

BILLINGS COUNTY COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

BILLINGS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL JOINT MEETING MINUTES Date: March 30, 2026 Location: Billings County Commission Room
Buffalo Gap Road Extension Discussion – Billings County & Golden Valley County CALL TO ORDER

The special joint meeting of the Billings County Board of County Commissioners and the Golden Valley County Board of County Commissioners was called to order at 1:00PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Commissioners in attendance: Dean Rodne, James Haag, Steven Klym from Billings County. Adam Smith, Robert Schmeling, Rory Farstveet from Golden Valley County.

Others in attendance: Marcia Kessel, Travis Bateman, Andrew Krebs, Anita Adams, Misty Hays, Cody Armbrust, Carl Rohde, Pat Redmond, Stacey Swanson, Jeremy Easum, Tamra Sperry, Pete Wirtzfeld, Kyle Shockley.

SPECIAL AGENDA ITEM
Buffalo Gap Road Extension – Joint County Discussion: Two proposals were received. Both firms provided presentations and answered questions regarding experience, staffing, schedule, environmental work, permitting, and subcontracting. Board members discussed permitting timelines, environmental surveys, FLEX funding opportunities, rate comparisons, and coordination with the Forest Service.

Motion: Adam Smith moved to accept Brosz Engineering proposal. Rory Farstveet seconded. All Golden Valley Commissioners voted aye.

Motion: Steven Klym moved to accept Brosz Engineering proposal. Jim Haag seconded. All Billings

County Commissioners voted aye.

County staff to finalize contract documents with Brosz/KLJ and return contract for signatures.

Brosz/KLJ to begin preliminary corridor work, coordinate environmental surveys, and engage Forest Service for permitting and schedule coordination.

Misty Hayes from US Forest Service requested inclusion of a design allowance for a Maah Daah Hey Trail crossing at Knutson Creek to mitigate beaver dam flooding and trail impacts. Engineers were asked to evaluate crossing options (e.g., box culvert) and include an allowance and cost options in design documents. The boards were in concurrence.

Jim Haag moved to adjourn the joint commission meeting at 1:37pm. Steven Klym seconded.

Rory Farstveet moved to adjourn the joint commission meeting at 1:37pm. Adam Smith seconded.

Chairman Dean Rodne called the special meeting of the Billings County Commission to order to continue the special meeting at 1:38pm.

SPECIAL AGENDA ITEM
Purchase Agreement for 10.11 Acres at Fairfield (County Shop Area)

A purchase agreement for a 10.11acre tract north of the county shop and fire department was presented. Discussion included existing materials/equipment on the parcel, cleanup responsibilities, condition of well/utilities, and whether to accept the property as is.

Motion: Jim Haag moved to proceed with the purchase agreement as written. Klym seconded. All voted aye.

County staff to obtain updated purchase agreement with correct signatures and proceed to closing. Facilities / Fire Department to inventory salvageable items and estimate

cleanup costs; report back to the board.

SPECIAL AGENDA ITEM
Floodplain Management Ordinance Amendment (Public Hearing)

Tax & Zoning Director Stacey Swanson presented a draft Floodplain Management Ordinance update required by state legislation for areas not mapped by FEMA. The draft has been reviewed by the State Water Commission and FEMA with no comments; the zoning board recommended approval. No public comments were received at the hearing.

Motion: Steven Klym moved to adopt the Floodplain Management Ordinance as presented. Jim Haag seconded. All voted aye.

Swanson will publish adoption notice and submit the ordinance to the State Water Commission for final processing.

SPECIAL AGENDA ITEM
Campground Ordinance Amendments

Tax & Zoning Director Stacey Swanson presented updates to campground regulations including definitions (campground, RV park, permanent campground, glamping campground), minimum area and density standards (minimum 5 acres; density limits; lower density for glamping), state licensing triggers (three or more sites), and parking requirements. No public comments were received.

Motion: Jim Haag moved to approve amendments to the Billings County Zoning Ordinance as presented. Steven Klym seconded. All voted aye.

Swanson will publish ordinance adoption notice and update application guidance and materials.

Motion: Dean Rodne moved to adjourn the special meeting at 2:15pm. Steven Klym seconded. All voted aye.

/s/ Dean Rodne
Dean Rodne, Chairman
/s/ Marcia Kessel
Marcia Kessel, Auditor
Published April 23, 2026

Environmental Education Impact

Project Learning Tree (PLT), an initiative of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, is an award-winning education program that advances environmental awareness, forest literacy, and green career pathways, using trees and forests as windows on the world. The Leadership in Education award recognizes educators who make significant contributions in their state to PLT and youth environmental education.

