

Levy issue argued in Hall

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Board Member Steve Immenschuh said that "permanent is not the correct terminology."

"If the voters decide they don't want the tax a year from now, they can do that."

County Attorney Chris Miller concurred with Immenschuh and explained that statute allows for rescission of the tax on any future ballot measure.

"It's a matter of getting a petition to get it on the ballot," he said.

Board Chair Ken Burd explained that the original ballot issue stated the levy would be in effect until repealed by the voters. The changing of that phrase to permanent, he said, has the same legal effect.

A citizen asked him if the tax places an undue burden on local businesses who may pay more in taxes because of equipment.

"We have about a two million

dollar payroll and a lot of that money gets recycled in the community and the beneficiaries of that tend to be businesses," he said.

"There is the thought," Luthje countered, "that businesses will grow - if they have that extra money they can build a building."

Bob Olson from the Montana Hospital Association had brought charts which showed the resident usage of GCMC versus out-of-county facilities. In a recent year the Town of Hall sent nine residents to the hospital in Philipsburg, 30 to Missoula and six to other facilities. Drummond sent 18 to Philipsburg, 129 to Missoula and five elsewhere. In Philipsburg, 166 residents went to their own facility while 59 went to Missoula and 51 went to other facilities.

The chart also tracks hospital admissions. There were no Drummond residents admitted to the hospital and they sent 47 to Missoula. Philipsburg sent 28

residents to their own hospital and 67 to Missoula. Olson noted that 15 communities in Montana have a critical access designation and they do so for two reasons:

"To take advantage of federal regulations and Medicare relief." Burd explained that properly seeking Medicare reimbursement has proven difficult.

"We learned that we had been over reimbursed by Medicare to the tune of about \$350,000. In the following months we learned we owed them another \$500,000." He said a notice like that from Medicare is like getting a notice from the IRS - you have to pay. The Board recently learned that they had been under reimbursed by Medicare for a more recent period by \$260,000.

"What seems to be the pattern is that it's fairly unpredictable. Because we operate on such a small margin we don't have the opportunity to build up a reserve," he said of the need for an ongoing levy to support GCMC.



Emergency prepared

Granite County Medical Center held the Granite Guardian emergency preparedness this month event in conjunction with Leanne Vreeland Consulting in Missoula. Many stakeholders participated that would play a role in an emergency crisis situation in the community, including the Sheriff's Department and Disaster and Emergency Services. Hospital board members were there in support, and statements were read from Senators Jon Tester and John Walsh. GCMC Manager Sharon Fillbach was honored for her hard work on the project. John Duda, Chairman of Summit Exercises and Training, flew from Washington, D.C. to overview. He spoke with the Philipsburg Mail after a post-exercise assessment period. "Philipsburg really embraced the exercise and saw it as valuable," he said. "No matter how much you train, new challenges will not be an issue until they are practiced. The first responders were excited and acted seriously. They seemed really sincere." Photos courtesy Ezra Gentry.

New wheels!



Students at the Philipsburg, Hall and Drummond elementary schools won drawings to receive bikes in the Free Masons' Bikes for Books program. They gained a number of entries depending on their amount of reading. Xavier Carrico, a Drummond fifth grade student, was ecstatic to earn his first bike. "I will love to ride it all over the place," he said. Left to right: Holly Hauptman and Annie Rue (Hall) with Masons; Kai O'Donnell, Alaina Marletto, Cadence Therriault, Ezra Gentry (Philipsburg). Other winners: Kevin Hilmo, Caleb Parke and Kayla Holland (Drummond) and Daniel Alley, Kaidrick Griswold and Kade Cutler (Philipsburg).

Nurse Practitioner becomes Extreme Huntress competitor

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One of those items, she wishes, would be more practical hunter's clothing for women. At just five feet tall and 115 pounds with the size two waist, Westphal has worn little boys' hunter clothing that hardly works for the body type of a physically mature woman, she said. Female hunter clothing is usually designed for women taller and thinner than average - "Amazons" was her word. She has also needed to buy a youth boys' bow and paid extra for it to be custom designed to have more power. Hers shoots up to 60 pounds, while men may pull an 80-pound bow. The difference is significantly less effective range for the small bow, she said.

"It makes it a little bit harder," she said, adding that outfitters like Prois and SHE Outdoor and stores like Just for Does and Hoyt have either been created or

designed equipment specifically for women. Much of the change in products have occurred in the past five years, she said.

Also difficult has been promoting herself. Westphal is up against seven non-American competitors whose international appeal has given them a disproportionate amount of votes.

She has passed out fliers, but her demands as a full-time professional and mother have given her less time than many competitors who are stay-at-home moms, she added.

Championing women as hunters does not mean Westphal considers herself a feminist.

"A feminist must support women in the lead in every aspect of life and the community, but I am for a balance," she said. "I do not believe women are above men, but when it comes to equality, I'm definitely a proponent. Men and women

should be able to strive to obtain the same goals and it should not be based on gender, whether in hunting, professions or families."

After being raised in a military family that moves many times, Westphal found herself moving to Kalispell, where she met her husband-to-be, Cody, and attended Flathead Valley Community College's nursing program. She worked at Kalispell Regional Medical Center before taking her GCMC job in Philipsburg, where Cody works from home with their two-year-old son. Cody, a "great hunter," helped her hunting skills since she began the sport after moving to Montana at 18 years old, Westphal said.

Westphal is advocating for people to enjoy the outdoors for several reasons.

"Those who are hunting are promoting health and natural wellness. There's peace in the outdoors. There is physical health

in hiking," she said. "It is good to put down the digital devices and relax. It's nice to see kids going outdoors. There are too many kids now on their iPad or cell phone." The goal of the Extreme Huntress program: "create positive role models for women who want to participate in hunting. With 50 percent divorce rates and kids becoming invested in sports at a younger and younger age, we feel if mom goes hunting, so will her children."

To express her hunting commitment, Westphal wrote in her winning essay about how she achieved her trophy of a mature mountain lion. It happened on Feb. 5, 2012, just two weeks after giving birth by Cesarean section in a blizzard.

"The weather had finally decided to cooperate, but I had little hope of actually filling my tag after having surgery," she wrote. "We found a hot track. I was a bit nervous about this hunt

so soon after surgery, knowing that I might be trekking through waist-deep snow for miles."

She submitted an Extreme Huntress application that hunting season. "I knew in my heart this would be my year," she wrote. Westphal has hunted many big-game trophies, including two black bears, two bull elk, antelope and multiple whitetail and mule deer, including different species with different weapons. She hunted a wolf during a trip to Alberta just earlier this month. She admitted that her hunting prowess may be unusual for a nurse.

"Some say I save people, but kill animals," she said. "As long as I'm not killing people."

If anything, her nursing career has made her a better hunter and conservationist, she said. "I realize that a life has been taken and it's a valuable resource, so we use as much as we can," she said.



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Mr. Miller's manner in the Courtroom is professional, cases well-prepared and presented with logic and reason. He shows respect to all parties involved and, thus, is able to handle a variety of situations in and out of the Court.

We are fortunate to have an experienced and able County Attorney. I look forward to his re-election.

Sincerely,
Jenne Pugh, Philipsburg

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