BEFORE THE BOARD OF ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

BOARD MEETING ) AUGUST 12, 2022 )

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS (VIA ZOOM)

August 12, 2022
9:00 a.m.

BEFORE CHAIRMAN STEVEN RUFFATTO, BOARD MEMBERS DAVID SIMPSON, JON REITEN, JULIA ALTEMUS and DAVID LEHNHERR PREPARED BY: LAURIE CRUTCHER, RPR COURT REPORTER, NOTARY PUBLIC
lauriecrutcher@gmail.com

WHEREUPON, the following proceedings were had:

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Thank you. I will now call the meeting to order. And Sandy, would you please call the roll.

MS. MOISEY-SCHERER: GOOd morning.
Chairman Ruffatto.
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Here.
MS. MOISEY-SCHERER: Vice Chair Aguirre.
(No response)
MS. MOISEY-SCHERER: Vice Chair Aguirre.
(No response)
MS. MOISEY-SCHERER: Board Member Altemus.

BOARD MEMBER ALTEMUS: Here.
MS. MOISEY-SCHERER: Board Member
Lehnherr.
BOARD MEMBER LEHNHERR: Here.
MS. MOISEY-SCHERER: Board Member
Reiten.
BOARD MEMBER REITEN: Here.
MS. MOISEY-SCHERER: Board Member
Simpson.
BOARD MEMBER SIMPSON: Here.

MS. MOISEY-SCHERER: Board Member Smith. (No response)

MS. MOISEY-SCHERER: Board Member Smith.
(No response)
MS. MOISEY-SCHERER: We have five Board members present, sir.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Thank you, Sandy. We have a quorum. I knew that Board Member Smith was not going to be here. We did not hear from Stacy Aguirre, as far as $I$ know, so maybe she will join. But we will proceed in any event.

So let's start with the review and approval of the minutes of the meeting on June 10. Do I have a motion to approve the minutes? BOARD MEMBER ALTEMUS: So moved. Julia Altemus. So moved.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: I think we have a motion by Board Member Altemus, and I heard a second by someone.

BOARD MEMBER SIMPSON: Second.
CHAIR RUFFATTO: By Board Member
Simpson.
BOARD MEMBER SIMPSON: This is Dave.
Second.
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Any discussion?
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: All in favor of approving the minutes of the June 10 th meeting, say aye.
(Response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Opposed.
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: The motion passes.
The next administrative item is the subject of in-person Board meetings. We have discussed this off and on for the past year and a half, and $I$ wanted to bring it up again.

And it has been suggested to me that it would be good for us to have an in-person meeting once in awhile so that we could meet in person, and get to know each other a little better in person, and $I$ think that's a good idea. So I would like to have some discussion about that.

My thinking is that we would not ever have an in-person meeting alone because $I$ think it's important to have the option of joining by Zoom, but $I$ think it would be a good idea for all of us to make an effort once in awhile, and $I$ think it would be a good idea to have a coordinated effort. So any discussion?

BOARD MEMBER SIMPSON: This is Dave. I certainly support the idea. I think I've mentioned before. This is $I$ think the sixth board/commission/advisory committee that I've been on, and $I$ really -- of course before, before the pandemic interfered with everything, all meetings were conducted in person, and zoom $I$ don't think had even yet come to be. But anyway, this goes back to the Harry Truman Administration pretty close.

But anyway, I think the interpersonal dynamic is important to get to know each other. We've been meeting by zoom now since our new appointments almost two years ago now, and $I$ think at a very minimum it would be good to meet in person, and get to know each other a little better. I really think it helps the deliberations of the group.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Any other thoughts?
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Well, I'm in favor of it, but we -- and my thinking is that maybe we should have a goal of meeting in person once a year. And it's only a goal, it's not a requirement. But $I$ don't think it's going to work
unless a number, let's say a majority of the Board commit to going to Helena for an in-person meeting once a year.

And let me also say $I$ don't think that means that all of those people who would attend the meeting would necessarily have to be in person. I think that can be by Zoom. And I think that has a lot of advantages. Let me give a few examples.

If a lawyer in Billings or Bozeman wants to appear and doesn't want to incur the expense and time of traveling to Helena, it's fine to appear by Zoom. Similarly there's usually a number of people from State government that are on these calls, and $I$ think it's probably more efficient for them to monitor these calls by Zoom. All I'm talking about is Board members making an effort to be in person once a year.

