

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

The Board of Pondera County Commissioners met daily in informal session and in scheduled meetings on May 7, 14, 21, and 28, 2025.

**MAY 7, 2025 REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMISSION:**

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

MATTERS WITHIN THE COMMISSION'S JURISDICTION OUTSIDE REGULAR MEETING

Commissioners attended a public meeting with Northern MT Joint Refuse Disposal District concerning the cardboard program on May 1, 2025.

HAYING AGREEMENTS-APPROVED

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

Kelly Rauscher	Arod Lakes Rd from Brady, 5 miles west*
Zane Drishinski	Old Shelby highway from Ledger Rd north to Bullhead Rd both sides, S Camp Rd from Old Shelby Hwy to Pioneer Rd both sides, Bench Rd 2 miles north from S Camp Rd both sides, Pioneer Rd from S Camp to Depot Rd both sides, Depot Rd from Pioneer Rd to Old Shelby Hwy both sides, Fowler from Bench Rd to Old Shelby Hwy both sides*
Brad and Nancy Bruner	Price Rd S from Midway Rd to Berland Hoop Rd, both sides*
Ronald & Darlene	Pondera Coulee Rd, from Price Rd to Moulton School Rd;
Denney	North Price Rd from Sollid Rd to Hwy 366*
Wylie Gustafson	Price Rd ½ mile S of Sollid Rd to Midway Rd; Furlough Rd from Sollid Rd 1 mile south, Price Rd from ½ mile south of Sollid Rd to Midway Rd*
Ray & Kevin Moritz	Hovde Rd N & S Sides; Prospector Rd both sides; Primrose Rd both Sides; Pondera Coulee Rd both sides; Kelly Rd both sides; Old Shelby Rd E & W sides; Rodeo Rd N & S sides*
Casey Vandenacre	Liberty School Rd. 1.5 mile to 2.25 mile N Sollid Rd; Pondera Coulee Rd from Primrose to Liberty School Rd; Kelly Rd from Sollid Rd to Pondera Coulee Rd*

Commissioner Drishinski seconded. Motion carried.

MARCH COMMISSION MINUTES APPROVED

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

RESOLUTION ON AUTHORIZING PROSECUTORIAL ASSISTANCE IN DISTRICT AND JUSTICE COURT CASES

PONDERA COUNTY MONTANA  
RESOLUTION #19 – 2024/25  
AUTHORIZING PROSECUTORIAL ASSISTANCE  
IN DISTRICT AND JUSTICE COURT CASES

WHEREAS, the Pondera County Attorney has requested general prosecutorial assistance periodically throughout the fiscal due to periodic absences from the county for vacations or training and/or conflict of interest cases;

WHEREAS, it is desired and deemed appropriate that a special deputy county attorney be appointed to assist in the prosecution of any matters that might require an experienced prosecutor;

WHEREAS, Mont. Code Ann. Section 7-4-2705 authorizes the board of county commissioners to employ special counsel to assist in the prosecution of any such criminal

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case pending in the county on request of the county attorney;

WHEREAS, the Pondera County Attorney has requested that a special deputy county attorney be appointed to prosecute necessary cases pending in the Ninth Judicial District Court, Pondera County, and the Pondera County Justice Court; and,

WHEREAS, Whitney Bugni, Cut Bank City Attorney, has agreed to act as a Special Deputy Pondera County Attorney when required;

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, That Cut Bank City Attorney, Whitney Bugni, shall be appointed as special deputy county attorney for Pondera County for the purpose of assisting in prosecution of any matters that may arise from May 1, 2025 through May 1, 2026, and that she can fulfill the functions set out in Mont. Code Ann. Section 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 special prosecutor Whitney Bugni however, her mileage shall be paid for any travel expenses incurred during the prosecution of any matters at the current rate of \$0.70 per mile. Witness fees and expense, jury costs, and other normal costs associated with the prosecution will be the county's responsibility as with all other prosecutions.

Adopted this 7<sup>th</sup> day of May, 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

RESOLUTION ON AUTHORIZING PROSECUTORIAL ASSISTANCE IN DISTRICT  
AND JUSTICE COURT CASES

PONDERA COUNTY MONTANA

RESOLUTION #20 – 2024/25

AUTHORIZING PROSECUTORIAL ASSISTANCE  
IN DISTRICT AND JUSTICE COURT CASES

WHEREAS, the Pondera County Attorney has requested general prosecutorial assistance periodically throughout the fiscal due to periodic absences from the county for vacations or training and/or conflict of interest cases;

WHEREAS, it is desired and deemed appropriate that a special deputy county attorney be appointed to assist in the prosecution of any matters that might require an experienced prosecutor;

