

MINUTES
UMATILLA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Meeting of October 1, 2014
9:00 a.m., Rm 130, Umatilla County Courthouse
Pendleton, Oregon

** ** ** **

Commissioners Present: Bill Elfering, Chair; George Murdock, Vice-Chair, and Larry Givens, Commissioner

County Counsel: Doug Olsen

Members and Guests Present: Tom Fellows, Public Works Director; Jim Littlefield, Undersheriff; Jennifer Blake, HR; Frank Millar, Milton-Freewater Cemetery Board; John Ehart, Freewater Cemetery Board; Hulette Johnson, Community & Economic Development Director; Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director

** ** **

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. Chair Bill Elfering reminded all present that the meeting was a public forum. It is recorded and minutes will be taken.

Pledge of Allegiance. Those in the room stood, saluted the flag and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Awards/Recognitions/Correspondence. None

Minutes BCC minutes for 8/20/14 had been distributed. **Commissioner Givens moved to approve. Seconded by Commissioner Murdock. Carried, 3-0.**

Additions to Agenda. Commissioner Givens noted the need to discuss the County Fair Board positions. Doug Olsen advised that after the current vacancy (Tammy Dennee is moving out of the county) is advertised, the other position (Dan Dorrans) would need to be addressed. Commissioner Givens asked Mr. Olsen to convey that information to Peggy Anderson, and he agreed to do so. There were no other additions/changes.

Recognition of Visitors/Public Input: None were noted other than on the regular agenda.

Chair Elfering asked if anyone wished to address the Board and none were noted.

Agenda

1. **Milton-Freewater Cemetery Paving Project.** Chair Elfering asked for the staff report. Tom Fellows, Public Works Director, advised that two people from the M-F Cemetery Board were in attendance; he asked them to go ahead and provide report. He introduced John Ehart and Frank Millar, members of the Milton-Freewater Cemetery District #3. The Milton-Freewater Maintenance District had previously submitted an application requesting an estimated \$37,000 to be paid to County Public Works for paving roads throughout the newest portion of the cemetery. Bad weather and muddy roads are inconvenient for people. Gravel was spread a while back by

volunteers so there is a gravel base. Paving would provide needed and better access. Mr. Millar referred to the Board packets. He advised this is probably the lowest priced cemetery district in the county; it is on a very tight budget. He noted Mr. Ehart had previously worked with Hulette Johnson about availability of funds that could possibly be used for this project. He also referred to a comparison among cemetery districts in the Board packets.

Commissioner Givens asked Mr. Olsen about how the cemetery district would go about increasing the tax base. There is a larger boundary area, thus possible need to increase tax. Mr. Olsen talked about the process and different ways (either through its own board and election or one way would need BCC approval). Total tax revenue is \$25,000. **Commissioner Murdock moved to approve/authorize the County Public Works Department to proceed with the paving project paid for by the Milton-Freewater Cemetery Maintenance District. Commissioner Givens seconded.** Discussion: Commissioner Givens asked Mr. Fellows his opinion since he recently had been to the cemetery to view the project. Mr. Fellows responded that the information he provided in the Board packets included asphalt prices at that time (June 2014); adjustment may be needed with changes in price. Mr. Fellows advised he would feel better if the asphalt could be paid for through the Cemetery District rather than through County Public Works (due to budget issues). Mr. Fellows could assist the Cemetery District with getting estimates. Mr. Millar said there is a limited reserve budget available that could be used – he may want to work through Mr. Johnson (Community & Economic Development) to help. Mr. Fellows advised a signed agreement should be prepared up-front to spell out the understanding of the project. He had spoken previously to Mr. Olsen. **Carried, 3-0.** The Board thanked Mr. Millar and Mr. Ehart for attending.

2. Criminal Division Deputy Hire. Sheriff Rowan discussed the recently Board approved contract with the City of Weston. Rather than putting another patrol detective on, it was decided internally to move forward with recruiting for a criminal deputy. It was posted internally and outside. He noted that Erik Palmer (a Sergeant at Athena Police Department) who has worked in the area for over 12 years in different towns has applied for the position. Sgt. Palmer has numerous certifications, relevant experience and familiarity with the area. Sheriff Rowan recommended that Sgt. Palmer be hired. He elaborated. He proposes that, due to Mr. Palmer's qualifications and experience, he is a great candidate for the position. Sheriff Rowan would like to offer him two things outside the normal benefits -- he wants to trade his 12 years of experience to count for 3 years of County employment. That is, accruals of vacation and other longevity benefit percentages. Mr. Olsen noted no similar waiver have previously been made for these components. Problems could be created for the County, both practically and legally.

Sheriff Rowan noted that Personnel Policy 1.1 speaks to hiring and compensation, etc. to make county employment attractive and would allow the Board for one-time to go outside the policy in this instance. Sheriff Rowan talked about restructuring of Sheriff's Office for more efficiency; he compared hiring of an inexperienced officer, which takes about 1 to 1 ½ years to become effective. In this case, Mr. Palmer is very familiar with the Sheriff's Office and all aspects, reporting, certifications, etc. There is virtually no general fund impact. He would ask for a variance to allow Human Resources to make an official offer today to Mr. Palmer, if possible. Chair Elfering thanked Sheriff Rowan. He asked Mr. Olsen about legal implications. Mr. Olsen responded that longevity and vacation accrual would be a change in County practice and policy (never given this benefit before). He also talked about collective bargaining for new employee.

