

COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BOARD MEETING

MINUTES

February 28, 2007

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

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

MINUTES:

Commissioner Hyde moved and Commissioner Corsiglia seconded to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2007 Board meeting and February 21, 2007 Staff meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

VISITOR COMMENTS:

Thelma Bonar, 56734 Way Lane, Warren: She is concerned with the newly adopted Executive Session Policy. Commissioner Bernhard stated that John Knight did a lot of research on this policy, checking with other counties and AOC. Thelma wanted to know why the Board is doing this now, when Executive Sessions have been held the same way for years. Commissioner Bernhard explained that this is a policy that has been in the works for some time and just recently became finalized. Commissioner Hyde stated that the Board can deliberate in Executive Session, but cannot make any decisions. John Knight explained that the National Newspaper Association was faced with distinguishing between what they considered to be news media and other forms of communication. The language in this policy is what the NNA used to distinguish between those who would be entitled to voting membership in the NNA and those how would not be. They were concerned that anyone putting a blog on a website, may claim that they were part of the news media. The NNA didn't want to open up their association to basically anyone who wanted to express their opinion and everything. There is a different between reporting the news and having an opinion.

Thelma then asked Commissioner Corsiglia, Bernhard and Hyde about their personal opinions on this policy. Commissioner Corsiglia expressed his concerns with this last week and is not in favor of it. Commissioner Bernhard feels this is a reasonable policy. A lot of research was done on this and all newspapers in the county were consulted and all agreed with it. Thelma doesn't understand the objections to this because the Board has held Executive Sessions for years. Commissioner Hyde stated that a lot has changed in the way information is shared now with the internet, etc. and the Board is just trying to get a handle on it. However, any policy can be amended if necessary.

Patrick Cunningham, 15734 Riverfront Road, Clatskanie: He is the owner of a internet news service. He agrees we are facing a new era and this last year, the first internet news source was granted White House press corp status. Patrick has a couple of worries about the Executive

Session policy. One is that the Columbian was not included on the list or the Bugler or himself, as an internet news service. He has a lot of credentials that he will forward on to the Board. This ruling is a restriction of the first amendment rights. The Board may want to consider the amount of legal costs this may take to defend.

John Knight explained that the policy has a means for legitimate news sources to present their credentials to establish themselves as a news media organization and persons to present their credentials as news reporters. There was no attempt to exclude legitimate news media organizations. There is a need to understand that there is a potential liability involved in things that are discussed in Executive Session. If the Board doesn't exercise some restraint on who is allowed, the confidential information can get out and the County can be liable. This policy is just an effort to protect the county from liability and to protect the purpose of Executive Session.

1st READING OF ORDINANCE #2007-3 - PORT OF ST. HELENS ZONE CHANGE:

This is the time set for the first reading of Ordinance No. 2007-3, "In the Matter of the Application of the Port of St. Helens for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Zone Change from Rural Residential (RR05) to Airport Industrial (AI)".

Sarah made some changes to the Ordinance, which have been approved by Mark Greenfield, attorney for the Port of St. Helens. If no questions, Sarah gave the first reading of Ordinance No. 2007-3, by title only. The 2nd reading will be held on March 14, 2007, at or after 10:00 a.m.

PAMELA POWELL - HEALTH DISTRICT DISCUSSION:

Pamela Powell, Project Coordinator Public Health & Carl Schultz, Project Coordinator, 3030 SW Moody Portland, Or. 97201: Pam wanted to thank the Board for the opportunity to address them on such short notice. An important event happened last Thursday at the Columbia Health District Board of Directors meeting. Michael Bell, a CPA and expert in rural health care funding, delivered a hospital feasibility report to the CHD Board that showed that the hospital project is viable, and will be a positive addition to the community both economically and in terms of improved access to health care. In fact, he said that every dollar invested in the hospital by the community will come back four-fold in terms of ancillary jobs and business that serves the hospital. This report marked the culmination of a year of uncertainty for the hospital project. When we were told about Federal changes to the rules for state regulation of Critical Access Hospitals, the Health District was faced with decisions to make. One option was to abandon the hope of improving health care for the community by providing a small hospital with 24/7 emergency care, but the Board opted to research all options before making any decisions. Michael Bell's new feasibility report used the assumptions of our growing community along with the projected higher construction costs to build a structure that fits both the state and federal definition of a critical access hospital in infrastructure and services provided. The study showed that the project can withstand the first few years of start-up losses and be financially stable over time. Pam will let the project manager talk about where the project stands now, but she wants this Board to understand that the CHD Board takes its promise to the voters very seriously. CHD is building the hospital that voters approved for no additional taxes. There is no material

difference between what CHD is going to do and what was on the ballot. We are going to provide the community with the same level of service that we anticipated when the ballot measure was passed and we are hopeful that when we apply to be a critical access hospital, we will be successful.

As a reminder, it will be a small hospital that has an emergency room that is open 24/7. It will have 12 in-patient beds, with an average daily census of one patient. It is a short-stay (average 4 days) hospital for moderately ill patients with, for example, pneumonia, wounds needing care, lacerations, infections or non surgical fractures. It will keep many local residents out of Portland emergency rooms and will be especially helpful for stabilizing senior citizens without life-threatening injuries. The hospital will, of course, accept Medicaid and Medicare patients.

