

**Morrow County Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes**  
**March 23, 2022**  
**Bartholomew Building Upper Conference Room**  
**Heppner, Oregon**

**Present In-Person**

Chair Jim Doherty, Commissioner Melissa Lindsay, Commissioner Don Russell, Darrell J. Green, Mike Gorman, Patricia Hughes, Roberta Lutchter

**Present Via Zoom**

SaBrina Bailey-Cave, Kirsti Cason, Julia Finch, Ronda Fox, Jasmine Garcia, Kelsey Greenup-Fennern, Derek Gunderson, Tamra Mabbott, Yvonne, Morter, Aaron Moss, Justin Nelson, Jaylene Papineau, Sandi Patton, Sandi Pointer, Dan Robbins, Gina Wilson, Steve Wilson; Non-Staff: Sarah Carlson, Patrick Collins, JoAnna Lamb, Mike McCarter, Karen Pettigrew, Rick Stokoe, David Sykes

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

**City and Citizen Comments:** None

**Open Agenda:** No items

**Consent Calendar**

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

- 1. Accounts Payable and Payroll Payables*
- 2. Personal/Professional Services Contract for Counseling Services with Community Counseling Solutions, Inc., for the following services through the Sheriff's Office, 20 hours per week: Mental Health Assessment & Treatment; Drug & Alcohol Counseling & Treatment; Batterer's Intervention; Sex Offender Treatment; Driving Under the Influence of Intoxicants – Evaluation and Treatment; will not exceed \$24,000*
- 3. Corrected BOC Minutes of December 8, 2021*

*Commissioner Lindsay seconded. Unanimous approval.*

**Retirement Recognition** – Patricia Hughes, Deputy Assessor/Tax Collector

A summary of Ms. Hughes' career with the County was read by Chair Doherty. Commissioner Lindsay commented on her interactions with Ms. Hughes in her prior career, saying she always appreciated her helpfulness. Commissioner Russell thanked her for her decades of service to the County. Mike Gorman, Assessor/Tax Collector, said he would miss Ms. Hughes' contagious laugh echoing through the halls of the Courthouse – laughs often at his expense. Administrator Darrell Green said her eye for detail was a huge asset in that department and also congratulated her on her retirement.

**Business Items**

Letter of Support for U.S. Economic Development Administration Grant Application – Heppner Water System Improvement Project

Commissioner Lindsay said the project associated with the request would provide water redundancy and better flow for Heppner. It would be what's needed to get a 14-20-unit subdivision started, she added.

*Commissioner Russell moved to approve the letter of support for the U.S. EDA Grant Application for the Heppner Water System Improvement Project. Commissioner Lindsay seconded. Unanimous approval.*

Commissioner Lindsay said she should have mentioned it under Open Agenda but there were two other letters of support for consideration that came in last night from the Port of Morrow and the City of Irrigon. Interim Port of Morrow Executive Director, Lisa Mittelsdorf, was then asked to provide an overview of the requests listed in the letters, which she did. Chair Doherty set the letters aside until later in the meeting to allow time to read them.

Compensation Board Recommendations for Elected Officials & Cost of Living Adjustment Recommendation for Non-Represented Employees

Darrell Green, Administrator

Mr. Green reviewed the recommendations from the Compensation Board meeting of January 20, 2022:

1. Cost of living adjustment (COLA) for the Assessor, Justice of the Peace, Sheriff and Treasurer of 4.5%
2. Salary increase for the Clerk of 5% and a 4.5% COLA
3. Increase the salary of the Commissioners from \$55,190 to \$79,000 and no COLA

*Commissioner Russell moved to forward on the report from the Compensation Board to the Budget Committee, with no recommendation. Commissioner Lindsay seconded. Discussion. Commissioner Lindsay: I appreciate the work of the Compensation Board...they put a lot of time into it... and talked things through. The missing pieces are the Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs), what we've done for other employees, the overall budget. I agree 100% that the Budget Committee gets to see the whole picture because I'm uncomfortable with some of these things and hope to have a robust discussion. I like that it doesn't come as, "We agree, we want this," it comes as, "Let's talk about this." Commissioner Russell: I know what we did in the CBAs and that has to be a consideration with what we do with everybody. Discussion on clarification of building the budget. Chair Doherty: ...It's good discussion at the Budget Committee. At the end of the day, the Budget Committee allocates the funds but we set the salary, but it's a good discussion to have and appropriate to have it there. Vote: Unanimous approval.*

Mr. Green said a COLA recommendation for Non-Represented Employees normally takes place at this time, as well. Non-Represented Employees do not include Elected Officials or Union Employees. Discussion.

*Commissioner Lindsay moved to recommend a 3% COLA to the Budget Committee for discussion. Commissioner Russell seconded. Unanimous approval.*

Mr. Green thanked Heidi Turrell, Ronda Fox and Lindsay Grogan for working with him to prepare the information.

**Break:** 9:38-9:44 a.m.

### Update on Finance Director Search

Darrell Green, Administrator

Mr. Green reported the updated job description was approved by the Board on March 16<sup>th</sup> and he engaged Prothman, a recruitment firm. He also said Lisanne Currin, Chief Financial Officer for Morrow County Grain Growers will temporarily assist the Finance Department with basic functions, while Christa Wolf, Wolfe Consulting LLC, will assist with daily operations. Discussion.

### Proposed Budget Committee Meeting Date

Darrell Green, Administrator

Mr. Green proposed two options – the week of May 9<sup>th</sup> or May 16<sup>th</sup>; the Commissioners preferred the week of May 9<sup>th</sup>.

