

MINUTES
UMATILLA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Administrative Meeting of July 28, 2015
10:00 a.m., Room 130, Umatilla County Courthouse
Pendleton, Oregon

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

County Counsel: Doug Olsen

Members and Guests Present: Mike Ciraulo, Washington Incident Management Commander; Jack Remillard; UCEM; Paul Chalmers, A&T Director; Tom Fellows, Public Works Director

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CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. Chair George Murdock welcomed all and reminded those present that the meeting was a public forum. It is being recorded and minutes will be taken. If persons wish to speak before the BCC, please identify yourself and state where you live for the record.

Pledge of Allegiance. Those in the room stood, saluted the flag and recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by Commissioner Givens.

Awards/Recognitions/Correspondence. Deferred to the 8/5/15 Board meeting.

Acknowledgment of Minutes of Previous Meetings. Commissioner Givens moved to acknowledge the minutes of the meeting of 7/22/15. Seconded by Commissioner Elfering. Carried, 3-0.

Additions to Agenda. None.

Public Input and Recognition of Visitors. Chair Murdock asked if anyone would like to address the Board for something other than what is on the agenda. None were heard.

Presentations to the Board. Jack Remillard, Umatilla County Emergency Manager, introduced Mike Ciraulo, from Vancouver, Washington, Incident Commander at the Blue Creek Fire. Mr. Ciraulo noted that Management Team #1 took over fire operations on Tuesday and went on to give a brief history and the current status. The fire started on 7/20 outside of Walla Walla on Mill Creek. The cause is still unknown. He referred to maps posted on the wall for specific location of activity. Air support was not successful due to weather and high heat. Things evolved and fire teams converged on the fire on Tuesday to begin the attack. The #1 priority was protection of the Mill Creek watershed (which serves as a source of water for 30,000 in the Walla Walla area) and to protect structures. They were trying to keep it from going over the Oregon state line. The fire was 73% contained as of this a.m. Tentative path is to go back to different team Friday. It will still be a concern – as temperatures will be up around 100 degrees with low humidity. He is to make sure the fire is contained as much as possible. Local resources should be able to keep the fire contained. He noted wonderful support of resources and cooperation of all involved – area local governments and across state line.

Commissioner Givens asked about inside the perimeter, what will need to be done? Mr. Ciraulo noted areas of grass burned but some timber did not -- he feels it could burn for another month. They are trying to keep costs to a minimum; the area will need to be tended by local fighters. About 850 firefighters were on site and fire lines at edge are being secured with the majority of effort near the Oregon state line. They are also protecting structures within that area and are looking for hotspots. Unfortunately, 1 structure and several out-buildings were lost on the first day. Costs to date are about \$7.1 million. However, with the high value of timber and watershed that were saved, it could have been a lot more devastating. It could have cost about \$20+ million if more was involved. There was great quick response with partners of Oregon Department of Forestry, Umatilla County Emergency Manager, Jack Remillard, and others.

Chair Murdock asked about livestock. Mr. Ciraulo responded several hundred head of cattle were in the area and none were lost. Ranchers reported all were found. He noted difficulties were: 1) terrain – very steep; 2) weather – windy and hot; and 3) most unique and rare in his experience was the fuel moisture drove the fire in the opposite direction from the wind (it was headed south vs. north). Fuel was burning downhill – it appeared to be headed to the watershed. Commissioner Givens commented about dry and hot weather and areas not burned may flare up so there is need to keep close eye on it. Mr. Ciraulo noted there will be about 15 engines and helicopters and water tenders at the ready. They are staged at Whitman College. The closest point the fire reached to Oregon is about ½ mile. They are working on a dozer line for regeneration. Commissioner Givens added Mill Creek Road where Kiwanis Cabin is located is safe – there are no issues with that road.

Paul Chalmers asked about fire management and fuel renewal. Mr. Ciraulo advised an aggressive approach was taken at the boundary. Good fuel reduction was done around Klicker and Blacksnake Roads. Jack Remillard noted there is need to clear out brush around homes on the Mill Creek Road in Oregon. Commissioner Givens added that FEMA is now involved in assisting with funds for firefighting and there may be standards for clearance of brush around structures. If this is not done, it would be disastrous. Commissioner Elfering noted insurance companies are looking at fire incidents/events and the need to mitigate fire damage.

Mr. Ciraulo reported there was a helicopter crash early on. The pilot walked away, but the private helicopter burned and was a total loss. The Commissioners thanked Mr. Ciraulo and the team for watching over the watershed – great job.