WHEREAS, Mont. Code Ann. Section 7-4-2705 authorizes the board of county commissioners to employ special counsel to assist in the prosecution of any such criminal case pending in the county on request of the county attorney;

WHEREAS, the Pondera County Attorney has requested that a special deputy county attorney be appointed to prosecute necessary cases pending in the Ninth Judicial District Court, Pondera County, and the Pondera County Justice Court; and,

WHEREAS, Merle Raph, Toole County Attorney, has agreed to act as a Special Deputy Pondera County Attorney when required;

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, That the Toole County Attorney, Merle Raph, shall be appointed as special deputy county attorney for Pondera County for the purpose of

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assisting in prosecution of any matters that may arise from May 1, 2025 through May 1, 2026, and that he can fulfill the functions set out in Mont. Code Ann. Section 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 special prosecutor Merle Raph however, his mileage shall be paid for any travel expenses incurred during the prosecution of any matters at the current rate of \$0.70 per mile. Witness fees and expense, jury costs, and other normal costs associated with the prosecution will be the county's responsibility as with all other prosecutions.

Adopted this 7<sup>th</sup> day of May, 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, Me

RESOLUTION ON AUTHORIZING PROSECUTORIAL ASSISTANCE IN DISTRICT  
AND JUSTICE COURT CASES

PONDERA COUNTY MONTANA

RESOLUTION #21 – 2024/25

AUTHORIZING PROSECUTORIAL ASSISTANCE  
IN DISTRICT AND JUSTICE COURT CASES

WHEREAS, the Pondera County Attorney has requested general prosecutorial assistance periodically throughout the fiscal due to periodic absences from the county for vacations or training and/or conflict of interest cases;

WHEREAS, it is desired and deemed appropriate that a special deputy county attorney be appointed to assist in the prosecution of any matters that might require an experienced prosecutor;

WHEREAS, Mont. Code Ann. Section 7-4-2705 authorizes the board of county commissioners to employ special counsel to assist in the prosecution of any such criminal case pending in the county on request of the county attorney;

WHEREAS, the Pondera County Attorney has requested that a special deputy county attorney be appointed to prosecute necessary cases pending in the Ninth Judicial District Court, Pondera County, and the Pondera County Justice Court; and,

WHEREAS, Joe Coble, Teton County Attorney, has agreed to act as a Special Deputy Pondera County Attorney in when required and authorized Jennifer Stutz; Deputy Teton County Attorney to also act as a Special Deputy Pondera County Attorney;

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, That the Teton County Attorney, Joe Coble, and Deputy Teton County Attorney, Jennifer Stutz, shall be appointed as special deputy county attorneys for Pondera County for the purpose of assisting in prosecution of any matters that may arise from May 1, 2025 through May 1, 2026, and that they can fulfill the functions set out in Mont. Code Ann. Section 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 special prosecutor Joe Coble, however, mileage shall be paid to each for any travel expenses incurred during the prosecution of any matters at the current rate of \$0.70 per mile. Witness fees and expense, jury costs, and other normal costs associated with the prosecution will be the county's responsibility as with all other prosecutions.

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Adopted this 7<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2025, as moved by Commissioner Kuka, seconded by Commissioner Drishinski, 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,

EXPENDITURES IN EXCESS OF \$1,500

Commissioner Kuka moved and Commissioner Drishinski seconded to approve the purchase of road signs for the Road/Bridge Department for the amount of \$2,737.35. Motion carried.

**MAY 14, 2025 REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMISSION:**

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

MATTERS WITHIN THE COMMISSION'S JURISDICTION OUTSIDE REGULAR MEETING

Commissioners met with Dave Kemp with The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks about House Bill 648, stating that FWP will notify Pondera County that a large predator will be relocated into the area.

DUI TASK FORCE PLAN APPROVED

Commissioner Kuka moved to approve the fiscal year 2025-26 DUI Task Force plan. Commissioner Drishinski seconded. Motion carried.

ENCROACHMENT AGREEMENT REQUESTED BY TYSON RAMBO

Commissioner Kuka moved to approve an Encroachment Agreement for Tyson Rambo on Sunshine Road for an approach for a pipeline. Commissioner Drishinski seconded. Motion carried.

APRIL COMMISSION MINUTES APPROVED

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

REVISED JOB DESCRIPTION APPROVED

Commissioner Drishinski moved to approve the revised job description for Noxious Weed Technician. Commissioner Kuka seconded. Motion carried.

