

**BIG HORN COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS**

121 3rd St W
Room 301
Hardin, MT 59034



**BIG HORN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS MINUTES
January 8, 2026
9:30 AM**

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

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Real Bird, Presiding Officer calls meeting to order.

2. Roll Call

Commissioner Real Bird, Presiding Officer, Commissioner Vandersloot, member and Commissioner Big Hair, member were all in attendance. Victoria Olson, Detention Administrator, Mike Opie Accountant, Heather Ready, Deputy County Attorney were also in attendance.

3. Claim Approvals

Commissioner Vandersloot entertained a motion to approve claims 1168 and 1169. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Big Hair and passed unanimously.

4. Approve Minutes and Supporting Documents

Commissioner Vandersloot entertained a motion to approve January 2, 2026. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Big Hair and passed unanimously.

5. Personnel/Legal

Teresa TurnsPlenty, explains that Lawrence Killsback negotiated his wage increase of \$1.00 at 6 months then after his one year post probationary increase of \$1.00.

(CLOSED DOOR)

6. Old Business

7. New Business

Travel Rates

Commissioner Vandersloot expresses his concern with the lodging rate being \$110. Mike Opie explains that employees ask for state rates and use the county credit card to book the rooms. it's very rare that anyone is reimbursed for lodging. Commissioner Vandersloot entertained a motion to approve Resolution 2026-6. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Big Hair and passed unanimously.

Jail Rates

Commissioner Vandersloot entertained a motion to approve Resolution 2026-7, setting the daily rate of incarceration at \$196.78. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Big Hair and passed unanimously.

Jail Resolution

Commissioner Vandersloot entertained a motion to table this until next Thursday. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Big Hair and passed unanimously.

Amended Property Sale Procedure

This is an amendment to Resolution 2025-18. The change is to allow property that wasn't sold in the tax deed sale, to give the Board the authority to put it out to bid or to engage in direct negotiation. Commissioner Real Bird would like to look at taking a lower price. Discussion over this process ensues. Commissioner Vandersloot entertained a motion to table resolution 2025-18A. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Big Hair and passed unanimously.

Amend Intent to make 1st street in Fort Smith a county road

Heather Ready explains the corrections that needed to be made to the location for the meeting on resolution 2025-37. Commissioner Vandersloot entertained a motion to approve resolution 2025-37A.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Big Hair and passed unanimously.

Off-site meeting First Street, Fort Smith

Commissioner Vandersloot entertained a motion to approve resolution 2026-8, a resolution for an offsite public meeting for First Street in Ft. Smith. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Big Hair and passed unanimously.

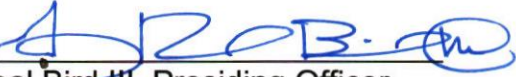
8. Public Comments

9. Discussion

Commissioner Real Bird discusses that the treasurer would like to set up the second sale of tax deed properties they are thinking sometime in March. He would like us to get together and get that going. Mike Opie would like a board to go over the step and grade wage scale from AE, so that they have it in place by budget season.

10. Adjourn

There being no other business, the board adjourned.

Approved: 
George Real Bird III, Presiding Officer

Attest: 
Peri Schenderline, Deputy Clerk & Recorder

COUNTY OF BIG HORN, MONTANA

RESOLUTION 2026- 6

PREAMBLE:

Big Horn County officers and employees are authorized by law to be reimbursed for meal and lodging expenses on necessary travel in connection with the duties of their respective offices, conventions, etc.

RECITALS:

MCA section **2-18-501** states:

Meals, lodging, and transportation of persons in state service. All elected state officials, appointed members of boards, commissions, or councils, department directors, and all other state employees must be reimbursed for meals and lodging while away from the person's designated headquarters and engaged in official state business;

THEREFORE:

The 2026 travel rates effective January 1, 2026, for all county officers and county employees are henceforth to be reimbursed in the following manner.