### Unanticipated Revenue, Option 2, Distribution Clarification

Chair Doherty said as the Treasurer, Jaylene Papineau, and Assessor/Tax Collector, Mike Gorman, worked through the distribution list based on last week's BOC motion, questions remained. The questions surrounded the process to send funds to the Morrow County School District and the Ione School District via their designated entities, as has been past practice. Ms. Papineau said she needed written instructions from both school districts. Discussion.

*Commissioner Russell moved to have the money that goes to the Ione School District (ISD) and the Morrow County School District (MCSD), whether bonding or money directly to them, be funneled through the education foundation with it earmarked as to how much goes to each of the two school districts. Commissioner Lindsay seconded. Discussion: Chair Doherty noted each district has its own. Commissioner Russell said to run MCSD through the Morrow Education Foundation and he then asked Rick Stokoe to comment. Mr. Stokoe said the Education Foundation met last week to distribute funds from the Columbia River Enterprise Zone and they also voted in case the BOC decided to put money through the Education Foundation. They voted to make those authorizations to disburse whatever way the BOC decided. There would be no admin fee for that, Mr. Stokoe added. Chair Doherty said he still wanted to meet with County Counsel, Justin Nelson, to make sure, adding that Ms. Papineau suggested if an auditor showed up and asked about the funds not doing directly to the school districts, then she would have signed hard copies to reference. He said he would be happy to move it forward now and then meet with Mr. Nelson and Ms. Papineau to button up the legal path forward to do this. Commissioner Russell asked if the motion provided the documentation Ms. Papineau requested. She said technically, yes it did, but it's a questionable area and she wanted to make sure we're all covered in case someone questioned it. Chair Doherty said he visited with Mr. Nelson last week about funds that went to a school district that were rerouted for a septic system and he wanted to know if it held true to the original agreement. He said he needed to make sure when changes are made, they're done properly. Vote: Unanimous approval.*

### Letters of Support Requested by the Port of Morrow and City of Irrigon

*Commissioner Russell moved to approve the letters of support for Congressionally Directed Spending applications from the Port of Morrow and the City of Irrigon, as presented. Commissioner Lindsay seconded. Unanimous approval.*

## Economic Development Conveyance between the U.S. Army and the Columbia Development Authority (CDA)

As background, Greg Smith, CDA Director, recently informed the CDA Board that a verbal agreement was made some years ago between the Army and the Port of Morrow that the Port would put up the \$1 million needed for the conveyance of Parcel 1 (640 acres). This meant the Port would receive that land upon the handover of the Umatilla Army Depot to the CDA. Chair Doherty, who is also Chair of the CDA Board, postponed the vote at the CDA meeting to allow the members time to approach their respective boards to see if they wanted to jointly participate in funding the \$1 million, thereby, also having a share in the property. The five entities of the CDA are Morrow and Umatilla Counties, the Ports of Morrow and Umatilla, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Commissioner Russell said when the Army wanted \$1 million, none of the entities had it except the Port of Morrow. In exchange, the Port of Morrow would get 640 acres of exclusive farm use (EFU) ground outside the fence. It's landlocked desert land with no water rights that became part of the application to the federal government. When this took place, the land appraised for just under \$1 million but an appraisal in September valued it less than that now. When he was a Port Commissioner, he said there was discussion about different uses, such as trading material but there's no value to the Port without water rights, unless someone could move existing water rights. Commissioner Russell then talked about the delay this could cause with the Base Realignment and Closure process pending at the Department of Defense.

Chair Doherty said the concerns over a potential delay were also expressed by Mr. Smith but he recently corrected his stance on that, telling Chair Doherty his instincts were correct in that it would not delay the process.

*Chair Doherty moved to, at least in principle, and it's a big financial obligation including where do the funds come from, but in principle, we're prepared to put up the full \$1 million for conveyance of the CDA property. Commissioner Lindsay seconded. Discussion: Commissioner Lindsay said it was unfortunate she couldn't find, locate or see that the \$1 million and the 640 acres were a decision that was memorialized...I think there have to be further discussions at the CDA that the CDA Board makes the decisions of what gets formalized. We're duty-bound to be transparent in government and it has to happen with our partners...protocol has to be followed. Commissioner Russell questioned the last-minute change and said the original agreement should be honored. Debate continued. Vote: Aye: Chair Doherty, Commissioner Lindsay. Nay: Commissioner Russell. Motion carried.*

## **Department Reports**

- The Board reviewed the written Road Department Monthly Report, as submitted by Eric Imes.

## **Correspondence**

- Office of the Governor, Executive Order No. 22-04: Determination of a State of Drought Emergency in Crook, Jefferson and Morrow Counties
- Flyer advertising a free waste pesticide collection event in Pendleton

## **Commissioner Reports**

The Commissioners provided reports of recent activity.

## **Miscellaneous**

Commissioner Lindsay and Planning Director, Tamra Mabbott, requested a letter of support for an application for Congressionally Directed Spending funds by the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area (LUBGWMA) subcommittee. If the funds were awarded, they would be used for filters for people using domestic wells in the nitrate plume area of the LUBGWMA, for example.

*Chair Doherty moved to approve the letter in support of the LUBGWMA Subcommittee's grant application requesting Congressionally Directed Spending funds; and authorize Commissioner Lindsay to sign on behalf of the Board; and provide the signed letter to the Board in the Consent Calendar as notification the letter was sent. Commissioner Russell seconded. Unanimous approval.*

## **Signing of documents**

**Adjourned:** 11:15 a.m.