REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
PONDERA COUNTY, MONTANA
Held in September 2026

The Board of Pondera County Commissioners met daily in informal session and in scheduled meetings on September 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30, 2026.

SEPTEMBER 2, 2026 REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMISSION:
PRESENT: Commissioner Jim Morren, Commissioner Zane Drishinski, Commissioner Tom Kuka, Clerk & Recorder Kody Farkell, Deputy Clerk & Recorder Tammy Bartsch, Road/Bridge Superintendent Frosty DeBoo, Public – Paul Anderberg

REVISED JOB DESCRIPTION APPROVED
Commissioner Drishinski moved to approve the revised job description for part or fulltime Health Nurse. Commissioner Kuka seconded. Motion carried.

MSU EXTENSION SERVICE AGREEMENT
Commissioner Kuka moved and Commissioner Morren seconded to approve the FY2027 Extension Services Agreement between Montana State University Extension and Pondera County. The Agreement includes the amount budgeted for the Extension Office in Pondera County, including the County portion of the Agents' salaries which is set at 65% of the Clerk and Recorder's base salary for each Agent or a maximum of $41,000.00 for each Agent. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION ON AUTHORIZING COST-OF-LIVING SALARY ADJUSTMENTS
PONDERA COUNTY, MONTANA
RESOLUTION #3 – 2026/27
AUTHORIZING COST-OF-LIVING SALARY ADJUSTMENTS

WHEREAS, the 2001 Legislature provided that County governing bodies create a county compensation board that shall prepare a compensation schedule for county elected officials for the succeeding fiscal year. The recommended compensation schedule shall be approved by a majority of the board including at least two commissioners; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioners appointed the County Compensation Board and the Board met during a public hearing called by the Commissioners on June 4, 2026 and discussed several suggested compensation schedules for elected officials for FY2026/27; and

WHEREAS, the County Compensation Board recommended that compensation for elected officials in Pondera County for FY2026/27 be increased by an amount up to 4.0% cost-of-living adjustment; the recommendation was approved by the members of the Compensation Board, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, effective August 26, 2026, the County will pay a cost-of-living salary adjustment of 4.0% for elected officials based on the Clerk and Recorder's base salary to be added to the salaries of Pondera County elected officials. Additional compensation of $2,000 annually for Commissioners and Sheriff will remain at the statutory rates. Additional compensation of $2,000 was approved for the Clerk and Recorder who also serves as Election Administrator (pursuant to 7-4-2503(d), MCA, effective October 1, 2005).

Treasurer/Superintendent of Schools $63,708.53
plus compensation of $3,500 for combined office

Clerk of Court $63,708.53

Clerk and Recorder $63,708.53
plus additional compensation of $2,000 per year allowed under statute for Election Administrator duties

Commissioner $65,708.53
includes additional compensation of $2,000 per year required by statute

Sheriff/Coroner $67,026.01
includes additional compensation of $2,000 per year required by statute (Sheriff) plus additional $2,000 for combined Coroner office

County Attorney/Public Administrator $120,772.08
State of Montana will pay reimburse the County at a rate set by statute, pursuant to 7-4-2502, MCA (2007)

Justice of the Peace $63,708.53

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, the County will continue to pay longevity of 1% of the Clerk & Recorder's base salary times the years of service for all elected officials who do not receive longevity per 7-4-2508 (2)(a) MCA. Longevity will be maxed at 12 years of service, continuing at the 12-year rate each year for the remainder of the elected official's service time.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commissioners hereby set the gross base wages for undersheriff at 98% of the Sheriff base salary, sergeants at 90% of the Sheriff base salary, deputies with one year or more at the Pondera County Sheriff's Department at 86% of the Sheriff salary, and deputies under one year at the Pondera County Sheriff Department will be paid 85% of the Sheriff salary. Sheriff's department longevity shall be calculated pursuant to state statutes. Deputies to other elected officials will be paid at 86% of the Clerk & Recorder's base salary.