1. **LODGING** expenses up to **\$110.00** plus tax per night, original receipt or confirmation notice required. If attending a conference where the rate at the conference site is higher than the \$110.00, you can request actual cost reimbursement, you must get approval from the County Commissioners prior to attending. Overnight lodging is considered a non-taxable expense, paid through the claims process.
2. **MEALS** will be paid at the State rates no receipt required. An elected official or employee is eligible for the meal allowance provided below, if the person is in travel status for more than 3 continuous hours during the following, if you go over amount, it will be at your own expense.
 - a. For in State **morning meal allowance** - **\$11.20** – between the hours of 12:01am and 10:00am.
 - b. For the in-State **midday meal allowance** - **\$13.30** – between the hours of 10:01am and 3:00pm.
 - c. For the in-State **evening meal allowance** - **\$19.60** – between the hours of 3:01pm and 12 midnight.

An eligible person may receive:

- a. Only one of the three meal allowances provided, if the travel was performed within the persons assigned travel shift; or
- b. A maximum of two meal allowances if the travel begins before or was completed after the person's assigned travel shift and the travel did not exceed 24 hours.

"Travel Shift" is that period of time beginning one (1) hour before and terminating one (1) hour after the person's normally assigned work shift. For purposes of making the computation under this Resolution an elected official shall be considered to have a normally assigned work shift which begins at 8:00am and ends at 5:00pm. All times will be calculated using Mountain time.

Out of state meal allowances are as follows; Morning - \$16.00; Midday - \$19.00; Evening - \$28.00.

3. **MILEAGE** – The mileage will be reimbursed at the rate of **seventy-two and a half cents (\$.725)** per mile for the first one thousand miles per month. Mileage Reimbursed is considered a non-taxable expense, paid through the claims process. However commuting mileage for the County Commissioners is considered a taxable expense, paid bi-weekly through payroll
4. **USE OF COUNTY VEHICLE** – Commuting from home to work or from work to home in a County vehicle falls under the Commuting Rule (IRS Publication 15-B) This is considered a benefit and is taxable to the employee. A claim form is required to be completed daily, and submitted bi-weekly with your time sheet for

that respective pay period. A \$3.00 per day charge will be added to your paycheck and W-2 at the end of the year. There is no exchange of money involved.

5. Personal use of a county vehicle is prohibited per standards of conduct (MCA 2-2-121)

EFFECTIVE:

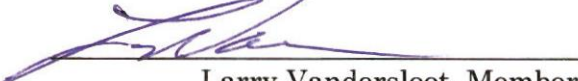
This shall become effective immediately

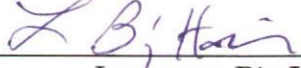
Enacted:

This 8th day of January, 2026, in Hardin, Montana.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BIG HORN COUNTY, MONTANA


George Real Bird III, Presiding Officer


Larry Vandersloot, Member


Lawrence Big Hair, Member

Attest:


Peri Schenderline
Deputy Clerk and Recorder

COUNTY OF BIG HORN, MONTANA

RESOLUTION 2026- 7

PREAMBLE:

A Resolution to establish daily rate of credit for incarceration.

RECITALS:

Montana Code Annotated Section **46-18-403(2)** states: **Credit for incarceration prior to conviction.**

(2) A person incarcerated on a bailable offense who does not supply bail and against whom a fine is levied on conviction of the offense may be allowed a credit for each day of incarceration prior to conviction, except that the amount allowed or credited may not exceed the amount of the fine. The daily rate of credit for incarceration must be established annually by the board of county commissioners by resolution. The daily rate must be equal to the actual cost incurred by the detention facility for which the rate is established.

THEREFORE:

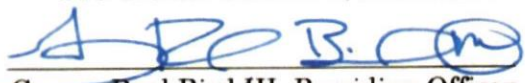
1. The daily rate for credit for incarceration is hereby established at one hundred ninety-six and 78/100 Dollars (\$196.78).

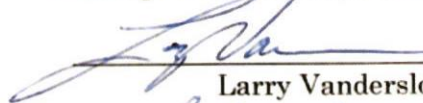
EFFECTIVE:

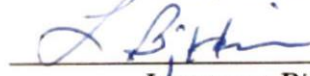
This shall become immediately effective.

