

COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BOARD MEETING

MINUTES

February 23, 2005

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners met in scheduled session with Commissioner Anthony Hyde, Commissioner Joe Corsiglia and Commissioner Rita Bernhard, together with Sarah Tyson, Assistant County Counsel and Jan Greenhalgh, Board Secretary.

Commissioner Hyde called the meeting to order and led the flag salute.

MINUTES:

Commissioner Bernhard moved and Commissioner Corsiglia seconded to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2005 Board meeting, February 16, 2005 Staff meeting and February 17, 2005 Hazard Mitigation Hearing minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

VISITOR COMMENTS:

Christine Goble, 14099 Colvin, Clatskanie, came before the Board to voice her concerns about the speed limit and the overgrown brush on Colvin Road. She asked who could address these issues. The speed limit is too high and is a safety concern and the brush is growing out into the road which needs to be cut back. Commissioner Hyde explained that the county can make an application with ODOT to have the speed limit reduced, but the County cannot change the limit until approved by the State. The Board will talk to the road department about putting up "slow" signs and about getting the brush cut back.

CONSENT AGENDA:

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

- (A) Ratify Select-to-Pay for 2/22/05.
- (B) Approve employment status letter to Jim Stewart.

AGREEMENTS/CONTRACTS/AMENDMENTS:

- (C) 2004 Fund Exchange Agreement for Various County Bridges Project with Oregon Department of Transportation.

- (D) Public Facility License LI-6804 with Department of State Lands for Beaver Boat Ramp and authorize the Chair to sign.

The motion carried unanimously.

OFFER TO PURCHASE TL #8329-101-00400UI:

Cynthia Zemaitis, Natural Resources Administrator, reviewed the offer of \$100 received by Scott & Elena Sylvester. The county owns only one-half interest in the property with the other half interest owned by Nels and Nona Christenson. The parcel is surrounded on three sides by property owned by the Christenson's. Prior to the 2002 auction, a letter was sent to the Christenson's advising them that the property would be held for auction, giving them the option of purchasing the property. No word was received from them and no bids were received at auction. The assessed value and minimum bids set at auction was \$500, so the County can now sell the property by private sale for an amount equal to or higher than \$75.00. Cynthia would recommend sending a letter to the Christenson's advising them that an offer has been submitted and being considered. The Board agreed and suggested that the letter be sent certified.

OFFER TO PURCHASE TL #4104-013-06800:

Cynthia presented the Board with an offer from Ken & Allen Jillson in the amount of \$8,200 for TL #4101-013-06800. This property is one-half of a lot located on 15th Street between St. Helens Street and Columbia Blvd, is zoned commercial and is subject to a sewer and pipeline easement to the City of St. Helens. This parcel was offered for sale at the 2002 auction with a minimum bid set at \$24,000 and letters were sent to the adjoining property owners, with no bids received. The county may now sell the property but at a price no less than 15% of the minimum bid, or \$3,600. Tom Linhares re-assessed the property in 2004 and increased the value to \$32,700 because the commercial value in St. Helens had increased by 9%. After discussion, Commissioner Bernhard moved and Commissioner Corsiglia seconded to accept the offer from Ken & Allen Jillson for \$8,200 on TL #4101-013-06800. The motion carried unanimously.

RELINQUISHING MINERAL RIGHTS ON TL #3212-014-06500:

Cynthia has received a letter from Randall Bateman, on behalf of his client Rosedale Development requesting removal of the county's reservation of mineral rights on property located in Scappoose (TL #3212-014-06500). Although Cynthia is aware that the county does not relinquish mineral rights, she does not have the authority to respond to this request without Board direction. The Board stated that they are not in favor of ever relinquishing mineral rights and would deny this request. Cynthia explained the procedure that needs to be followed and will record a statement of claim to retain the mineral rights. With that, Commissioner Bernhard moved and Commissioner Corsiglia seconded to deny the request by Randall Bateman to have the county relinquish their mineral rights on TL # and authorize County Counsel's office to record a statement of claim in response to any claim to cancel the county's mineral rights. The motion carried unanimously.

ORDER NO. 1-2005 - BATES & ROTH:

Sarah Tyson briefly reviewed Order No. 1-2005 which is now ready for Board approval. With that, Commissioner Bernhard moved and Commissioner Corsiglia seconded to approve Order No. 1-2005, "In the Matter of an Application by Bates & Roth for a Variance to Columbia County Zoning Ordinance 1044.4(B), and a Variance to Columbia County Surface Mining Ordinance 8.3". The motion carried unanimously.