The cost-of-living increase and raise for non-deputy hourly full-time and regular part-time employees is hereby set at an increase of 4.0%.

Airport manager salary will remain at $150 per month
Seasonal employees' hourly rates will be set at $17.16 per hour, beginning March 2027 ($19.97 for returning employees)

Adopted this 2nd day of September, 2026 as moved by Commissioner Kuka, seconded by Commissioner Drishinski, and passed on a 3-0 vote of the board. Effective August 26, 2026.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Pondera County, Montana

/s/ Jim Morren
Jim Morren, Chairman

/s/ Thomas A Kuka
Thomas A Kuka, Member

ATTEST: */s/ Kody L Farkell*
Kody L. Farkell, Clerk & Recorder

/s/ Zane Drishinski
Zane Drishinski, Member

RESOLUTION ON ADOPTING THE FINAL OPERATING BUDGET AND SETTING APPROPRIATION AUTHORITY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30,2026
PONDERA COUNTY MONTANA
RESOLUTION #4 – 2026/27
ADOPTING THE FINAL OPERATING BUDGET AND SETTING APPROPRIATION AUTHORITY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2026

WHEREAS, Section 7-6-4030, MCA, provides that the governing body shall adopt the final budget by resolution. The resolution must:

(a) Authorize appropriations to defray the expenses or liabilities for the fiscal year;
(b) Establish legal spending limits at the level of detail in the resolution; and

(c) Include any increase in property taxes, including an increase authorized under 15-10-420(1) and the amount by which property taxes will increase on homes valued at $100,000, $300,000 and $600,000.

WHEREAS, Section 7-6-4020 requires that a preliminary annual operating budget must be prepared for the local government; and

WHEREAS, Section 7-6-4021 requires that the governing body shall cause a notice of public hearing on the preliminary or amended budget to be published, and

WHEREAS, Section 7-6-4024, provides that the governing body must hold a public hearing in accordance with the notice given pursuant to 7-6-4021; and

WHEREAS, The Board of County Commissioners held a public hearing on August 26, 2026 where residents of the County were allowed to express their concerns about the proposed budget; and

WHEREAS, The Board of County Commissioners has reviewed the proposed budget, received the estimated ending cash balances for all county funds, made changes to the budget as deemed necessary following the public hearing and from input by elected officials and department heads, and computed the estimated taxes, fees and assessments needed to fund the fiscal year 2027 budget.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Pondera County that:

The final budget after any amendments to the preliminary budget and after considering any public comment is adopted.

This resolution authorizes:

(a) Appropriations to defray the expenses or liabilities for the fiscal year.

(b) It sets the legal spending limits at the county fund level. Fund level detail is stated in the formal budget document and established in the County's accounting system.

(c) A decrease in property taxes due to (15-10-420 calculation), aggregate of countywide of $6.24, $18.72, and $106.72, respectively for a home valued at $100,000, $300,000 and $600,000 is included in this fiscal year budget.

(d) A decrease in property taxes due to (15-10-420 calculation), countywide permissive levies of $12.46, $37.38, and $74.74, respectively for a home valued at $100,000, $300,000 and $600,000 is included in this fiscal year budget. This decrease is due to no permissive levy this fiscal year.

(e) A decrease in property taxes due to (15-10-420 calculation), voted countywide levies of $2.70, $8.10, and $29.82, respectively for a home valued at $100,000, $300,000 and $600,000 is included in this fiscal year budget.

Adopted this 2nd day of September, 2026, as moved by Commissioner Drishinski, seconded by Commissioner Kuka, and passed on a 3-0 vote of the board. Effective July 1, 2026.

