

Morrow County Board of Commissioners
Work Session Minutes
March 15, 2017
Port of Morrow Riverfront Center, Wells Springs Room
2 Marine Drive, Boardman, Oregon

Present

Chair Melissa Lindsay
Commissioner Don Russell
Commissioner Jim Doherty
Jerry Sorte, Administrative Officer
Gayle Gutierrez, Treasurer
Karen Wolff, Human Resources Director

Mike Gorman, Assessor/Tax Collector
Kate Knop, Finance Director
Richard Tovey, County Counsel
Linda Skendzel, Veterans Representative
Carla McLane, Planning Director
Roberta Lutcher, Executive Assistant

Call to Order: 1:30 p.m.

North Morrow County Facility Planning Update

Mr. Sorte said a project team has been assembled that will work on a broader strategy for facility planning. As part of that, a property near Boardman has been evaluated by the Planning Department. Ms. McLane was asked to provide the report.

Potential site near Boardman for Public Works Yard

Ms. McLane reviewed the Planning Department report on the property to the southeast of Boardman referred to as the Yates Lane property. She described it further as being on the south side of Yates Lane, west of Taylor Transfer, and southeast of the I-84 Port of Morrow interchange (Exit 165). She said the property is 2.98 acres in size and there is the potential to purchase the adjoining property.

Commissioner Russell said the property was once owned by his father, Vernon Russell, and since he leased it from him, he is somewhat familiar with its characteristics, which he then described. He explained the current owners, Kevin and Wendy Taylor have both expressed an interest in selling the property which was sold to them seven years ago for \$20,000 an acre.

Discussion took place on the space and facility needs for a Public Works Yard; what would be a reasonable offer (Commissioner Russell suggested \$17,000/acre); and what the assessed value is of the property (\$29,000, according to Mr. Gorman).

The Board directed staff to move forward and do additional outreach.

North County Facility Planning

Mr. Sorte said he's drafted a process that gets a project from the concept stage to the completion stage. The comprehensive process will allow the board to fully evaluate all options. It will be a team effort and take a significant amount of time, he added.

Discussions centered around several topics, such as:

- Should County services be centralized to one location - Irrigon or Boardman?
- Should existing services remain as they are in each community?
- Should the County maintain a presence in each community but shift the departments somewhat?
- Should the County pursue the purchase of the Blue Mountain Community College building in Boardman?
- How does the Gilliam-Bisbee Building come into the process of facility planning since its primary tenant will vacate February 2018?
- Should the Docken Building in Boardman also be a part of facility planning discussions? (Public Health Department, District Attorney, BOC, and Juvenile Department all have offices there.)

The Board requested additional information in order to bring the discussions to a conclusion. Mr. Sorte said staff would bring the information back to the Board in the near future so the process can continue to move forward.

Recap of March 1, 2017 Work Session: Discussion on Financial Processes

Chair Lindsay asked Elected Officials and Department Head in attendance to provide an analysis of the March 1st Work Session where the County's financial processes were reviewed.

Mike Gorman, Assessor/Tax Collector

Mr. Gorman admitted there has been some frustration and contentious feelings, but new staff, administrators, and Commissioners need to better educate themselves on the workings of County departments.

The Commissioners took the opportunity to explain the rationale behind Work Sessions and that they allow the opportunity for communication and education for all parties, but especially so for Commissioners who cannot meet unless in a publicly advertised meeting.

Mr. Gorman said as a result of the March 1st Work Session, he realized some policies in his office were not in writing and he is now working to remedy that.

Gayle Gutierrez, Treasurer

Ms. Gutierrez summed up the previous Work Session as being good, and sought to clarify her definition of a manual check. She cited a few examples and noted they happen very infrequently.

Kate Knop, Finance Director

Ms. Knop said her focus of the last Work Session was to ask if the County is comfortable with policies at the Department Head level. She also said she understands the types of checks the Treasurer is statutorily required to disburse, but anything outside of those should have Board approval through the Accounts Payable process. She said she continues to believe a single

person should not have control of cash from start to finish, and she would like to see the creation of an investment committee.

Commissioner Russell

Commissioner Russell's analysis included his observation that there is friction between departments. He had hoped the turnover in Commissioners might improve that, but it may not be that easy.

Various discussions.

Commissioner Doherty said the recap has been productive but where does the County go from here. Chair Lindsay requested the following:

- Commissioners and staff compile a list of items determined to be of importance in order to draft a policy/process to be followed by all departments.
- Staff, including County Counsel, will review the list to determine what is feasible.
- Commissioner Doherty requested the information be sent to the Administrative Officer.

Mr. Sorte said the end product will be a set of written financial policies that articulate who does what. With a comprehensive set of policies in place, staff in every office will have a level of certainty and consistency as to what is expected, he explained. Continuing, Mr. Sorte said as staff, Department Heads and Elected Officials work on this together, it will provide a needed opportunity for teamwork.

The discussion continued on the list requested by the Board. Chair Lindsay requested:

- A certification process be developed
- An investment policy be revisited, perhaps with citizen involvement
- Written policies be developed for handling petty cash and for manual check writing (excluding checks the Treasurer is statutorily required to issue, such as to taxing districts)
- The Finance Department have access to the Local Government Investment Pool as a back-up to the Treasurer.

Mr. Sorte recommended the Finance Director and Treasurer be the "Project Team" that will bring in other departments, as needed, to draft the policies. He suggested the policy include flow charts, descriptions of duties, etc.

Commissioner Reports

Work Session future topics and meeting structure discussion

The Commissioners said they were pleased with the Work Sessions and wanted to continue holding them. Mr. Sorte said some topics may lend themselves to Work Sessions, such as the discussion during today's regular meeting of the BOC regarding the restructuring of the Sheriff's Office. If staff anticipates lengthy discussions for items, we can recommend they be scheduled for Work Sessions, he said. (Work Sessions are tentatively scheduled to be held twice a month on the first Wednesday in Heppner and the third Wednesday in Boardman, starting at 1:30 p.m.)

Legislative topics discussion

Commissioner Doherty suggested resources be tapped at the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) for a better understanding of proposed legislation. Mr. Gorman mentioned he is part of an assessor's organization that follows legislative matters affecting assessment and taxation. Mr. Sorte said other department heads and elected officials might also belong to such groups and suggested they provide updates to the Commissioners during the session as to how certain bills could impact the County.

Adjourned: 3:49 p.m.