioners with payroll and claims to review and sign.

PAYROLL:

Prairie County Voucher # 1052 $1,202.09

Prairie County Voucher # 1051 $7,929.68

Prairie County Voucher # 8 $7,860.31

Prairie County Voucher # 1073 $17,071.49

Prairie County Voucher # 1074 $2,253.00

Prairie County Voucher # 1075 $16,505.08

Prairie County Voucher # 1076 $31,369.34

Prairie County Voucher # 1072 $59,763.75

CLAIMS:
Prairie County Voucher # 1080 $154.60

Prairie County Voucher # 1078 $24,595.45

Prairie County Voucher # 1079 $2,439.02

Commissioners reviewed expenditure sheets.

12:00 p.m. Lunch Break

1:00 p.m. Clerk & Recorder Shari Robertson and Treasurer Garrett Lapp discussed with commissioners about agenda, public comments and what they learned at the MACo meeting. She explained that statue doesn't say you have to allow phone calls for public comments. The options should be 1. written comments, 2. in person comments. And public comments should be brief in the minutes instead of detailed. Public comment should happen during or just before a decision is made, whichever way it is done, it needs to be done consistently. They discussed how to incorporate public comment on "action items". There was a suggestion of setting a final date at which public comment phone calls will end, and in person or written comments will be accepted after that date. The Clerk provided the commissioners with an example of a different agenda style to consider for possible changes.

Shari also discussed the possibility of a resolution for petitions that acts as a guideline on how petitions should be handled. She showed examples from Dawson County and says she supports the cost of submitting the petition. Garrett explained this would help with the process of going through a petition etc. The commissioners want to review and think about the suggestions and will follow up at a different time.

The commissioners ask that we try new agenda formats and see how it goes.

Shari also suggested that there be a form for people to fill out for The Freedom of Information Act requests. Commissioners requested some examples before making changes.

2:30 p.m. Commissioner Keltner made a motion to accept Resolution 26-17 Setting Holidays-Office Hours-Payroll Dates & Time Sheet Deadlines for Calendar Year 2026 to add Election Day, seconded by Commissioner Teske, open to discussion/public comment "all in favor" motion passed.

3:00 p.m. Public Comment.

Todd Tibbett's commented on last weeks meeting. Spoke about Commissioner Devlin's long history as county commissioner. He also commented on road conditions around the county. You appear to me as the decision maker, either yes or no. He gave an example of actions of the county that could put it at liability for county actions, such as gravel piles on the road. He spoke to commissioner Keltner about her decisions as well. He explained his frustrations with the commission and current issues within the county.

Reene Pirtz: commented about last week's decision, and other decisions made. Commented on wind energy and the issues around it. Gave a background on outside legal advice, and her interpretation of actions taken and spoke about Commissioners Devlin's zoning draft.

Kory Martinson: Do you commissioners spend any time on the county roads? There are holes in roads etc. It would be nice for you to be out one day a month. If you're not up for the doing it, just step down and let someone else take it on.

4:00 p.m. Lon Reukuef; Explained that there are some legitimate concerns about the Growth Policy. If you decide to do some zoning, does this document need to be in place for you to zone? Todd Tibbetts explained that both zoning and the growth policy can be worked on at the same time. If the commissioners want some more clean up, then we can do that. Can the commissioners make a request with the BLM about applications for access across public lands for high energy lines?

4:00 p.m. Commissioner Teske made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Devlin, "all in favor" motion passed.

Signed this 7th day of January 2026

Todd Devlin, Commissioner Chair

ATTEST: Shari Robertson

Shari Robertson, Clerk & Recorder

Milwaukee Bridge Project Update

Meeting Minutes – December 17, 2025

Meeting Details

Date: December 17, 2025
Time: 2 PM (held via Teams)

Attendees

- Prairie County Commissioners: Dennis Teske, Todd Devlin, Christine Keltner
- EPEDC: Terra Burman
- MT Department of Commerce: Lindsey Siebrasse
- FLAP/FHWA: Jeff Key (Engineer)

Meeting Notes

Previous Update:

1. The last project update with the Prairie County Commissioners occurred in November. Jeff provided an email summarizing the latest project developments at that time.

Project Timeline:

2. The anticipated completion date for the project is set for summer 2026.
3. Significant progress has been made on required environmental steps.

Environmental Consultations:

4. Informal consultation with FWP (Fish, Wildlife & Parks) indicated the project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, sturgeon or paddlefish species.
5. There is a restricted period for in-water work activities.
6. The Sage Grouse Council issued a positive response regarding the project's impact.

Engineering and Permitting:

7. Jacob's Engineering is currently reviewing the project specifications.
8. The 444 01 permit is planned for submission by the end of December. A representative from the county will need to sign this permit, which is being coordinated with the Army Corps of Engineers.
9. FWP's Mike Bacus is also participating in ongoing consultations.

Project Schedule:

10. Bids are expected to be opened in April, with construction starting in June and completion targeted for September.
11. These dates are subject to adjustment based on milestone achievements.
12. **Environmental Document:**
13. The Environmental Document was finalized on October 2.
14. The Sage Grouse Council granted authorization approximately one month after receiving the document.
15. Once the 44401 permit is submitted, there will be a 45-day review period prior to final approval by the chief engineer.

Project Status:

16. The project is now a top priority on the FLAP list.
17. The notice to proceed is expected around June 15.

Outstanding Items

- Securing an agreement from the landowner to extend the project timeline by one year.
- No additional written easements are required on the Terry Side.
- The Design Standards form needs to be signed in December or January.
- An email from Todd Devlin is required to confirm the County's approval to advertise the project.
- The 44401 permits must be signed by the commissioners; Jeff will follow up on this action item.

Engineering Updates

- Jacobsons is currently reviewing the project's plans and specifications.
- Ongoing coordination is taking place with MidRivers concerning fiber optics due to prior design changes.
- A temporary work bridge may be necessary, pending contractor decisions. The Army Corps of Engineers requires a detailed drawing of the riprap for approval.

Budget and Financials

- The engineering estimate for the project is $7.5 million, while $9.18 million has been allocated to date.
- Jeff is confident the allocated funds will cover the project, pending bid results. There is flexibility in the budget for potential reallocations if needed.

Documentation and Contracts

- Jeff will send PDF copies of necessary documents to Terra, who will then forward them to the Department of Commerce.
- Christine is responsible for sending the landowner easements to Jeff for processing/for his documents folder.

Future Meetings

- The group agreed to meet every two months to continue monitoring progress. Jeff will send out calendar invites for upcoming meetings.