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 ORDERING THE CREATION OF PONDERA COUNTY INTERDISCIPLINARY CHILD INFORMATION AND SCHOOL SAFETY TEAM

PONDERA COUNTY MONTANA

RESOLUTION #5 – 2026/27

A RESOLUTION ORDERING THE CREATION OF PONDERA COUNTY INTERDISCIPLINARY CHILD INFORMATION AND SCHOOL SAFETY TEAM

WHEREAS, section 52-2-211, subsection (1) MCA, states "county commissioners shall ensure the formation of an interdisciplinary child information and school safety team"; and

WHEREAS, section 52-2-211(1) further states that such team "includes representatives authorized by any of the following: youth court, county attorney, department of public health and human services, county superintendent of schools, sheriff, chief of any police force, any board of trustees of a public school district operating within the boundaries of the county and the department of corrections; and

WHEREAS, the interdisciplinary child information and school safety team will operate under the further guidance of 52-2-211(3), (4), (5), (6), (7), and (8); and

WHEREAS, 52-2-211(9) requires "the County Superintendent of Schools shall provide to the Office of Public Instruction a current copy of any written agreement under this section no later than September 1;"

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by order of the Pondera County Commissioners, they hereby form the Pondera County Interdisciplinary Child Information and School Safety Team.

Adopted this 2nd day of September, 2026, 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, Member

AUGUST COMMISSION MINUTES APPROVED

Commissioner Kuka moved and Commissioner Drishinski seconded to approve the August 2026 Minutes of the Commission. Motion carried.

SEPTEMBER 9, 2026 REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMISSION:

PRESENT: Commissioner Jim Morren, Commissioner Zane Drishinski, Clerk & Recorder Kody Farkell, Deputy Clerk & Recorder Tammy Bartsch, Undersheriff Robert Bender, Public – Paul Anderberg, Cindy Johnson, Ted Kronebusch (Port Authority), Lisa Schmidt, Sarah Converse (Sweetgrass Development)

Public Comment-

Sarah Converse reported on the Pondera County activities performed by Sweetgrass Development from 2020-2026. She is asking Pondera County to pay the annual dues for Sweetgrass Development. Commissioner Morren agreed to put this on the agenda for discussion after Cindy Johnson visits with the City of Conrad regarding the city withholding the agreed annual payment to the county for the Blue Sky Villa housing development.

REVISED JOB DESCRIPTION APPROVED
Commissioner Drishinski moved to approve the revised job description for fulltime Detention Officer. Commissioner Morren seconded. Motion carried.

TASK ORDER AMENDMENT CONTRACT FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, & CHILDREN (WIC) GRANT
Commissioner Drishinski moved and Commissioner Morren seconded to approve an amendment for Women, Infants, & Children (WIC) task order contract with the Montana Department of Health & Human Services. Motion carried.

HAYING AGREEMENTS-APPROVED
Commissioner Drishinski moved to approve the following Yearly Right-of-Way Forage Removal Agreement/Applications:
Ray VandenBos – Valier Airport
Commissioner Morren seconded. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION ON AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A CONTRACT WITH HILINE'S HELP FOR ABUSED SPOUSES FOR PROVISION OF VICTIM WITNESS SERVICES TO PONDERA COUNTY

PONDERA COUNTY MONTANA
RESOLUTION #6 – 2026/27

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A CONTRACT WITH HILINE'S HELP FOR ABUSED SPOUSES FOR PROVISION OF VICTIM WITNESS SERVICES TO PONDERA COUNTY

WHEREAS, Montana Code Annotated section 46-24 et. seq. sets forth the legal requirements for County Attorneys to maintain contact with and provide notice to victims of certain crimes prosecuted in the County; and

WHEREAS, the County Attorney's office does not have a victim witness advocate devoted to providing notice and maintaining contact with victims of crime in Pondera County and lacks the proper personnel to provide such services with its current staff; and

WHEREAS, HiLine's Help for Abused Spouses (HLHAS) has the infrastructure and trained personnel to provide such services at a reasonable rate to the County Attorney's office;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Chairperson of the Pondera County Commissioners is hereby authorized to enter into a one-year Agreement with HiLine's Help for Abused Spouses identified as, "Professional Victim Advocacy Services Contract" with a date of October 1, 2026 as the start date to provide victim witness advocate services to Pondera County.

