

Morrow County Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes
September 15, 2021
Bartholomew Building Upper Conference Room
Heppner, Oregon

Present In-Person

Chair Don Russell, Commissioner Jim Doherty, Commissioner Melissa Lindsay, Darrell J. Green, Paul Gray, Roberta Lutcher, Tamra Mabbott, Richard Tovey; Non-Staff: Chris Barnum, Cathy Lloyd

Present Via Zoom

Staff: Kirsti Cason, SaBrina Bailey Cave, Glen Diehl, Lindsay Grogan, Eric Imes, Katie Imes, Deanne Irving, Aaron Moss, Sandi Pointer, Heidi Turrell, Gina Wilson; Non-Staff: Cole Bode, Tommy Brooks, JoAnna Lamb, Wendy Neal, Karen Pettigrew, Weston Putman, Jonathan Tallman

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

City & Citizen Comments: Justin Nelson, District Attorney, introduced the students from Riverside High School who were participating in Career Day. Mr. Nelson said, while they were assigned to the D.A.'s Office, he wanted them to see county government in action. Chair Russell then explained the function and responsibilities of the Board of Commissioners.

Open Agenda: Commissioner Lindsay said she wanted to discuss the Community ROCKit program during Commissioner Reports to gauge whether or not the other Commissioners wanted to pursue this opportunity.

Consent Calendar

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

1. *Accounts Payable & Payroll Payables*
2. *Minutes: August 4th*
3. *Notification from Finance Director Kate Knop of the receipt of Electric Cooperative Gross Revenue Tax payments totaling \$586,973.14 (\$116,007.98 from Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative; \$470,965.16 from Umatilla Electric Cooperative)*
4. *Morrow County Personal/Professional Services Contract with DLR Group for the Courthouse Feasibility Study; not-to-exceed amount \$85,706; effective September 14-November 30, 2021*

Commissioner Doherty seconded. Unanimous approval.

Business Items

Presentation by Stepping Stones Alliance – Homelessness in Morrow & Umatilla Counties

Cathy Lloyd, Board Chair

Chris Barnum, Project Manager

Ms. Lloyd said Stepping Stones was aligned with the City of Hermiston and Umatilla County and wanted to see if Morrow County wanted to be included in some way. She then talked about the mission and plans of the non-profit, which is currently focused on developing a property between Hermiston and Umatilla to place emergency shelters for the homeless and support them on a path to housing stability and self-sufficiency. She said Morrow County's involvement

would take transportation to get people to the site, however. After discussion, Chair Russell encouraged Ms. Lloyd and Ms. Barnum to reach out to Morrow County's Public Health Department and Veterans Services Office. Commissioner Lindsay suggested any monetary request be vetted through the Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (LPSCC) and then brought forward by them to the Budget Committee next spring.

Morrow County Government Center Courtroom Schedule

Glen Diehl, Justice of the Peace

As background, the Courtroom in the new building in Irrigon has been designed to serve not only as the Courtroom for Justice Court, but also as the place to hold Board of Commissioners meetings in the northern part of the County. The Board recently approved upgraded audio/visual capabilities for both the Courtroom and the Upper Conference in the Bartholomew Building, where BOC meetings are held in Heppner. The Commissioners surmised the virtual meetings that came about as a result of the pandemic were now here to stay, so the investment to enhance public participation through better A/V capacity was warranted.

Judge Diehl talked about the difficulties it would create for Justice Court if the Board were to hold its meeting in Irrigon one or two Wednesdays a month. The Judge's current office hours are Mondays and Tuesdays in Heppner, and Wednesdays and Thursdays in Irrigon, with support staff only in the Irrigon office on Fridays. Various scheduling scenarios were discussed.

Chair Russell said the Commissioners needed more time to evaluate the scheduling problems discussed by Judge Diehl and asked that this topic be brought back to an agenda in the near future.

Discussion – Compensation Board Members

Lindsay Grogan, Human Resources Director

Ms. Grogan said the terms for two of the five members of the Compensation Board were set to expire December 31st. She asked the Board for direction on how to handle the upcoming vacancies and suggested three options. The Commissioners were in favor of the following option: Human Resources informs the members that their terms are expiring and asks if they would like to reapply. This option includes opening the vacancy to the public.

