Prairie County Board of Commissioners Meeting

January 28th, 2026

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:

Harry McNall commented on the petition for zoning. Would it be possible for the commissioners to ask the petitioners to come in and allow the commission to ask questions directly to them about the petitions and allow public an opportunity to ask the petitioners questions concerning their petition?

Joylynn Millwright: Sheriff Lewis what is going on with the shooting of dogs on Yellowstone? Sheirff Lewis, I would have to ask the investigating officer.

Joylynn Millwright ask Commissioner Devlin what is the plan for EMS signals within the proposed wind turbine area? There are studies that show there is interference.

Commissioner Devlin: I would have to look into it, good question. Commissioner Teske, it is one of the declared concerns of the wind farms. It is a legitimate concern and should be addressed. Commissioner Keltner, with there being so many wind farms there must be a solution.

Sheriff Lewis: there has been no loss of radio or cell signal in the current wind farm area in Garfield and Custer County. If it becomes an issue, we will have to look at adding repeaters and towers. He explained how many towers the area currently has, that support EMS communications.

There was discussion on contract terminology and agreements on private property.

Commissioner Teske I am not concerned about what the lessor and lessee do, it's the outside effects of neighboring properties that concern me most.

There was discussion on decommissioning, Joylynn offered the question: What happens in the future if the owners of the property lose their property to the county? Commissioner Teske gave some examples of known issues going on to give some insight on what might happen. The conversation went into electricity costs, low revenue to farmers and property taxes.

There was also discussion on data centers and water pollution and use.

9:50 a.m. Commissioner Keltner read the minutes from January 21st, 2026, commissioners meeting.

10:06 a.m. Commissioner Teske made a motion to accept the minutes from the January 21st, 2026, commissioners meeting as corrected, seconded by Commissioner Keltner, "all in favor" motion passed.

10:30 a.m. Clerk & Recorder Shari Robertson provided payroll and claims for the commissioners to review and sign.

Payroll Vouchers

Prairie County Voucher # 1088 $17,165.67

Prairie County Voucher # 1086 $17,741.29

Prairie County Voucher # 1085 $65,788.65

Prairie County Voucher # 1091 $31,650.39

Prairie County Voucher # 1087 $2,211.00

Prairie County Voucher # 9 $6,277.13

The commissioners reviewed letters going to employees that have met or exceeded the amount of paid time off allowed on the books.

Claim Vouchers

Prairie County Voucher # 1092 $5,085.19

Prairie County Voucher # 1093 $2,493.33

Commissioners reviewed expenditure sheets discussed current spending level based on budget to date. Some areas are over, so there was discussion as to why. There was a discussion on using funds from the GIS funds to recreate county ownership maps.

11:30 a.m. Correspondences with a letter from Norma and Harold Peabody, and Norma Riley.

Commissioner Devlin signed Rory Haughians letter for his appointment to the Land Planning Board.

Clerk & Recorder spoke to the commission about the security assessment that is scheduled for February 3rd, 2026.

Commissioners received a thank you letter for road work done from Cliff & Paullette Householder.

12:00 p.m. Lunch Break

1:00 p.m. Delite Dukart with Watts Insurance to discuss MACo property renewal. They discussed the replacement values of the buildings the county owns, such as the courthouse, road buildings, fairground buildings, and other structures.

1:28 p.m. Commissioner Keltner made a motion to sign 2026-2027 Property and Casualty Trust (PCT) Renewal Scheduled Property through MACo, seconded by Commissioner Teske, "all in favor" motion passed.

1:30 p.m. Commissioners discussed Resolution 2026-19 and what day to have a public hearing. Sheriff Lewis will look at other options for buildings. 7:00 p.m. March 2nd, 2026, at The Evelyn Cameron Heritage in Terry Montana.

Commissioner Devlin read Resolution 2026-19 for the public comment for the "Next Best Place" zoning district petition.

Commissioner Keltner made a motion to accept Resolution 26-19, "A resolution of intent to receive public feedback pertaining to the statutorily required finding that the public interest or convenience requires the creation of the Last Best Place citizen initiated zoning district, and to set a public hearing thereon, seconded by Commissioner Teske, "all in favor" motion passed.

