

COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
BOARD MEETING

MINUTES

July 18, 2007

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners met in scheduled session with Commissioner Rita Bernhard and Commissioner Joe Corsiglia, together with Sarah Hanson, County Counsel, and Jan Greenhalgh, Board Secretary. Commissioner Hyde was attending a NACo conference.

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

**MINUTES:**

Commissioner Corsiglia moved and Commissioner Bernhard seconded to approve the minutes of the July 10, 2007 Work Session and July 11, 2007 Board meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

**VISITOR COMMENTS:**

***Wayne Mayo, 415 S. 2<sup>nd</sup> St., St. Helens:*** Wayne approached the Board with a request for the Board of Commissioners to declare Columbia County an "Illegal Worker Free County". Wayne read his prepared statement into the record as follows:

"I'm asking the Columbia County Board of Commissioners to declare Columbia County an "Illegal Worker Free County". I'd like you to consider new rules and statutes penalizing contractors and employers who employ illegals and enable this current circumstance. If they come into the USA with proper paperwork from the US Government, it means something reasonable: 1) They have no criminal background, meaning they have no drug history, kidnapping history, history of murder, history of sexual child abuse or history of theft or prostitution. 2) They are apprised of our insurance requirements on cars and trucks; 3) They are told that if they are caught doing crime in the USA, they will be deported and will not be allowed back in; 4) They are encouraged to obey our laws and customs while they are our guests; and 5) They are positively identified and are authorized by the US Government to be here.

Right now, illegal entrants meet none of these requirements. We keep track of child molesters, but we have no idea about the illegal no accounts among us. Unemployment in Oregon is higher than the national average. Unemployment in Columbia County, according to the figures released at the end of June 07, are higher than the state average. Our youth need jobs besides flipping tacos or salting french fries. They need productive, constructive opportunity that is being denied them by an influx of illegal workers working perhaps even off the books. This is wrong. He is asking the Board of Commissioner to declare Columbia County an "Illegal Worker Free County". I'd like you to consider new rules and statutes penalizing contractors and employers who employ illegals, enabling this current circumstance and ignored in the I9 requirements. I would like to see you direct the Sheriff's department to do social security number checks with the special line set up by the SS to see if workers are valid. If one on even a subcontracting crew if found to be without the proper paperwork, the building permit on that house and all the others

he may have worked on goes up \$15,000 per house. This money should be dedicated to the Sheriff's Department for enforcement. Stop work orders can be issued until assurances are made that only legal aliens and American citizens are working on the project. This can be extended to landlords through Landlord licensing and penalties. Other employer business licenses can be suspended along with punitive charges attached to the redemption of the license. A phoned in citizens complaint should start the process. I have no problem with any color or nationality, as long as they have the United State's formal approval to be here. With so many enemies declaring hatred for the USA from without, it makes no sense to allow them havens within. This is a matter of national security.

Commissioner Corsiglia stated that the Board is being asked to consider new laws and statutes and asked Wayne if that is allowable under Oregon Law? Wayne believes it is - you can add any price or any penalty you want to building permits, business licenses, etc., within the county. They are doing successfully right now in a small town in Pennsylvania. The minute that town was declared an illegal worker free zone, the illegals packed up and left town. Pennsylvania didn't start the statute process, but that would add teeth to it and would give the Sheriff's Department an incentive to work this over. Commissioner Corsiglia asked Wayne if it would be legal for the Sheriff to do this under Oregon Law and Federal Law? Wayne felt it could be challenged, but a good lawyer is always a good thing.

In finishing, Wayne asked for more time at a future meeting to discuss this and possible options. Commissioner Bernhard cannot say when that would happen because research will need to be done on the legalities and information shared with Commissioner Hyde. She is not sure this is something the county can even do. Wayne feels it would be easy enough to declare the county a "Illegal Worker Free" zone and perhaps require the placement of 4'x8' signs at the start of every sub-division stating that and adding the Sheriff and INS phone numbers. Commissioner Bernhard stated that the Board will take this information under consideration.

