

**Morrow County Board of Commissioners
Business Meeting Minutes
November 7, 2018
Bartholomew Building Room 201
Heppner, Oregon**

Present

Chair Don Russell
Commissioner Jim Doherty
Commissioner Melissa Lindsay
Darrell Green, Administrator
Justin Nelson, County Counsel
Roberta Lutcher, Executive Assistant

Call to Order: 7:33 a.m.

Open Agenda: No items

Agenda Coversheet Discussion

Commissioner Lindsay began the discussion by expressing concern over the shorter agendas recently. She asked if the Agenda Coversheets and the approval process have become too cumbersome and, therefore, discourage people from bringing items to a Board meeting. She also asked if the process encourages people to circumvent the process entirely.

Mr. Green spoke to the basic nature of agendas in that some topics can be foreseen and planned well in advance, and others take longer for all the required information to come together so the Board can make informed decisions. He also said there are plans to hold Long Range Planning sessions once a month, but there is a need for strategic planning meetings. Strategic planning meetings are beneficial for determining the vision for the County and where it's going. Once those strategic planning goals are in place, he said, they will start driving the agenda topics.

Commissioner Lindsay said she's heard complaints about the length of time it takes for an item to be reviewed by Finance or County Counsel. She said she wants the County to function like a small county and perhaps the Agenda Coversheet needs to be reanalyzed.

Mr. Nelson admitted there have been times when he hasn't tracked items as well as he should and some requests have fallen through the cracks, but some departments turn an item in for review on the day before the agenda is due to be published. He said some Department Directors are much better about shepherding their items through the process than others.

Mr. Green said the review process, especially through Finance and legal, is part of being a government entity.

Discussion continued on multiple topics, such as: the best use of staff time; what kind of items need Board signature vs. signature by the Administrator or Department Director; does County Counsel need to attend the Board meetings; and how Board meetings have evolved since the hiring of an Administrator and the implementation of the Agenda Coversheet.

Mr. Green said the feedback he's received is that when people come to a Board meeting, they want to be successful, regardless of the process. They don't want something to be blown up because they didn't have the necessary information. The Coversheet helps provide that, he said. If there's a reason people aren't bringing something to the Board, it's because there's a level of fear coming in. There is nothing wrong with accountability, he said, but they ask themselves if they want to go through this or not. Mr. Green said he wants to make sure they're ready for success, and if we've done that and there's still a problem, then where did we mess up? He said the process should reduce the amount of questions by the Board, so the Board can say yes or no. He said he wants the Commissioners to have all the information possible for a good decision but if it becomes about the process, then the process is broken.

After additional discussions, Mr. Green said he would solicit feedback from Department Directors on the coversheet and keep the Board apprised.

Roles & Goals

Mr. Green listed the many projects currently taking his time, and in addition, he said he will be attending County College sessions two days a month from January-June and again in September. He said he needs direction from the Board on where to spend his time, and that they all need to be "on the same page."

Commissioner Doherty discussed how easy it is to keep putting ideas on the table but it's important to be reminded what the current projects are. He suggested a visual aid like a flow chart to track the status of current projects.

Mr. Green said he could outline the projects and then there could be discussions about who wants to be involved, and how, and the communication piece. Communication is important because there have been times when a Commissioner requested something of a Department Director that resulted in confusion on the part of the Director because Mr. Green said he had already asked that person to do something. Various discussions.

The Commissioners were in favor of the flow chart idea and holding Business Meetings more often. Chair Russell suggested Mr. Green ask the Commissioners to take on some things to help out, as well.

Adjourned: 8:47 a.m.