

**Morrow County Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes**  
**February 10, 2021**  
**Bartholomew Building Upper Conference Room**  
**Heppner, Oregon**

**Present In-Person**

Chair Don Russell, Commissioner Jim Doherty, Commissioner Melissa Lindsay, Mike Gorman, Darrell J. Green, Roberta Lutchter, Tamra Mabbott, Richard Tovey

**Present Via Zoom**

Staff: Ronda Fox, Lindsay Grogan, Kate Knop, Justin Nelson, Linda Skendzel, Heidi Turrell, Stephen Wrecsics, Gregg Zody; Non-Staff: Susan Christensen, Patrick Collins, Torrie Griggs, Erika Lasater, Blake Lawrence, Ed Orloski, Karen Pettigrew, Greg Smith, David Sykes

**Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance & Roll Call:** 9:00 a.m.

**City & Citizen Comments:** None

**Open Agenda:** Chair Russell said he would be participating in a 30-minute Zoom meeting with Governor Kate Brown and commissioners at 10:30 a.m. and would then turn the gavel over to Commissioner Doherty. He also said the Columbia Development Authority (CDA) agenda item would be taken up when Greg Smith, CDA Executive Director, joined the meeting.

**Consent Calendar**

*Commissioner Doherty moved to approve the following items in the Consent Calendar:*

1. *Accounts Payable and Payroll Payables*
2. *Minutes: December 2<sup>nd</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020*
3. *Correction of Road Committee Appointment term dates made on December 2, 2020 from 2024 term end dates to 2023 term end dates. Revised term dates for the following will be from December 2, 2020-December 2, 2023: Kim Cutsforth as the Alternate, South County representative; Joe McElligott as the South County At Large representative; Bob Nairns as the Alternate, South County At Large representative; and Frank Osmin as the South County representative*
4. *Application for Tax Refund, RDO-Calbee Foods, LLC in the amount of \$94,141.93 as a result of the Oregon Tax Court, Magistrate Division, Stipulated Judgement*

*Commissioner Lindsay seconded. Unanimous approval.*

**Business Items**

Agreement Between Morrow County and the Columbia Development Authority on Protection of the Oregon Trail Site at the Umatilla Army Depot

CDA: Greg Smith, Ed Orloski, Debbie Pedro, Patrick Collins

Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director

Justin Nelson, County Counsel

Ms. Mabbott said the CDA presented similar resolutions to both Morrow and Umatilla Counties regarding the protection of a section of the Oregon Trail and a munitions igloo that was the site of a deadly explosion in 1944. She said after a review by staff, a few issues needed to be discussed.

Mr. Nelson outlined the issues, one being a reference to the Programmatic Agreement (PA), which hadn't been provided by the CDA. He was told it was currently in draft form and wasn't being shared at this time.

Mr. Smith said the resolution wasn't asking Morrow County to assume responsibility for the Trail, other than ensuring the owner of the Trail complied with the preservation language. He said they were not sharing the PA or an associated memorandum of agreement (MOA) in order to protect certain cultural resources important to the tribes (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation). He also offered to have CDA's legal counsel share the PA and MOA with the County's legal counsel, where the Commissioners could then look at it. The Commissioners brought up concerns they had with some of the wording in the resolution, which resulted in postponing the item a few weeks to allow Mr. Nelson to go over those items with the legal counsel for CDA.

#### Update on the Disbursement of the Business Oregon Small Business Relief Fund

Susan Christensen, Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation (GEODC)

Ms. Christensen said Business Oregon's grant funds for small businesses impacted by the COVID shutdown were turned over to districts to distribute. She reported on the rounds of grant funds disbursed by GEODC to Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla and Wheeler Counties. In Round 2, no funds were awarded in Morrow County but Round 4 saw 28 businesses awarded grants totalling \$121,035. Ms. Christensen went on to discuss an upcoming grant opportunity through the Small Business Administration specifically for venues shuttered during the pandemic.

#### **Legislative Updates**

Chair Russell said Legislative Updates will be listed on the agenda during the legislative session so Directors and Elected Officials can provide overviews of senate or house bills that need to be brought to the attention of the Commissioners.

#### **Business Items**

##### Permit Requests

Blake Lawrence, Windwave

Chair Russell stated he had a financial interest in Windwave.

Mr. Lawrence discussed a project with a new pathway that will have Windwave building in the County's right-of-way. The new pathway is needed because they are running out of fiber capacity on their Heppner connection, he said. He then presented an interactive map of the route. The first portion, which will impact the Morrow County Road Department, will be Olson Road from I-84, south to Kunze Lane, Kunze Lane to Miller Road, then a private easement area, then Bombing Range Road, then Homestead Lane to the County line. Paterson Ferry Road is the other portion, he said, from Highway 730, up Paterson Ferry Road where they'd leave the County right-of-way at the Hale Farms shed. Mr. Lawrence discussed the project in detail and responded to questions.

Commissioner Doherty said there have been discussions in the past about bringing service to different places in the County, including the Umatilla Army Depot. He asked if this was also an opportunity to get fiber there.

Mr. Lawrence replied, “It would. We’d have some empty conduits in that package we could potentially delegate just for service to the weapons depot. At this time, we don’t have any kind of arrangements or agreements with anybody in this area at all, in the weapon depot portion of it. But yes, it would give us the ability to serve that in the future, or for somebody to use that conduit and fiber to serve that.”

Commissioner Doherty asked, “So, it’s a little more than just long-haul fiber?”

