

COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BOARD MEETING

MINUTES

May 21, 2003

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners met in scheduled session with Commissioner Joe Corsiglia, Commissioner Rita Bernhard and Commissioner Anthony Hyde, together with John Knight, County Council and Jan Greenhalgh, Board Secretary. The meeting was held at the St. Helens High School, Loo Witt Room, St. Helens, Oregon.

Commissioner Corsiglia called the meeting to order and led the flag salute. The Board and staff introduced themselves. One student, Dustin King, was present to observe the meeting.

MINUTES:

Commissioner Hyde moved and Commissioner Bernhard seconded to approve the minutes of the May 13, 2003 Work Session; and the May 14, 2003 Board meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

VISITOR COMMENTS:

Ron Murray, 17236 NW Lucy Reeder Road, Sauvie Island: He is here today representing the Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 290. He wanted to address the Board regarding the enterprise zone and tax credits to Georgia Pacific Corporation for the Wauna Paper Mill. There are many members here today who have concerns about this. There are approximately 200 members of Local 290 that reside in Columbia and Clatsop counties. Currently, their unemployment rate in Columbia County is at 47%, and 44% in Clatsop County. Local 290 has the highest skilled pipe trade workers in the world and is the largest pipe trade organization west of the Mississippi. At the Wauna Mill, their employer was the low bidder on the mechanical contract. With \$10.2 million of tax credits coming out of the Clatskanie area that is going to Georgia Pacific, public funding, they were the low bidder. The award winning contractor, TIC, chose not to use them. The bottom line is that they didn't want union labor on the job. Ron gave some background on TIC. The co-generation plant in Hermiston that TIC did, they brought in 30 un-licensed people from Argentina. Many of their workers come from Oklahoma, Louisiana, Alabama and Florida. TIC will run these people through the local employment office and call that a local hire. Local 290 met several times with GP executives and were assured that this job would be a local hire job. Representative Betsy Johnson, Senator Joan Dukes, Congressman Wyden, the Governor were all assured that this would be a local hire project (for the construction phase), but it's not. Ron can document what happens when TIC comes to a community. Their employees will be on the Oregon Health Plan, use all the public services available, but they won't be buying homes here and will not contribute to the community. They will send their money back to the deep south where their homes are. Local 290 has a real problem with this. They would ask for the Commissioner's help to see that local hire happens at the Wauna plant. The Local is very concerned with what's going to happen to their members that are on their ninth month of unemployment.

Commissioner Corsiglia stated that the Board has been contacted a number of times over the last 2 weeks about this concern. The Board is very concerned about putting Columbia County residents to work. It is their intention to bring all the parties to the table to begin some type of dialog to address this issue.

Commissioner Hyde spoke with Ron yesterday and asked him to send the Board some information, he also asked if Ron has spoken with the Clatsop County Board yet. Ron has not. Commissioner Hyde strongly suggested he do that because of their stake in all of this. Commissioner Hyde gave some background on the negotiations with GP to convince them to come to Oregon instead of Florida. It came down to two issues: the availability of timber in Oregon and labor. GP felt Florida would be cheaper because they wouldn't have to use union labor. The State convinced GP executives that Oregon has control over their timber lands and that organized labor would be cheaper in Oregon. The County also feels duped on this and he has already been down to Salem ruffling some feathers on this. The Board will be doing some research on this, although not sure what they can do.

Again, Commissioner Corsiglia felt it would be best to bring all parties involved together to discuss these issues and concerns.

Commissioner Bernhard stated that Clatsop County also needs to be involved in any discussions because the business is in Clatsop County and there are potential effects on that county.

