

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
PONDERA COUNTY, MONTANA
Held in June 2025**

The Board of Pondera County Commissioners met daily in informal session and in scheduled meetings on June 4, 11, 18, and 25, 2025.

JUNE 4, 2025 REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMISSION:

PRESENT: Commissioner Jim Morren, Commissioner Thomas Kuka, Commissioner Zane Drishinski, Clerk & Recorder Kody Farkell, Deputy Clerk & Recorder Dalayne VanDyke, Deputy Clerk & Recorder Tammy Bartsch, Public – Paul Anderberg

HAYING AGREEMENTS-APPROVED

Commissioner Kuka moved to approve the following Yearly Right-of-Way Forage Removal Agreement/Applications:

Tyler Arnold – Conrad Airport, all sides of runways

Commissioner Drishinski seconded. Motion carried.

FUNDING FOR TOOLE COUNTY MARIAS FAIR-

Commissioner Kuka moved to pay Toole County Marias Fair \$2,500.00, for the 2025 year staying within the Pondera County budget. Commissioner Drishinski seconded. Motion carried.

JUNE 11, 2025 REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMISSION:

PRESENT: Commissioner Jim Morren, Commissioner Thomas Kuka, Commissioner Zane Drishinski, Clerk & Recorder Kody Farkell, Deputy Clerk & Recorder Tammy Bartsch, Public – Paul Anderberg Rob Cook

DISCUSSION REGARDING COUNTY ASSISTANCE TO CASA

Rob Cook, Representative from CASA, was in attendance to request financial assistance from the county to help fund CASA. Because a large portion of the organization's federal funding has not been renewed, each county within the district is being asked to help support CASA financially. CASA is asking Pondera County for \$5,000 in the next budget year. Funding helps pay for mileage for advocates to visit each child twice per month. Commissioners will take the request under consideration through the budget process.

MATTERS WITHIN THE COMMISSION'S JURISDICTION OUTSIDE REGULAR MEETING

Commissioners met with Troy Downing, Thursday June 5th. Discussing matters within Pondera County.

CLAIM FOR INDIGENT BURIAL APPROVED FOR PAYMENT

Commissioner Kuka moved to approve payment of \$750 for a burial of indigent resident of the county. Commissioner Drishinski seconded. Motion carried.

MAY COMMISSION MINUTES APPROVED

Commissioner Kuka moved and Commissioner Drishinski seconded to approve the May 2025 Minutes of the Commission. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION ON AUTHORIZING PROSECUTORIAL ASSISTANCE IN DISTRICT AND JUSTICE COURT CASES

PONDERA COUNTY MONTANA

RESOLUTION #23 – 2024/25

AUTHORIZING PROSECUTORIAL ASSISTANCE
IN DISTRICT AND JUSTICE COURT CASES

WHEREAS, the Pondera County Attorney has requested prosecutorial assistance in the case of State v. William Olson, Cause No. DC-24-26, and;

WHEREAS, it is desired and deemed appropriate that a special deputy county attorney be appointed to assist in the prosecution of the aforementioned case, and

WHEREAS, Mont. Code Ann. § 44-4-111 authorizes and contemplates that the training coordinator for county attorneys and the bureau chief of Prosecution Services Bureau (together with the deputies within said bureau) act as special counsel on request of the county attorney and upon the approval of the board of county commissioners, and

WHEREAS, Mont. Code Ann. § 2-15-501(6) authorizes the Attorney General to provide assistance to county attorneys in the discharge of his or her duties.

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, That the attorneys assigned to the Prosecution Services Bureau of the Department of Justice are hereby appointed as special deputy county attorneys for Pondera County for the purpose of assisting in the prosecution of the aforementioned case and that any of said deputies can fulfill the functions set out in Mont. Code Ann. § 44-4-103.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, That under the terms of this agreement, no fee will be charged for attorney time provided by the Bureau. Assistance in such cases is provided without an hourly fee. Witness fees and expenses, transcript costs, jury costs, and other normal costs associated with trial will be the County's responsibility as with all other prosecutions.

