

Morrow County Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes
February 21, 2018
Port of Morrow Riverfront Center
Boardman, Oregon

Present

Chair Don Russell
Commissioner Jim Doherty
Commissioner Melissa Lindsay
Darrell Green, Administrator
Richard Tovey, County Counsel

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance: 8:35 a.m.

City and Citizen Comments: No comments

Open Agenda: No items

Business Items

West Extension Irrigation District (WEID) request to sign Affidavit for Partial Abandonment of a Ground Water Certificate of Registration

Carla McLane, Planning Director

Bev Bridgewater, District Manager, WEID

Bev Bridgewater of the West Extension Irrigation District was invited to the meeting to discuss the abandonment of Morrow County's water rights that were registered under Robert V. Gillett. Ms. Bridgewater gave some historical data in regards to the land and water rights. She mentioned that the water rights ultimately stay with the land, not the property owner. She stated they will be moving forward to grant the current owner above ground water rights. There is no harm if Morrow County decides to do nothing, she added, but there is a possibility we could 'transfer' these water rights to the City of Irrigon to use elsewhere.

Commissioner Doherty moved to table the Water Rights topic and revisit this in three weeks. Commissioner Lindsay seconded. Discussion - Commissioner Lindsay wanted more time to examine all of the facts, including Irrigon's role in this process. Unanimous approval.

Consent Calendar

Commissioner Doherty moved to approve the Consent Calendar as presented:

- 1. Accounts Payable dated February 22nd in the amount of \$107,556.08; Manual check to Trailer World for two General Maintenance trailers in the amount of \$9,903.25; Payroll Payables, Immediates & Electronic dated February 13th in the amount of \$147,616.53*
- 2. Revised Vehicle Purchase Pre-Authorization Request, Planning Department, 2018 Jeep Cherokee from Hermiston Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram, purchase price not to exceed \$23,232 (using Building Permit Funds)*

Commissioner Lindsay seconded. Discussion: Commissioner Doherty expressed annoyance that the Jeep dealer did not meet the bid specs to have the vehicle on hand. Motion passed 3-0.

Business Items, continued

U.S.D.A. Wildlife Services Update

Chris Lulay, U.S.D.A. Wildlife Specialist

Mr. Lulay passed out a handout to show the animals that he has worked with along with resources he has protected throughout Morrow County. He mentioned that he forgot to add badgers to his handout, but did say they are causing problems for hay farmers. The main problem is with coyotes, predominately in the Boardman area. West Irrigation is having a problem with muskrats burrowing around the ditches.

Wolf discussion – Mr. Lulay has not been able to find wolves although he has been given a few leads. He stated they travel long distances in a short period of time. Mike Gorman, Assessor/Tax Collector, said he believed he saw wolf tracks around his cabin at Penland Lake. Mr. Lulay gave Mr. Gorman and Commissioner Lindsay his business card. He clarified that notification of sightings sooner than later was beneficial information for tracking.

North East Area Commission on Transportation (NEACT) Appointment Recommendations

Commissioner Doherty reviewed what NEACT does and is. He said that he is Chairing the committee as Union County Commissioner Steve McClure has health issues.

Commissioner Lindsay moved to appoint Tim Patton to the NEACT At-Large Voting Member Position and Jacob Cain to the At-Large Alternate Position. Commissioner Doherty seconded. Discussion followed, Commissioner Doherty gave some background on the two candidates. Commissioner Russell had good things to say about each of them. Unanimous approval.

Authorization to Add Working Foreman Position to the Road Department

Matt Scrivner, Public Works Director

Mr. Scrivner submitted several handouts:

- 1) Memo explaining the Working Foreman request
- 2) Job description
- 3) Road Pay Scale
- 4) Working Foreman total salary and benefits
- 5) Last 10 years of FTEs (Full Time Equivalents) for the Road Department

Mr. Scrivner explained how the Road Department would be more efficient starting and completing work with another Working Foreman. His current Foreman, Alan Gregory, will be retiring in three years, so this could also be the beginning of a succession plan for Mr. Gregory.