Bob Randolph, 61242 Barger Road, St. Helens: He appreciates the concern about the Beaver project. There are hundreds of jobs at stake if this same thing happens out there. There are journeymen and apprentices in the audience. There are apprentices that won't be able to turn out under the State of Oregon programs if they don't get the required hours of work. Many have been unemployed for 7-9 months. Bob went to the union parking lot at Wauna and saw Oregon and Washington license plates. He then went into the non-union parking lot and saw license plates from Louisiana, Alabama, Oklahoma, Texas and Mississippi. He has photos and other information on TIC that he will be forwarding to the Commissioners. Bob asked if it was possible to get a copy of the agreement that was signed with GP. Commissioner Hyde suggested Bob contact Tom Linhares for a copy of that (the certification for enterprise zone).

Elizabeth Folsom, 50861 Columbia River Hwy, Scappoose: She has been in the trade since 1980. She has been out of work for 8 months. She is a very qualified worker and never had to travel for work. Now she will have to just to get a job. Leaving her family will be hard, but is necessary to work. This is very upsetting.

Randy Raffin, 2212 Tualatin St., St. Helens: He is an apprentice with Local 290. He is getting close to finishing the program and could really use this work. He's afraid he will lose work to workers from out of state. As an apprentice, he is not allowed to travel for work. He can't travel to work but can't work here with no work. If he can't work, he won't finish the program. He represents 85 unemployed apprentices.

Perry Mann, 33253 NW Wheeler, Scappoose: He spoke with his brother-in-law in California last week, who said that Oregon is a laughing stock. Their local news talks about how bad the unemployment is in Oregon. We need to do something to help ourselves. This is not sending a good message to companies that may want to locate here.

Jessie Templin, 30995 Dowd Road, St. Helens: His family has worked in this county for 5 generations. He is now a recent journeyman but has been unemployed for 5-6 months. He was recently told by someone that, when things get tough, pack up and move. Jessie doesn't want to move, he has strong roots in this county and wants to stay. He wants to be able to work at the Wauna Mill if they hire union labor. He is not leaving.

Ron Cole, 35024 Roberts Lane, St. Helens: He has lived here for 27 years. He only has a few years until he retires. However, if he doesn't work, nothing goes into his retirement and it extends the time he has to work before he can retire. He is very miffed with GP.

Mike Sheehan, 33126 Callahan Road, Scappoose: He is a taxpayer in this state and it's upsetting to see the amount of tax incentives that have gone into bringing these companies in. He told of how these types of agreements had a very negative effect on the packing companies back in Iowa years ago. The Iowa state department started giving incentives to companies to bring them into the state. Once that happened, the companies brought in workers from out of the country at lower wages. This wiped out all the union meat packing plants. It was a disaster that was all funded by the Iowa Department of Economic Development. We need to make sure that doesn't happen here.

Rosemary Lohrke, 56679 Mollenhour Road, Scappoose: The County needs to make sure that local workers are used on these types of projects, such as Port Westward and it needs to be in writing.

Billmond Mann, 33733 SW Myrtle, Scappoose: He was working last summer. His wife got a part time job for extra spending money. Two months later he was out of work. It's a good thing his wife was working. Now he has to go out of state to work. It's hard to leave his family. We pay taxes here but can't even work here.

Bob Randolph: He asked that, when the meeting is held with all the parties involved, could the County propose a Project Labor Agreement. Hopefully, it's not too late for the Wauna Mill project. Commissioner Corsiglia stated that it's hard to determine what the Board can accomplish but they intend to go that direction. Any information that can be submitted to the Board office will be very helpful.

The Board thanked everyone for their comments and stated that they will do their best to see what can be done about these issues and concerns.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Commissioner Corsiglia read the consent agenda in full. With that, Commissioner Hyde moved and Commissioner Bernhard seconded to approve the consent agenda as follows:

- (A) Ratify the Select to Pay for 5/20/03.
- (B) Amended Resolution No. 29-2003, "In the Matter of the Application of Columbia County to Participate in the Assessment and Taxation Grant".
- (C) Resolution No. 34-2003, "In the Matter of Adopting the Columbia County Community Corrections 2003-2005 Biennial Plan".