Executed this 8th day of January, 2026, in Hardin, Montana.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BIG HORN COUNTY, MONTANA


George Real Bird III, Presiding Officer


Larry Vandersloot, Member


Lawrence Big Hair, Member

Attest:


Peri Schenderline
Deputy Clerk and Recorder

COUNTY OF BIG HORN, MONTANA

RESOLUTION 2026- 8

PREAMBLE:

A Resolution that a quorum of the Board of Commissioners of Big Horn County will hold a public hearing offsite for the purpose of receiving comments on the resolution of intent to make First Street a county road.

RECITALS:

In accordance with MCA 7-5-2101(1), the board of county commissioners has jurisdiction and power, under such limitations and restrictions as are prescribed by law, to represent the county and have the care of the county property and the management of the business and concerns of the county.

Pursuant to MCA 7-5-2122(3), the board may, by resolution and having provided at least two days posted public notice in accordance with MCA 7-1-2123, designate another meeting time or place.

The Board adopted Resolution 2025- 37-A declaring it to be the intention of the Board of County Commissioners to make First Street in Fort Smith a county road.

In accordance with MCA 7-14-2101(2)(a), the Board of Commissioners will hold a public hearing at 5:30 p.m. on January 21, 2026 at the Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center located at 2222 Access Rd. in Fort Smith Montana.

THEREFORE:

The Board of Commissioners of Big Horn County hereby resolves that a quorum of the Board will be present at a public hearing held at 5:30 p.m. on January 21, 2026 at the Yellowtail Dam located at 2222 Access Rd in Fort Smith Montana for the purpose of receiving comments on the resolution of intent to make First Street a county road.

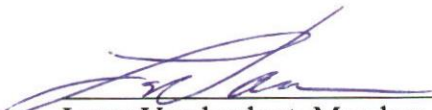
The Board further directs that notice shall be posted in conformity with MCA 7-1-2123.

ENACTED:

This 8th day of January, 2026, in Hardin, Montana.

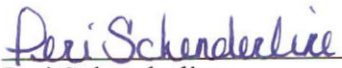
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BIG HORN COUNTY, MONTANA


George Real Bird III, Presiding Officer


Larry Vandersloot, Member


Lawrence Big Hair, Member

Attest:


Peri Schenderline
Deputy Clerk and Recorder

COUNTY OF BIG HORN, MONTANA

RESOLUTION 2025- 37A

PREAMBLE:

A Resolution declaring it to be the intention of the Board of County Commissioners to make First Street in Fort Smith a county road.

RECITALS:

Pursuant to MCA 7-14-2101(1)(a)(i), the board of county commissioners, under the limitations and restrictions that are prescribed by law, may lay out, maintain, control, and manage county roads and bridges within the county.

In accordance with MCA 7-14-2101(2)(a), following a public hearing, a board of county commissioners may accept by resolution a road that has not previously been considered a county road but that has been laid out, constructed, and maintained with state department of transportation or county funds.

First Street in Fort Smith was dedicated to the public on the plat map of the Yellowtail Subdivision, which was recorded on August 7, 1961.

The County has historically maintained First Street in Fort Smith with County funds.

The Board desires to obtain input and comments from members of the community on the proposal to make First Street in Fort Smith a county road.

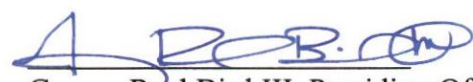
THEREFORE:

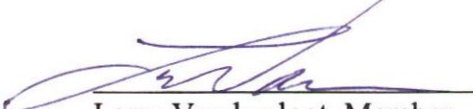
The Board of County Commissioners shall hold a public hearing at 5:30 p.m., on January 21, 2025, at the Yellowtail Dam Visitor Center located at 2222 Access Rd, Fort Smith, Montana to receive comments on the proposal to make First Street in Fort Smith a county road. Comments may be submitted in-person at the hearing or in writing.

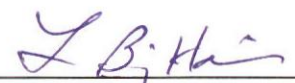
ENACTED:

This 8th day of January, 2026, in Hardin, Montana.

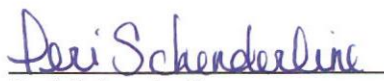
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BIG HORN COUNTY, MONTANA


George Real Bird III, Presiding Officer


Larry Vandersloot, Member


Lawrence Big Hair, Member

ATTEST:


Peri Schenderline
Deputy Clerk and Recorder