Pam stated that, if there are those who have questions, the Health District Board holds work sessions on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm and Board meetings on 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm. Both of these meetings allow for public input. Pam would encourage anyone who has questions for their Board, to attend one of their meetings.

Patrick Cunningham asked what the approximate building budget and property budget is. Carl stated that the direct construction budget is approximately \$10 million. The property is undisclosed at this time because no offers have been made on property.

There were questions from Tammy Maygra and Thelma Bonar that Pam could not answer at this time and suggested they attend one of the CHD Board meetings.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Commissioner Bernhard read the consent agenda in full. Sarah asked the Item (C) be removed. With that, Commissioner Hyde moved and Commissioner Corsiglia seconded to approve the consent agenda as follows:

- (A) Ratify the Select-to-Pay for 2/27/07.
- (B) Order No. 28-2007, "In the Matter of Designating a Maximum Speed of 40 MPH for Fishhawk Road".
- (C) Order No. 29-2007, "In the Matter of Conveying Certain Real Property in Columbia City, Oregon, to Richard K. & Bonny J. Wagoner [Tax Account No. 02-03 5128-042-00500]". **(PULLED AND HELD OVER)**
- (D) Appoint Valerie Koss to the Columbia County Compensation Committee for a one (1) year term.
- (E) 2007 Liquor License Renewals for:
 - Vernonia Golf Club;
 - Birkenfeld Country Store.

AGREEMENTS/CONTRACTS/AMENDMENTS:

- (F) Amendment #2 to the Personal Services Contract with Community Action Team, Inc., for Heathy Start.
- (G) Approve the Emergency Management Performance Grant Work Plan.
- (H) Approve Settlement Agreement with Ross and Christine Barkhurst for \$2,500.

The motion carried unanimously.

COMMISSIONER BERNHARD COMMENTS:

Commissioner Bernhard attended an excellent City/County meeting last night in Clatskanie. A lot of good information was shared and Commissioner Hyde was given issues to take to Washington DC this week. The timber bill was the biggest issue discussed and how to manage this huge funding shortfall. Also the Vernonia sewer system was discussed.

Last Thursday, Friday and Saturday she was in Salem attending a Commissioners training sponsored by AOC, where a number of topics were discussed. They also went over to the Capitol and met with legislators to discuss funding sources, assessment & taxation, auditing, bonding, investments, parliamentary procedures, etc. Very good presentations and very worthwhile.

Last Wednesday, the Board met with the Lazerath Group to put in a project for at-risk youth, trade training, academic training. The whole community will need to get involved to make this work.

COMMISSIONER HYDE COMMENTS:

Commissioner Hyde reported on the hazardous driving conditions from Vernonia.

Last night, he attended the City/County meeting. These meetings are very productive and a good way for the cities and the County to interact. He is going to Washington D.C. tomorrow and will be taking issues brought up last night with him to the hill.

He mentioned the Rail Corridor meeting to be held on March 13th.

Last week, he attended the O&C meeting. The topic of the day was the Secure Rural School funding and what of the chances to get it re-authorized. He met with reps from the Governor's office on that funding. We have to figure a way to fund certain shared services, or the State will be getting those services back.

Last Friday, he met with the Governor's office, Boise Cascade, union management to talk about the Boise mill in St. Helens and what the plans are to not closing down. They plan to re-organize how they do business, using workforce training, etc. to help save the bill.

Tomorrow, he will be going to Washington, D.C. for a week and then to the O&C meeting next week. He will be pushing for the Secure Rural School funding. He also wanted to note that the cost of his trip to Washington DC trip will be totally funded by NACo, not the county.

COMMISSIONER CORSIGLIA COMMENTS:

Commissioner Corsiglia stated that, even with the hopes of PL 106, the county has been looking at what the County can do with the lost of 2.5 million in funding.

He attended a meeting last night with Ray Bradbury where discussions were held on global warming, economic development, etc.


There was no Executive Session held.


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

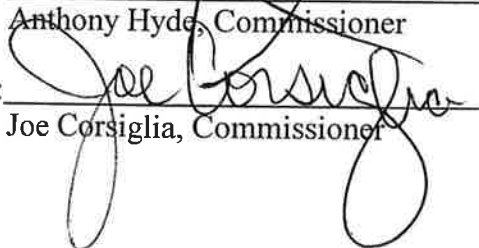
Dated at St. Helens, Oregon this 28th day of February, 2007.

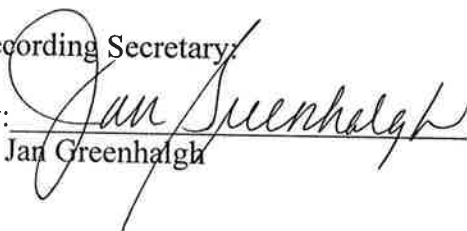
NOTE: A tape of this meeting is available for purchase by the public or interested parties.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

By: 
Rifa Bernhard, Chair

By: 
Anthony Hyde, Commissioner

By: 
Joe Corsiglia, Commissioner

Recording Secretary:
By: 
Jan Greenhalgh