So the way I think we should approach -Well, and let me say $I$ think the October meeting would be a good meeting to try that. With Board Member Smith and Board Member Aguirre not being on the call, $I$ can't judge what they might say, although $I$ do recall Board Member Aguirre in the past stating her view that we should have some
in-person meetings.
So let me try this. I would move that the Board designate one meeting a year when all Board members will make an effort to get to Helena for an in-person meeting, and that that first one be the October 14 th meeting 2022. And that's my motion.

BOARD MEMBER SIMPSON: Second.
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Further discussion. Yes, Doctor.

BOARD MEMBER LEHNHERR: Chairman Ruffatto, $I$ think in general it's a good idea to meet in person if possible at different times, although it's not just pandemic related concerns that may prevent someone from being able to attend in person. Depending on where you live or a variety of other circumstances, it may not be possible to get to Helena, and $I$ hope we always -and you've mentioned always having an option for attending by Zoom. I support the motion, but I do think it's very important we always have the option of attending by Zoom.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Thanks, Doctor.
BOARD MEMBER REITEN: I've got a
comment, too. Unfortunately I am not going to be
able to attend in October. I've got out of state commitments, and $I$ probably won't even be able to join via Zoom, so I'll announce that right now. But $I$ do support the idea, but unfortunately I won't be able to make the October meeting.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Understood, Jon. Any further discussion? Go ahead, Dave.

BOARD MEMBER SIMPSON: Mr. Chairman, this is Dave. I don't know how many of the Board members have been in the board room recently as it's been set up at $D E Q$, but it has been upgraded greatly as far as just a technological upgrade that makes it far easier to have a session where people can join in by Zoom along with the in-person Board members. So that's a consideration as well. The Department obviously has anticipated this, and it is set up and ready for a hybrid meeting, if you will.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Thanks, David. James, do you have any comments from DEQ's point of view that would impact this discussion?

MR. FEHR: I don't. I think that we can certainly accommodate a hybrid. That's not a problem or challenge for us. We're in support of it whichever direction the Board wants to go.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Thanks, James. I will speak for Laurie a little bit. She tells me that hybrid meetings are tougher to handle, especially for the Court Reporter, and so if we have a hybrid meeting, we'll have to keep in mind that we need to accommodate the difficulties that Laurie would have trying to keep track of who is speaking and where it's coming from. Any further discussion? BOARD MEMBER SIMPSON: Just one other comment, Mr. Chairman, and $I$ think you brought it up earlier. I think it's realistic to expect that not all members would be able to attend, but I think in order to have an in-person meeting, we ought to have at least a majority of the Board present.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: That's a good point. I would amend my motion to say that we'll have a goal of doing that on October 14 th, and we will poll the Board in advance, and if we're not going to have a majority of the Board indicate that they plan on being there, we will not have it. Are you okay with that amendment, David?

BOARD MEMBER SIMPSON: Yes, Mr.
Chairman.
CHAIR RUFFATTO: All right. Any further discussion?

BOARD MEMBER ALTEMUS: Mr. Chair, this is Julia. I mean $I$ fully support your motion. I would hope, though, that as we find a date that works for the majority that it's not winter travel. That would be my hope. But we can always join by zoom. Thank you.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: I agree with that,
Julia. That's why I suggested October 14 th, although you never know. That might be winter travel.

BOARD MEMBER ALTEMUS: It could be.
CHAIR RUFFATTO: We hope not, or at least $I$ hope not. All right. A motion has been made and seconded that the Board members have a goal of having a majority of the members in person on October 14 th , and we will take a poll in advance of that meeting to see if we are going to have the majority of the members. And so all in favor, say aye.
(Response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Opposed.
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Thank you. Sandy, would you plan on getting an email out to all

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Board members as soon as possible to tell them that we've had this discussion, and this motion, and to ask them to put it on their calendar. And then let's say three weeks before that Board meeting, would you find out how many are planning on attending on October 14 th? Does that make sense?

MS. MOISEY-SCHERER: It does, sir. Thank you.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Thank you, Sandy.
Let's go to the second administrative item, and that's the adoption of rules for the form of exceptions to proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law.

This has been brought up a couple of times, and it was suggested that we put it on the agenda for a discussion. And $I$ think it was Board Member Simpson that raised this issue.

Mike Russell took a look at it, and thought we would need some sort of rulemaking to get it accomplished. But even aside from the rulemaking, $I$ think we should discuss whether we as a Board think it's really a good idea or not. So before any motion I'd like a little discussion on this point, so $I$ would open that up for
discussion, and then we can see if it comes to a motion.

