

Morrow County Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes
August 11, 2021
Bartholomew Building Upper Conference Room
Heppner, Oregon

Present In-Person

Chair Don Russell, Commissioner Jim Doherty, Commissioner Melissa Lindsay, Kate Knop, Roberta Lutcher, Aaron Moss, Justin Nelson

Excused

Darrell J. Green, Administrator

Present Via Zoom

Staff: Erin Anderson, Stephanie Case, SaBrina Bailey Cave, Lindsay Grogan, Katie Imes, Deanne Irving, Crystal Jaeger, Tamra Mabbott, Ian Murray, Jaylene Papineau, Sandi Pointer, Linda Skendzel, Heidi Turrell, Vickie Turrell, Sherry Wright; Non-Staff: Sheryll Bates, Kraig Cutsforth, Ryan DeGrofft, Dirk Dirksen, JoAnna Lamb, Karen Pettigrew, Jenn Rollins, David Sykes

Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance & Roll Call: 9:02 a.m.

City & Citizen Comments: None

Open Agenda: No items

Consent Calendar:

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

- 1. Accounts Payable & Payroll Payables*
- 2. Request to Purchase Five Public Transit Vehicles from Creative Bus Sales: three 14-passenger Starcraft Allstar/Ford F450 buses, \$298,839; one 26-passenger Starcraft Allstar XL/Ford F550 bus, \$147,415; one 6-passenger Braun Ability ADA Voyager Rear Entry Van, \$53,315; grand total: \$499,569*

Commissioner Lindsay seconded. Unanimous approval.

Public Hearing: Supplemental Budget Resolution No. R-2021-20, Fund #504 – 5310 Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Grant

Chair Russell opened the Public Hearing at 9:05 a.m. and called for the Staff Report.

Finance Director, Kate Knop, explained The Loop was requesting to increase appropriations in Materials & Services and Capital Outlay for the CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) funds they received. She said the same resolution was brought to the Board at year-end in June but the funds were not spent, so they were asking for the increase again in the new fiscal year.

Commissioner Lindsay said the funds rolled over from the previous budget. Were they connected to the vehicle purchase in the Consent Calendar, she asked. Ms. Knop replied they were.

Chair Russell received no response to his calls for proponents and opponents to speak and closed the Public Hearing at 9:09 a.m.

Commissioner Doherty moved to approve Resolution No. R-2021-20: In the Matter of Appropriations for Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2021. Commissioner Lindsay seconded. Unanimous approval.

Business Items

Introduction of Aaron Moss, Lead for America & American Connection Corps Fellow

Commissioner Lindsay said the County hosts Mr. Moss but Land O'Lakes, with participation from Tillamook County Creamery Association, funds the fellowship program. Mr. Moss reports to the Administrator and will be in charge of the County's broadband initiative.

Mr. Moss thanked the County for hosting his fellowship. He said he grew up in Clackamas, attended the University of Portland and Portland State University, graduated recently and then "jumped into the Lead for America Fellowship." He said the broadband-related fellowship is called American Connection Corps, which consists of 50 fellows, mostly in rural placements across the country, who are assisting their host entities with bringing broadband and funding to their areas. Mr. Moss said he planned to be here for one, or possibly two years.

Audio Visual Equipment for Morrow County Government Center Building & Bartholomew Building

Kate Knop, Finance Director

Following the July 14th presentation from Avidex on equipping both rooms, a decision by the Board was needed on how to fund the \$285,000 cost. Ms. Knop reviewed several funding scenarios she and Administrator Darrell Green proposed. During the ensuing discussion, Commissioner Lindsay asked if CARES funds could be used because the Upper Conference Room was heavily used for numerous meetings of the Emergency Operations Team and Government Command Team during the pandemic, adding the current capabilities in the room were extremely lacking. She said she could also see how the Government Center Building could be used during emergencies in that area of the County, so perhaps the Emergency Manager could pursue grant options.

Chair Russell moved to allocate \$285,000 from General Fund Contingency, for the time being, while other future sources continue to be investigated. Commissioner Doherty added the motion was with the caveat Ms. Knop was still researching Commissioner Lindsay's suggestion regarding CARES funds. Unanimous approval.

Grants to Cities Appropriations

Kate Knop, Finance Director

Ms. Knop explained \$500,000 remained unappropriated in the Resiliency Fund that needed a final decision by the Board. After reviewing a variety of distribution formulas, the Board learned the 2020 U.S. Census numbers would be released the next day (population statistics have traditionally played a part in the distribution formula).