AGREEMENTS/CONTRACTS/AMENDMENTS:

- (D) Contract with Cowlitz County for Juvenile Detention Services.
- (E) Contract with Merina & Company, LLP, to conduct the 2003 Columbia County Audit.
- (F) Approve Purchase and Sale Agreement with Chris Nelson for Lots in Hillcrest Subdivision, Part I.

The motion carried unanimously.

INSURANCE AGENT OF RECORD:

Bill Potter, General Services Director, came before the Board regarding the Insurance Agent of Record. In response to the RFP, (7) proposals were received. The Risk Management Committee read and scored the proposals based on predetermined factors. The committee felt there were three firms best qualified to serve as our agent of record. Those three firms scored as follows: JBL&K 84.5%; Pieper Ramsdell 73.75%; and Wilson-Heirgood 73%. For various reasons, the committee could not make a unanimous recommendation and felt the Board should review the proposals and make the final decision. Bill noted that the current policy expires on June 30, 2003, so there is a need to deal with this matter fairly soon.

Commissioner Hyde asked how many of the three companies are from Columbia County. Bill stated that Pieper Ramsdell is the only one. Commissioner Hyde feels the choice is obvious and with that, moved to award the contract to Pieper Ramsdell. Commissioner Bernhard seconded the motion with discussion. Commissioner Bernhard feels it is extremely important and a great advantage to have a local agent. The difference in percentages more than makes up for the convenience. John Knight commented that he was on the Risk Management Committee and scored Pieper Ramdell the highest. Ruth Baker scored JBL&K the highest according to the criteria, however she would prefer that the criteria provided more weight towards local presence

because she feels that's important. John feels that the responsiveness that we have with the local agent has proven itself over and over throughout the years. Commissioner Corsiglia has no conflict of interest here and agrees with having a local agent. He appreciates the work that Pieper Ramsdell has provided over the year. With the vote taken, the motion carried unanimously.

NATIONAL SECURITY LEVEL:

The Board office has heard from various emergency responders throughout the county and, personally, Commissioner Corsiglia sees no reason to change the alert status from yellow. Commissioner Bernhard feels that, since September 11th, we have all been in a very vigilant state anyway. She sees no reason to change the status at this time. Commissioner Hyde agreed and noted that yellow is not a stand down position. The consensus of the Board was to keep the alert status at yellow.

COMMISSIONER CORSIGLIA COMMENTS:

Commissioner Corsiglia noted for the record that the Board will be recessing this meeting until 1:00 pm today to reconvene in Room 308 of the Courthouse for general discussion on transportation issues.

Commissioner Corsiglia wanted to congratulate everyone involved with putting together the Lewis & Clark train ride that the Board rode on Saturday. It was a great exposure for those who don't know what Columbia County looks like.

He attended the Rainier dock opening, however he missed the dock opening in St. Helens due to a flat tire.

COMMISSIONER BERNHARD COMMENTS:

Commissioner Bernhard attended both the Rainier and St. Helens dock openings. Unfortunately, the weather could have been better.

She also took the Lewis & Clark train ride on Saturday. She had a really good time and liked the idea of being able to go slowly so she could appreciate the scenery.

She has some grave concerns with the issues surrounding the Council of Seniors. Hopefully there can be some sort of resolution that is workable for the people of the community. Many people depend on COLCO for doctor appointments, shopping, etc.

COMMISSIONER HYDE COMMENTS:

Commissioner Hyde also attended both the Rainier and St. Helens dock openings and the Lewis & Clark train ride. He felt that nine hours on the train was a bit too long.

He has been putting a lot of time and effort into the Linear Trail project. It's not a matter of "if", but "when" the County will be getting the grant funding for this project.

He briefly commented on the revenue forecast, that has both good news and bad news.

COUNTY COUNSEL COMMENTS:

John Knight continues to work on transportation issues.

John commented that a number of county counsels are gone this year due to retirements and moving out of state. John was recently appointed as President of the Oregon County Counsel's Association. The Board congratulated John on this appointment.