BOARD MEMBER SIMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I'll-- I'm sorry. I'll defer to Dr. Lehnherr.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Doctor.
BOARD MEMBER LEHNHERR: Thanks, Board Member Simpson. I think Board Member Simpson was probably going to address my question or request. I was just hoping to get an overview of what we were looking at or trying to accomplish.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Board Member Simpson, do you have a response to that, or do you want me to respond with my idea?

BOARD MEMBER SIMPSON: I'll defer to you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Okay. Well, I think this came up in past Board meetings where we felt that the exceptions did not include specific points and specific relief requested in some of the exceptions, so it left us somewhat confused as to what the entity making the exceptions was asking for.

While I agree that there was some difficulty following the briefs, and tracking it with the proposed findings of fact and conclusions
of law, $I$ don't know exactly what we would do to make that process easier. So I probably haven't helped you out, David, but go ahead and make your comment.

BOARD MEMBER SIMPSON: Okay, Mr.
Chairman. This goes back to $I$ believe the last meeting where one of the briefs with exceptions to the proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law raised a number of points, but did not ask for specific relief on any point except their opposition to the adoption of the findings of fact and conclusions of law.

Chairman Ruffatto went through the brief, and sorted out a list of exceptions which we went through, and we rejected some and accepted some, but it seemed to me to be more than a little bit awkward to try to ferret out from what was essentially a narrative brief just what it was that constituted an exception.

So I think it would be far more
sufficient for Board review if exceptions were stated specifically, and specific relief requested where the Board could say yea or nay, and that was the whole reason for the suggestion.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Any more discussion?
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Well, I'll give you my thoughts. I've thought about this a fair amount because it was kind of a laborious process to try to figure out exactly what was going on with those exceptions, but the flip side of that is $I$ don't think that in my view that we can't lay out a rule that is really going to help.

So my thinking is that by making that, making such a rule, we might help the process or we might just make it more complicated, and then the parties would argue about whether the other party followed the rule appropriately, and I don't think we want more argument about procedure.

So I'm inclined to think it's not going to help, and that it could create unintended consequences that we don't want to deal with.

BOARD MEMBER REITEN: I tend to agree with your thoughts on that. If a rule is not needed, why make one?

BOARD MEMBER ALTEMUS: Mr. Chair, could I ask if Mr. Russell had any comments or anything else to add? Is that okay to ask our attorney if he has --

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Of course. Anytime.

BOARD MEMBER ALTEMUS: Thank you.
MR. RUSSELL: Good morning, everyone. I tend to agree with Mr. Ruffatto. I think it would be possible to include a rule saying, or to come up with a rule saying that the party with exceptions must outline the specific basis for the exception, and the specific numbered finding of fact or conclusion of law to streamline it.

But practically speaking, $I$ think most of the time the parties tend to do that. It's in their interests to make it as clear and concise as possible. It could be something that the Hearing Examiner maybe brings up in the initial procedural order providing some guidance on that, but $I$ do think it could further complicate things unnecessarily, like Mr. Chairman brought up.

But I think it's possible to do. I'm not sure if this concern came up due to anything else, or any other reason aside from that specific brief that Board Member Simpson brought up, so I'm not sure how pervasive of an issue it is for that to warrant a rulemaking process on that basis.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: I'd like to emphasize a point that Mike made. It is in the interests of the parties to make their exceptions as clear and
concise as possible, and if they do not do that, it certainly, in my mind, damages the credibility of their argument, and thus $I$ think it behooves the parties to make it as clear and easy for the Board as possible.

The parties know that we're a volunteer board, and $I$ think they have an interest in making it easier for us rather than hard; and if they happen to make it hard, it may mean that they don't have clear and concise arguments. So I think that's a good point.

BOARD MEMBER SIMPSON: Mr. Chairman, this is Dave Simpson. I'd make the observation that the brief in question was filed in opposition to the findings of fact and conclusions of law, whereas those in support of the findings itemized their exceptions and requested specific relief.

From the standpoint of an opposing brief, $I$ suppose $I$ can understand why specific relief to specific points may not be requested because the entity would be in opposition to the findings of fact completely, request that it be remanded or disapproved.

So I can see the rationale behind not asking for specific relief when they're opposed to
the findings as a whole. So then it comes down to a question of organization of the brief, because as $I$ pointed out earlier, in going through the points that were raised, the Board did actually accept some of those exceptions from the opposing party.