It may be a problem for the Union since it is inconsistent with past practices. He also talked about other candidates -- current County employees who have not received this benefit. Sheriff Rowan noted talking with the E Board -- and they are not opposed to the direction being taken. He again reiterated Sgt. Palmer's 12 years of experience vs. posted request of 3 yrs. He is very supportive of bringing on Mr. Palmer who would be great benefit to all. He knows it is away from the norm, but in consolidation events (like 911 dispatch), those staff were brought on with their benefits -- it is not exactly the same, but it is similar. Mr. Olsen talked about this situation and asked Jennifer Blake to comment. She talked about seniority dates and compensation.

Mr. Olsen noted there must be some objective basis for handling these things for any future events. Commissioner Givens asked if the criteria for the City of Weston's contract is a part to consider. Would this position be covered by that contract? Sheriff Rowan commented about qualifications of Sgt. Palmer in relation to this job and incentives associated with that. Chair Elfering asked Mr. Olsen about criteria to be established in current policy. Mr. Olsen said this would be a management decision -- but it has not been done. If an exception is made, criteria must be established. It must be objective and also when it applies and in what situations/circumstances. Chair Elfering asked how soon that could be done. Mr. Olsen felt it could be soon (1-2 weeks). Commissioner Murdock asked if this position would be assigned to Weston? Sheriff said no, he would be in the detective department. Sheriff noted another detective is out now. Patrol services are already assigned for Weston. Commissioner Murdock asked about a memo of understanding with the Union and Mr. Olsen noted this is a major policy implication for all county employees. Commissioner Murdock talked about an emergency component. Sheriff noted the need is now, but the criteria as discussed can come for future needs. Discussion included limitations, for what county departments, what categories to consider and fiscal impact. Chair Elfering asked about granting an exception in this case and then adopting criteria. Mr. Olsen said it needs to be done now and to fit the situation. Further discussion included what the offer of employment could include to move forward on the short timetable Sheriff Rowan mentioned. Jennifer Balke noted longevity is for Umatilla County employment and the Board considering an exception has big implications in many ways. She wondered if it could be something other than longevity.

Commissioner Murdock noted he is conflicted with Sgt. Palmer's past experience -- he is more comfortable with Mr. Olsen's suggestion to present the employment offer without longevity incentive and then go back within a week to further discuss and make recommendation. Undersheriff Littlefield talked about different options. Discussion included the need to offer best packages for experienced people (that is, not starting at entry level). Commissioner Givens expressed sympathy, but a lot more discussion is needed due to fiscal impact. Commissioner Givens noted his desire to work with Mr. Olsen, the Board and Human Resources about criteria for this policy.

Sheriff Rowan said industry standard for public safety has flexibility built in to their practices. He talked about our county policies (many) are from 1997 -- there is need to update. Chair Elfering supported Commissioner Murdock's suggestion to make the offer as discussed, and to look at criteria for action at BCC's next administrative meeting next Tuesday. Sheriff Rowan advised current staff at his office -- deputies for patrol are 15 total certified police officers (excluding detectives, noted by Undersheriff Littlefield). 10 deputies are specifically on the road. Last year, there were 7 and more are needed. Coverage is good.

Commissioner Givens moved to direct county counsel to come back with criteria for a policy for discussion at the board's administrative meeting next week. Seconded by Commissioner Murdock. Carried, 3-0.