CCMH - REQUEST TO SUBMIT PROPOSAL:

John Knight presented the Board with an e-mail he received from Corissa Neufeldt of CCMH. They would like to submit a proposal request to RFP #1896 for additional Family Support funds. The RFP is due tomorrow. The e-mail explains that only County's or organizations who have direct contracts with DHS for Family Support can apply. Therefore, the proposal has to be submitted by the County. CCMH is writing the proposal, but will need a letter stating the proposers interest in the RFP and willingness to amend the current County Financial Assistance Contract. John has not reviewed the proposal but feels the Board can move forward with this and, if there are problems with the actual contract received, they can deal with it at that time. Therefore, he would recommend approval of the proposal. With that, Commissioner Bernhard moved and Commissioner Corsiglia seconded to approve the proposal by CCMH for additional Family Support funds and authorize the Chair to sign the support letter. The motion carried unanimously.

COMMISSIONER HYDE COMMENTS:

Commissioner Hyde noted that the Board will be meeting with Congressman Wu, Senator Johnson and Representative Witt this afternoon to discuss Veteran's Services and the different bills being introduced for VA funding.

The Board will also be meeting with the Surface Mining Advisory Committee at 6:00 pm tonight.

COMMISSIONER CORSIGLIA COMMENTS:

On Saturday night, he attended Lincoln Day dinner at Bing's where there was a good presentation on economic development.

COMMISSIONER BERNHARD COMMENTS:

Commissioner Bernhard has been attending a number of United Way meetings to determine how the funding will be distributed.

Thursday, the Board held a Hazard Mitigation Plan hearing in Vernonia. Vicki Harguth, Emergency Management Director, did an excellent job in presenting the plan.

The Board recessed the meeting at 10:35 a.m. and reconvened at 4:30 p.m. in the Circuit Courtroom.

Commissioner Hyde called the meeting back to order.

DISCUSSION ON VETERANS SERVICES:

Present were Commissioner Hyde, Commissioner Corsiglia, Commissioner Bernhard, Congressman David Wu, State Senator Betsy Johnson, Representative Brad Witt, Katie Harris, Jeff Hill, Doug MacGillvan and Paula Brown, Veterans' Services.

After introductions, Jeff Hill discussed the issues that veterans face in Columbia County. There was over \$2 million paid out in benefits to veterans last year thanks to the VA Services in Columbia County, which is only open 2 days per week. They need more funding to allow for the office to be open for more days. They would like to be able to work at least one day per week in the outlying cities to help more veterans. Technology also has to be improved to provide better service.

Doug MacGillvan gave 3 examples of the cases he is working on and what is involved in the process. He does a lot of work at home due to the lack of funding. These cases are usually very complex and take a lot of work, more work than the current staff can handle. Senator Johnson applauds Doug and the staff for going way beyond the call of duty to help the vets in Columbia County.

Jeff stated that if funding is cut, it will reduce office hours even more. He talked about Senate Bill 10 that is going through right now. If it passes, it will provide more money for VA services.

Brad Witt stated that he testified last week on SB 10. He wanted to say that if it wasn't for the dedicated staff, we wouldn't have the services we do here in Columbia County. With the possibility of funding cuts, he feels it is just another example of the state not providing even the basic services. It is an insult to vets who have put their life on the line for this country.

Paula Brown spoke about VA services and feels very positive about what her department does for the veterans.

Senator Johnson brought some information on the number of different bills being presented to the legislature dealing with Veterans' Services. It should not be this hard for the vets to obtain the benefits they are entitled to. She encouraged everyone to contact the Ways and Means Committee with letters of their personal experiences. Her office is happy to advocate for this issue.

The floor was opened to hear from the public.

Christine Lambert talked about her husband who was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2000. Kaiser strongly encouraged them to contact the VA office about benefits. She talked with Doug and staff and cannot say enough about the wonderful service they received. They were tremendous in helping them obtain benefits. Senator Johnson suggested Christine put that in a letter to the legislature.

Richard Sanders is a Vietnam veteran. He thanked everyone for being here tonight. He talked about the technology issue and made some suggestions.

Bruce Olson also thanked everyone for being here tonight, although he is a little disappointed that there are not many vets here tonight. He started his case about 35 years ago and it made him feel like a beggar. Then he ran into Jim Palmer and he took that feeling away. After a number of appeals, he is now at 100%. This is because of the persistence of the VA staff here tonight. He cannot thank them enough.

Gene Lambert is sorry to here that the funding may be cut for this program. We need more dollars to help the veterans. The work that Katie and Doug do show in the number of claims that have been taken care of. This staff need more hours. The office should be open 5 days a week to help the many vets in this county.