**Mike Edera, 30987 Pond Drive, Scappoose:** He has lived in the county since 1998. Since that time, there has always been some type of crusade going on. First its gays, porno, health issues and now it's undocumented workers. He thinks this is culture war and politics and doesn't feel it helps anyone. On his way in today, he heard on the radio about what happened in the late 1800's with the Chinese in the Pacific NW. There was a lot of the same arguments. There are 2 issues here. There is a giant issue of immigration and people fleeing economic depravation in coming to the US. Then there is the issue of how we run a community, how we look at each other, help others and look at our own lives. If we create a community where we are officially mandated to hunt for people who are undocumented, to post signs, etc. we are going to have families divided. He is concerned with that and doesn't believe that is a direction we want to go. He feels that a debate about immigration is valid but urged the Board to reject this idea because it would be disastrous.

**Windy Abbott, 52654 Hoag Terrace, Scappoose:** She has lived in Scappoose since 1977. She came to Oregon from Virginia back in 1969. In Virginia she was so involved with a lot of the hate and prejudice of blacks. She worked hard on the marches for Martin Luther King and tried to change peoples attitude on prejudice. The comments she has been hearing lately on "illegals"

are along the same line. They are going after a cluster of people. When she came to Oregon, she worked in the fields picking fruit and working in the packing houses. She helped a lot of other people that worked on the farms that couldn't speak English. They weren't this list of molesters and all these ugly hate feelings. These were people that came to find work. She learned to respect those clustered people just trying hard to make a living and coming where they were needed. When she sees what is being proposed here today, it is very disturbing to her. If someone has an issue because their career in construction, instead of trying to change laws and breed hate and make this community look like a sick group of people, perhaps they can put in their contracts that they don't hire illegal immigrants. She owns a lot of homes and does a lot of business with local contractors. Some of those contractors have hired local kids that "needed jobs" and the last job done on her house was pathetic. This needs to be kept personal. If someone is against people coming into our country and doing jobs that might be in their profession, they can do adds stating they don't hire illegal immigrants and leave it at that instead of breeding hate in our community.

**Christine Santoro, 1020 E. "E" Street, Rainier:** She is thrilled to be a member of Columbia County and cares about all members of the community. This is something she is very emotional about. This is fear tactics - getting up here and shouting mis-truths about drug use, molesters, and law breakers, are simply myths. Male whites dominate most of our jail space for those crimes. She just thinks it is humiliating to think that this community would put up signs targeting a particular group. These people are not criminals, they are displaced people and members of her community and she cares about them and wants to help. They are people doing the best they can, serving our community and working hard to feed their family. She feels very passionately that hating people for doing the best they can, is not ok. This issue is motivated by hate and she would ask that the Board not allow hate to be a part of our community.

**Joe Cason, 171 Columbia Blvd., St. Helens:** He has lived here since 1992. We can deal in emotion or we can deal in logic. This is being turned into an emotional issue, when it is a logical issue. It's about economics. Wayne is here because this directly affects him immediately. Joe is here because it is going to affect his children in the years to come. If he were to stop paying his mortgage, law enforcement would make sure that the banker was paid. That is a logical, economic situation. It is the responsibility in a republic for the government to represent the people that fall within its jurisdiction. The term "illegal" means something. It has nothing to do with race or gender. That is the intent of some of the people here today - to turn this into an emotional argument. This is not emotional, it is about a logical answer to an illegal problem. It has nothing to do with the individuals involved. Joe has nothing against the Hispanic race, English race or black race. This is simply about economics.

**Eloise Bates, 59536 Catteran Street, St. Helens:** She addressed the economics of this. The town in Pennsylvania that Mr. Mayo referred to is a small town in Hazleton Pennsylvania and they passed an ordinance so that the landlords were punished for renting to illegals. They are now in court being sued for this. If you want to talk about economics, we cannot afford to be sued for harassment or profiling. This needs to be considered.

