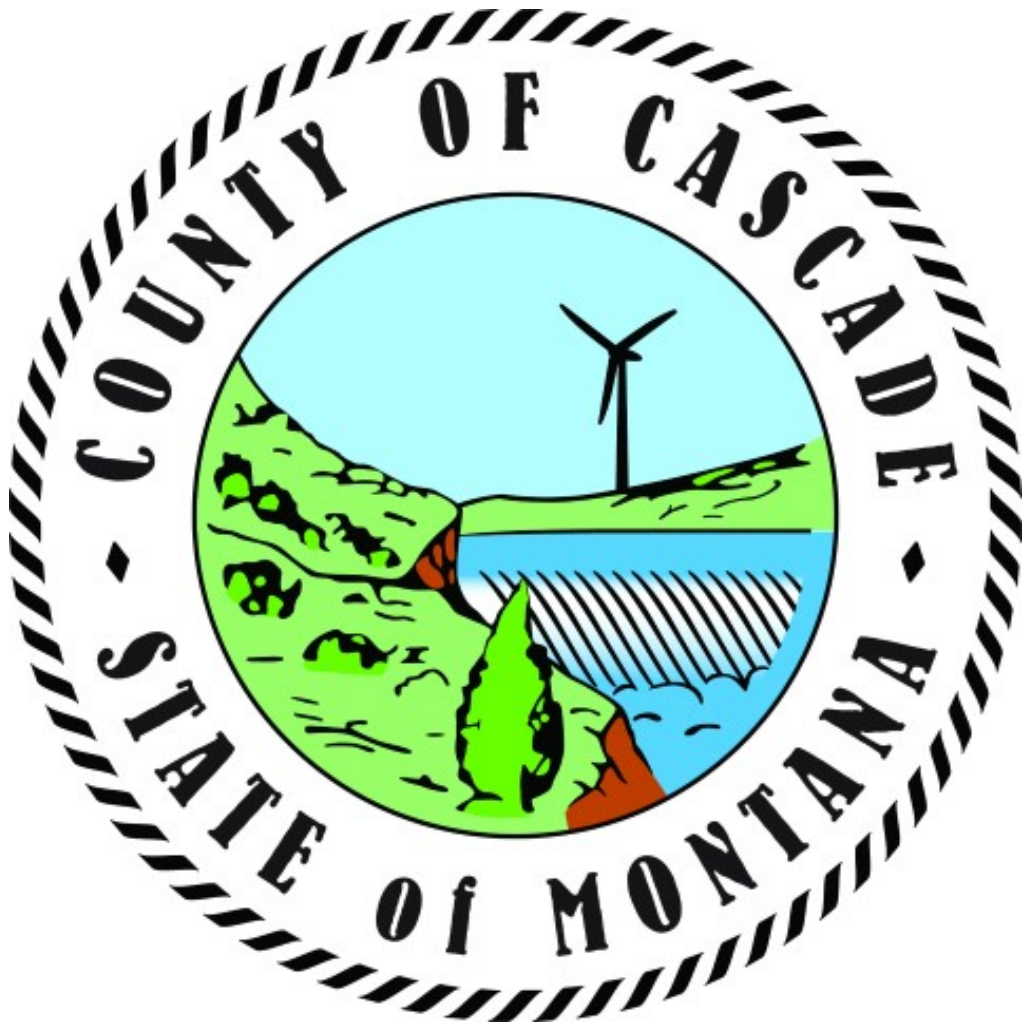


**Cascade County Proposed Budget
and Capital Expenditures for
Fiscal Year 2024**

Summary



Revised 09/06/23

Budget process remaining

This budget is the product of many months' effort by the Department heads, elected officials, and their staff. It is being highlighted through a public hearing that starts on August 30, 2023, and runs each day until the hearing is closed on September 7, 2023.

During the ongoing hearing, the public is encouraged to review the budget at the Annex or online and offer your questions and suggestions to the commissioners. We can be reached at our offices located at 325 2nd Ave North in Great Falls, via phone at (406)454-6810 or at our group email at commission@cascadecountymt.gov.