Adopted this 9th day of September, 2026, as moved by Commissioner Drishinski, seconded by Commissioner Morren, and passed on a 2-0 vote of the board. Effective upon passage and approval.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Pondera County, Montana

/s/ Jim Morren
Jim Morren, Chairman

Absent
Thomas A Kuka, Member

Attest: */s/ Kody Farkell*
Kody Farkell, Clerk & Recorder

/s/ Zane Drishinski
Zane Drishinski, Member

CONTRACT WITH HILINE'S HELP FOR ABUSED SPOUSES
Commissioner Drishinski moved to approve the Professional Victim Advocacy Services Contract with HiLine's Help for Abused Spouses for the amount of $42,000. Commissioner Morren seconded. Motion carried.

EXPENDITURES IN EXCESS OF $1,500-APPROVED
Commissioner Drishinski moved to approve the purchase of a transmission from Winter's Transmission for a Sheriff Department vehicle in the amount of $7,500.00. Paid from the Stonegarden Grant. Commissioner Morren seconded. Motion carried.

SEPTEMBER 16, 2026 REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMISSION:
PRESENT: Commissioner Jim Morren, Commissioner Zane Drishinski, Commissioner Tom Kuka, Clerk & Recorder Kody Farkell, Deputy Clerk & Recorder Tammy Bartsch, Public – Paul Anderberg, McKenzie Graye

MATTERS WITHIN THE COMMISSION'S JURISDICTION OUTSIDE REGULAR MEETING
Commissioner Drishinski attended a meeting with Toole County Commission, September 9, 2026 to discuss Northern Transit operating the Conrad Surrey.

All Commissioners took part in Extension Agent interviews September 11, 2026.

DATE, TIME AND PLACE SET FOR PUBLIC HEARING OF PROPOSED OFFICE CLOSINGS ON THE DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING AND THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS
Commissioner Drishinski moved to set Wednesday, October 7, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. in the County Commissioners office as the date, time and place for a public hearing on the proposal to close the county offices on the day after Thanksgiving and at 12:00 pm the day before Christmas. Commissioner Kuka seconded. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION ON ESTABLISHING SATELLITE ELECTION OFFICE ON BLACKFEET RESERVATION IN HEART BUTTE FOR THE NOVEMBER 3, 2026 FEDERAL GENERAL ELELCTION

PONDERA COUNTY MONTANA
RESOLUTION #7 – 2026/27
ESTABLISHING SATELLITE ELECTION OFFICE ON BLACKFEET RESERVATION IN HEART BUTTE FOR THE NOVEMBER 3, 2026 FEDERAL GENERAL ELECTION

WHEREAS, the Montana Secretary of State has issued Election Directive #01-2015 dated October 15, 2015, to all Counties in Montana with an American Indian reservation that includes voting-eligible residents to open satellite election offices on those reservations, if certain conditions are met;

WHEREAS, the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council has requested a Satellite Election Office on the Blackfeet Reservation in Heart Butte, Pondera County, Montana, and has agreed to provide an appropriate location for said office which meets the criteria for an appropriate office as detailed in the Election Directive #01-2015; and

WHEREAS, based on census data and current voter registration numbers for the Heart Butte Precinct, Pondera County officials agree to establish a Satellite Election Office on the Blackfeet Reservation in Heart Butte for the November 3, 2026 Federal General Election as follows:

Thursday, October 15, 2026	10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Tuesday, October 27, 2026	10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that based on census data and current voter registration numbers for the Heart Butte Precinct, Pondera County officials agree to establish a Satellite Election Office on the Blackfeet Reservation in Heart Butte for the November 3, 2026 Federal General Election as follows:

Thursday, October 15, 2026	10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Tuesday, October 27, 2026	10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Satellite Election Office on the Blackfeet Reservation will be in place for the Federal General Election, the days and hours will be

evaluated after the November 3, 2026 Federal General Election and adapted, if necessary, prior to setting days and hours for future elections.

