

Morrow County Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes
August 4, 2021
Bartholomew Building Upper Conference Room
Heppner, Oregon

Present In-Person

Chair Don Russell, Commissioner Jim Doherty, Commissioner Melissa Lindsay, Darrell J. Green, John Bowles, Kate Knop, Roberta Lutchter, Richard Tovey; Non-Staff: Kimberly Lindsay

Present Via Zoom

Staff: Erin Anderson, SaBrina Bailey Cave, Ronda Fox, Mike Gorman, Deanne Irving, Nazario Rivera, Linda Skendzel, Heidi Turrell; Non-Staff: Torrie Griggs, JoAnna Lamb, Glenn McIntire, Debbie Pedro, Karen Pettigrew, Jessy Rose, Rick Stokoe, David Sykes

Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance: 8:30 a.m.

Chair Russell stated the Board would meet in Executive Session for approximately 30 minutes and then return to the regular portion of the meeting. He read the relevant Executive Session citation.

8:32 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

9:03 a.m. Closed Executive Session

9:08 a.m.: The regular meeting was called back to order and introductions took place.

City & Citizen Comments: None

Open Agenda: Commissioner Doherty requested to add a Business Item discussion on the Weed Department. Chair Russell added a discussion on the “thank you” certificates for Fair volunteers, following the Weed Department item.

Consent Calendar

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

- 1. Accounts Payable & Payroll Payables*
- 2. Minutes: July 7th*
- 3. Second Amendment to Oregon Health Authority Intergovernmental Agreement #154978, Public Health Division, Alcohol & Drug Prevention and Education Program; and authorize Chair Russell to sign on behalf of the County*
- 4. Sheriff's Office Request to Purchase 2021 Dodge Charger in the amount of \$27,927.60 from Withnell Dodge*

Commissioner Doherty seconded. Unanimous approval.

Business Items

Community Counseling Solutions (CCS) Quarterly Report

Kimberly Lindsay, Executive Director

Ms. Lindsay reviewed the following:

- *2021 End of Session Report* prepared for the Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs
- Statistics for clients served through the one-year-old Frontline Program. This program offers free counseling services to medical workers and first responders who live or work in Morrow, Wheeler, Grant and Gilliam Counties.

Other topics – board vacancy positions; the Kids Program; recruitment for vacant openings within CCS, and a Zero Suicide update.

Sheriff's Office Request to Purchase Six 2021 Dodge Durango Pursuit Vehicles

Undersheriff John Bowles

Undersheriff Bowles said he was getting back on track regarding vehicle rotations. He said more SUVs, like the Durango, were now more often being used in law enforcement fleets instead of sedans. These will be used primarily by the Criminal Division because of the extra supplies they need, he explained. Discussion about the bid price vs. actual price when invoiced. Undersheriff Bowles said he would keep the Board informed as the vehicles arrive.

Commissioner Doherty moved to approve the described Purchase Pre-Authorization Request as presented (Six 2021 Durango all-wheel drive pursuit vehicles, \$34,219.95 each). Commissioner Lindsay seconded. Unanimous approval.

Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) Budget Allocation for Watermaster Duties

Kate Knop, Finance Director

Ms. Knop explained the budget appropriation to OWRD for fiscal year 2021-2022 was \$12,200 but it was contingent upon a follow-up presentation by their representatives. That presentation took place May 12th and Ms. Knop needed verification from the Board of the amount to allocate. Brief discussion.

Commissioner Doherty moved to authorize the expenditure in the amount of \$12,200. Commissioner Lindsay seconded. Unanimous approval.

Resolution No. R-2021-18: General Fund Interfund Loan to Video Lottery

Kate Knop, Finance Director

Ms. Knop said the interfund loan was requested to provide short-term cash flow coverage for tourism opportunities, in this case, \$10,000 to Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo.

Commissioner Lindsay moved to approve the General Fund interfund loan to Video Lottery in the amount of \$10,000, per Resolution No. R-2021-18: In the Matter of General Fund Making Loan to Video Lottery Fund, Pursuant to ORS 294.468. Commissioner Doherty seconded. Unanimous approval.

Dividend Allocation – SAIF Workers' Compensation Insurance

Lindsay Grogan, Human Resources Director

Ms. Grogan said if 20%, or \$12,500, of the dividend were to be allocated to the Safety Committee, that would leave about \$50,200 to allocate to employees at \$300 per employee. Generally speaking, after taxes, etc., the take-home amount would be about \$200 with approximately \$70 contributed toward retirement. Each Commissioner spoke about the preference to allocate 80% of the funds to employees for their continued efforts toward safety, especially during the COVID pandemic.

