

COUNTY OF RAVALLI



October 24, 2023

Jen Stepleton
Montana Department of Commerce. HOME-ARP Program, EFSG Program
P.O. Box 2200528
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Ms. Stepleton:

The Board of Ravalli County Commissioners would like to add our hearty support for SAFE's application for funding from the Montana Department of Commerce. Since 1987, SAFE has provided housing, services and community programs geared toward ending domestic and sexual violence in Ravalli County. At the heart of SAFE's work is the provision of safe emergency shelter for those who are fleeing violence in their homes.

In 2000, SAFE constructed an emergency shelter with four bedrooms. At the time, SAFE's vision was that they were building a facility that would serve our community for decades. They have done just that, serving, on average 50 adults and their children annually. However, as the population of the Bitterroot Valley continues to grow exponentially, the need for emergency shelter has outpaced SAFE's capacity.

The proposed emergency shelter expansion will provide eight bedrooms, a trauma-informed design and will increase their capacity by 100%. This expansion is critically needed, as SAFE was unable to provide requested emergency shelter 96 times during their FY 2022 program year because their shelter was at or over capacity. Over the last two years, SAFE's shelter has functioned at an average of 117% occupancy for the year.

SAFE is the only organization offering emergency shelter in Ravalli County. An additional emergency shelter provider, the Bitterroot Family Shelter, has recently announced it no longer has the capacity to provide shelter services, leaving SAFE as the only agency to provide this critically needed service—one that can mean the difference between life and death for the citizens of our community.

As with many Montana communities, Ravalli County is also experiencing a crisis related to the lack of available, affordable housing. This lack of housing creates barriers for those fleeing domestic or sexual violence. Many survivors have experienced financial abuse as well, leaving them with credit challenges, interrupted work histories or a lack of rental history. Affordable housing pressures in Ravalli County often mean that those without good credit or with a challenging rental history are often unable to obtain rental housing. The advocacy SAFE provides for those residing in their shelter helps remove those barriers, increasing the likelihood that vulnerable citizens can obtain permanent, safe housing.

We urge you to provide funding for SAFE's critically needed emergency shelter expansion.
Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dan Huls', is written over the 'Thank you.' text.

Dan Huls, Chair
Ravalli County Board of Commissioners

**SPECIAL AND REGULAR MEETINGS
OF THE
RAVALLI COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

REGULAR MEETING 9:30 AM

Thursday, September 07, 2023

**Commissioners' Meeting Room
County Administration Building,
215 S. 4th St, Hamilton, MT 59840.**

1. Roll Call

Commissioner Dan Huls, Commissioner Greg Chilcott and Commissioner Jeff Burrows.

STAFF PRESENT:

Chris Taggart, minutes

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Public comment: For those participating via Granicus, you may call 406-375-6513 in order to provide your public comment

None.

4. Administrative - Review with Decision:

A) Contracts for Services and Insurance Requirements for county departments

Airport Hangar E 274 S:

Commissioner Chilcott moved to approve Airport hangar lease transfer, Hangar No E-274-S / 275, from Empresario LLC to 6131, LLC, for a 30 year effective September 23, 2023 through August 31, 2053 as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Burrows. Public comment on motion: none. Discussion: none. All voted "aye" (3-0).

HR Action Items:

Present:

Elizabeth Warriner, HR Director

5. Presentation and possible support letter: SAFE Shelter Project (HOME ARP program / HB 5)

Attachment - Meeting request

Present:

Stacey Umhey, SAFE Director
Sheriff Steve Holton
Brook Angst
Becka Jakewith

Commissioner Chilcott moved to approve sending a letter of support on behalf of SAFE application for HB 5 funding, as requested. Seconded by Commissioner Burrows. Public comment on motion: none. Discussion: none. All voted "aye" (3-0).

6. Interview: J Rennaker for Weed Board

Present:
Jeff Rennaker

7. Discussion with possible decision: Open Weed Board positions (2)

Attachment - open positions

Commissioner Chilcott moved to appoint Craig Thomas to the Weed Board with a term through December 31, 2025 and appoint Jeff Rennaker to the Weed Board with a term through December 31, 2026. Seconded by Commissioner Burrows. Public comment on motion: none. Discussion: none. All voted "aye" (3-0).

8. Set School Mill Levies

Present:
Regina Plettenberg C&R

Commissioner Burrows moved to continue this meeting to Thursday, September 14, 2023 at 9:00 AM. Seconded by Commissioner Burrows. Public comment on motion: none. Discussion: none. All voted "aye" (3-0).

9. Public Hearings

Attachment - Public Hearings - legal ads (5)

A) *** 1:30 PM FY 24 Sheriff's Retirement Permissive Levy

Present:
Jana Exner, CFO
Klarryse Murphy

Commissioner Chilcott moved to approve and adopt Resolution No. 4543, adopting the FY 24 Sheriff's Retirement Permissive Levy as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Burrows. Public comment on motion: none. Discussion: none. All voted "aye" (3-0).

The public hearing closed at 1:34 PM.

B) *** 1:45 PM FY 24 Lighting Districts

Present:
Jana Exner, CFO
Klarryse Murphy

Commissioner Burrows moved to approve and adopt Resolution No. 4544, adopting FY 24 Lighting Districts Levies as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Chilcott. Public comment on motion: none. Discussion: none. All voted "aye" (3-0).

The public hearing closed at 1:46 PM.

C) *** 2:00 PM FY 24 Elected Officials Salaries

Present:
Jana Exner, CFO
Klarryse Murphy

Commissioner Chilcott moved to approve and adopt Resolution No. 4545, adopting the FY 24 Establishment of the Salaries for Elected Officials as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Burrows. Public comment on motion: none. Discussion: none. All voted "aye" (3-0).

The public hearing closed at 2:02 PM.

D) *** 2:15 PM FY 24 Permissive Medical Levy

Present:
Jana Exner, CFO
Klarryse Murphy

Commissioner Chilcott moved to approve and adopt Resolution No. 4546, adopting the FY 24 Permissive Medical Levy for Health Care Premiums as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Burrows. Public comment on motion: none. Discussion: none. All voted "aye" (3-0).

The public hearing closed at 2:16 PM.

E) *** 2:30 PM Adoption of FY 24 final budget

Present:
Jana Exner, CFO
Klarryse Murphy

Commissioner Chilcott moved to approve and adopt Resolution No. 4547, adopting the FY 24 Operating Final Budget as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Burrows. Public comment on motion: none. Discussion: none. All voted "aye" (3-0).

The public hearing closed at 2:38 PM.

10. Public comment on items not otherwise on the agenda

None.

11. Adjournment

Commissioner Burrows moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Chilcott. All voted "aye" (3-0).

Chris Taggart, Administrative Assistant