Adopted this 16th day of September, 2026 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

/s/ Zane Drishinski
Zane Drishinski, Member

ATTEST:

/s/ Kody L Farkell
Kody L. Farkell, Clerk and Recorder

SEPTEMBER 23, 2026 REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMISSION:
PRESENT: Commissioner Jim Morren, Commissioner Tom Kuka, Clerk & Recorder Kody Farkell, Deputy Clerk & Recorder Tammy Bartsch, Public – McKenzie Graye

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TASK ORDER FOR MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (MCH)-APPROVED
Commissioner Kuka moved to approve Task Order 19-07-5-01-037-0 to the Master Contract for the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant Program Grant (MCH). The County will receive $6,198 for federal fiscal year 2026-27. Commissioner Morren seconded. Motion carried.

SEPTEMBER 30, 2026 REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMISSION:
PRESENT: Commissioner Jim Morren, Commissioner Tom Kuka, Commissioner Zane Drishinski, Deputy Clerk & Recorder Tammy Bartsch, Road/Bridge Superintendent Frosty DeBoo, Public – McKenzie Graye, Paul Anderberg

MATTERS WITHIN THE COMMISSION'S JURISDICTION OUTSIDE REGULAR MEETING
Commissioner Kuka reported on the Roy Davis project in Valier, MT.

APPROVED THE JUNK VEHICLE PROGRAM GRANT
Commissioner Kuka moved and Commissioner Drishinski seconded on the approval of the grant for the Junk Vehicle Program. The program will pay $16,717.40 to the County for the removal of junk vehicles. Motion carried.

CONRAD AIRPORT LAND LEASE APPROVED
Commissioner Kuka moved and Commissioner Drishinski seconded to approve an airport land lease with Iceberg Enterprises in the amount of $132 per year for a period of 5 years. Motion carried.

CLAIMS APPROVED FOR PAYMENT

FUND		
Fund	Fund Description	
1000	GENERAL	74,305.22
2110	ROAD	34,445.78
2130	BRIDGE	215.61
2140	WEED	2,124.71
2170	AIRPORT	2,089.63
2230	AMBULANCE	176.69

2290	EXTENSION SERVICE	9,305.03
2300	PUBLIC SAFETY (LAW ENFORCEMENT)	16,407.79
2390	DRUG FORFEITURE	180.00
2401	BRADY LIGHTS MAINTENANCE	364.63
2800	ALCOHOL REHABILITATION	5,321.79
2820	GAS APORTIONMENT TAX	8,423.78
2830	JUNK VEHICLE	311.43
2850	911 EMERGENCY	8,313.47
2860	LAND USE PLANNING	400.00
2866	NORTHERN TRANSIT INTERLOCAL	494.34
2917	VICTIM & WITNESS ADV PROG	926.00
2958	EP (DES) GRANTS	243.82
2960	TOWN PUMP GRANT	5,154.66
2962	LOR FOUNDATION GRANT	5,169.39
2963	ORAL HEALTH SERVICES GRANT	425.00
2965	INNOVATION BEH HEALTH	9,018.32
2971	WIC GRANT	72.66
2973	MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH	11.43
2976	IMMUNIZATION ACTION GRANT	171.72
2978	CHRONIC DISEASE GRANT	700.26
2980	HEALTH CARE FOUND. GRANT	2,083.00
4012	GENERAL FUND CAPITAL IMP	7284.59
7920	REFUND FUND	10,561.62

TOTAL CLAIMS	$204,702.37
TOTAL PAYROLL	$385,841.26
TOTAL CLAIMS AND PAYROLL FUNDS	$590,543.63

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m. on September 30, 2026

Pondera County, Montana.

Jim Morren, Chairman

ATTEST:

Kody L Farkell, Clerk & Recorder

COUNTY CLERK & RECORDER SEAL PONDERA COUNTY, MONTANA