

MINUTES

MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 59th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

JOINT APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON LONG RANGE PLANNING

Call to Order: By **CHAIRMAN JACK WELLS**, on January 27, 2005 at 8:00 A.M., in Room 350 Capitol.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Rep. Jack Wells, Chairman (R)
Sen. John Brueggeman (R)
Rep. Ralph L. Lenhart (D)

Members Excused: None.

Members Absent: Sen. Jon Tester, Vice Chairman (D)
Sen. Mike Cooney (D)
Rep. Carol C. Juneau (D)
Sen. Bob Keenan (R)
Rep. John E. Witt (R)

Staff Present: Laura Dillon, Committee Secretary
Catherine Duncan, Legislative Branch
Amy Carlson, OBPP

Please Note. These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

Committee Business Summary:

Hearing & Date Posted: HB 5, 1/27/2005
Executive Action:

Reference book is: Governor's Budget State of Montana, Fiscal Years 2006-2007, Long Range Building Program (LRBP), Volume 4.

CHAIRMAN WELLS opened the hearing for HB 5 Projects.

Joe Triem, Department of Administration, Architecture and Engineering, told the committee that the first two projects would be presented by the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS).

Montana Developmental Center, Page 102

Proponents' Testimony:

Jeff Sturm, Director, Montana Developmental Disabilities Program, stated that this was the first of two projects for the center. The gym and stage floors will be replaced. The current floors are worn almost to the sub-floor. Leaky windows will be replaced for energy efficiency.

Opponents' Testimony: none.

Questions from Committee Members and Responses: none.

Montana Developmental Center Secure Unit, Page 147

Proponents' Testimony:

Mr. Sturm said the Montana Developmental Center has been accepting residents with more aggressive and more criminal backgrounds. Medicaid requires that these aggressive residents be housed in a secure care unit at the facility. The units at the facility are generally full, due to the increased population served. The potential mix of these aggressive residents with the remainder of the resident population is cause for concern. The project will fund improvements that will enable the facility to accommodate its growing secure-care population.

Opponents' Testimony: none.

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked where the current secure-care residents are moved to when a more aggressive resident is accepted.

Mr. Sturm responded that the resident is moved back onto the less-secure unit.

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked if this meant dangerous residents were being housed with the general facility population.

Mr. Sturm answered, "Yes."

CHAIRMAN WELLS commented that there were currently eight beds available for the secure-care unit. He asked how many additional beds were needed.

Mr. Sturm responded that a total of 14 to 16 beds would be within the budget.

CHAIRMAN WELLS added that the committee hoped to visit the Montana Developmental Center in the coming week.

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 16.7}

Mr. Triem introduced the next three projects. Each project funds improvements to the Montana State Hospital (MSH) in Warm Springs.

Facility Improvements MSH Warm Springs

Proponents' Testimony:

Mr. Triem described the facility. MSH is the only state hospital in Montana. The hospital provides health care to residents with addictive and mental disorders. The proposed project will provide air conditioning to the main hospital, where high temperatures can exceed state limits in the summer. The seclusion rooms and other sections of the facility will also be remodeled to better accommodate persons with disabilities. The amount requested for completion of this project is \$595,000.

Ed Amberg, DPHHS, MSH, further outlined the proposed improvements to the hospital. The current facility is not large enough to adequately meet the needs of its residents. He feels that residents in this hospital should be entitled to the same quality level of care as in any other state facility.

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 16.7 - 28.5}

Opponents' Testimony: none.

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

REP. LENHART asked if the hospital population was increasing.

Mr. Triem responded that the hospital population was increasing. The number of residents with a criminal background has also increased.

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 28.5 - 30.5}

REP. LENHART asked if the mental health facility in Lewistown was related to the MSH facility.

Mr. Amberg explained that the Lewistown facility was a nursing care center and the facility at Warm Springs was a licensed hospital.

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked for the average number of residents in the facility at a given time.

Mr. Amberg replied that the number of residents in the hospital stays at capacity, which is 189.

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked how long the average patient stayed in the hospital.

Mr. Amberg replied that most patients stay at the facility for around three months.

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked what the acronym "PRU" stood for.

Mr. Amberg answered that it referred to the Psycho-social Rehabilitation Unit. Patients learn social skills necessary to live with mental illness at this type of unit.

{Tape: 1; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 9.7}

Demolish Abandoned Buildings DPHHS, Page 141

Proponents' Testimony:

Mr. Triem distributed a handout (Exhibit 1) explaining the proposed building demolition. Nearly half of the MSH campus has been abandoned. A building on the Developmental Center Campus in Boulder is also proposed for demolition. The buildings will be destroyed because they are safety hazards and no alternate uses for the buildings can be found. The project budget is \$1.93 million and includes the buildings at both campuses. The department will work with Fish Wildlife and Parks and the Department of Environmental Quality to properly dispose of the debris. Labor contributions from the agencies will reduce project costs.