So I can understand the concerns here, so $I$ think $I$ 'll refrain from making a motion and go from there.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Thank You, Dave. Does anyone want to make a motion?
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: No motion having been made, we will move on. But $I$ just realized that $I$ failed to have Sandy identify non-board members that are present, and the purpose of that is to identify it for the record. Sandy, are you still in a position to be able to do that?

MS . MOISEY-SCHERER: Yes, sir, I am.
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Would you like to do that.

MS. MOISEY-SCHERER: Laurie Crutcher.
Court Reporter; Aislinn Brown, Agency Legal;
Caitlin Buzzas, Agency Legal; Angie Colamaria, DEQ; Moira Davin, DEQ; Deputy Director Fehr, DEQ;

Jeremiah Langston, DEQ; Kirsten Bowers, DEQ; Michael Russell, Board attorney; Myla Kelly, DEQ; Sam Yemington, Holland and Hart; Vicki Marquis, Counsel; Nick Whitaker, DEQ; Lauren Sweeney, DEQ; Andy Janes; Catherine Armstrong, DEQ; Deb Carroll; Elena Hagen, Agency Legal; Heidi Barnes; Jason Mohr; Lee McKenna, DEQ; Loryn Johnson, DEQ; Murry Warhank, Counsel; Sarah Ogden; Ray Stout; Sonja Nowakowski, DEQ; Tonya Fish, EPA.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Thank you, Sandy. And I also meant to mention early on, and $I$ failed, that $I$ expect this meeting to last less than two hours. So just thought I'd say that for the benefit of those that might be wondering how long we're going to go.

With that, I'm going to go on to the briefing items. The way I'd like to handle it this time is to go page by page, and on each page I'm going to ask essentially for any updates from whoever is on -- Hearing Examiners primarily, but anybody else that has an update, we'll hear them. Then I'll ask for any questions from the Board about the items on that page.

So we'll start with Page 1. Are there any updates on the briefing items on Page 1 ?
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Any questions on the briefing items on Page 1 of the agenda?
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Let's go to Page 2.
Any updates or questions on Page 2?
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: I'll go to Page 3. Any
updates or questions?
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: I have a comment on
Page 3. If you would look at Item (b), small (b) on Page 3, that is the case that is currently in front of the Montana Supreme Court, and the Board is a party to that appeal.

The Board is appealing a lower Court decision that failed to dismiss the Board. The Board position has been that the Board should not be a party to judicial review of its decisions. We are taking that position at the Supreme Court level.

So we hope that gets decided to our liking, but it may not be. I call that out because that's going to -- that case is going to have a bearing on one of our action items. So I
just call that out so you are aware that there's a relationship there.

MS. MOISEY-SCHERER: Chair Ruffatto, Board Member Lehnherr has his hand up.

BOARD MEMBER LEHNHERR: Chairman
Ruffatto, I'm sorry. I did have a question about one of the items on Page 2, under Item $1(b)$, in the matter of Luke Ployhar.

And $I$ had heard something about a fine in that case, and I didn't know if it was related in some way to what the Hearing Examiner was doing. So I'm wondering if someone could address that issue, a possible fine.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Hearing Examiner
Russell, are you aware of any fine involved in that?

MR. RUSSELL: No, I'm not. My understanding of this case is that it's a challenge to the DEQ's determination that an environmental impact survey needed to be done. I wasn't aware of any fine, but $I$ could be wrong. At this point we've issued a procedural order, and I expect to have a proposed scheduling order here by the end of the month.

BOARD MEMBER LEHNHERR: I just saw
something in the media, but who knows where that came from or its validity, so $I$ just thought I'd raise that. Thank you for the information.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Thank you, Doctor. Any more questions on Pages 2 or 3? (No response)

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Let's go to Page 4.
Any updates or questions?
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: We'll go to Page 5. Any updates or questions on the matter there?
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: I have, I guess I'd call it a question or an update, but it's reflected.

Hearing Examiner Patrick Riskin has resigned from the State service, and so he's no longer available for Hearing Examiner service as a member of Agency Legal Services. So $I$ would move that we assign Michael Russell as the Hearing Examiner on the case that appears as lower case (d) on Page 5 .