The panel wanted to thank everyone for being here tonight and sharing their stories. It is important for them to call their legislators supporting VA funding. They also thanks the staff for all the hard work they do.

The Board then recessed the meeting to reconvene in the Extension Room at 6:00 p.m. for a joint meeting with the Surface Mining Advisory Committee.

Commissioner Hyde called the meeting back to order.

JOINT MEETING WITH THE SURFACE MINING ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Those present were Commissioner Hyde, Commissioner Corsiglia, Commissioner Bernhard, Todd Dugdale, Agnes Peterson, John Peterson, Bob Short, Rich Morten, Chris Thompson, Dave Williamson, Cliff Connolly, Gary Lynch and Brian Gray.

Cliff Connolly thanks the Board for meeting with this committee tonight and explained that they wanted to have some general discussion with the Board on the future and direction of the SMAC.

Some discussion was held on John Peterson's surface mining application. Dave Williamson stated that there were some issues, but he has been working on those with DOGAMI and feels those issues can be resolved. Generally, it has been a pleasure working with them.

Agnes Peterson commented on how DOGAMI functions. They do not go out of their way to be difficult, unlike some of the county staff. Some county staff has been very difficult to

work with. She is very satisfied with DOGAMI and feels the county should just turn the entire program over to them. Rich agrees with that. He has talked with a number of miners and they are very supportive of DOGAMI.

When asked about the future of the Surface Mining Committee, Commissioner Hyde stated that the current arrangement with DOGAMI is for a one year trial period, but the county will still need a SMAC.

Discussion was held on the issue of relinquishing the entire management of surface mining to DOGAMI. There are a lot of issues that go along with that and land use is a big part of it. Agnes brought up the issue of exemptions allowed by the county, but not DOGAMI and how that will significantly effect certain mines.

Commissioner Hyde brought up the subject of a County Weighmaster position that the Board is currently considering. There is a lot of materials being brought into this county that is not being taxed. Truck drivers go out of their way to go through Columbia County because they know we don't have scales. This creates more damage to our roads, with no monetary benefit.

Gary Lynch, DOGAMI, commented on his experience with Columbia County so far. It has been a pleasure working with the county staff. He agrees it would be better to move slow on the process of moving surface mining administrator to DOGAMI. There is the land use issues, but the County will always have to deal with that. He would recommend keeping the relationship the same as it is now for at least another year. DOGAMI is still trying to get to know Columbia County and, given some time, it will get better. Commissioner Hyde agrees and sees no reason to change anything at this point.

Commissioner Hyde commented on another potential request for an increase in depletion fees from a county resident. The Board could use some advice from SMAC on the impacts to the industry when these types of things come up. The public also needs to be informed on the costs to the taxpayers to hold these elections. Cliff stated that the committee would help in any way they can.

Commissioner Corsiglia asked about Robert Crain's authority as the Code Enforcement Officer. Todd stated that, under the IGA with DOGAMI, Robert deals with issues of enforcement and it has worked out well so far. The county relies on DOGAMI for technical complaints. Agnes stated that the most disturbing, rude, awful letter she has ever received came from the County Code Enforcement Officer. She would personally recommend that enforcement be with DOGAMI. Commissioner Corsiglia stated that these are things the Board needs to know. If they are not made aware of any problems, they can't work to fix them.

More discussion was held on how to effectively track the dirt and rock coming into the county. Hopefully, having a Weighmaster will be able to deal with this.

The committee thanked the Board for taking the time to meet with them. The Board also thanked the committee for their work and commitment. If there is anything they need from the Board, please ask.

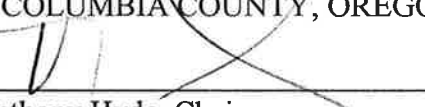
There was no Executive Session held.

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

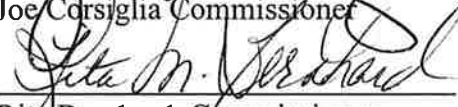
Dated at St. Helens, Oregon this 23rd day of February, 2005.

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

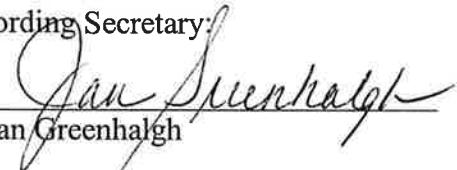
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

By: 
Anthony Hyde, Chair

By: 
Joe Corsiglia Commissioner

By: 
Rita Bernhard, Commissioner

Recording Secretary:

By: 
Jan Greenhalgh