

Morrow County Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes
April 8, 2020
Bartholomew Building Upper Conference Room
Heppner, Oregon

Present In-Person

Chair Melissa Lindsay
Commissioner Don Russell
Commissioner Jim Doherty
Darrell J. Green, Administrator
Justin Nelson, County Counsel
Gregg Zody, Community Development
Roberta Lutcher, Executive Assistant
Gayle Gutierrez, Treasurer
Andy Fletcher, CBEC General Mgr.
Rollie Marshall, Ione School District
John Murray, Port Commissioner
Greg Sweek, Enterprise Zone Manager
David Sykes, Gazette-Times

Via Electronic Means

Karmen Carlson, HR Director
Mike Gorman, Assessor/Tax Collector
Ann Jones, Fair Secretary
Kate Knop, Finance Director
Matt Scrivner, Public Works Director
Linda Skendzel, Veterans Services
Gerry Arnson, CBEC Board
Kraig Cutsforth, Heppner City Manager
Justin Hoeft
Nicole Mahoney, County Health District
Lisa Mittelsdorf, Port of Morrow
Aaron Palmquist, Irrigon City Manager
Karen Pettigrew, Boardman City Manager
Sandy Toms, Boardman Mayor

Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance: 9:01

City & Citizen Comments: Justin Hoeft encouraged the County to have meetings available through YouTube or some other platform. Chair Lindsay said that has been explored and current circumstances make it worth looking into again.

Open Agenda: No items

Consent Calendar

Commissioner Russell moved to approve the following items in the Consent Calendar:

1. *Accounts Payable, April 9th, \$121,670.75; Retirement Taxes, April 6th, \$22,564.59*

Commissioner Doherty seconded. Unanimous approval.

Business Items

High-Speed Internet Access to Morrow County Citizens – Task Force

Chair Lindsay said the Boardman Chamber of Commerce has made progress in this area and suggested there be a collaboration with them. She then asked for input from others at the meeting.

Andy Fletcher, Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative, outlined his organization's efforts in the last few years to pursue high-speed internet in Morrow County. He said the Coop can't do this alone and it will take a county-wide initiative for everyone to have access. Mr. Fletcher said they are in the process of signing up for a consortium through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and then suggested the County take the lead in finding a solution. When asked about costs, Mr. Fletcher said to bring fiber to every home in the Coop's service territory in south Morrow County and to Gilliam and Wheeler Counties, it was estimated to cost \$33,000,000. He added other options were also being explored.

Rollie Marshall, Ione School District, said 40-45% of the district's students have zero access to connectivity. He continued, another 20-30% have connectivity but lack reliable service and at best, only one student at a time in the house can use the connection. He then outlined the work being done by ISD's IT personnel in conjunction with Windwave Communications to alleviate the problems.

Morrow County School District Superintendent Dirk Dirksen said equitable delivery of online learning will be the biggest challenge for all of Oregon and the nation. He said there will be dollars out there specifically for this to make sure we have this ability in the future.

John Murray, Chairman of the Morrow County Health District Board of Directors, said the health district has access for telemedicine, and on-the-spot cardiac and stroke consults for patients in the emergency room. Clinics have reached out to patients who may not need to come into the clinic to possibly not expose others. It's been successful for the health district, he said.

Commissioner Doherty said farmers and ranchers have been impacted, as well. He went on to say that some farmers changed their center pivot irrigation systems to wireless and recently had to rewire the system because the signal became too weak.

When Chair Lindsay asked each of the speakers from the other entities if they were willing to serve on a taskforce, they all replied in the affirmative. She said she would lead the task force after Commissioner Russell stated it could be perceived as a conflict for him to be on the task force since he serves on the Board for Windwave Communications.

Community Development Director Update

Gregg Zody, Community Development Director

Mr. Zody said he's been introducing himself in the communities and asking for meetings with the other cities. He also reached out to Planning Directors in the state and met with staff in Planning, the Fairgrounds and The Loop. A few priority items for him will include working on a housing needs assessment, and updates to the Comprehensive Plan. He also talked about RV camping and said he's working with Planning staff and the eastern Oregon regional representative with the Department of Land Conservation and Development in preparing a recommendation for the Board. Mr. Zody said he would be working with County Counsel and Planning staff regarding Code Enforcement. Commissioner Russell provided some background information on the topic and Commissioner Doherty suggested Mr. Zody not just look at individuals, but industries and businesses with conditional use permits. He said those permits need to be reviewed because in some cases, they've become more than what was originally intended.