Mr. Lawrence said, “Yes, absolutely. We’re out of fiber going to Heppner, out of pairs there. Hopefully the north end of the County will wind up getting built out and at some point, with a residential project. There’s not too many fiber paths in there but we’d be able to upgrade this section (referring to the map) with more fiber count. That’s exactly where we’re restricted right now, and get some more fiber pairs down to Lexington. It’s ultimately where we’d split off with that and then that would get more capacity to Heppner.” Miscellaneous discussion continued.

Draft Memorandum of Understanding with Morrow County School Districts Regarding the Wheatridge Project Strategic Investment Program Agreement

Richard Tovey, County Counsel

Mr. Tovey reviewed the additions to the latest draft that were requested last week. The Commissioners further defined some items and agreed to review it again next week.

Morrow County Internship Program

Lindsay Grogan, Human Resources Manager

Enterprise zone agreements have allowed funds to be set aside for internship opportunities for high school students. The Port of Morrow’s Workforce Training Program coordinates the internship program. Students earn \$11.50 per hour, up to 15 hours per week. Ms. Grogan said Morrow County was allotted two internships and the proposal was to place one in the Planning Department in Irrigon and the other would be a “float” position in offices in south County.

*Commissioner Doherty moved to approve the Morrow County Planning Internship job description and the Morrow County Government Internship job description; and to participate in the Student Internship Program through the Port of Morrow Workforce Training Program. Commissioner Lindsay seconded. Discussion: Commissioner Doherty asked the start date of the internships. Ms. Grogan said the second week of school in September. Unanimous approval.*

New Position (Full-Time Equivalent or FTE) Requests for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 – Emergency Manager and Planning Office Manager

Lindsay Grogan, HR

Ms. Grogan provided an overview of the two requests and asked the submitting departments to provide the details. Administrator Darrell Green, reviewed the Executive Summary he prepared for the Emergency Manager position. He said there were two challenges with the position: who does this person report to, and where would the office space be located.

**Chair Russell left the meeting at 10:28 a.m.**

After discussion, there were more questions from the Commissioners, so the request was moved to a future agenda for consideration.

Planning Director Tamra Mabbott reviewed the Executive Summary for the Planning Office Manager position, which would combine two existing part-time positions into one new full-time position.

*Commissioner Lindsay moved to approve the Planning Department Office Manager, consolidating the two existing part-time positions. Commissioner Doherty seconded. Discussion: It was noted the new full-time position also means the addition of benefits. Vote: Aye: Commissioner Doherty and Commissioner Lindsay. Motion carried. (Chair Russell absent.)*

Discussion - Code Enforcement FTE

Commissioner Lindsay stated this was the time for new position requests and perhaps the Commissioners should bring forward the request for a Code Enforcement position instead of the interested departments trying to figure it out (Sheriff's Office and Planning Department). She asked that the feasibility of paying for the position using the County's portion of building permit fees be explored, especially given the fact the City of Boardman funds four positions using its portion of those same fees. Commissioner Doherty suggested the Code Enforcement FTE currently exists within the Sheriff's Office and recommended minutes be researched.

**Break:** 10:55-11:05 a.m.

**Chair Russell returned to the meeting.**

Emergency Operations Center Update

- Chair Russell said the 10:30 conversation with the Governor was very informative and that most counties have the same challenges as Morrow County. Some Commissioners pushed to give restaurant reopenings a range of some type, but the Governor appeared to not be interested in that, he said.
- Commissioner Lindsay said beginning Friday morning, Morrow County will drop from the Extreme level to Moderate because there were under 45 new cases over a two-week period. She commended the citizens of the County for doing the work to get to this point. Hopefully, the Super Bowl won't reverse it, she added.
- Mr. Green said the Health Department was coordinating with the Oregon Health Authority for a free testing event at the Fairgrounds on Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>. He said Katie Murray was now on-board as the contracted Communications Officer.

*Commissioner Lindsay moved to revoke the Telecommuting Policy under the current category, Moderate, effective Tuesday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, with rare exceptions to be approved by the Administrator. Commissioner Doherty seconded. Unanimous approval.*

### Building Projects Update

- Commissioner Lindsay said she had the partition for the Sheriff's Station 2 Building if the Commissioners wanted to review it. She said it already had Planning Commission sign-off and needed to go to the City of Heppner and Devin Oil, but would most likely come back for Board signature next week.
- Mr. Green displayed photos of the progress of construction in Irrigon. He said the Irrigon building was about two months behind schedule due to the delay with the building permit. The Team was looking for time savings to get back to the original schedule.

### **Department Reports**

- The Treasurer's Monthly Report was reviewed by Jaylene Papineau.
- The Community Development Department Monthly Report was reviewed by Gregg Zody, Director.
- The Planning Department Monthly Report was reviewed by Tamra Mabbott, Director.
- The Weed Department Quarterly Report was reviewed by Dave Pranger, Weed Coordinator/Inspector.

### **Correspondence**

- Letters of support from Lake Penland Corporation and Morrow County Grain Growers, Inc., for the snow groomer/search & rescue building at Custforth Park
- News release from Northeast Oregon Water Association: East Columbia River Water Supply Project officially deemed complete by the State of Oregon

### **Commissioner Reports**

Postponed due to time.

### **Comments Prior to Executive Session**

Chair Russell said a decision was not anticipated following the Executive Session.

**12:07 p.m. Executive Session:** Pursuant to ORS 192.669(2)(e) – To conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions

**12:22 p.m. Closed Executive Session**

**Signing of documents**

**Adjourned:** 12:30 p.m.