BOARD MEMBER SIMPSON: Second.
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Discussion.
BOARD MEMBER SIMPSON: And this is Dave

Simpson.
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Thanks, Dave. Any discussion?
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: It's been moved and seconded that Mike Russell, the Board attorney, be designated or assigned as Hearing Examiner to the case, lower case (d) on Page 5 of our agenda. All in favor, say aye.
(Response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Opposed.
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: The motion carries.
Any other questions or comments on Page 5?
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Let's go to Page 6. I have the same point about the first matter there, the Western Sugar Cooperative case. It shows Patrick Riskin as the Hearing Examiner, and I move that we appoint Michael Russell as the Hearing Examiner.

BOARD MEMBER LEHNHERR: Second.
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Discussion?
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: All in favor, say aye.
(Response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Opposed.
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: The motion carries.
Any other questions on Page 6?
MS. BROWN: I do have one update,
Chairman. This is Aislinn Brown. I'm the Hearing Examiner in the Sidney Sugars, Incorporated case, and since this agenda came out, a reply brief was filed in that case, so the motion for summary judgment is now fully briefed.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Thank you, Aislinn.
Any other questions or comments updates on Page 6?
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Let's go to Page 7.
Any questions or comments on briefing items? And it does not include the action items on Page 7 .
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Hearing none, we're going to move on to action items, and the first action item is the Montana Environmental Information Center versus Montana Department of Environmental Quality and Signal Peak Energy.

This is a case that has been filed in Yellowstone County District Court to review our
decision in the Signal Peak matter. As has occurred in the past, the Board has been named a party in this judicial review proceeding.

The Board's position has been that we are not, that we're not an appropriate party, and therefore, we should be dismissed.

However, we have, as I pointed out earlier, we have that issue in front of the Supreme Court, so in my view, we should not spend resources raising that issue here and spending money fighting it here, because $I$ think the Supreme Court decision in the case that's pending before the Montana Supreme Court will hopefully decide that issue one way or the other.

So it's my thinking that we should participate in that case as little as possible, and spend as little resources as possible in that case, and $I$ think that would mean in the past -What can be done is to file a notice of non-participation, and then the attorney that represents the Board will simply monitor the case, and if there's some reason why the Board needs to participate more actively, the Board Counsel can do that, or bring it to the Board for a decision of whether we should participate more actively.

So I guess for purposes of discussion, I will make a motion that the Board participate in this case as little as possible; that the Board appoint Board Counsel Michael Russell to file an appropriate pleading demonstrating that; in that pleading, make any reservations that we think are appropriate, that he thinks are appropriate to reserve our right with respect to the issue that's before the Supreme Court; and also to reserve our right to get involved if there is reason for the Board to do so.

BOARD MEMBER REITEN: I second that.
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Discussion?
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: A motion has been made and seconded that we participate in this matter as little as possible, and we direct the Board Counsel to make an appropriate filing with the Court reserving rights as appropriate. All in favor, say aye.
(Response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Opposed.
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: The motion carries.
(Meeting recessed at 9:42 a.m. and reconvened at 11:08 a.m. Selenium rule transcript bound separately) * * * * *

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Thank you. We'll take a break until 11:18, and hopefully we can wrap things up fairly quickly.
(Recess taken)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: I will reconvene the meeting of the Board, and ask Sandy to call the roll.

MS. MOISEY-SCHERER: Chairman Ruffatto.
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Here.
MS. MOISEY-SCHERER: Board Member Altemus.

BOARD MEMBER ALTEMUS: Here.
MS. MOISEY-SCHERER: Board Member Lehnherr.

BOARD MEMBER LEHNHERR: Here.
MS. MOISEY-SCHERER: Board Member Reiten.

BOARD MEMBER REITEN: Here.
MS. MOISEY-SCHERER: Board Member Simpson.

BOARD MEMBER SIMPSON: Here.
MS. MOISEY-SCHERER: We have a quorum.
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Thank you. Now we're on the new contested case section of the agenda. The first one is the appeal and request for hearing by Valley Garden Land and Cattle, LLC, concerning the issuance of an opencut mining permit.

I issued an order a few weeks ago requesting the parties to tell us whether or not they wanted an -- they would agree to an informal process or not. I did that pursuant to a prior Board decision.

DEQ and Valley Garden Land and Cattle both responded that they wanted an informal conference before they made their decision. I don't think that informal conference has occurred unless $I$ don't have the most current information. Mr. Russell, where are we at on that?