Adopted this 11th day of June, 2025, as moved by Commissioner Drishinski, seconded by Commissioner Kuka, and passed on a 3-0 vote of the board. Effective upon passage and approval.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Pondera County, Montana

/s/ Jim Morren
Jim Morren, Chairman

/s/ Thomas A Kuka
Thomas A Kuka, Member

Attest: /s/ Kody Farkell
Kody Farkell, Clerk & Recorder

/s/ Zane Drishinski
Zane Drishinski, Member

EXPENDITURES IN EXCESS OF \$1,500

Commissioner Kuka moved and Commissioner Drishinski seconded to approve the purchase of one road grader tire for the Road/Bridge Department for the amount of \$3,500.00. Motion carried.

JUNE 12, 2025 COUNTY COMPENSATION BOARD PUBLIC HEARING:

Present: Commissioner Jim Morren, Commissioner Thomas Kuka, Commissioner Zane Drishinski, Clerk & Recorder Kody Farkell, Sheriff Robert Skorupa, Treasurer Shaunna Graham, Judge Cody Shaw, County Attorney Shari Lennon, & Compensation Board members Chris Torgerson and Dana Davis

Commissioner Morren called the hearing to order at 10:00 am.

The notice of the hearing was published in The Independent-Observer and The Pioneer Press in the May 29 and June 5, 2025 issues.

Pursuant to 7-4-2503(4), Montana Code Annotated, county governments are required to appoint a county compensation board to prepare a compensation schedule for the elected county officials for the succeeding fiscal year. Also, in accordance with 7-4-2503(4), the Clerk and Recorder prepared and presented a worksheet showing salary comparisons to other counties as well as the City of Conrad and the Clerk of the Conrad School District and other demographics of the counties. The Board reviewed the worksheet. The National cost-of-living adjustment for the fiscal 2026 year is 2.9%.

There was review of the proposed options for cost-of-living increases in elected officials' salaries for the 2025-26 fiscal year. There was discussion on the possible expenditures for the upcoming year. The cost of insurance for property, workers compensation, as well as employee health insurance are continuing to increase. Pondera Center loan was paid off, yearly payments of \$25,000. Pondera County Courthouse loan for HVAC is still being paid of \$35,000 per year. Conrad Airport runway work has been completed, but the fuel system and road to the airport is still on going. The cost of fuel and vehicle/equipment replacements are anticipated to remain higher than past years. However, all departments have been able to remain within their budgets and overall cash within the county funds is in a decent position.

After some discussion, Chris Torgerson moved and Dana Davis seconded to recommend an increase of up to 3.5% for elected officials.

The hearing closed at 10:50 am.

JUNE 18, 2025 REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMISSION:

PRESENT: Commissioner Jim Morren, Commissioner Thomas Kuka, Commissioner Zane Drishinski, Clerk & Recorder Kody Farkell, Deputy Clerk & Recorder Tammy Bartsch, Deputy Clerk & Recorder Dalayne VanDyke

MATTERS WITHIN THE COMMISSION'S JURISDICTION OUTSIDE REGULAR MEETING

Commissioner Morren attended a GIS meeting, Wednesday June 11th. Discussing on 911 mapping.

Commissioner Kuka attended a transportation meeting, also Wednesday June 11th. Discussing on bus routes in Pondera County.

COUNTY ASSISTANCE TO CASA

Commissioner Drishinski moved and Commissioner Kuka seconded the approval of donating \$5,000 to CASA for the fiscal year of 2025-2026. Motion carried.

CONTRACT WITH MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

Commissioner Kuka moved and Commissioner Drishinski seconded exploring technology assistance with MACO for 911, phone bills, internet connections, etc. Motion carried.