EXPENDITURES IN EXCESS OF \$1,500

Commissioner Kuka moved and Commissioner Drishinski seconded to approve the purchase of a new printer for the Justice of the Peace office for the amount of \$3,300.00 from Preferred Office. Motion carried.

EXPENDITURES IN EXCESS OF \$1,500

Commissioner Kuka moved and Commissioner Drishinski seconded to approve the purchase of additional equipment for the new vehicle, 2025 RAM 1500 for the Sheriff Department for the amount of \$1,880.00. Motion carried.

EXPENDITURES IN EXCESS OF \$1,500

Commissioner Drishinski moved and Commissioner Kuka seconded to approve cleaning inside and outside windows for the Pondera County Courthouse for the amount of \$2,300.00 from Walker's Window Cleaning. Motion carried.

**MAY 21, 2025 REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMISSION:**

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

**TASK ORDER FOR IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM APPROVED**

Commissioner Drishinski moved and Commissioner Kuka seconded to approve Task Order 22-07-4-31-133-0 to the Master Contract that Covers the Period of July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026, Immunization Program with the State of Montana Department of Health and Human Services. The County will receive \$5,161.00 in grant funding for FY2025-26. Motion carried.

**CONTRACT WITH NEXUS CPA GROUP**

Commissioner Drishinski moved and Commissioner Kuka seconded the contract with Nexus CPA Group for the years ending June 30, 2025, June 30, 2026, and June 30, 2027. Nexus CPA Group will conduct an audit for Pondera County for these years. Motion carried.

**CONRAD STORM WATER IMPROVEMENT FLOODPLAIN PERMIT**

Commissioner Kuka moved and Commissioner Drishinski seconded the permit application, with the DNRC, for the City of Conrad storm water improvement floodplain. Motion carried

**EXPENDITURES IN EXCESS OF \$1,500**

Commissioner Drishinski moved and Commissioner Kuka seconded to approve the rehabilitation for the grass runway at the Conrad Airport for the amount of \$14,000.00. Motion carried.

**MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION GRANT FOR BRIDGE REPAIR**

Commissioner Drishinski moved and Commissioner Kuka seconded the MDT Bridge Quick Fix Grant for Pondera County. The total of the grant is \$94,513.36 for 5 (five) bridges; Swanson Road Bridge, Dry Fork Road Bridge, East Lake Road Bridge, Trunk Butte Road Bridge, Midway Road East Bridge. Motion carried.

**DATE, TIME, AND PLACE SET FOR COUNTY COMPENSATION BOARD**

Commissioner Drishinski moved to set the County Compensation Board meeting for Thursday, June 12, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. in the Commissioner's Office. Commissioner Kuka seconded. Motion carried.

**PAYMENT OF DUES TO SWEETGRASS DEVELOPMENT**

Commissioner Drishinski moved to pay 2025-2026 dues to Sweetgrass Development in the amount of \$2000.00. Commissioner Kuka seconded. Motion carried.

**MAY 28, 2025 REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMISSION:**

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

**TASK ORDER WITH PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS (PHEP) GRANT APPROVED**

Commissioner Kuka moved and Commissioner Drishinski seconded to approve the PHEP grant through the Montana Department of Health & Human Services. The grant provides the date from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 for the amount of \$29,910.00. Motion carried.

**REVISED JOB DESCRIPTION FOR CUSTODIAN-APPROVED**

Commissioner Kuka moved and Commissioner Morren seconded to approve a revised job description for the Custodian. Motion carried.

**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE MOTOR VEHICLE DIVISION MOU**

Commissioner Kuka moved and Commissioner Morren seconded the approval of a MOU with the Department of Justice Motor Vehicle Division. The purpose of this MOU is to

set forth a framework under which Pondera County will perform certain tasks relating to the titling and registration of motor vehicles and the collection of taxes and fees attendant to those registrations in the County's facility at the county seat in Conrad. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION ON AUTHORIZING BUDGET AMENDMENTS TO PONDERA COUNTY BUDGET

PONDERA COUNTY MONTANA  
RESOLUTION #22 – 2024/25  
AUTHORIZING BUDGET AMENDMENTS TO  
PONDERA COUNTY BUDGET

WHEREAS the Montana Code Annotated, Section 7-6-4006(4), grants the Board of County Commissioners the power and authority to amend the budget during the fiscal year by conducting public hearings at regularly scheduled meetings; and

WHEREAS Pondera County Commissioners approved the appropriations budget for the Pondera County during its regular budget approval process and correction in revenues and expenditures budget have been identified; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Pondera County that the budget be corrected as follows:

