

MINUTES
UMATILLA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Special Administrative Emergency Meeting of July 22, 2015
3:00 p.m., Room 121, Umatilla County Courthouse
Pendleton, Oregon

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Commissioners Present: Vice-Chair Larry Givens and Commissioner Bill Elfering
Absent: Chair George Murdock
County Counsel: Doug Olsen
Members and Guests Present: Phil Wright, Reporter, East Oregonian; Jack Remillard, Emergency Manager.

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CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Larry Givens called the Special Meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. for the purpose of implementing a ban of all burning in Umatilla County effective 7/23/15. Pursuant thereto, **Commissioner Elfering moved to approve/adopt Order No. BCC2015-063 Implementing a Temporary Burn Ban on All Burning in Umatilla County due to dry conditions, low humidity, numerous wildfires and the need to prevent uncontrolled burns. Seconded by Vice-Chair Givens. Carried, 2-0.** Doug Olsen advised this is a general ban which includes agriculture burning. He noted the Board implemented the same type of ban in 2012. Phil Wright asked if the ban covers, for example, campfires at Harris Park. The Board responded it covers everything – all fires.

Jack Remillard, Emergency Manager, addressed the group. He noted he had spoken to Jim Whelan, County Fire Marshal, about information sharing. Mr. Remillard is obtaining assessed value information about homes/property involved in the subject wildfire area from Assessment & Taxation. He noted fire assessment and approach to firefighting of the Blue Creek/Mill Creek fire is being made. Discussion included location, movement/direction of the fire, approximately 1,300 acres is involved since yesterday, and the fire appears to be slow moving and may be heading into a watershed area with limitations of firefighting capabilities (helicopters with water buckets and boots on the ground – no heavy equipment and no chemical suppression are allowed). The group also discussed the process of sending County resources in a fire emergency – upon notification from Fire Marshal Whelan, the process begins.

Vice-Chair Givens and Mr. Olsen clarified mutual aid and the agreement is in place, also Mr. Remillard noted he and Jodi Florence checked and the agreement in force at this time is from 1999; it covers what is needed, but should be updated. He also suggested in the future, it could be reviewed perhaps on a 5-year cycle to be sure it is up-to-date.

Vice-Chair Givens noted with the fire only about 1 mile from the Washington-Oregon border, the County needs to be vigilant and cautious as time is critical.

Mr. Remillard noted he will attend a meeting on Monday, 7/27/15; beforehand, he will have Jodi Florence prepare an updated (mutual aid) agreement to be ready for signing by the relevant parties.

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Submitted by,

Melinda Slatt,
Executive Secretary to the Board of Commissioners