On September 7, 2023 at 10:30 am the Commission will take final action on the budget and several other items that impact the taxes assessed within Cascade County. These will include the setting of elected official's salaries, the setting of Cascade County Mills, the placing of the other taxing jurisdictions levy requirements on the tax bill and the setting of assessment for the County operated lighting districts.

The Commission will continue to refine the budget during the hearing process and to review suggestions that we have received from the public.

Overall budget comparison to FY 2023

- The total budgeted revenue for the county in FY 2023 was \$ 70,373,992 and the budgeted revenue for FY 2024 is set at \$ 77,944,470. This represents an increase in overall revenue of 10.76%.
- The total budgeted expense for the county in FY 2023 was \$ 96,590,022 and the budgeted expense for FY 2024 is set at \$ 94,925,863. This represents a decrease in overall expenses of 1.7%
- The ARPA funds received in prior years (FY 2021 and 2022) that are not already expensed will continue to impact the budget until they are spent. These unexpended funds will show as expenditures for which the corresponding revenue was received in prior years. This creates the false impression that the County is spending beyond its means.
- The reality is that we have a significant amount of federal funds that can only be spent in specific ways. Most of these funds have been allocated and the projects are moving forward but have not yet reached the point where the county ARPA funds need to be expended.
- The "apparent deficit" that is shown on the final page of the budget would indicate that the county is spending \$ 16,164,796 more than it is taking in. This "deficit" is largely a representation of the following large expenditures for which

the revenue has already been received for a specific purpose or saved for a project in prior years:

ARPA funds pending dispersal	\$ 12,654,098.73
Extra Public Works Heavy Equipment	\$ 434,500.00 *
Aging Services facility upgrades	\$ 1,146,308.00
Adult Detention facility upgrades	\$ 445,000.00
Armington Bridge Replacement	\$ 2,591,958.00
Extra Fleet vehicle purchases	<u>\$ 833,950.00 *</u>

Total of ARPA and prepaid capital expenses: \$ 18,105,814.73

* We have yet to receive both heavy equipment and the light duty vehicles that were ordered during the prior fiscal year causing us to budget for two years of this equipment in FY 2024.

Taxpayer impacts

The amount of taxes that each property in the county is based on several factors.

1. The number of combined mills that are levied by the taxing jurisdictions in which the property lies. For example, your property may be subject to the City of Great Falls Mills, the Cascade County Conservation District Mills, Great Falls Transit Mills and the newly passed Great Falls Library Mill.
2. All property in Cascade County is subject to the Countywide Mill levied by the County Commission as well as the new Public Safety levy passed by the voters in November of 2022 as well as a school levy from whichever district the property resides. Additionally, all property is subject to several mills set by the State legislature.
3. Those properties not within the Great Falls City limits pay a County Road Mill and a rural Mill instead of the City of Great Falls taxes and assessments.
4. Those properties within the towns of Belt, Cascade and Neihart pay their Town Mill, the County Road Mill, and the County Rural Mill in addition to the Mills listed above that are placed on all properties in the County.

5. The final piece of the puzzle is the taxable value set on your property. The taxable value times the number of mills levied on your property divided by 1000 equals your tax liability, This portion of the equation is under the exclusive control of the State of Montana. The Department of Revenue does the market appraisal on your property and the legislature defines the equation that translates your market value into the taxable value.
6. Cascade County is required by law each year to do a calculation that limits our ability to raise taxes on property already on the tax roll to ½ the average rate of inflation for the prior three years. This year that calculation resulted in a maximum rise of 2.46% in the aggregate taxes on the tax base that existed in FY 2023.
7. The number of Mills that the County Commission can levy is automatically reduced so the that the amount of taxes we raise on last years' tax base does not exceed an increase of 2.46% Accordingly, the number of Mills that we can levy this year went down from 121.84 to 108.86 a savings of 12.98 Mills.
8. Had it not been for the voter passed Public Safety levy that takes effect this tax year, the total number of Mills assessed by Cascade County would have dropped significantly which would have helped to mitigate the increases in assessed values applied by the Montana Department of Revenue. Including the new Public Safety levy, the aggregate number of Mills levied by the County will stay about the same as in FY 2023. This means if your appraised value went up, so will your taxes, but at a lesser rate than the percentage increase of your appraisal.

