

Morrow County Court
January 13, 2016
Irrigon, Oregon
Oregon Trail Library District Community Room

Present

Judge Terry Tallman
Commissioner Leann Rea
Commissioner Don Russell
Jerry Sorte, Administrative Officer
Karen Wolff, Human Resources Director
Rich Tovey, County Counsel/Deputy District Attorney
Roberta Lutcher, Court Executive Assistant

Audience

Kathy Street, Director, Oregon Trail Library District (OTLD)
Karen Pettigrew, Boardman City Manager
Melissa Lindsay, Lexington

Judge Tallman called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

City and Citizen Comments – Irrigon

Ms. Street reported there is currently an at-large opening on the OTLD Board of Directors. She said board meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month and the location rotates among the branches.

Open Agenda

No items

Department Reports

Veteran's Department Update

Linda Skendzel, Veterans Service Officer

- A ribbon cutting ceremony will take place March 23rd in Vancouver for a newly constructed Fisher House. (As explained on the Fisher House website – A Fisher House offers housing for families of patients receiving medical care at major military and Veterans Administration (VA) medical centers. They are typically located within walking distance of treatment. There are 65 Fisher Houses and more are under construction or in design.)
- Ms. Skendzel provided copies of Fiscal Year 2010 and 2014 Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures by county in Oregon.
- Regular meetings will resume between congressional office representatives and county Veteran Service Officers.
- Morrow County Veterans Service Office is currently serving 367 veterans.
- A count of homeless veterans will take place in counties. Discussion ensued about the difficulty of obtaining such a count. Judge Tallman said Morrow County isn't opposed to the count but questions the accuracy.

Sheriff's Office Update

Undersheriff Steve Myren

- Undersheriff Myren returned with the documents to surplus the vehicles discussed at the December 23rd Court meeting. He noted the title for the 1995 Freightliner was inadvertently not transferred to Morrow County and is still held by Boardman Rural Fire Protection District (BRFPD), but they cannot find it and will apply for a lost title.

Commissioner Rea moved to approve the surplus of a 1995 Freightliner FL 70 (former Mobile Communications Center), license plate E217738, VIN 1FV6HLAA1SL684980, to the Hermiston ARES/RACES Ham Radio Club, a 501(c)(3) organization; and two 2003 Polaris Sportsman 500 Quads, VIN 4XACH50A91A335566 and VIN 4XACH50A24B128477 to the Lake County Sheriff's Office for search and rescue operations; and authorize Undersheriff Myren to sign the titles. Commissioner Russell seconded. Unanimous approval.

- Undersheriff Myren said invoices for two new Sheriff's Office vehicles will be coming through the Accounts Payable, one of which is funded through the City of Heppner. He said additional vehicles are expected in the near future, as well. This means the Sheriff's Office will be rotating out several vehicles, he said.

New Business

Finley Buttes Fee Adjustment Request

Kevin Green, Waste Management, Finley Buttes Landfill Company
Sandi Putman, Public Works Management Assistant

The Court reviewed the list of requested fee changes to be effective February 1st and compared it to the last fee change request of April 2009. Commissioners Russell questioned the Minimum Charge increase from \$5 per load to \$32 per load. Mr. Green explained the rate applies to use of the landfill itself and not the transfer stations. The increase is an effort to encourage the users of the landfill site to bring in larger loads instead of smaller loads, he said. Commissioner Russell said he believed the higher rate will ultimately irritate people and, thereby, encourage illegal roadside dumping. Discussion. Commissioner Rea suggested a rate of \$15 per load, and Commissioner Russell followed up with the idea to make it the same as the Municipal Solid Waste rate of \$16 per ton. Mr. Green said he would discuss the County's request with Dean Large, Sales Manager, and return next week.

Commissioner Russell said he had an additional request to convey to Mr. Large. He would like the Finley Buttes contract to allow road maintenance funds be used on Ulman Boulevard, in addition to Bombing Range Road. He explained overweight trucks travel on multiple roads, not just Bombing Range Road. He said he doesn't want to delay the current fee request changes over this issue, but it is an area he would like to discuss.

Old Business

Tobacco Policy Proposal

Shelley Wight, Tobacco Educator/Communicable Diseases

Ms. Wight said she received feedback after she presented the draft policy to the Court in October and at a Department Head meeting in November. She reviewed the revised policy with the Commissioners, and a sheet of Frequently Asked Questions. Discussion.

Ms. Wolff commented some of the items in the policy are subject to bargaining and will have to be presented to the unions. She said this does not need to slow the policy making process, however. Mr. Sorte encouraged the Court to offer a cessation assistance program, in some form, to employees. Ms. Wight said when Morrow County Health District implemented its tobacco free policy, it offered to help pay out-of-pocket costs for cessation options (with some limitations). She also said she would support the formation of a wellness group or committee. Ms. Wolff said an employee expressed interest in putting together something along those lines, but the Court is awaiting a more formal proposal.

The Court discussed whether or not any employees should be exempt from the policy and decided there should be no exemptions. Ms. Wight said she contacted other counties about 911 dispatchers and not one county included exemptions for this, or any other, type of employee.

The draft policy includes one exception for “the use of noncommercial tobacco for ceremonial, cultural, religious or medicinal activities that are in accordance with the American Indian Religious Freedom Act...” Commissioner Russell said this should be limited to federally recognized tribes.

Commissioner Rea said the County will move forward with no exemptions, apart from the legally required exception (listed above), and exclude outdoor parks. Mr. Sorte asked Ms. Wolff to produce the next draft with appropriate policy language.

