

MINUTES
UMATILLA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Meeting of February 3, 2016
9:00 p.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: Gina Miller, Planning Department (Code Enforcement); Jennifer Blake, Human Resources Director; Tom Fellow, Public Works Director; Klaus Hoenha, City of Pendleton (Regulatory Specialist); Mike Ladd, Oregon Water Resources Department (Region Manager); Greg Silbernagel, OWRD Watermaster; Tamra Mabbott Planning Department Director

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CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. Chair George Murdock welcomed all.

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Givens

Chair Murdock reminded those present that the meeting is a public forum. It is being video and audio recorded and minutes will be taken. Comments will become part of the meeting record. If persons wish to speak before the Board, please come to the podium, identify yourself and state where you live for the record.

Awards/Recognitions/Correspondence. Chair Murdock read (1) a letter from Robin Buckle regarding helpfulness of Paul Chalmers in Assessment & Tax (getting her glasses fixed). (2) From the Durfee Family – thank you for flower bouquet they received at the Athena First Citizens banquet and thanks to the Commissioners for their hard work.

Acknowledgment of Minutes of Previous Meetings. Commissioner Givens moved to approve the meeting minutes of 1/19/16. Seconded by Commissioner Elfering. Carried, 3-0.

Additions to Agenda. None.

Public Recognition/input. None.

Agenda – Business Items

1. **Ordinance Creating OACES.** Chair Murdock called the public hearing to order at 9:04. Doug Olsen presented. The Oregon Association of County Engineers and Surveyors has operated and been utilized for a number of years. It is requested to be dealt with more formally as the Association now has assets to deal with. The AOC (Association of Oregon Counties) will still manage the organization, but today’s action will make it a separate formal organization. All Oregon counties will be asked to sign an Intergovernmental Agreement

and to adopt ordinances creating the organization under a Chapter 190 organization status. Chair Murdock asked for those to speak for or against? Tom Fellows, Public Works Director, reported. This was started about 2 years ago, where suggestion was to make OACES a more functional part of AOC. Other options were discussed, but the attorneys felt this ordinance is the proper way to move forward, thus the recommendation at the last OACES meeting. Mr. Fellows explained OACES is comprised of all surveyors and engineers in the state – they assist in putting together potential legislation, state transportation packages and recommendations are made to county commissioners. It also gives the opportunity to share grant opportunities, federal funding/transportation packages and how to access them. They work closely with OEM on programs to provide aid in emergency situations; it is a good benefit statewide. In addition, they work on the formula for the counties' share of road funds. The larger the county the more dollars they get – small counties have more benefit with the formula in the State Highway Fund to help even out funding distribution. Chair Murdock added the critical issue is the amount of money per mile. Mr. Fellows noted currently in State highway fund distribution, there are 9 counties in Oregon that receive 75% of those dollars which represents only about 30% of the road miles in the state. There was no further public comment.

Chair Murdock closed the hearing at 9:13 a.m. **Commissioner Elfering moved to adopt Ordinance No. 2016-01. Seconded by Commissioner Givens. Carried, 3-0.**

2. Smoke Management Update. Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director, and Gina Miller, Planning Code Enforcement, liaison to the Smoke Management Committee, presented. The next meeting of that committee is March 15 at the Justice Center, Pendleton. During fire season it is critical to get information out. Social media and a new program for text messages are being implemented and development continues. With Dan Lonai's (Administrative Services Director) help a text alert system has been created. A Beta test is planned in early May. Text alerts will allow up-to-date messages to all permit holders (who are part of the system) regarding burn day designations. In addition, a Facebook page has been created – it is purely for information and it is secure, using only staff updates. When permitting, parties provide their cell phone number and carrier information to connect to text alert system. It is a voluntary program for effective communication.

Chair Murdock and Commissioner Givens applauded these steps to modernize and get information out immediately. Farmers have keen insight into burning for their operations – it is a great tool. Discussion included possible lack of coordination of city rules as they relate to county rules. Ms. Miller advised requests have come in for proper language of notices (where city rules do not override county). Ms. Mabbott noted Pendleton and the Tribes have their own burn programs and there are eight different fire districts (also with slightly different programs and their own rules). She advised the Planning Department has a spreadsheet with all pertinent burn information. Commissioner Givens asked about coordination with Walla Walla County, Washington on events and burn days, and suggested working with Walla Walla County. Chair Murdock noted Washington has a more vigorous program oversight by its Environmental Quality division. **Commissioner Givens moved to approve support of the Smoke Management Program and enhancements of text alert system and Facebook Page. Seconded by Commissioner Elfering. Carried, 3-0.**

3. Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event - Update. Ms. Mabbott noted the event is open to all county and city residents. Ms. Miller also handed out brochures and flyers for notifying the public of the event set for Saturday, 4/16/16, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. partnering with City of Pendleton. DEQ funding in an amount of \$60,000 is being used and there are other partners (Tribes). Volunteers are being asked to help – mainly in setting up and directing traffic – not handling hazardous waste. Arne Swanson is donating hand-wash stations and porta potties. The contractor will be supplying a tent and City of Pendleton will bring in items for staging of traffic for unrestricted movement. Word is getting out in many ways – statements, radio, flyers, Chambers and Clubs. Also an article will come out in the EO.