Enterprise Zone III

Chair Lindsay outlined the parameters for public input and then offered the opportunity for comment; none was received.

Commissioner Doherty said it was important for the Port of Morrow to have an enterprise zone. He then summarized the situation: The Enterprise Zone Manager, Greg Sweek, needs two things

for an enterprise zone application to Business Oregon - the application itself and a map showing the boundaries of the zone. The other issues can be worked through later, he added.

Commissioner Doherty moved to co-sponsor an enterprise zone application with the Port of Morrow and have Greg Sweek move forward with the map of the Port proper, or the blown-up (enlarged) portion of the map in the lower right corner of the document that we looked at last week (labeled as “CREZ Boundaries,” cartography by Stephen Wrecsics, Morrow County Planning Department, dated March 3, 2020 at 10:07 a.m.). Chair Lindsay seconded. Lengthy discussion with the issues being representation by the City of Boardman and the zone boundaries. Commissioner Doherty said the details could be worked out later through intergovernmental agreements (IGAs). Irrigon City Manager Aaron Palmquist said a resolution will be required and urged the Board to draft one. Responding to Chair Lindsay’s question about a resolution, County Counsel Justin Nelson said one could be drafted for consideration by the Board and it could be as specific as the Board wanted it to be. Discussion continued. Vote: Aye: Chair Lindsay, Commissioner Doherty. Nay: Commissioner Russell. Motion carried.

Mr. Sweek said if the Port goes along substantially with the County’s proposal, he would need Mr. Wrecsics, GIS Planning Tech, to produce a new map to provide to the taxing districts for the public hearing.

Chair Lindsay asked if a resolution would also be needed.

Mr. Sweek said the resolution would be after the public meeting with the taxing districts so you’ve got until the first or middle part of June to craft the resolution. The County’s and the Port’s resolutions have to be substantially identical. There is no resolution needed for the meeting with the taxing districts but he would need to have a map showing the proposed boundaries.

Chair Lindsay said that guidance will be given to Mr. Wrecsics. For the cities listening, she said the commitment and the head nod was very clear that an IGA around your city and your circle of impact and influence is exactly where we want to get. She said she didn’t know if the Port would agree but the goal is to get every city in the most positive position we can and to see growth across the County. In 10 years when this is over, she said she’d like to see every city with something happening.

Irrigon Building Update

Darrell Green, Administrator

- The design-build team is conducting surveys of the property, geological surveys, etc., to make sure we can build the way we want.
- Second stakeholder meeting will be scheduled soon for input on the basic design of the building.
- Mr. Green said he appreciated Mr. Palmquist’s assistance with the permits through the City of Irrigon, among other things.

Board of Commissioners Meeting Calendar – April 29th

Mr. Green said BOC meetings are not usually held on a fifth Wednesday, which is the case for April 29th. Unless an emergency meeting becomes necessary, no meeting will be planned for that day, he said.

Morrow County Government Command Center Update

- Chair Lindsay said the members of the Command Center recommended bringing forward the issues surrounding high-speed internet access.
- Mr. Green said the County ordered outdoor sandwich boards for placement at building entrances. They will contain signs to remind the public and employees if they have symptoms, don't enter the building.

Resolution No. R-2020-5: Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) Application
Teamsters Collective Bargaining Agreement

Chair Lindsay stated these items will be taken up in Executive Session and there was the potential for decisions.

Break: 10:18-10:29 a.m.

10:30 a.m. Executive Session: Pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(d) - To conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to carry on labor negotiations

10:46 a.m. Closed Executive Session

10:47 a.m. Executive Session: Pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(e) – To conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions

10:53 a.m. Closed Executive

Resolution No. R-2020-5: PERS Application

Kate Knop, Finance Director

Ms. Knop said the Resolution is the result of negotiations with Teamsters Local 223, which represents 25 Sheriff's Office employees. It establishes the County's wish to begin participating as a PERS-covered employer. The Resolution outlines the parameters for the future application to the PERS program for Sheriff's Office employees represented by Teamsters Local 223 hired on or after July 1, 2020.