Commissioner Doherty moved to allocate 20% of the \$62,755 SAIF Dividend to the Safety Committee and 80% to employees for appreciation of the work they've done over the last year. Chair Russell seconded. Unanimous approval.

Update on the July 29th Regional Building Inspection Roundtable

Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director

The meeting was convened to bring together staff in the region representing planning offices, cities, counties and state government to discuss the common challenges faced in recruiting and retaining qualified inspectors. Ms. Mabbott reviewed her summary notes from the meeting, which were also included in the Agenda Packet. As far as next steps, Ms. Mabbott will work with Ms. Knop to compile financial information relative to the County creating its own building inspection program and present it at the August 25th BOC Meeting, tentatively.

Emergency Operations Center Update

Public Health Director, Nazario Rivera, said with the rise in cases, they were wanting to move forward with the recommendation of universal mask usage for the County. Other states and counties have moved forward with it and he said they supported the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Oregon Health Authority (OHA) in recommending all individuals, vaccinated or not, use masks in public indoor settings.

Chair Russell asked if there was an uptick in vaccinations since a lot of the national and local press were reporting about upticks in cases.

Mr. Rivera replied, "Yes, before we were doing about maybe a vial a day at the clinics, most of the time not a full vial, about four or five doses. But now we're about 20 doses a day, so with all the national coverage on the delta variant, we have seen an uptick in people wanting to get vaccinated."

Chair Russell asked if there was any action required by the Board.

Mr. Rivera said this was just a public recommendation at this point and nothing was mandated, other than for health care facilities and public transportation. When asked if this was a recommendation for County government or the County as a whole, Mr. Rivera said it was a recommendation for the County as a whole.

Commissioner Lindsay said there were two parts to this and the Board should weigh in and make a decision for the public buildings and County government. She then asked Human Resources Director, Lindsay Grogan, to provide the specifics on the recommendation from the Government Command Team.

Ms. Grogan said the Team recommended all employees, visitors and County residents wear a mask. This is a recommendation not a requirement, but employees need to clean all public work spaces, ensure there is adequate hand sanitizer at entrances and exits, stay home if sick, follow quarantine orders, and also notify the supervisor and HR if quarantined or are ill so contact tracing can take place.

Discussion took place about current positive case statistics and upcoming public events, such as fairs and rodeos, being held throughout the region.

Commissioner Lindsay moved to recommend masks in the County government and support the Public Health Director in his efforts to get more vaccinations and encourage people to wear masks. Chair Russell seconded. Discussion: Commissioner Doherty asked Mr. Rivera if the 27 people who got COVID last week were unvaccinated. Mr. Rivera said there were some breakthrough cases (vaccinated people who later test positive) but he wasn't sure what it looked like for those 27. Commissioner Doherty said more information is better, don't summarize, have the information ready. Oregon is 1.9% breakthrough cases. He continued, the constituency out there after a year-and-a-half, fully understand this issue. The top down approach – us going out there and bandying them about won't lead to more vaccinations or more mask-wearing. He said he understood the bind Mr. Rivera was in because he has to follow the CDC and OHA recommendations but he was reluctant, at this time, to go out and tell the constituency something they're fully aware of at this point, and the employees of the County. Mr. Nazario stressed even though there were breakthrough cases, the vaccines are working against hospitalizations and deaths, even though we're seeing some positives, at the end of the day, we're just doing the job of keeping our community members safe. Commissioner Doherty said if 60% of our constituents aren't going to get vaccinated and I have to wear a mask to keep those 60% from getting sick or going to the hospital, how does it work for those folks who got vaccinated, how do you rectify that? Mr. Rivera said it's something we're working through right now, especially with the breakthrough cases. At this moment, it would be in our best interest to follow the messaging of the State and CDC so we'll continue to work through that. Our Public Information Officer, Katie, is sending a packet and we'll review it and see what the message is looking like - so we're working on getting some information out to the public. Commissioner Doherty: It doesn't jibe to say we're going to ask the constituents and employees to mask up again and we have control whether the Fair and Rodeo go forward, you can't do one and not stop the other. We've either got to step in there and do this or not do it. Mr. Rivera: At this point, we're just asking folks as a recommendation, we're not setting any mandates for folks. Commissioner Doherty: Would you recommend the Fair or Rodeo not go forward? Mr. Rivera: Not at this time, our only recommendation at this time is that people mask up at public indoor settings. Commissioner Doherty: You saw what happened at Whiskey Fest, right? Mr. Rivera: Correct, we do have