MR. RUSSELL: It has not yet occurred. We did make contact with the permittee's Counsel, and permittee is also interested in that conference. I followed up last week or recently regarding scheduling, so we're getting that scheduled.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Thank You.
Notwithstanding the fact that that has not occurred, $I$ think the Board can still make a decision whether it wants to assign the case for some or all of the matter to a Hearing Examiner, and $I$ would move that we assign the case in its entirety or in totality to Board Counsel Russell. BOARD MEMBER REITEN: I second that motion.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Thank You, Jon.

Discussion?
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: There being no further discussion, a motion has been made and seconded that we assign this matter in its totality to Board Counsel Russell. All in favor, say aye.
(Response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Opposed.
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: The motion passes. The
next matter is the matter of appeal and request for a hearing regarding the Rosebud Mine Area B Amendment 5, and I'd give two updates on this.

One is the Westmoreland and the
Operating Engineers Union have filed a motion to
intervene in this case; and there was also an order issued concerning informal procedures, and $I$ will ask Mr. Russell to explain how that conference went.

MR. RUSSELL: Sure. We held the
informal conference regarding the possibility of adopting or employing informal procedures for this particular contested case. All parties were present including the requested intervenors. We discussed the pros and cons of the formal procedure versus informal procedure, and we got some good feedback back from the parties. This particular case does not seem that it's well suited for informal procedures considering the posture of the parties, and the likelihood that it will reach the judicial review stage. They wanted to make a more complete, more formal record in accordance with the Rules of Civil Procedure that everybody is used to.

So we had a good discussion, and while informal procedures do not appear to be appropriate for this particular case, and the parties didn't consent to them anyway, we're still considering that, trying to keep an eye out for cases that may be appropriate for use of those
procedures.
And that's about all that went on during that conference. I think it was constructive, and it gave me certainly some things to think about, and $I$ appreciated the input from the parties.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Thank you. Any
questions or comments about what Mr. Russell described?
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: If not, then $I$ will
make a motion that we assign this case in its entirety, totality, to Board Counsel Russell as the Hearing Examiner.

BOARD MEMBER LEHNHERR: Second.
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Any discussion?
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Any further discussion?
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Hearing none, a motion has been made and seconded to assign this matter to the Board Counsel Russell in its totality. All in favor, say aye.
(Response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Opposed.
(No response)

CHAIR RUFFATTO: The motion carries. Just one comment that $I$ will make. I did sit in on that informal conference for educational purposes, and while it did not produce an informal procedure -- $I$ really didn't expect it to -- but as Mr. Russell commented, it was good insight, and hopefully there will be a time when we can use informal procedures in an appropriate case, because $I$ think it may shorten the process, and make it less time consuming and resource consuming. So we'll see what happens going forward.

Now we'll go to the Board Counsel update. Any questions for Board Counsel from the Board?
(No response)
CHAIR RUFFATTO: Any comments from Board Counsel that you want to talk to us about?

MR. RUSSELL: I don't think so in addition to what we've already discussed, unless there are specific questions.

CHAIR RUFFATTO: There being none, we will move on to the general public comment, and members of the public may comment on any matter within the jurisdiction of the Board that is not
otherwise on the agenda for the meeting, subject to the point that individual contested case proceedings are not public matters on which the public may comment. So $I$ will open it up to public comment now. (No response) CHAIR RUFFATTO: Hearing none, we will move to the final agenda item. That is adjournment. I move to adjourn this meeting. BOARD MEMBER SIMPSON: Second. CHAIR RUFFATTO: All in favor, say aye. (Response)

CHAIR RUFFATTO: Opposed. (No response)

CHAIR RUFFATTO: The motion carries.
Thank you, everyone. Sorry it took a little longer than $I$ predicted. And $I$ hope to see as many Board members as possible in Helena on, $I$ think it's October 14 th. So hopefully we can all be there, or most of us anyway. Thank you.
(The proceedings were concluded at 11:28 a.m. )
$\qquad$

STATE OF MONTANA )
: SS.
COUNTY OF LEWIS \& CLARK )

I, LAURIE CRUTCHER, RPR, Court Reporter, Notary Public in and for the County of Lewis \& Clark, State of Montana, do hereby certify:

That the proceedings were taken before me at the time and place herein named; that the proceedings were reported by me in shorthand and transcribed using computer-aided transcription, and that the foregoing - 32 - pages contain a true record of the proceedings to the best of my ability.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my notarial seal this 22nd day of August, 2022 .

LAURIE CRUTCHER, RPR
Court Reporter - Notary Public
My commission expires
March 9, 2024.


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