Commissioner Doherty moved to approve Resolution No. R-2020-5: In the matter of establishing a PERS program beginning July 1, 2020 for Teamsters Local 223 members who qualify and are hired on or after July 1, 2020. Commissioner Russell seconded. Brief discussion. Mr. Green said the negotiations with Teamsters were very professional, from the very beginning. The new Business Agent, Mike Mann, had things outlined in a professional manner and good conversations took place, based on facts. The local representatives, Undersheriff John Bowles, Operations Lieutenant Terry Harper and Criminal Sergeant Brian Snyder comprised a very good committee and he appreciated their willingness to work through the contract in a fairly quick manner in order to keep the timeline on track. Commissioner Doherty said by consensus, the Board wanted to express its gratitude to the committee and asked Mr. Green to convey that message. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Teamsters Collective Bargaining Agreement

Karmen Carlson, Human Resources Director

Ms. Carlson said the Teamsters signed the agreement, which expires June 30, 2023. It contains a cost of living adjustment (COLA) of 2.5% each year of the three-year contract, and a few other changes.

Commissioner Russell moved to approve the Morrow County Sheriff's Association Collective Bargaining Agreement, expiration date June 30, 2023. Commissioner Doherty seconded. Unanimous approval.

Department Reports – Written

Veterans Services Office Quarterly Report

Linda Skendzel, Veterans Services Officer via Zoom

Ms. Skendzel discussed the impact of COVID-19 on her office. She explained most veterans called in for appointments, even prior to the current office restrictions. She said email communications with veterans have increased, which has been a benefit. Various discussions.

Planning Department Monthly Report

Stephanie Case, Interim Planning Director via Zoom

Chair Lindsay brought up the Planning Department's Preliminary Findings of Fact, Land Use Decision, Applicant - Umatilla Electric Cooperative (UEC), and asked Ms. Case if she could provide more information.

Ms. Case said UEC submitted an application for a transmission line, which is a land use decision with standards. She said it's a Planning Director decision and notice was provided to adjoining property owners, one of which was Morrow County. The process is currently in the comment period until close of business on April 10th.

Commissioner Doherty said the County property is in the City of Boardman. Shouldn't there be a notice coming from the City of Boardman, he asked.

Ms. Case said the County sends notices to adjoining property owners within the 500' radius and we should receive notice from the City on its decision which affects County property. This County notice that went out is an adjoining property owner notice so the County property is in 500' of the decision area. This decision only affects County jurisdiction and the City should be doing its own notice. She said Mr. Wrecsics called the City but had not yet heard back about the status of Boardman's notice to the County. She said notice is sent to those within 500' of the property boundary, not the project boundary.

Commissioner Doherty sought additional clarification.

Ms. Case said the County is required by law to send notice regardless of whether or not someone lives in the City or the County, if they're within 500' of the property boundary that the County is making a decision on, we will send notice.

Commissioner Russell said the City would have similar requirements for areas within its jurisdiction. Discussion continued.

Ms. Case said for the purpose of notice, it doesn't stop at the city limits. However, the County's decision stops at the city limits. For the purpose of notice, if it crosses a jurisdiction, the County sends notice, regardless of which jurisdiction someone lives in.

Ms. Case then shared the list of property owners who were noticed by the County.

Chair Lindsay said, by statute, the County should receive notice from the City of Boardman process, correct?

Ms. Case replied, yes.

Justice Court Quarterly Report

Judge Glen Diehl, via electronic means

Judge Diehl's report was reviewed and a brief verbal update was provided.

Correspondence

- Examples from Idaho Power of the letters sent to landowners along the Boardman to Hemingway (B2H) Project to request right-of-entry to conduct surveys.
- Planning Department Notice to Adjoining and Affected Landowners, including the Preliminary Findings of Fact (applicant UEC).
- Letter from Oregon Department of Transportation regarding the closure of the Heppner DMV field office until further notice due to COVID-19.
- Oregon Department of Energy Public Notice, Wheatridge Wind Energy Facility, Receipt of Preliminary Request for Amendment 5.
- City of Irrigon Public Notice regarding CAPECO's application to partition a tax lot into two lots.
- Sixth Judicial District, Amended Presiding Judge Order No. 20-005 – Amends and Implements Guidance for Social Distancing and Limited Operations Allowed Under Chief Justice Order 20-006 as Amended.
- Oregon Department of Agriculture News Release: ODA approves permit to transfer to buyer of former Lost Valley Farm.

Commissioner Reports

The Commissioners each provided reports of activity since the last meeting.

Signing of documents

Adjourned: 12:00 p.m.