Agenda

1. Mutual Aid for Fire Protection. Jack Remillard, Emergency Manager, reported. He had received a request for a current copy of a Mutual Aid Agreement regarding fire protection. The last one was dated 1999 and it included Morrow County. His assistant, Jodi, contacted area fire chiefs for current information. He met with Jim Whelan, Scott Goff (State Fire Marshal Deputy) and Scott Stanton, Hermiston and Stanfield Fire Chief, to develop a plan of action (regarding the Blue Creek fire) if evacuation was needed. Apparently, there is a current mutual aid agreement with Umatilla, Morrow, and Gilliam Counties – Mr. Whelan said they prepared it.

Mr. Remillard felt the Board of Commissioners should be involved in preparing the agreement and it should be addressed by the governing Boards and legal counsel from each county. Discussion continued about the type of agreement, protocol, process, etc. Commissioner Givens felt the incident commander needs to make the initial call to the appropriate County's Emergency Manager, who would then call on resources needed, and then the final review and approval of costs would go to the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Remillard's concern is if an agreement is

signed, what resources would be available and they do not want to be drawn into a fire outside of a fire district. Commissioner Elfering noted that is more of a preventative deal to fight fire so it did not get into a covered district. Commissioner Givens talked about responses of departments and the need to work out mutual aid details. Chair Murdock noted there is a mutual aid agreement with the Sheriff's Office in Walla Walla area. Mr. Remillard and Mr. Olsen agreed that Washington and Oregon have different requirements, and it was felt some agencies may stop at the state line. Commissioner Givens talked about Walla Walla's way of handling services, contracting and unprotected areas. No action was taken; Board wanted to keep moving forward to see if it is feasible.

2. Purchase of Power Broom. Tom Fellows, Public Works Director, presented. A Request for Proposals for a used power broom was issued. A response was received from Clyde/West for a used power broom for \$29,000. It will replace a 1988 model which is old and not repairable. This is part of the equipment purchase program and budget is available. **Commissioner Givens moved to approve/authorize purchase of a 2013 KR350 Broce Broom from Clyde/West in the amount of \$29,000. Seconded by Commissioner Elfering. Carried, 3-0.**
3. HB3492 – Solar Project Tax Exemption. Paul Chalmers, A&T Director, presented a hand-out to the Board. The 2015 Legislature adopted HB3492. It allows local authority to provide tax exemption for solar projects. Mr. Chalmers noted the tax exemption is not a requirement. He requests a policy decision for when projects come up if there is direction prior to siting. This would be retroactive if the Board chooses to participate. Mr. Chalmers noted concerns. From a revenue standpoint, he would be somewhat concerned. There is not a comparison with co-gen power to solar. The capital investment of solar and wind are higher at the front end, but fuel costs are less. Umatilla County is a good location for these types of projects for resources and access to the power grid. Commissioner Elfering asked about the amount per watt and if Mr. Chalmers had any projection. He responded there is not enough history for a depreciation factor at this time. He noted filing requirements and timeframes would make for more administrative oversight time. Commissioner Elfering commented from an economic development perspective, he does not want to give away taxpayer's money. Mr. Paul reiterated the Board needs to consider participation. Mr. Olsen added, at this time, it is being requested that the Board give guidance to Mr. Chalmers for potential property tax exemptions for solar projects – no action is needed at this time. No action was taken.
4. Dispatch Advisory Committee. Commissioner Elfering noted this is for creation and appointment of the Umatilla County Dispatch Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from the Cities of Hermiston, Pendleton, Pilot Rock, Stanfield, and Umatilla, as well as Hermiston Fire District, Umatilla County Dispatch, and the Board of Commissioners. **Commissioner Elfering moved to approve and adopt Order No. BCC2015-064. Seconded by Commissioner Givens. Carried, 3-0.**
5. Sun Ridge Systems Payable. Mr. Olsen advised this is for the RIMS annual maintenance/support services fee of \$55,397 and was referred to the Board by the Finance Department due to amount. **Commissioner Elfering moved to approve the payable to Sun Ridge Systems in the amount of \$55,397. Seconded by Commissioner Givens. Carried, 3-0.**

6. USDA Payable - Wildlife Services. Mr. Olsen advised this is also referred from Finance due to amount. It is a quarterly payable to USDA for the county portion of funding for wildlife services. **Commissioner G moved to approve the payable to USDA in the amount of \$16,720.48. Seconded by Commissioner Elfering. Carried, 3-0.**

7. EO Business Source Payable. This is for EOBS (Susan Bower) services for June/July. **Chair Murdock moved to approve the payable to EO Business Source in the amount of \$8,400. Seconded by Commissioner Givens. Carried, 3-0.**

There was no Executive Session.

Commissioner Reports. Deferred at this time.

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melinda Slatt

Executive Secretary
Umatilla County Board of Commissioners