Public comment

Shane Eaton: he will speak for the landowners of the petition and they have 100% signed. The previous petition was signed by the same people, but it was denied. The new district was created by 100% of the people who wanted these zoning restrictions. Health, safety and welfare are the only things that should be considered. Shane explained many different aspects that were given for denying the previous petition and how the new petition addressed those concerns. He explained why there are no vested rights for the wind developer, and he gave information supporting that statement. They are not grandfathered in. Only option left is to vote in the district.

Dan Pike I understand your concerns, we addressed minority rights, and legal threats are left on the table. We need to stand up for what we can do now, because we will see lawsuits on all sides of the issue. You can't do things because you fear lawsuits, you must make decision because of what is right. Thank you for your work and efforts. Please pass this district, thank you.

2:00 p.m. Public Health Nurse Tylene Eaton to discuss funding opportunities concerning dementia through a grant. She went over some ideas for the grant and what the grant requires if awarded. She is just starting on the grant application process and wanted to inform the commission.

2:12 p.m. Clerk & Recorder Shari Robertson to discuss the policy for citizen initiated zoning districts. Commissioner Teske explained that rules and policies have become difficult to conform to.

Dan Pike spoke that he was very pleased with the clerk's office and the process to get the petition submitted. He supports a simpler form or guidelines.

The discussion was focused on the importance of having guidelines for future clerks, and citizens who may come along down the road and have no idea what to do.

Shane Eaton there should be no fee for petition. He discussed with the Clerk the process laid out in the draft. He discussed what he would like to see in the guidelines, such as the perimeter of the district, and the 60% of the landowners. The discussion covered landowners, full list of owners within the district vs only 60% of the landowners within the district, and who should determine that information. Also who is allowed to sign the petition and how to verify that information. It might be good to have a guideline for the petitioners and then have internal documentation for definitions and requirements for the office to follow. The discussion also covered required timelines from each side, the clerk's office and the petitioners.

Sheriff Lewis explained we are talking about policy and procedure. Policy is a guide, and procedure is an exact process. Policy is not permanent; it can be changed or modified as needed but gives good guidelines.

3:00 p.m. Public Comment.

Travis Choat, the audio is difficult to follow, is there a reason for no video and just audio?

Commissioner Devlin, the statue says we are not required to do so. Commissioner Teske said it does give more context when you can see a video.

Shane Eaton concerning the Last Best Place zoning district. Who has standing, the people within the district have standing. They agreed on the map, regulations, and terms. The district is funded by the district so in general it doesn't cost the county. He gave examples of where similar area's created districts. He also gave examples of other uses within the county that exists. You need to consider why the regulations are being petitioned for.

Joylynn Millright asks that some time restraints are put in place in the petition process, concerning ownership changes during a petition. Look into Boon County Indiana where the commissioners stopped a project and see how they did it.

Renee Pirtz she read some quotes from Commissioner Devlin concerning long term uses and historical uses, as well as domestic livestock etc. Look at your statement and that the petition is for the health, safety and welfare of the county. The people are using their rights to protect the long term uses and farms/ranches. We hired you to do what we need done, look to us not MACo.

Shane Eaton Read a letter from Mary Kay Kountz, that was submitted to the commission for public comment in which she supports the zoning petition. Shane added that we want regulations within our district to protect our neighbors and ourselves. Commissioner Devlin you had said that 60% and it would be done. Commissioner Devlin explained he was referring to the resolution like the one signed today. Shane he believed you were speaking to the district petition.

Commissioner Teske explained an encounter he had in Miles City concerning a landowner that was approached by NextEra over transmission lines and how NextEra avoided answering questions. The same thing has happened here.

3:30 p.m. Deputy Clerk & Recorder Aria Walters: there is a grant through Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) state branch. The grant would pay to set up multi-authentication on

county systems. I am seeking permission from the Commission to fill out the grant and send it to DES. It is a reimbursement grant, so the cost is unknown.

4:40 p.m. Commissioner Keltner made a motion to apply for the Disaster and Emergency Service (DES) Grant, seconded by Commissioner Teske, "all in favor" motion passed.

If the county pays for a year of Microsoft services it will save us 8% overall, if paid by the year instead of the month. The total savings of about $600.00 per year.

Commissioner Keltner made a motion to pay Microsoft Services for the year all at once and save 8%, seconded by Commissioner Teske, open to discussion, "all in favor" motion passed.

Commissioner Devlin made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Keltner, "all in favor" motion passed.

Signed this 11th day of February 2026

Todd Devlin

Todd Devlin, Commissioner Chair

ATTEST: Shari Robertson

Shari Robertson, Clerk & Recorder