VALIER LAW ENFORCEMENT AGREEMENT APPROVED

An agreement between the Town of Valier and Pondera County to provide law enforcement services was approved. Agreement includes sum of \$72,166.00 for the fiscal year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026; and \$75,052.00 for fiscal year July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027. Payments are to be made on a quarterly basis in September, December, March, and June; beginning September 2025 and expiring June 2027. Commissioner Kuka moved and Commissioner Drishinski seconded. Motion carried.

EXPENDITURES IN EXCESS OF \$1,500

Commissioner Drishinski moved and Commissioner Kuka seconded to approve the purchase of 12 semi-truck tires for the Road/Bridge Department for the amount of \$4,800.00. Motion carried.

JUNE 25, 2025 REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMISSION:

PRESENT: Commissioner Jim Morren, Commissioner Thomas Kuka, Clerk & Recorder Kody Farkell, Deputy Clerk & Recorder Tammy Bartsch, Deputy Clerk & Recorder Dalayne VanDyke, Public- McKenzie Graye

MATTERS WITHIN THE COMMISSION'S JURISDICTION OUTSIDE REGULAR MEETING

Commissioners attended a meeting with the Health Department, Sheriff, City Police, Logan Health and Conrad Schools on June 25, 2025, concerning a measles table top exercise.

CYBER LIABILITY INSURANCE

Commissioner Kuka moved and Commissioner Morren seconded the purchase of cyber insurance coverage with Leavitt Insurance for the total of \$8,964.00. For the fiscal year of 2025-2026. Motion carried.

CODE RED CONTRACT

Commissioner Kuka moved and Commissioner Morren seconded to approve the 2025-26 contract in the amount of \$2,421.10 with OnSolve for the Code Red Contract. Motion carried.

MONTANA HEALTH INSTITUTE CONTRACT

Commissioner Kuka moved and Commissioner Morren seconded on a contract with Montana Health Institute for Behavioral Health. The total will be \$7,812.50 for a two year contract, from July 2025 to June 2027 paid quarterly.


CLAIMS APPROVED FOR PAYMENT

<u>FUND</u>		
Fund	Fund Description	
1000	GENERAL	53,336.46
2110	ROAD	24,740.11
2130	BRIDGE	105.42
2131	BRIDGE RAPID REPAIR	909.00
2140	WEED	17,111.15
2150	PREDATORY ANIMAL CONTROL	4,658.00
2160	COUNTY FAIR	2,500.00
2170	AIRPORT	510.06
2190	COMPREHENSIVE INSURANCE	894.02
2220	LIBRARY	191,097.73
2230	AMBULANCE	165.94
2280	SENIOR CITIZENS	14,616.46
2290	EXTENSION SERVICE	7,666.33
2300	PUBLIC SAFETY (LAW ENFORCEMENT)	34,540.91
2370	PERS	5,758.30
2401	BRADY LIGHTS MAINTENANCE	317.17
2811	DUI PREVENTION	238.77
2830	JUNK VEHICLE	4,496.66
2840	NOXIOUS WEED GRANT	245.06
2850	911 EMERGENCY	5,485.23
2860	LAND USE PLANNING	3,961.70
2866	NORTHERN TRANSIT INTERLOCAL	5,183.73
2894	ST ALLOC FED MINERAL ROY	5,000.00
2958	EP (DES) GRANTS	1,451.30
2963	ORAL HEALTH SERVICES GRANT	3,227.22
2964	ALLIANCE FOR YOUTH	106.25
2971	WIC GRANT	450.34
2973	MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH	143.05
2976	IMMUNIZATION ACTION GRANT	212.26
2978	CHRONIC DISEASE GRANT	2,510.52
2980	HEALTH CARE FOUND. GRANT	2,942.35
7920	REFUND FUND	2,821.83
TOTAL CLAIMS		\$397,403.33
TOTAL PAYROLL		\$348,997.11
TOTAL CLAIMS AND PAYROLL FUNDS		\$746,400.44

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m. on June 30, 2025

Pondera County, Montana.


Jim Morren, Chairman

ATTEST:


Kody L. Parkell, Clerk & Recorder