EXHIBIT(jlh21a01)

Mr. Amberg said that this was the first time money has been available to address the buildings. Broken glass and other dangerous debris are located at the sites and the buildings are not secure.

Mr. Sturm added that the building on the Boulder campus has not been used for over 20 years. Renovation of the building would be very expensive.

Opponents' Testimony: none.

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

REP. LENHART asked if the Department of Corrections had shown any interesting in utilizing the buildings.

Mr. Triem replied that they had discussed alternate uses of the buildings with the Department of Corrections and other agencies. No one has expressed interest in using the buildings.

{Tape: 1; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 9.7 - 24}

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked what the expansion unit on the Warm Springs campus was used for.

Mr. Triem explained that the unit was being used by the Department of Corrections when the map of the facility was created.

Mr. Amberg added that the building has had many uses. The Department of Corrections has used the building, but they do not feel it is secure enough to serve the purpose of a correctional facility.

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked if the state prison could potentially use inmate labor on the projects.

Mr. Triem replied that the Department of Corrections had expressed interest in helping with the project.

Mr. Amberg commented that the department can potentially run into grievances from labor unions for utilizing inmate labor.

CHAIRMAN WELLS felt that using inmate labor on the projects would benefit the Department of Corrections as well as the taxpayers.

{Tape: 1; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 24 - 30.5}

MSH Chapel, Page 166**Proponents' Testimony:**

Mr. Triem explained that this project is a request for authority to construct a chapel at the MSH Warm Springs campus. The chapel will be constructed with private funds. The project is requesting \$350,000 worth of spending authority.

Mr. Amberg commented that faith is an important aspect of patient rehabilitation. Currently, there are Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Native American chaplains available to the residents. The chapel would provide adequate space for religious ceremonies or quiet reflection. Former Governor Judy Martz has expressed interest in helping with the project.

Opponents' Testimony: none.

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked if the hospital was seeking funds for the project from a particular religious denomination.

Mr. Amberg responded that various church and civic organizations would be approached for donations.

{Tape: 2; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 4.5}

Eastern Montana Veterans Home, Page 160**Proponents' Testimony:**

Kelly Williams, DPHHS, explained that this project would allow for renovation of the veterans home to address the needs of the residents who suffer from Alzheimers or dementia. The facility is seeing an increased demand for a special care unit. \$475,000 has been requested for the renovation. This will provide for a 16 bed special unit and a new nurses station. Ms. Williams distributed copies of the proposed remodeling plan (Exhibit 2) for the committee members.

EXHIBIT (j1h21a02)

REP. LENHART went on record in support of the project.

Opponents' Testimony: none.

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked how many beds would be added to the special care unit.

Ms. Williams replied that the current special care unit holds 10 beds. The proposed project would provide an additional six beds.

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked if the 80-bed capacity of the facility included the special care beds.

Ms. William replied that the special care beds were included in the building capacity.

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked if funding for the project could come from a portion of the tobacco tax.

Ms. Williams responded that this tax is used to supplement the operation and maintenance of the nursing home facilities.

Montana Veterans Home, Page 163

Proponents' Testimony:

Ms. Williams described the veterans home campus, which is located in Columbia Falls. The proposed project will facilitate improvements to the service building and superintendent's building, which are located on the grounds. Both of these buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Lighting and roof improvements, as well as asbestos abatement, will be addressed through this project. The project cost is estimated at \$465,000.

{Tape: 2; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 4.5 - 15.4}

REP. LENHART went on record in support of the Montana Veterans Home Project.

Opponents' Testimony: none.

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

CHAIRMAN WELLS asked what the total capacity of the facility was.

Ms. Williams stated that the facility had 150 beds, with 15 beds devoted to special care patients.

School for the Deaf and Blind, Page 144**Proponents' Testimony:**

Mr. Triem stated that \$400,000 has been recommended for this project at the School for the Deaf and Blind in Great Falls. The funding will be used to complete eight separate projects. The school has a low operations and maintenance budget and is unable to handle more costly repairs. Siding on the building will be repaired or replaced and some of the gas furnaces will be replaced. The food service dishwasher will be replaced and the fire alarm system will be updated or replaced. The windows and lighting will be addressed for greater energy efficiency.

Opponents' Testimony: none.

Questions from Committee Members and Responses: none.

CHAIRMAN WELLS reminded the committee members that they would be touring the Helena College of Technology the following day. The chairman adjourned the meeting.

{Tape: 2; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 15.4 - 29}

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 9:30 A.M.

REP. JACK WELLS, Chairman

LAURA DILLON, Secretary

JW/lld

Additional Exhibits:

EXHIBIT ([jlh21aad0.PDF](#))