The Board recessed the meeting at 11:30 a.m. The meeting was reconvened at 1:00 p.m. at the County Courthouse, 230 Strand Street, Room 308, St. Helens, Oregon. Present were Commissioner Corsiglia, Commissioner Bernhard, Commissioner Hyde, and John Knight, County Counsel.

Commissioner Corsiglia called the meeting back to order.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES:

John Knight gave an overview of the situation. The County was faxed a letter from ODOT, Public Transit Division last week, stating that the Columbia County Council of Senior Citizens is no longer eligible to receive federal funds for COLCO. They mentioned a number of concerns and in conclusion, feel that CCCSC is not capable of managing a federally funded program. COLCO is funded by two sources of money, one is the Federal Transit Act (FTA), the other is the Special Transportation Fund (STF). This letter does not effect the STF revenues and COLCO is presumably still eligible to receive STF funds, but as of 7/1/03, the state will not allow them to be a recipient of federal funds. ODOT also sent a letter to CCCSC listing criteria that COLCO met and what criteria they didn't meet. It also included a lengthy report. The letter also instructed COLCO to return 16 of the 20 vehicles that they use for this program. Four of the vehicles are owned by COLCO outright. They are to turn the keys and maintenance records to John Knight, County Counsel. John feels the appropriate place for that would be General Services. John stated that Carol Lansing, who is doing the transit study, has been in touch with Kathy Straton and will be here Friday to participate in a conference call with Kathy Straton and Martin Loring of ODOT. This development has had an effect on the study and Carol has suggested it might be appropriate to use the remaining funds available for the study towards developing an RFP for transit services. John attended a meeting Monday night at the St. Helens Senior Center, and he was informed that there is still some unallocated STF funding that might be available to assist in the transition, approximately \$20,000. It might also be possible to get some federal financing. John doesn't want to make any recommendations to the Board regarding the study until after his meeting on Friday.

Discussion then led to the needs of the community. Commissioner Corsiglia has an overriding concern on the short term and that arrangements need to be made for those in need, such as seniors and the disabled. John agrees that we are in an emergency situation and could probably dispense with the RFP with regards to meeting our immediate needs. We need to find someone to provide transportation services. Commissioner Bernhard stated that Kathy Straton suggested a few possible interim service providers: Sunset Transportation from Astoria; Special Mobility in Portland; Ride Connections; and Oregon Housing and Community Service. Commissioner Corsiglia has been out in the community and hearing the concerns about transportation. There is a few in the Vernonia, Rainier and Clatskanie areas that they will be left out of the loop. Whatever happens, they need to be included in the services. It was suggested that the some of the COLCO drivers might be interested in driving. They know the area, the routes, have their CDL's. John will check into that option.

Fred Walstrom, Spotlight, informed the Board that there is a meeting going on right now at RSVP with representatives from all five senior centers. They are putting together an interim plan to provide transportation. Their feeling is that the County is dragging their heels on this issue so they are taking matters into their own hands. The Board responded that it's hard not to drag your feet when you're not in charge. This is a state issue, not county. It was suggested they be invited over for this discussion. Commissioner Bernhard contacted Nancy Harwood to invite them to the meeting.

The Board recessed the meeting for 15 minutes to allow time for the seniors to attend.

The meeting was called back to order.

Commissioner Hyde started by saying the Board was informed that the seniors felt the Board was dragging their feet on this issue. That didn't set well and that is why these two meetings were combined. He explained that there is not much the Board can do in terms of taking over anything until the end of next month, but they can look at alternatives in the mean time. Commissioner Corsiglia stated that the Board is looking at short term ideas to help bridge the gap and in the long term, rebuilding the transportation service. The Board has already directed John Knight to look at the different bus services that are already in existence within the County. He expressed his concern about equitable service being delivered to all parts of the county. Commissioner Hyde discussed the other part of this, which is AAA. This is a real opportunity to get all the discourse out of the way and have a united front on the part of the seniors in Columbia County.

