

**BIG HORN COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS**

121 3rd St W
Room 301
Hardin, MT 59034



**BIG HORN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS MINUTES
March 7, 2024
9:30 AM**

Members

George Real Bird III, Presiding Officer
Larry Vandersloot, Member
Lawrence Pete Big Hair, Member

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Vandersloot, Presiding Officer calls meeting to order.

2. Roll Call

Commissioner Vandersloot, Presiding Officer, Commissioner Real Bird, member and Commissioner Big Hair, member were all in attendance. Mike Opie, AJ Espinoza, Ray Dale were also in attendance.

3. Claim Approvals

Commissioner Big Hair entertained a motion to approve Claims 1201, 1202, and 1204. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Real Bird and passed unanimously. Commissioner Vandersloot would like the minutes to reflect that he approves the claims with the exception of the claims without supporting documents. After talking with the auditors it's the responsibility of the commissioners to make sure all documents are being submitted. Discussion over the credit card policy ensues.

4. Approve Minutes and Supporting Documents

Commissioner Real Bird entertained a motion to approve the minutes from February 22, 2024. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Big Hair and passed unanimously.

5. Personnel/Legal

Heather Ready, Deputy County Attorney, discusses Kingley Road abandonment petition. The board of viewers will consist of Commissioner Real Bird, Stahly, and Road Superintendent, AJ Espinoza. Heather goes on to discuss the petition to alter Road 97, their application is incomplete. Discussion over the fairgrounds roof ensued. Commissioner Vanderlsoot brought up the Farm to Market agreement and 13th Street. In the annexation, the city took 13th Street, does that invalidate the Farm to Market. Heather explains with the language in the farm to market it does not.

6. Old Business

7. New Business

Road and Fire Ballot question

Mike Opie, accountant, built the road levy with the anticipation that coal proceeds will no longer be available. The overall budget is \$3 million dollars. Mike suggests raising the mills to 158.52.

The board recessed to read over the new resolution language.

The Board returns from recess. Commissioner Big Hair entertained a motion to approve resolution 2024-14 a resolution for the Road Levy Language. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Real Bird and passed unanimously.

Ray Dale

Ray Dale, Library Director, goes over the Big Horn County Library's statistical report. Commissioner Vandersloot would like to look into putting a small library in the room of the COA in Lodge Grass.

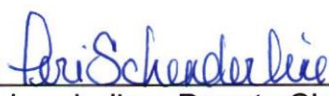
8. Public Comments

9. Discussion

10. Adjourn

There being no other business, the board adjourned.

Approved: 
Larry Vandersloot, Presiding Officer

Attest: 
Peri Schenderline, Deputy Clerk & Recorder

COUNTY OF BIG HORN, MONTANA

RESOLUTION 2024- 14

PREAMBLE:

A Resolution approving the placement of a question County mill levy election for the purpose of providing funding for the Big Horn County Rural Fire Department and Big Horn County Road Department on the ballot, to be held in conjunction with June 4, 2024 primary election.

RECITALS:

In accordance with MCA 7-14-2501(1), subject to MCA 15-10-420 and to raise revenue for the construction, maintenance, or improvement of public highways, each board of county commissioners may levy a tax upon the taxable property in the county. The tax must be collected the same as other taxes as the board may direct.

In accordance with MCA 7-6-2527(15), a county may impose a property tax levy for any public or governmental purpose, including fire control, as provided in MCA 7-22-2209.

In accordance with MCA 7-33-2209(1), the county governing body may appropriate funds for the purchase, care, and maintenance of firefighting equipment or for the payment of wages in prevention, detection, and suppression of fires. Subject to MCA 15-10-420, if the general fund is budgeted to the full limit, the county governing body may levy a tax.

In accordance with MCA 15-10-425, a new levy may be imposed or current mill levy be increased by conducting an election.

The Board of County Commissioners, see the need:

1. To provide stable funding for the construction, maintenance, and improvement of public highways;
2. To provide stable funding for the purchase, care, and maintenance of firefighting equipment and for the payment of wages in prevention, detection, and suppression of fires;
3. To provide that funding by a mill levy increase of approximately Sixty-Four (64) mills to One Hundred Fifty-Eight (158) mills with the additional amount of money to be raised currently being Three Million Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$3,080,000) per year which will be subject to MCA 15-10-420(1)(a) after the first year, allowing for inflationary growth and new taxable growth; and
4. That such levy would be permanent and have no durational limit.

In prior fiscal years, the Big Horn County Rural Fire Department and Road Department were funded by Coal Gross Proceeds and further supplemented by Coal Royalties. Big Horn County will continue to use Coal Gross Proceeds to reduce property taxes, as funds become available.