Commissioner Doherty offered the following: It might be prudent to bring this back next week for discussion. The County was just coming out of negotiations with some of the labor unions who suggested the County was quite flush and that we were able to give money away. However, we contended that was not the case and we'd be upside down in a year or two. We allocated

roughly the equivalent of what the County allocated in the past to Enterprise Zone Funds in Grants to Cities and I am a little concerned about the optics of that. To suggest we're in a bind and yet this has been manna from heaven, if you will, when things are really good, we're able to do these kinds of things but this year we held it in abeyance wondering what the cities got relative to CARES dollars and some of those things. I'm sympathetic to the notion that they need these dollars but I think it fair to weigh in the fact that the Representative from the town came back and allocated \$1.5 million to Boardman's children's facilities and \$4.5 million to the Port of Morrow and \$25 million to the Oregon Military Department, which would have been satisfied with \$22 million but he squeezed \$25 million out of that, and now the ask has come to us again. Quite frankly, all of those optics don't sit well with me at this point in time. I'm uncertain whether I want to move forward with Grant to Cities at all. I don't know if this was more important than the septic systems needed in Lone and Lexington. I don't think this was ever constructed as an ask – we've got these dollars and we set them aside, so this is my current stance and where I've been since budget time. I'm sympathetic to the notion we want to allocate but relative to CREZ (Columbia River Enterprise Zone) dollars, which don't flow as easily or the volume doesn't wind up in Heppner as much maybe as elsewhere, so I'm sympathetic to a lot of those things.

Commissioner Doherty moved to table this until next week. Chair Russell seconded.

Discussion: Chair Russell said these grants go to cities without a lot of sideboards on them. We suggested they spend on capital projects rather than ongoing programs because the money might not be there next year. Is it more important for a sewer system in towns without sewer systems, he asked, adding they can spend the money on that, if they so choose. It's giving it back to the very local level. Commissioner Lindsay said to clarify, these dollars were not General Fund dollars that were set aside, they came from Enterprise Zone dollars. She said she wanted to be very clear when talking about employees that her focus has always been on the fact General Fund has to operate the County, saying she looks at Discretionary dollars very differently, right or wrong. She said she didn't know how the County makes the broader analysis of needed help. Population has worked, but it is exponentially compounding in very big ways when the complete cross section is looked at. She said it was a good idea to table it but she didn't know how to gather all the information pertinent to the whole picture. Unanimous approval.

Discussion – Local Control of Masking – Letter to Governor Kate Brown

The Commissioners relayed recent interactions with the Governor regarding requests for local control of decision-making, which was granted and then taken away when she issued a statewide mask mandate. Input was also received from Morrow County School District Superintendent, Dirk Dirksen.

Commissioner Doherty moved to support the letter to Governor Brown, as drafted. Commissioner Lindsay seconded. Unanimous approval.

Morrow County Command Team Update

Some items discussed during this week's Command Team meeting:

- Current statistic – increasing.
- Re-implementation of previous safety measures, such as plexiglass barriers going back up and increased cleaning of surfaces.

- Human Resources being more proactive regarding decisions, thereby avoiding the need for emergency meetings.
- The concern by the Director of the Oregon Health Authority that hospitals would be over-capacity very soon.
- The Commissioners voiced concern that Regional Solutions' Courtney Crowell, who has half of her salary paid by counties, was not advocating to the Governor for counties in eastern Oregon, which is her job. Commissioner Doherty said she might need to look for a job elsewhere and "we need to drive that message home."

Building Project Updates

- The Sheriff's Office has moved into Sheriff Station 2 Building and the items stored at the Fairgrounds are now gone.
- The Morrow County Government Center Building in Irrigon is still on-time and on-budget. Some materials haven't arrived but the builder is finding good substitutions. The exception is the masonry, which still hasn't arrived. The parking lot will not be finished until spring, when the asphalt plants open back up.

Department Reports

- The Planning Department Monthly Report was provided by Tamra Mabbott, Director.
- The Treasurer's Monthly Report was provided by Jaylene Papineau, Treasurer.

Correspondence

- Quarterly Review of the Defined Benefit Retirement Plan from Mercer Advisors/McGee Wealth Management's Jennifer Currin Gutridge

Commissioner Reports

Reports were provided.

10:31 a.m.

Chair Russell said the regular meeting would be closed and the Board would take a short break before meeting in Executive Session. He read the citation and said no decisions were anticipated.

10:41 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

Signing of documents

Adjourned: 11:00 a.m.