

BIG HORN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

121 3rd St W
Room 301
Hardin, MT 59034



BIG HORN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MINUTES August 28, 2025 9:30 AM

Members

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

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Real Bird III, Pro Tempore, calls the meeting to order.

2. Roll Call

Commissioner Real Bird, Pro Tempore and Commissioner Vandersloot, member, were both in attendance. Mike Opie, Accountant, Denise Rios, Treasurer, and Heather Ready, Deputy County Attorney, were also in attendance.

3. Claim Approvals

Commissioner Vandersloot entertained a motion to approve claims 1064. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Real Bird and passed unanimously.

4. Approve Minutes and Supporting Documents

Commissioner Vandersloot entertained a motion to approve minutes from August 21, 2025. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Real Bird and passed unanimously.

5. Personnel/Legal

6. Old Business

7. New Business

Monette P&I

Denise Rios, Treasurer, has a request from Monette Farms to waive their penalties and interest on their personal property taxes. They got a bill for \$600,000 for personal property taxes and started questioning why it was so high, so Denise referred them to the Department of Revenue. It took them a while to get their research done and by the time they had their answers they had accrued around \$5000 in penalties and interest. They were waiting for answers from the state as to why it was so high. Once they got their answers, they paid the amount they owed. She explained if it was \$10 or under she would've worked with them but feels that \$5,000 is a large amount, and it is up to the Board to decide. Commissioner Real Bird asks if a \$10 penalty and interest is Denise's call, how is this one the board's call? She explains a few dollars she's comfortable with and has consulted with Mike on it before when it happened, but this amount is too large. She clarifies that Monette Farms has paid all other taxes on time and hasn't had any issues with them. Denise's recommendation is to waive them since she was part of the conversation and emails through the entire process and explained they weren't trying to get out of paying them, they were trying to understand the process. Commissioner Vandersloot entertained a motion to waive Monette Farms penalties and interest on

personal property taxes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Real Bird and passed unanimously.

Special Deputy Agreement

Commissioner Vandersloot entertained a motion to approve Resolution 2025-27, a resolution appointing a special deputy county attorney to prosecute an elder exploitation. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Real Bird and passed unanimously.

City County Planning Board Appointment

Commissioner Vandersloot entertained a motion to appoint Erin McCleary to the City-County Planning Board. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Real Bird and passed unanimously. Commissioner Vandersloot entertained a motion to approve term lengths as follows: Taylor Sidwell and Erin McCleary each a two-year term and Commissioner Vandersloot's will be as long as his elected official term. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Real Bird and passed unanimously.

L. Fisher

Heather Ready, Deputy county attorney, presented Lisa Fisher's repayment agreement for workman's compensation. Commissioner Vandersloot entertained a motion to approve the agreement. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Real Bird and passed unanimously.

8. Public Comments

9. Discussion

Denis Rios, Treasurer, explained the abatements that were sent a few days ago from the Department of Revenue's Virginia Dooley. One was for \$329.80 and the other was for \$0.73. She explains the abatement process and the work that goes into them. She is hoping the Commissioners will pass a resolution where they don't accept any abatement under \$50. Her initial request is to deny the \$.073 and her second request is a resolution to deny any abatements under \$50. After discussion, the Board would like legal to look into it.

10. Adjourn

There being no other business, the board adjourned.

Approved: _____
Lawrence Big Hair, Presiding Officer

Attest: _____
Peri Schenderline, Deputy Clerk & Recorder