Revenue	Description	Prior Amount	New Amount
1000-365006	Help Now Contributions	\$0	\$5,550
1000-365009	Car Seat Donations	\$0	\$1,500
2190-362025	State Fund Dividend	\$0	\$11,235
2801-360001	Opioid Settlement	\$4,000	\$8,150
2860-335230	Entitlement Shares	\$2,372	\$0
2860-341072	Building Permits Fee	\$5,600	\$48,700
2811-331178	DUI Task Force	\$250	\$300
2811-335025	License Reinstatement	\$1,800	\$4,750
4012-362005	Insurance Claim	\$0	\$133,051
2390-351013	Drug Forfeiture	\$500	\$3,415
2131-330443	MDT Bridge Grant	\$49,000	\$94,513

Expenditure	Description	Prior Amount	New Amount
1000-448-440199-210	Project Help Now	\$540	\$3,425
1000-448-440197-210	Car seats	\$0	\$2,199
1000-522-521000-820	Capital Transfers	\$668	\$4,810
1000-604-460430-244	Swift Dam	\$600	\$960
1000-604-460430-246	Brady Park	\$1,000	\$1,600
1000-404-440401-397	Contract Payments	\$8,000	\$12,300
1000-101-470310-903	Runway Resurfacing	\$0	\$12,963
1000-521-410100-790	Contributions	\$12,963	\$0
2860-110-411045-314	Building Permits	\$4,200	\$33,250
4012-304-430301-905	Valier Airport	\$46,138	\$179,189
2131-303-430243-110	Salaries	\$0	\$17,437
2131-303-430243-140	Benefits	\$0	\$4,325
2131-303-430243-231	Fuel	\$0	\$6,518
2131-303-430243-233	Machinery & Equip Parts	\$0	\$5,000
2131-303-430243-241	Consumable Tools	\$0	\$5,000
2131-303-430243-316	Environmental Fees	\$0	\$1,048
2131-303-430243-354	Engineering Services	\$41,557	\$10,940
2131-303-430243-360	Maint & Repairs	\$0	\$10,000
2131-303-430243-426	Culverts	\$0	\$6,800
2131-303-430243-429	Bridge Building Materials	\$0	\$18,846
2131-303-430243-452	Gravel	\$0	\$1,155

Adopted this 28<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2025 as moved by Commissioner Kuka, seconded by Commissioner Morren, and passed on a 2-0 vote of the board. Effective on passage and approval.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
Pondera County, Montana

/s/ Jim Morren  
Jim Morren, Chair

/s/ Thomas A Kuka  
Thomas A Kuka, Member

ATTEST: /s/ Kody L Farkell  
Kody L Farkell, Clerk and Recorder

Absent  
Zane Drishinski, Member

EXPENDITURES IN EXCESS OF \$1,500

Commissioner Kuka moved and Commissioner Morren seconded to approve the purchase of 2 sets of carbide blades for the Road/Bridge Department for the amount of \$10,600.00. Motion carried.

CLAIMS APPROVED FOR PAYMENT

<u>FUND</u>	Fund Description	
1000	GENERAL	43,075.86
2110	ROAD	23,787.58
2130	BRIDGE	1,556.23
2131	BRIDGE RAPID REPAIR	1,048.32
2140	WEED	1,702.77
2160	COUNTY FAIR	687.50
2170	AIRPORT	255,498.18
2230	AMBULANCE	208.53
2290	EXTENSION SERVICE	3,688.54
2300	PUBLIC SAFETY (LAW ENFORCEMENT)	15,860.41
2401	BRADY LIGHTS MAINTENANCE	298.09
2811	DUI PREVENTION	1,000.00
2830	JUNK VEHICLE	612.55
2850	911 EMERGENCY	539.97
2866	NORTHERN TRANSIT INTERLOCAL	155.93
2958	EP (DES) GRANTS	453.57
2964	ALLIANCE FOR YOUTH	106.25
2971	WIC GRANT	328.16
2973	MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH	358.83
2976	IMMUNIZATION ACTION GRANT	1,104.68
2978	CHRONIC DISEASE GRANT	239.27
2980	HEALTH CARE FOUND. GRANT	2,430.68
4013	ROAD/BRIDGE EQUIP PURCHASE	17,884.80
4016	HOSPITAL CAPITAL IMPROV	33,600.49
7920	REFUND FUND	

TOTAL CLAIMS	\$406,227.19
TOTAL PAYROLL	\$313,587.76
TOTAL CLAIMS AND PAYROLL FUNDS	\$719,814.95

ADJOURNMENT

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

Pondera County, Montana.

Jim Morren  
Jim Morren, Chairman

ATTEST:  
Kody L Farkell  
Kody L Farkell, Clerk & Recorder



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