

Morrow County Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes
April 29, 2020
Bartholomew Building Upper Conference Room
Heppner, Oregon

Present In-Person

Chair Melissa Lindsay
Commissioner Don Russell
Commissioner Jim Doherty
Darrell J. Green, Administrator
Roberta Lutchter, Executive Assistant
Diane Kilkenny, Interim Public Health Dir.
David Sykes, Heppner Gazette-Times
Sheryll Bates, Heppner Chamber

Via Electronic Means

Stephanie Case, Kirsti Cason, Bobbi Childers, Ronda Fox, Mike Gorman, Gayle Gutierrez, Leah Harris, Ann Jones, Kate Knop, Gabriela Perches, Matt Scrivner, Linda Skendzel, LeAnn Wright, Gregg Zody, Kalie Davis, Erika Lasater, Lisa Mittelsdorf, Aaron Palmquist, Mark Patton, Greg Sweek, Sandy Toms, three unidentified callers

Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance: 1:32 p.m.

City and Citizen Comments: Chair Lindsay stated comment time for the Enterprise Zone III Business Item would be limited as there had previously been extensive comment made, but this was the time to do so for that item. No comments were received.

Open Agenda: No items

Consent Calendar

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

1. *Accounts Payable, April 30th, \$412,762.83*
2. *Minutes: February 12th, 17th & 26th, March 4th*

Commissioner Doherty seconded. Unanimous approval.

Business Items

Morrow County Government Command Center Update

- Chair Lindsay said the Command Center team, as well as the Emergency Operations Center team, meets every Tuesday and both teams have been working on potential reopening plans. She said she planned to present a draft to the Board on May 6th.
- County Counsel Justin Nelson explained the plan, even after approval by the Board, will be a living document and subject to change.
- Heppner Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Sheryll Bates talked about the current struggles of small business owners and said she would like businesses to have the opportunity to reopen under strict guidelines. Chair Lindsay said those topics have been discussed in the team meetings but she found it difficult to understand why some stores, such as Walmart, are packed with shoppers when main street businesses can't sell anything. Commissioner Russell commented on the inconsistency and said he found it odd what is considered to be an essential business and what is not.
- Interim Public Health Director Diane Kilkenny offered the following comments – Economic health is part of public health. If people don't have jobs or financial security, then they won't have things that make their lives worthwhile or stable, which causes a lot of public concerns. The Governor has an order which we're to follow but now we can

put together a plan to reopen. There will be phases of the plan that will still cause some problems but it really gives us time to monitor where COVID-19 is going. Gateway criteria will still be in place, meaning a downward trajectory of influenza-like or COVID-like syndrome cases within a 14-day period; and a flattening, or downward trajectory of COVID-like or COVID positive cases over a 14-day period, both of which Morrow County is attaining. This is why we had these things in place, to stop the upward trajectory. It was pretty severe, we sheltered in place and now we're seeing the hardest part of this – quarantine fatigue, which is an actual term. People are tired of being home and not going where they want, seeing who they want, and recreating how they want. Rural Oregon has had pretty low cases and Umatilla County continues to add to its cases, but most are from out-of-county to them. As we're next to them, we have the potential to have that happen to us because of some of the same interstate and intercounty commerce, and where people live and where they work don't always happen to be in the same state or county, so we need to keep an eye on it. As long as we follow this framework and pre-plan for it, I feel we have the ability to be safe in the way we go forward. First, we have to meet the criteria, we have to look at how many tests we have available per week and according to the guidelines for Morrow County, that's 41 tests per week. This morning I learned about our testing capability and what it's increased to, and we can do that and probably exceed that. Tomorrow we'll meet with the hospital and I've been in contact with the federally qualified health center (FQHC) in Boardman and we're going to figure out what their needs are and how they're going to make it and what is possible. I feel that if we do this together as a team, and we have businesses be able to give input into that and they're going to get guidelines from the State, which are already in draft form, and when they're finalized with the Economic Council they will be coming out and people can follow them. It's not going to be right back to where we were before because it's just not possible but as we control the phases in and we see that they're working, or that we have to pull back and readjust, we could move forward. So, this COVID-like or COVID-19 illness is going to be here for a while and it's going to change how we look and do business and how we live and recreate. But I don't think it necessarily has to completely shut us down either, but we just need to be aware as we're moving forward and watching for sentinel events like outbreaks and hotspots. And the biggest part of that is having public health ready to move in, do a test or have a confirmed positive test, and then do contact tracing and investigation. We then isolate and test those people as they pop up so we can get them set aside to not spread the illness. This is so we can contain it until we have a vaccine or a treatment, or we see that it's getting beyond our control or that we're keeping it where it needs to be.

- Chair Lindsay said the teams talked about suicide calls in some neighboring counties because of a lack of hope. She said it felt important at the local level to start creating that hope that we're at least delivering the message of where we'd like to see this get. That May 1st date is ringing loud for a lot of people so it felt important to take some direction to help with that, as well.
- Commissioner Russell said Morrow County Parks were going to open on May 8th, in conjunction with the opening date for State Parks, but the Oregon State Parks Department has since pushed that back until after May 25th. He said the Board should provide new guidance for Matt Scrivner, Public Works Director. Mr. Scrivner said his recommendation was to remain in line with State Parks for May 28th and to discuss again

at the May 20th BOC meeting. Chair Lindsay said she would add it to the May 20th agenda and noted there will be a large impact to the income at the parks, which the Board will need to pay attention to.

- Commissioner Doherty said it was important to note one of the Governor's criteria is the ability to do a certain number of tests, but the County can't get the test kits. The County needs to lean on the State and tell them to get them to us so we have the ability to do the tests. Ms. Kilkenny explained commercial labs were coming on with a much bigger capacity to handle testing, and local healthcare providers were working with them to provide an expanded capacity. Some test kits remain hard to come by and they're being prioritized in Region 6 to healthcare providers, first responders, etc. She said the preference was for more tests and she thought testing was expanding but she couldn't provide any numbers.
- Commissioner Russell asked about the two ventilators that were requested. Ms. Kilkenny said they were still being requested from the Ops Site. She added that Grande Ronde Hospital in La Grande loaned one to Morrow County until the others can be acquired.
- Fair Secretary Ann Jones talked about the status of the County Fair. She said since it's in August, she hoped to wait until July before deciding whether or not to cancel the Fair.

Enterprise Zone III – Port of Morrow Request for Joint Meeting

Chair Lindsay said she received clarification from Lisa Mittelsdorf, Port of Morrow Economic Development Director, that her request was not to have a joint meeting, but to have the BOC get to a decision on a quick timeline so the Port could hold its own meeting. She asked Ms. Mittelsdorf if that was accurate.

Ms. Mittelsdorf said what the Port said was we'd advertise a meeting for the same day as the County's meeting but obviously we didn't do that.

Chair Lindsay said she wasn't sure how to handle the request since it was different than what was stated on the agenda. She said she added it for discussion and included in the Agenda Packet the documents the Port went over. She asked how she should bring forward the request.

Commissioner Doherty recommended not scheduling a joint meeting, and to instead schedule meetings on the same day. He further suggested the topic be added to the May 6th BOC agenda, which was agreeable to the Chair.

Correspondence

- Letter to the Board from Bishop Liam Cary, Diocese of Baker, requesting assistance in the official reopening of COVID-19 restrictions on religious services in Oregon.
- Letter to the Board from Ray DeLoe, Minister, Heppner Christian Church, asking when communities would open back up and when church services can begin again. He stated, "We do not need to wait for the Governor to make the decision, it is one you as our local representatives can and should do."

Adjourned: 2:24 p.m.