As Big Horn County is the sixth largest county in Montana, additional funding is necessary to enable the Road Department to repair, maintain, and improve the condition of public roads.

Additional funding is necessary to equip the Rural Fire Department with essential safety equipment and funding for firefighters to provide the residents of Big Horn County with the best response possible to fires, vehicle accidents, and other emergencies.

THEREFORE:

The Board of Commissioners of Big Horn County, Montana, hereby calls and directs a County mill levy election to be held on June 4, 2024, in conjunction with the primary election for the purpose of voting on the following question:

Shall the Board of County Commissioners be authorized to establish a Road Improvement and Fire Response Annual Mill Levy of a permanent duration, increasing the mills by approximately Sixty-Four (64) mills, to approximately One Hundred Fifty-Eight (158) mills with the amount of money to be raised currently being Three Million Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$3,080,000)

NOTICE OF ELECTION
TO ESTABLISH AN ANNUAL PERMANENT LEVY FOR
ROAD IMPROVEMENT AND FIRE RESPONSE

Big Horn County, Montana

June 4, 2024

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN by the Board of County Commissioners (the "Board") of Big Horn County, Montana (the "County") that pursuant to a certain resolution adopted at the regular meeting of the Board on March 7, 2024, a mill levy election of the registered voters of the County will be held on June 4, 2024, in conjunction with the primary election, for the purpose of voting on the following question:

Shall the Board of County Commissioners be authorized to establish a Road Improvement and Fire Response Annual Mill Levy of a permanent duration increasing the mills by approximately Sixty-Four (64) mills, to approximately One Hundred Fifty-Eight (158) mills with the amount of money to be raised currently being Three Million Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$3,080,000) annually to provide financial stability that cannot be decreased due to the needs of other County programs, to replace a decrease in the Coal Gross Proceeds, and to further the goals of enabling the Road Department of the sixth largest county in Montana to repair, maintain, and improve the condition of public roads and to equip the Rural Fire Department with essential safety equipment and funding for firefighters to provide the residents of Big Horn County with the best response possible to fires, vehicle accidents, and other emergencies; where the new levy of approximately Sixty-Four (64) mills, to approximately One Hundred Fifty-Eight (158) mills with the amount of money to be raised currently being Three Million Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$3,080,000) per year will be subject to MCA 15-10-420(1)(a), after the first year, allowing for inflationary growth and newly taxable growth?

It is estimated by the County that, using the current assessed values of taxable property, for a home valued at \$100,000, taxes would be increased annually by the levy in the amount of \$86.12, and for a home valued at \$300,000, taxes would be increased annually by the levy in the amount of \$ 258.36, and for a home or real property valued at \$600,000, taxes would be increased annually by the levy in the amount of \$ 516.71. An increase in property taxes may lead to an increase in rental costs.

The mill levy election shall be conducted by the Big Horn County Election Administrator on June 4, 2024.

4) The Ballot shall be printed in substantially the following form:

OFFICIAL BALLOT
BIG HORN COUNTY, MONTANA
ELECTION TO ESTABLISH AN ANNUAL PERMANENT
LEVY FOR ROAD IMPROVEMENT AND FIRE RESPONSE

June 4, 2024

VOTE FOR ONE

Shall the Board of County Commissioners be authorized to establish a Road Improvement and Fire Response Annual Mill Levy of a permanent duration of increasing the mills by approximately Sixty-Four (64) mills, to approximately One Hundred Fifty-Eight (158) mills with the amount of money to be raised currently being Three Million Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$3,080,000) annually to provide financial stability that cannot be decreased due to the needs of other County programs, to replace a decrease in the Coal Gross Proceeds, and to further the goals of enabling the Road Department of the sixth largest county in Montana to repair, maintain, and improve the condition of public roads and to equip the Rural Fire Department with essential safety equipment and funding for firefighters to provide the residents of Big Horn County with the best response possible to fires, vehicle accidents, and other emergencies; where the new levy of approximately increasing the mills by approximately Sixty-Four (64) mills, to approximately One Hundred Fifty-Eight (158) mills with the amount of money to be raised currently being Three Million Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$3,080,000) per year will be subject to MCA 15-10-420(1)(a), after the first year, allowing for inflationary growth and newly taxable growth?

It is estimated by the County that, using the current assessed values of taxable property, for a home valued at \$100,000, taxes would be increased annually by the levy in the amount of \$86.12, and for a home valued at \$300,000, taxes would be increased annually by the levy in the amount of \$ 258.36, and for a home or real property valued at \$600,000, taxes would be increased annually by the levy in the amount of \$ 516.71. An increase in property taxes may lead to an increase in rental costs.