3. Lifting of Burn Order. **Commissioner Murdock moved to adopt Order No. BCC 2014-069 Lifting Temporary Ban on all Burning in Umatilla County. Seconded by Commissioner Givens.** He asked Doug Olsen about advising the media of burn ban lifting. Mr. Olsen agreed to talk with Gina Miller in Code Enforcement – Planning Department to get this done today. **Carried, 3-0.**
4. Reclassification of Position – Human Resources. Mr. Olsen reported. As part of the reorganization of Human Resources, Jennifer Blake has assumed more job duties and a leadership and supervisory role in the office. **Commissioner Murdock moved to approve the reclassification and job description of Associate Human Resources Director. Seconded by Commissioner Givens.** Under discussion, Commissioner Murdock noted that he and Mr. Olsen have discussed reorganization of HR and the desire to enhance the function with many options considered. He feels that Jennifer Blake is well qualified. She and Susan Bower have work closely and frequently to move forward with professional development during the County reorganization. Commissioner Givens asked Ms. Blake about the changes and if she is in support with them? She responded yes. Commissioner Murdock added that this is part of a progressive plan in place to move forward. The plan is to have this expansion of duties continue, including the proposal to reclassify the current HR/Payroll Administrator to the Associate HR Director and to increase the pay range from 25 to 27. The financial impact from the increase for this fiscal year is \$5,000. **Carried, 3-0.**
5. Sam Cook Bldg HVAC. Dan Lonai, Administrative Services Director, reported. This is for an RFP to go out (in conjunction with next agenda item). The heating and cooling system at the Sam Cook Building are the original units and have been failing on a regular basis. The first step will be to send out a Request for Proposals. **Commissioner Murdock moved to approve Administrative Services to Request Proposals (RFP) for a new HVAC system for the Sam Cook Building. Seconded by Commissioner Givens. Carried, 3-0.**
6. Sam Cook Building Roof. Mr. Lonai reported. This is bigger priority than the HVAC system (due to leaks and rotting areas). The roof has been patched multiple times and now it needs to be completely replaced. **Commissioner Murdock moved to approve Administrative Services to Request For Proposals for a new roof on Sam Cook Building. Seconded by Commissioner Givens.** Discussion: Commissioner Murdock also noted the Sam Cook Building is used for the Veterans Department in Hermiston. He said signage is also needed; he is working with Jay Steiner in Maintenance to get a sign made and installed. **Carried, 3-0.**
7. Elections Payable. Mr. Lonai reported. The state is involved, but not paying anything this year. Next year this may change. This is for maintenance on the voter registration system; it is a yearly routine expense for conducting elections and has been budgeted for. The invoice is \$7,776 which is over \$5,000 and requires Commissioner approval. Dan said this has been paid for probably the last 10 years. **Commissioner Murdock moved to approve as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Givens. Carried, 3-0.**

8. Regional Solutions Committee Appointment. **Commissioner Givens moved to adopt Order No. BCC2014-070 nominating Commissioner Elfering to the Greater Eastern Regional Solutions Advisory Committee (he is the liaison commissioner to Regional Solutions). Seconded by Commissioner Murdock. Carried, 3-0.**

9. HAREC Lab. The proposal is to provide funding in the amount of \$20,000 from Economic Development to the State of Oregon Extension for construction of the new HAREC Lab at the Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center. The cost of the lab is approximately \$250,000. **Commissioner Givens moved to approve payment of \$20,000 from economic development funds towards construction of the HAREC lab. Seconded by Commissioner Murdock.** Hulette Johnson, Community & Economic Development Director, said funds are available. **Carried, 3-0.**

10. Port of Umatilla Printer Donation. **Commissioner Murdock moved to approve acceptance of the generous offer by the Port of Umatilla for donation of a surplus printer to the County. Seconded by Chair Elfering.** Commissioner Givens asked Ms. Mabbott to make staff report. She noted that Kim Puzey, Port of Umatilla Director, approached the County Planning Department regarding use of a surplus printer. This printer has had limited use and the Port does not have need for it. The printer is for cartographer mapping. She said Julie Alford, Cartographer, has researched this printer and associated supplies and recommends approval. The existing Planning Department printer can be reassigned for use in the Printing office. Ms. Mabbott noted that Mr. Puzey needs to consult his Port Board to be sure it is acceptable to make the offer. **Carried, 3-0.**

11. Appointment to Regional Community Advisory Council. Commissioner Murdock advised Jenna Lorenzen has applied to the EOCCO for appointment to its Regional Community Advisory Council. **Commissioner Murdock moved to approve and adopt Order No. BCC 2014-071. Seconded by Commissioner Givens. Carried, 3-0.**

Commissioners' Reports.

Commissioner Givens. He will leave this afternoon to attend meeting of the Milton-Freewater Chamber and then on to an MPO meeting in Walla Walla. He talked about meetings yesterday regarding the Columbia Development LRA. Tomorrow, all three County Commissioners and Tom Fellows, Public Works Director, will attend AOC district meeting in John Day all day. On Sunday, he will travel to Salem for the AOC Public Lands and Natural Resource Committee on continuing discussion of taking back federal lands in the State of Oregon.

Commissioner Murdock. This week is routine, except for HR activities. Next week, on Thursday, he will attend a meeting of the Workforce Investment Board in Baker City. This will be first meeting as reconstituted board. He then will go to Salem for the LGAC and Health and Human Services Steering Committee there.

Chair Elfering. On Monday, he attended the Morrow County courthouse clock rededication. He noted good attendance from throughout the region – counties, commissioners, and also AOC representative Eric Schmidt. They also dedicated new administrative building north of courthouse and including additional parking areas (using SIP funds). He met with I-LRA as

outgoing celebration before the Columbia Development Authority meeting for development of the old Depot property for re-use of commercial projects as well as discussion of old igloos and disposition. Tuesday he attended a meeting of regional authority at BMCC – projects agreed on from Grant County for biomass project. Last week, he met with Kim Puzey at Port about activities and relationships. He will meet today with Steve Eldridge to discuss the Columbia Development Authority and activities.

Commissioner Murdock also noted Cattlemen’s Association plans to discuss the de-listing of wolves. Commissioner Givens is on the wolf depredation committee. Commissioner Murdock suggests this item for a future discussion and recommendation.

There was no further business.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melinda Slatt
Executive Secretary
Umatilla County Board of Commissioners