some cases associated with that outbreak. Commissioner Doherty: Those two things don't jibe. You can't allow these events to go forward if you're going to be asking folks to mask up just in general. Commissioner Lindsay: But if they're vaccinated or wear a mask at Fair, then according to the CDC, they're safe. Chair Russell: Even though there are some breakthrough cases of fully vaccinated people, nationwide about 95% of those hospitalized are unvaccinated people. Commissioner Lindsay: We have two hospitalized and it was zero for a while. It's difficult when a lot of those hospitalized don't come home. We had a very similar conversation on Monday morning (at the EOC meeting) and I fall on both sides of the argument daily as I listen to the numbers and the reasons. My reason for agreeing to bring this forward to this body revolves heavily around the fear of what the State will do if we don't make some recommendation or make some movement toward curbing it because it is spreading quickly, so I appreciate where Commissioner Doherty is coming from. We talked about coming forward with the recommendation for the unvaccinated to wear masks vs. a general recommendation but we came forward with the general recommendation because this body has said it didn't want to be more conservative and wanted to follow what the CDC and State do. Vote: Aye: Chair Russell and Commissioner Lindsay. Nay: Commissioner Doherty. Motion carried.

Commissioner Lindsay said the Public Health Department will set up vaccination booths at the Watermelon Festival and Fair. She asked if the Board would consider Public Health providing a \$15-20 Visa card as a vaccination incentive since there were some incentive funds remaining.

Commissioner Lindsay moved to allow the Public Health Department to do vaccine Visas at the events as an incentive to get the vaccine, staying under the \$20 cap. Chair Russell seconded. Discussion: Commissioner Doherty said it's like the State lottery, I think informed consent, folks have the information out there, they can make a choice. I don't want to pay them. Vote: Aye: Chair Russell and Commissioner Lindsay. Nay: Commissioner Doherty. Motion carried.

Commissioner Lindsay said the daily case update emails would resume, as would the weekly meetings of the Government Command Team, not the Emergency Operations Center, she clarified. When asked by Commissioner Doherty if a motion was made in the past to allow that group to grow or resume, etc., Commissioner Lindsay said there was not a motion to shut them down but the Board created it without an end date but the meetings eventually were backed off. Each individual in the Team has the authority to call a meeting but the Team was not shut down, she added.

Administrator Darrell Green said, more recently, the Team was meeting once a month but when the cases increased, it was pulled back together.

Building Project Updates

- Sheriff Station 2: Substantially completed. Undersheriff Bowles and his crew moved everything into the new building that had been stored at the Fairgrounds. Doors have been installed and painted and the ground leveled.

- Courthouse Feasibility Study: Proposals are due August 5th at 2:00 p.m. Commissioner Lindsay, Mr. Green and the owner's rep (from the Irrigon building construction project) will evaluate the proposals, followed by interviews and a recommendation to the Board.
- Morrow County Government Center in Irrigon: Down to a lot of finishing details, such as door colors, case work changes, locks, signage, etc. Masonry still hasn't arrived. Air quality relative to the smoke from forest fires might shutdown the project, per OSHA rules (Occupational Safety and Health Administration). Photos of the project were shared by Mr. Green.

Weed Department Discussion

Commissioner Doherty said discussions have taken place in recent years about restructuring the Weed Department but it appeared a decision was postponed until after the current incumbent retires. He said that wasn't right and he requested the Human Resources Director, Administrator and Public Works Director bring it forward for a decision by this fall; Chair Russell and Commissioner Lindsay concurred.

Thank you Certificates for Fair Volunteers

Chair Russell requested to keep with tradition and provide a meal certificate for Fair volunteers that can be used at the 4-H Snack Shack, as a way of thanking them for their efforts.

Chair Russell moved to sign the certificates for Fair volunteers. Commissioner Doherty seconded. Unanimous approval.

Department Reports

- The Administrator's Monthly Report was reviewed by Mr. Green.
- The written Sheriff's Office Monthly Report was reviewed.
- The Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (LPSCC) Quarterly Report was reviewed by Jessica Rose, Coordinator.
- The Finance Department Quarterly Report was reviewed by Ms. Knop.
- The Assessment & Tax Quarterly Report was reviewed by Mike Gorman, Assessor/Tax Collector.

Commissioner Reports

Reports were provided by the Commissioners.

Signing of documents

Adjourned: 11:45 a.m.