Commissioner Doherty asked why we could not hire or designate a ‘lead’ person. Mr. Scrivner responded that a Working Foreman has more responsibility and ability to make decisions. The lead person can change from week to week if the ‘lead’ person is absent for a period of time, such as a vacation or if there is a new project.

Commissioner Russell remarked that he is comfortable with the personnel request. He went on to explain why there was a significant change in the FTE count for the Road Department after 2001. This is when the County discovered they were not allowed to use General Fund dollars for the Road Department.

Commissioner Doherty moved to approve adding another Working Foreman position to the Road Department. Commissioner Lindsay seconded. Unanimous approval.

Discussion prior to February 28th meeting of Special Districts regarding the NextEra Energy Inc. Strategic Investment Program (SIP) Agreement

Mike Gorman, Assessor/Tax Collector

Mr. Gorman discussed the need to have a public hearing for the NextEra Wind Farm Community Service Fee (CSF) monies. He recapped who should be at the meeting. They are moving forward sooner than they have in the past because Art Fish from Business Oregon said the public hearing needs to be completed in 90 days. The County has already exceeded 90 days, but can still have the meeting.

Commissioner Lindsay asked why the Boardman Rural Fire District was invited clarifying was the project into the Districts territory. Mr. Gorman said that this project could have a tower or a substation in their district.

Commissioner Russell said the big decision we need to make is, “Does Morrow County take any of the CSF monies.” In the past, Morrow County has agreed not to take their percentage of the CSF monies.

Commissioner Lindsay moved to approve Morrow County foregoing its share of the NextEra CSF monies. Commissioner Doherty seconded. Discussion: Commissioner Doherty didn't think the school districts should not weigh in on this issue since they are getting \$1 million dollars to start a STEM/A (science, technology, engineering, math/arts) program. Commissioners Russell and Lindsay agreed but stated the schools didn't get a say on how the \$1 million would be allocated, because the County told them how the money would be spent. Unanimous approval.

Mr. Gorman asked to clarify his role at the public hearing and that of Chairman Russell. Chair Russell stated he will open the meeting, give some history and information about the hearing and turn it over to Mr. Gorman to handle the remainder of the meeting.

Correspondence

- Public notice that Navy personnel will conduct tumbleweed mitigation on the Naval Weapons Systems Training Facility Boardman along Bombing Range Road from March 5th-9th.
- Letter from Heppner Chamber of Commerce thanking the County for its support of the efforts to designate the Blue Mountain Century Scenic Bikeway as a State Designated Scenic Bikeway. The letter also provided an update of activities surrounding the Bikeway.

Commissioner Reports

- Commissioner Doherty – attended a meeting in Baker about the Eastern Oregon Jobs Council. He gave a brief history behind the purpose of the council. He stated the ‘more’ eastern counties are pulling most of the money in their direction and leaving Umatilla and Morrow Counties with little or none. He will try to put together a meeting with Morrow

and Umatilla County members to see about pulling some of that money back to the two counties. Commissioners Russell and Lindsay agreed with his plan. Commissioner Doherty went on to talk about housing and stated Umatilla County is funneling \$500,000 to infrastructure in Hermiston. Commissioner Lindsay shared an idea to create a pool of money for developers to use 'cheap' (borrow at little to nothing) to help pay for infrastructure. Mr. Gorman said that more people should be at the table to talk about developing a plan. Commissioner Lindsay agreed and said she would pull together a better proposal with research as to how it might look, for further discussion.

- Commissioner Russell - capital costs of renewable solar energy projects, \$7,000 per megawatt is a good number if there isn't a back-up storage unit. He also said the Environmental Protection Agency is apparently holding up the Chemical Depot project with new requirements.
- Commissioner Lindsay- meeting with Kathleen Cathey, Kim Peacher and others about the Bombing Range. She reviewed what and how the Navy has impacted the local area projects.

Adjourned: 11:30 a.m.

(Submitted by Darrell Green)