On Friday, 4/15/16, there will be a separate event to collect waste from commercially generated waste (paint, solvents, etc.) There will be a charge for this service and appointments must be scheduled. This will all be run by Clean Harbor; County staff will not be working that day.

In response to a question about expansion to other communities, Ms. Mabbott advised Hermiston is also sponsoring a similar event (not including household hazardous waste). It may be possible to rotate with Hermiston moving forward. The last event in Pendleton was 7-8 years ago. Commissioner Givens advised he would bring this matter to AOC regarding assistance with funding possibilities. Ms. Miller noted her job is to gather volunteers and organize the event.

Commissioner Elfering commended Planning for this event to help mitigate problems. Brochures are well outlined. Chair Murdock also noted it is helpful to include information about packing, hauling and other safety considerations. He also suggested getting word to Cooperative Extension for outlying areas to participate.

4. Watermaster Presentation. Greg Silbernagel, Water Resources Department Watermaster, and Mike Ladd, Water Resources Department Regional Manager, presented. Mr. Silbernagel handed out documents for Board consideration including a cover letter written to Robert Pahl, CFO, regarding financial positions and employees (FTE breakdown and Morrow County Watermaster budget information). Five FTE employees are funded through the County General Fund, Morrow County and the Bureau of Reclamation. Of those, two FTE's track reservoirs, rivers – county/state/federal coordination. Administrative fees go to the County for bookkeeping. Revenue is generated. 2.75 FTE are Assistant Watermasters and an Administrative Assistant that are paid from the General Fund. Those positions are very customer service oriented. Assistant Watermasters field calls as well as monitoring water usage per water law and priority date.

Morrow County budget contributes 1/10 of the Administrative Assistant salary and 1/10 of office expenses (parts of computer, billing, phone bills and the like). He went over the spreadsheet for the Morrow County budget. Assistant Watermaster Curtis Cooley does measurements in Morrow County. A breakdown of work was outlined. Commissioner Givens asked if the workload is dropping off as it relates to flow management from wells. Mr. Silbernagel noted the Basin Commission is not doing recharge efforts. Mr. Ladd responded Assistant Watermasters monitor the County line water level. The Basin Commission is not currently operational (they used to handle recharge efforts). Westland Irrigation has filed license to test recharge in its district. He anticipates it will continue. He

does not see a letup of water flow management and workload has not decreased. On the horizon, NOWA has a proposal for application of water out of the Columbia River which should increase some workload as it ties in. Mr. Silbernagel added recharge permits are picking up.

Commissioner Givens commented about budget and priorities noting that all entities working with the County - anything with financial support - have been asked to carefully look at their budget needs. Benefit to the County is a priority as the County is trying to shave the budget wherever possible. In addition, Morrow County contributes a small amount to the Watermaster budget; maybe it is not enough and should be revisited soon.

Mr. Ladd gave background of Watermaster over the last 30+ years; back and forth between State employment and County employment; Assistant Watermasters, budgets, Umatilla Basin Project took over some workload and funding was part of that. Now, positions are down to historic lows for County funded positions. Clear back to the 70s, there were 3 FTEs. He noted the Umatilla River is managed on a yearly basis and diversions are metered due to the Umatilla Basin project regarding water exchange (for fish habitat). There has been good vision for cooperative water usage.

Discussion continued about breakdown of personnel assignments, comparison between Umatilla and Morrow Counties, and Gilliam County district established in early 2000s from Condon (District 21) which took a big amount of time previously managed in Morrow County (Willow Creek). Buttercreek is monitored by the Umatilla County Watermaster. A well inspector covers the entire Umatilla Basin, John Day Basin and Deschutes Basin. New wells construction is a large primary objective of inspections.

Commissioner Givens commented about the County commitment of \$60,000 contribution (previously) to NOWA; this year negotiated down 50%. He asked what the affect would be if the Watermaster's office received a 50% budget cut? Mr. Silbernagel responded that customer service and response time would be extremely delayed. Water distribution and diversion must be timely -- he feels the impacts could be very negative. Discussion continued about funding reduction and understanding customer service would be impacted, ways to reorganize personnel and activities, regulations; call for waters - who turns water out from irrigation ditches? Rotation determination is Watermaster's duty based upon agreement, irrigation districts physically divert the water (regarding head gates), but some small headgates can be turned out by the Watermaster. Districts are pretty cooperative -- they manage water within their district.

Chair Murdock commented about State employees being supervised by County employees. In this case, a State employee supervises County employees. Policies and procedures apply differently between State and County employees. County employees who work in state agency have difficult time -- feel they are under State direction, when they are not. Discussion continued about personnel policies, procedures, HR direction, etc. Mr. Silbernagel mentioned lapse of activities when he took over from the prior Watermaster upon his retirement (6 months). Staff did take over some state items of day to day operation during that time.

Mr. Silbernagel was thanked for taking the time to make a presentation.

5. Personnel Policy – Non-benefitted Employees Sick Leave. Jennifer Blake, HR Director, presented. This policy is updated due to State mandate (unfunded). This is a new personnel policy that will provide up to 40 hours of sick leave to non-benefited employees. Very few employees will be impacted. **Commissioner Elfering moved to approve Personnel Policy 4.3(a) and authorized the Chair to sign. Seconded by Commissioner Givens. Carried 3-0.**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Melinda Slatt

Executive Secretary, Umatilla County Board of Commissioners