John Helm asked that when the County decides on what they are going to do, that all information such as ride numbers, financial numbers, etc. be gathered and distributed to help make it a smooth transition. Commissioner Hyde believes there will be two transitions, the interim and the long term. Commissioner Corsiglia talked about the bussing services that currently serve the school districts and that they may want to help out. Commissioner Hyde noted that we get public transportation money and we get senior transportation money. When you put the two together, they match each other. If you have it segmented, you have scant dollars..

Commissioner Bernhard expressed her concerns with the public's need for services. Whatever the County decides, the people need to be informed on what the county is doing and how transportation services will be provided.

Cheryl Young addressed the transportation study. She heard that the study and the surveys should probably be invalidated because of the rumors that people were filling out surveys in one direction and filling out multiple surveys. She believes that invalidates the whole survey. Commissioner Corsiglia stated that there have been a number of rumors out there, but hopefully we can put all that behind us.

Nancy Harwood wanted to clarify on thing. This group that was meeting today at RSVP has been meeting quarterly and today's meeting was scheduled three months ago by Greg Russo. He called here and asked out we can fill some of the gaps for the seniors. This meeting has nothing to do with what's happening right now. They were not acting behind anyone's back.

Cheryl Young expressed her concerns about the employees who are delivering the services right now through COLCO and the AAA program. She would like some assurance for them that they're going to have a job on July 1st. Under the current program, their jobs end June 30th. Is there going to be a transition that will allow them to keep their jobs?

Commissioner Corsiglia stated that the Board of Commissioners cannot assure them their jobs, but can assure them that every effort will be made to include them in the proposal. Not just employees, but there is also a good number of the volunteers we don't want to lose.

Commissioner Bernhard explained the difficulty is that the employees work for the Council of Seniors, which is a separate organization from the County. Part of the problem the Board is struggling with here is that there are two programs, transportation and AAA. The AAA program currently has been basically run by the state and they contract directly with the Council of Seniors for that service, so that sort of kept the county out of the loop up to this point. It's really their call what they're going to do with that part of the service. The transportation part is really more in our court along with ODOT. It's not all one thing. It's basically been one organization that's been providing both services in the past, but now that it's split out and they're not going to be in the picture, it's a whole different ball game. We don't have the authority to say anything to the state about AAA. The advocates will be not under transportation, but under AAA. That's what we're struggling with - trying to figure out how we're going to come up with that split.

Commissioner Hyde stated that the State is researching the concept of awarding AAA service to Community Action Team, which would take care of that situation. He noted that earlier in this meeting, the Board talked about the importance of the retention of the current employees. The Board obviously cannot guarantee it, but can put it as a priority.

Cheryl Young asked Commissioner Corsiglia if he is a member of the Council of Seniors' Board of Directors? The reason she asks is because he said he was not, or had not accepted the position

to represent Clatskanie, yet his name was included in a document she recently saw that includes him as a Board member.

Commissioner Corsiglia responded, "Let me give you the history of that. I have not seen that document and have not received any mailings from them. I had been at a AAA meeting and we were talking about their situation and I said if I could be of any assistance I would be more than happy to help. About three weeks or a month later, I received a letter from Clatskanie saying that they had put my name out there as a potential representative and from that point on, I don't think it had ever been dealt with. I have never been to their meetings. As far as I know, I haven't accepted anything - they've never voted on it. I thought it kind of fell flat, so, no, I'm not a member. I don't know if they go through a swearing-in process or how they go about being on the Board, but I don't consider myself a Board member at this point. If he were to be on that Board, he would not consider it a conflict of interest, because Commissioners serve on many different boards and committees.

After little more discussion, the Board thanked everyone for their comments.

There was no Executive Session held.

With nothing further coming before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

Dated at St. Helens, Oregon this 21st day of May, 2003.

NOTE: A tape of this meeting is available for purchase by the public or interested parties.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

By: Joe Corsiglia
Joe Corsiglia, Chair

By: Rita Bernhard
Rita Bernhard, Commissioner

By: Anthony Hyde
Anthony Hyde, Commissioner

Recording Secretary:

By: Jan Greenhalgh
Jan Greenhalgh