“Hank is a pillar in the North Dakota Project Learning Tree program. He is dedicated to increasing access to environmental education opportunities for rural and tribal students statewide,” said Beth Hill, the North Dakota PLT State Coordinator at the North Dakota Forest Service. “Hank is an incredible educator who has taught thousands of North Dakota students about the importance of our beautiful state and its natural resources and people.”

Since being trained in Project Learning Tree in 2001, he has been committed to providing connections to North Dakota through environmental education and traditional knowledge. In 2003, through the assistance of a Green Works grant, LaBore coordinated a tree planting ceremony where 20 trees were

planted at the heart of the communities where he helps connect students from rural and tribal schools to nature. He wants to ensure everyone can learn about and enjoy the environment,” says Beth Hill.

LaBore retired from teaching in 2016, but in retirement, his enthusiasm for environmental education hasn't dimmed. He now visits rural classrooms twice a year as a guest presenter, traveling the entirety of the western two thirds of North Dakota to provide educational lessons and activities related to trees, watersheds, and indigenous connections. This outreach meets more classes where they are, reaching more than 1500 rural students each year. He uses his years of experience to teach these environmental education topics in innovative ways, and has modified a number of existing PLT lessons to highlight the state's natural resources for the required 4th grade North Dakota Studies class.

“Hank's passion for improving access to environmental education is one of the things that truly makes him stand out. Oftentimes, students in rural areas

don't have access to events or resources, so Hank travels to the heart of the communities where he helps connect students from rural and tribal schools to nature. He wants to ensure everyone can learn about and enjoy the environment,” says Beth Hill.

Since 1976, PLT has reached 145 million students and trained 765,000 educators to help students learn how to think, not what to think, about complex environmental issues. PLT helps develop students' awareness, knowledge, and appreciation of the environment, builds their skills and ability to make informed decisions and encourages them to take personal responsibility for sustaining the environment and our quality of life that depends on it.

LaBore, along with Heather Bevis, an early childhood educator with St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge in Florida, was honored at the 2026 PLT Annual Conference at the Arbor Day Farm in Nebraska March 23-25, 2026.

The recipients of PLT's Leadership in Education were selected from nominees across the US for their leadership in implementing PLT programs and initiatives within their state, provincial, and local communities.

CITY OF MEDORA BOARD OF EQUALIZATION PROCEEDINGS

City of Medora Draft Minutes of Board of Equalization Meeting April 7, 2026 (Subject of Council review and approval)

Meeting was called to order at 5:00pm by Mayor Derwin Zuroff. Present were Council members Jodi Johnson, Clarence Sitter, Jim Bridger, and Administrator Ivy Maus. Council member Tracy Sexton was absent.

No members from the public were present.

Billings County Tax Director and City Assessor, Stacey Swanson, presented the Board with a packet of information on how the 2026 city tax assessments were determined.

County and State Tax Departments conduct annual

audits to ensure real estate assessments stay within 90% to 100% of actual market value, as required by law. They calculate a median sales ratio by comparing recent sale prices to assessed values. Land values were updated last year in 2025, so there were no changes in 2026. Billings County's 2026 residential assessments were adjusted to address a median ratio of 86.5%, which fell below the state's required 90-100% range. While land values remained unchanged, mass-appraisal updates for the City of Medora

resulted in an approximate 4.4% increase in residential building assessments to bring them in line with market value.

Billings County's commercial median sales ratio of 90%

indicates assessments are within tolerance but near the low end of market value. For 2026, assessments in Medora increased by 12.55%, driven by updating modeling for retail and food/beverage properties to address wider market value gaps. The total true and full value in Medora is 20% residential, with the remaining 80% commercial. City Council members, serving as the City Board of Equalization, reviewed the valuations. The 2026 projected net taxable value is \$3,273,753.00. One mil is about \$3,273.75.

Sitter moved to approve the 2026 tax assessments as presented, Johnson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 5:28pm.

/s/ Derwin Zuroff
Derwin Zuroff, Mayor
/s/ Ivy Maus
Ivy Maus, Auditor
Published April 23, 2026



Hank LaBore (third from left) receives the Leadership in Education Award from Project Learning Tree, for his outstanding contributions to environmental education in North Dakota.

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