The change in Mills levied by Cascade County between 2023 and 2024 is shown below:

County Wide Mill levies (Commission levied)	- 12.98 Mills
Rural Mill (Commission levied)	- 1.29 Mills
Road Mill (Commission levied)	- 1.94 Mills
Sheriff's Retirement System (Commission levied)	- .11 Mills
Health Insurance Levy (Commission levied)	+ .77 Mills
Public Safety Levy (Voter levied)	+14.00 Mills
Total change in number of Mills levied by County	- 1.55 Mills

FY 2023/24 Capital Improvement Plan

Current market conditions are making it difficult to secure engineers and contractors in a timely manner and as such we have several potential projects that are not yet developed adequately to budget. These may be added as the year passes.

The major projects listed below include ongoing projects such the Armington Bridge replacement, which is funded by a \$750,000 MCEP grant and from reserves transferred over four years from the Bridge Fund.

Aging Services is attempting to buy-out the Bus Barn lease from USDOT at the Benefis Court location, however, at this time the USDOT and the county are still negotiating an equitable price. In preparation we have budgeted \$ 921,000 for the buy out of the lease and remodeling of the building to house Meals on Wheel as shown below. This project will be funded from existing cash reserves.

The following tables reflect the currently Commission-approved Capital Projects, Heavy Equipment and Other Capital Outlay for FY 2023/24:

Major Projects FY 2023/24	
Project	Total
ADC contingency	\$120,000
ADC Chiller unit	\$300,000
ADC Slider replacements	\$60,000
ADC Hot Water Heater	\$ 25,000
Aging Services - Possible buy-out of USDOT bldg. lease	\$500,000
Aging Services - remodel of buildings at 1801 Benefis Court	\$421,000
Aging Services - equipment for Kitchen/other	\$201,890
Armington Bridge replacement	\$2,591,958
Subtotal:	\$4,219,848
ARPA Projects	
CCSO new evidence storage building	\$1,500,000
ADC steel safety barrier	\$300,000
ADC Camera upgrades	\$79,442
IT Countywide phone upgrade	\$ 109,382
Expo park Shower trailer	\$ 57,000
ARPA Subtotal:	\$2,045,824
Total Projects	\$6,3265,672

Heavy Equipment Purchases FY 2023/24

Item	Total
Motor Graders - 4	\$436,000
Water Tank	\$50,000
Semi Truck	\$150,000
Pintle Trailer	\$35,000
2 Henke Balderson Sow Plows	\$48,000
Total Heavy Equipment	\$719,000

Fleet Purchases FY 2023/24

Item	Total
(1) 2024 CCSO Van	\$65,000
(6) CCSO 2024 interceptors	\$391,950
(2) Diesel Trucks for PW	\$130,000
Reappropriate FY23 Fleet order not yet delivered	\$216,000
Reappropriate FY22 Interceptors not received by 6/30	\$391,950
(5) small SUVs for Fleet	\$165,000
(1) small SUV for Planning	\$33,000
(5) Pickups	\$275,000
Total Fleet	\$1,667,900
?	

Other Capital Purchases FY 2023/24

Item	Total
Elections -Printer Copier	\$20,000
PW Air conditioning Recovery Machine	\$12,000
PW - Printer Copier	\$10,000
PW - Fuel Island upgrades	\$75,000
PE - Hot Water Heaters	\$40,000
Clerk of Court - Microfilm reader	\$8,000
CCHD - Office Printer	\$10,500
CCSO - Radio replacement (12)	\$151,000
Clerk & Recorder - Copier	\$8,000
Clerk & Recorder - Microfilm Reader	\$9,500
CCSO - Video upgrades DUI	\$19,800
CCSO - Watchguard Body Cameras	\$21,948
Executive Plaza AC replacements	\$30,000
Expo—Undercounter portable food warmers	\$10,000
County Printer - New printer	\$40,000
Total Other	\$465,748

TOTAL ALL CAPITAL OUTLAY**\$9,118,320**