☐ FOR a levy to provide funding for _____

☐ AGAINST a levy to provide funding for _____

5) If the majority voting on the question are in favor of the additional levy, the Big Horn County Commissioners are authorized to impose the levy, increasing the mills by approximately sixty-four (64) mills, to approximately One Hundred Fifty-Eight (158) mills with the amount of money to be raised currently being Three Million Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$3,080,000) per year which will be subject to MCA 15-10-420(1)(a) after the first year, allowing for inflationary growth and newly taxable growth.

6) If approved, the Big Horn County Commissioners may reduce the levy in any fiscal year, up to the maximum amount or number of mills approved in the election. However, nothing herein authorizes a governing body to impose more than the approved levy in any fiscal year or to extend the duration of the approved levy.

7) Pursuant to MCA 13-1-405, the Big Horn County Commissioners hereby request that the election be included on the primary election ballot.

8) That a levy be imposed for Road Improvement and Fire Response on the approval of a majority of the qualified electors of Big Horn County, voting on the issue in the election to be held in conjunction with the Primary Election on June 4, 2024.

9) That a copy of this resolution will be provided to the County Election Administrator as soon as possible after its adoption to inform her of the details of the election and pertinent requests and authorizations as to the conduct of the election.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS this 7th day of March, 2024, in Hardin, Montana.

annually to provide financial stability that cannot be decreased due to the needs of other County programs, to replace a decrease in the Coal Gross Proceeds, and to further the goals of enabling the Road Department of the sixth largest county in Montana to repair, maintain, and improve the condition of public roads and to equip the Rural Fire Department with essential safety equipment and funding for firefighters to provide the residents of Big Horn County with the best response possible to fires, vehicle accidents, and other emergencies; where the new levy, increasing the mills by approximately Sixty-Four (64) mills, to approximately One Hundred Fifty-Eight (158) mills with the amount of money to be raised currently being Three Million Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$3,080,000) per year will be subject to MCA 15-10-420(1)(a), after the first year, allowing for inflationary growth and newly taxable growth?

It is estimated by the County that, using the current assessed values of taxable property, for a home valued at \$100,000, taxes would be increased annually by the levy in the amount of \$86.12, and for a home valued at \$300,000, taxes would be increased annually by the levy in the amount of \$ 258.36, and for a home or real property valued at \$600,000, taxes would be increased annually by the levy in the amount of \$ 516.71. An increase in property taxes may lead to an increase in rental costs.

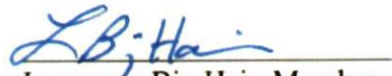
2) All qualified electors of the County shall be entitled to vote at the mill levy election. The Big Horn County Election Administrator is hereby requested and authorized to give proper notice of the close of registration, and thereafter prepare printed lists of the electors in the County entitled to vote in the County and to conduct the election in the form and manner prescribed by law.

3) The Election Administrator is hereby authorized and requested to cause notice of the call and holding of the election as prescribed by law. The notice of election as published shall read substantially as follows:

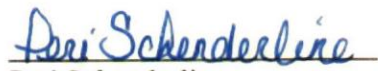
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BIG HORN COUNTY, MONTANA


Larry Vandersloot, Presiding Officer


George Real Bird III, Member


Lawrence Big Hair, Member

ATTEST:


Peri Schenderline
Deputy Clerk and Recorder

Librarian Statistical Report: Big Horn County Library 2023/24

Date:	2024 FEB	Year-to-Date
Days Open	20	165
Hours Open	176	1,460
Door Count	3,113	22,938
Aver # of Patrons per Hour	18	16
Children's Programs	21	43
" Attended "	364	406

Materials Circulation:	2024 FEB	Year-to-Date
Juv-Fiction	122	910
Juv-Non Fiction	18	128
Adult Fiction	100	901
Adult Non Fiction	48	527
In-Library Use		
Big Horn Room	9	90
Video-Recordings	242	2,065
Electronic and Audio Books	113	897
ILL-Borrowed Via OCLC	20	87
ILL-B-MT	10	43
ILL-B-OSS	10	44
IL-Loaned - Via OCLC	20	137
IL-Loaned In-State	4	65
IL-Loaned Out-of-State	16	71

Fees	2024 FEB	Year-to-Date
Fines Collected	\$213.40	\$1,582.75
Fees for Lost Books		\$0.00

Internet Summary	2024 FEB	Year-to-Date
Kids Sessions	185	444
Adults Sessions	195	2,132
Total Sessions	380	2,573
Totals Time (Minutes)	12,360	89,522