Resolution No. R-2021-23: Adopting the Hermiston-Boardman Connector & the Boardman-Port of Morrow Circular Plans

Katie Imes, Coordinator, The Loop/Morrow County Public Transit

Commissioner Doherty moved to approve Resolution No. R-2021-23: A Resolution Adopting the Hermiston-Boardman Connector and the Boardman-Port of Morrow Circular Plans. Commissioner Lindsay seconded. Unanimous approval.

Review Permit Application #OOL Originally Issued September 2019 – Application for Necessity to Build on Right-of-Way from Umatilla Electric Cooperative for an Electric Transmission Line at Olson Road and Wilson Lane

Commissioner Doherty explained when this permit was approved on September 11, 2019 it was with one condition: "...A review by the Planning Department of the temporary nature of this

will take place in 24 months from the date of signing.” He said he appreciated the representatives from UEC who were attending virtually (Cole Bode, Tommy Brooks, Wendy Neal, Weston Putman) but he still had a lot of unresolved questions, and he encouraged them to listen to the recording of the 2019 meeting. He said he wanted to make sure this was reviewed by the Public Works Director, but he was currently out of the office. He continued by asking if there was interface with the City of Boardman and if the temporary permits and variances were in place there before the Board approved this “bridge to nowhere.” He said the Agenda Coversheet from two years ago contained the wording that it was only to feed the Amazon data center and this begged the question as to whether the Chair could weigh in on the discussion. He said this was a much broader discussion than a simple head nod and we move onto 2023. The Commissioners asked County Counsel two years ago if requiring a review in 24 months allowed the Board the ability to curtail this today, or perhaps next week, and the answer was a clear yes. This was a temporary permit, he said, and if things were going “according to Hoyle” today we were able to move it to 2023. He said he thought things were not anywhere near going “according to Hoyle,” so he wanted to table it until next week.

Commissioner Doherty moved to table this until next week as he had unresolved questions at this point. Commissioner Lindsay seconded. Discussion: Commissioner Lindsay said she had questions about the verbiage on the application and wanted to revisit the recording herself. Vote: Aye: Commissioner Doherty, Commissioner Lindsay; Nay: Chair Russell. Motion carried. Discussion: Commissioner Doherty asked Chair Russell if he was comfortable with participating in a discussion on feeding the Amazon data center that was feeding him. Chair Russell said he was comfortable they have until 2023 to finish this. Commissioner Doherty encouraged Chair Russell to listen to the recording from the September 11, 2019 BOC meeting and asked staff to send it to Chair Russell.

Chair Russell asked if there were any comments from UEC. Mr. Brooks with Cable Huston LLP, representing UEC, said it would be helpful to know what the questions were. He said this permit was for a temporary 115kV line related to, but separate from, the other Olson Road transmission line they were constructing and where there has been a lot of activity. Commissioner Lindsay said her questions were about how they were related, the current status, timelines, and worst/best case scenarios.

Command Team Update

- Emergency Manager, Paul Gray, reviewed current hospital bed capacity statistics for the region – 3-6 intensive care unit (ICU) beds available.
- Ms. Grogan said the Biden Administration released the intention of a rule – all federal workers and contractors will be required to get vaccinated, and there will be no testing option. Additionally, she said, a second order will require the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to write a rule that employers with 100 or more employees would need to require employees be vaccinated or do weekly testing. She said Morrow County has 125 employees but it’s unclear which rule the County will fall under. We have limited information and are trying to plan how the logistics will play out in multiple areas, she said. Discussion.

Building Project Updates

- Courthouse Feasibility Study – DLR Group conducted a virtual meeting with stakeholders from the building. In-person meetings are also scheduled with stakeholders and to allow DLR Group reps to assess the building. Chair Russell said his “take-away” from the first stakeholder meeting was that changes were needed for the Courthouse and, ultimately, a decision needed to be made whether it was an office building or a courthouse because it’s not big enough for both.
- Morrow County Government Center – there have been some product delays, such as masonry, but the move-in date is still planned for the end of October or beginning of November.

Commissioner Reports

- Brief reports were provided. Commissioner Lindsay then discussed Community ROCKit (Resource Organizer for Communities Kit). It is a non-profit that assists organization in moving a specific project from the talking phase to the action phase. She recommended Community ROCKit assist Morrow County with workforce housing, and said she would bring it to next week’s agenda for consideration.

10:55 a.m. Executive Session: Pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(i) – To review and evaluate the employment-related performance of the chief executive officer of any public body, a public officer, employee or staff member who does not request an open hearing

Signing of documents

Adjourned: 11:20 a.m.