North County Building Needs

Judge Ann Spicer, Justice of the Peace

Carla McLane, Planning Department Director

John Bowles, Parole & Probation

Rick Worden, Finance Department Director

Ms. McLane said there have been previous discussions with the Court about facility needs in the north end of the County and she, Judge Spicer, and Mr. Bowles are back to make sure the dialogue continues. She said they would like to work with Mr. Sorte and Mr. Worden to produce a more formal building design than the rough sketch provided today. She said building acquisition funds were set aside in previous Long Range Planning sessions and she asked if a portion of those funds could be used for architectural designs. Various discussions ensued.

The Court decided several questions need to be addressed in a Long Range Planning session, including:

- Should the County continue to have a presence in both Irrigon and Boardman, or consolidate all north end services to one location?
- Should the County build a new facility, find an existing building, or build a new structure using County employees?

Ms. McLane asked how she and the others can stay engaged in the process. Commissioner Russell said they should revisit their building plans with future growth taken into consideration.

The Court's next Long Range Planning session was scheduled for Wednesday, January 27th, at 1:30 p.m. in the Bartholomew Building upper conference room.

Department Reports

Planning Department Update

Ms. McLane

- John Kilkenny opted not to continue as a member of the Planning Commission. This creates a vacancy on the commission for someone from the Heppner area.
- By consensus, the Court agreed to sign a comment letter regarding the Naval Weapons Systems Training Facility, Boardman, Final Environmental Impact Statement. Commissioner Rea will attach a list of inconsistencies she noted in the report.
- Abandoned Vehicle Discussion – Ms. McLane said the City of Heppner requested enforcement in the Urban Growth Boundary around the city, but it couldn't be done according to current Morrow County code. Ms. McLane said she researched Code Enforcement and Zoning but doesn't see a way to accomplish this. She added the other four communities in the County are not interested in this kind of enforcement. Judge Tallman questioned if the Court should consider a Code Enforcement Ordinance change if only one of five communities is interested. Mr. Sorte suggested the Court revisit the issue later.

Lunch Break 11:55 a.m.

Resumed 1:12 p.m.

- Comment letter to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) after the Public Community Meeting on January 6th to discuss the Preliminary Environmentally Preferred Route of the Boardman to Hemingway (B2H) Transmission Line – Ms. McLane said both Morrow and Umatilla Counties agree West of Bombing Range Road is the preferred route, but do not agree on the point of transition between the counties. (The two transition point areas are Butter Creek Junction for Morrow County and Lena/Highway 207 for Umatilla County.) She said after she drove each transition point route, and viewed Google Earth images, she now favors Umatilla County's choice. She said the impact to irrigated agriculture could be less if Morrow County supports Umatilla County's transition point that is farther south. The Commissioners agreed with Ms. McLane. She said she would have the comment letter ready for signature next Wednesday.

Minutes

Commissioner Rea moved to approve the minutes of October 28th, as presented. Commissioner Russell seconded. Unanimous approval.

Commissioner Rea moved to approve the Executive Session #1 minutes of October 28th, as presented. Commissioner Russell seconded. Unanimous approval.

Commissioner Rea moved to approve the Executive Session #2 minutes of October 28th, as presented. Commissioner Russell seconded. Unanimous approval.

Claims

Commissioner Rea moved to approve the January 2016 Retirement Taxes, dated January 14th; Payroll Payables, Immediate & Electronic, HRA VEBA, dated January 6th; Payroll Payables, Monthlies, dated December 31st; Payroll Payables, Immediate & Electronic, dated January 6th; and Accounts Payable, dated January 14th, in the amount of \$185,729.34. Commissioner Russell seconded. Unanimous approval.

Correspondence Reviewed:

- Notice from the Town of Lexington to adjoining property owners.
- Washington Department of Ecology notice of Public Comment Period regarding the proposed closure of 207-A South Retention Basin Storage Unit at Hanford.

Administrative Officer Report

Mr. Sorte discussed the following topics:

- Sale of the Pioneer Annex Building to the Morrow County Health District is nearing completion and County Counsel will draft a quitclaim deed.
- Lease of the second floor of the Gilliam-Bisbee Building to Community Counseling Solutions – after an update from Mr. Sorte, the Commissioners decided to move forward with the lease.
- Storage area shelving in the Bartholomew Building – after soliciting bids, the estimate from Public Works came in at \$6,000-7,000. Mr. Sorte said he would follow up to see if this is for one storage room or all the storage rooms.
- Furnishings in storage – the Commissioners said they want to make sure furnishings remain available for future building needs. Discussion took place on how to determine those needs and options to disburse the excess. Mr. Sorte said he would work on a policy to be in place when the County is ready to distribute excess items.

Commissioner Reports

- Commissioner Russell reported he and Mr. Sorte had an informal meeting with executives of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR). He said the meeting was an opportunity to introduce Mr. Sorte, and establish a relationship with Dave Tovey, Executive Director, Debra Crosswell, Deputy Executive Director, and Chuck Sams, Communication Director.
- Commissioner Rea said she has been working with members of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Energy and Agriculture, who were very interested to learn what took place during Morrow County's Public Community Meeting on January 6th concerning the B2H Environmentally Preferred Route. She said she also attended several Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) meetings, by phone, on Public Lands and Water Policy. The emphasis of the meetings were the recent droughts and the impacts to municipal water sources.
- Judge Tallman discussed several initiative petitions which could be filed during the upcoming short legislative session, as learned at an AOC meeting.

Calendars Items:

- Meeting with the Court and AFSCME will take place on Thursday, January 21st, 3:00 p.m.
- The Commissioners decided to make it a practice to attend the Chamber of Commerce meetings in both Boardman and Irrigon when the Court meets in those locations.
- Dedication of the Bartholomew Building – Friday, March 18th at 2:00 p.m., pending confirmation with Heppner Chamber of Commerce’s Wee Bit O’Ireland Celebration schedule.

Adjourned: 2:35 p.m.