**Jeff Campbell, 28250 Haffermann, St. Helens:** Mr. Cason stated that this has nothing to do with emotions. That just demonstrates how out of touch some of these opinions are. Of course this is an emotional issue and an economic issue and political issue. This is not a black and white issue, there is a lot of complexity. Many of the illegal aliens in this country are due to economic conditions, economic policies that are set at the federal level. Jeff doesn't feel it's practical to start erecting signs telling people where they can or cannot be. Regarding the signs suggested by Mr. Mayo, if allowed, Jeff foresees signs at the nursery businesses and fast food businesses. Although things have taken some bad turns in the past few years, he still doesn't feel that we've reached a point where we will be detained by authorities to determine that our papers are in order. This is not the kind of America that he looks forward to living in and doesn't believe the immigration issue is nothing more than a wedge issue to distract us from the realities of globalization, corporate economic policies, etc. This is a far greater problem than we can deal with on a local level. The list that Mr. Mayo read seems to be of the opinion that people with US documentation are not murderers, rapist, flag burners, sexual abusers, etc. That is a ridiculous assumption to make. Jeff stated his opposition to this proposal.

**Marcy Westerling, 30987 Pond Drive, Scappoose:** She is very proud to have lived the last 20 years in Columbia County and Oregon. One of the reasons she is proud of this state is because we are one of the states that has made it illegal for our law officers to be deputized in witch hunts. ORS 181 specifically says that it is not legal for our law enforcement to do the work of INS. The thinking behind that is real simple. Communities go down hill very fast when law enforcement is not allowed to uphold basic community values and people have to hide in fear from law officers. She feels that this meeting would have gotten off at a very delayed start if everyone in this room needed to document their legality. That creates a very different kind of community when in fact, how do we document it. Or is this just really a racist witch-hunt and we do it based on sir names and skin color. That is why this law is being challenged in Hazleton and in the 25 other counties that have made decisions when similar racist, anti-immigrant ordinances were proposed. She really hopes that Columbia County can stay a place where we are aware of what starts a witch-hunt and aware of the consequences when we put up a sign "no blacks allowed" or "illegal free worker zone", etc. We count on our elected leaders to have backbone and show the way for how we can be the best of the kind of inclusive democracy that we were founded on. It's always a journey to live up to that language but she has always been proud of how we try to think critically and make the right decisions. Many of us grew up where "wop" was a slur that could be used towards many people of Italian decent. All this really means is "without papers". This is not a new issue. When economies start feeling the pinch, we start looking at who are the most recent people. She is the daughter of an illegal immigrant and it was never an issue. Many of us come from histories that are not fully papered. Let's stay strong.

**Ron Peterson, 33843 Vista Lane, Warren:** He was born in St. Helens in 1960. He is a local concrete construction subcontractor. At one point (1998), he had 12 employees in this county. In his business of working on large developments, he had a generally skilled workforce. He hired a significant number of young unskilled workers and began their training process. That was economically viable when he started the business in 1996. It became less viable in 1998 and, by about 2003, he no longer had employees because he couldn't compete with the large

concrete contractors from out of Hillsboro and Milwaukee, who employ large numbers of undocumented workers. From his prospective, this isn't about hate. These people are in this country illegally. They are not documented to work in this country, which is required by the federal government. He does not think it is an unreasonable proposition for the local government to aid in the implementation of that. It certainly hurts our local economy. He sees any number of guys that he used to employ who are generally living just above the poverty line. They are working at Walmart and other low skilled, low paid jobs. Ten years ago, he paid them significantly more than they're making now. That's because he couldn't compete with the illegal workers. It is already required that documentation be posted on every construction site, dealing with licensing, permits, etc., however nothing to do with undocumented workers.

**Gayle Lee, 16680 Arctic Way, Vernonia:** She doesn't believe that Mr. Mayo is asking law enforcement to check everyone's personal paperwork. All checking would most likely be done through documentation that business owners already have. She wanted to make clear that this discussion is about "illegal" immigration. She doesn't believe there is anyone in this room that is really concerned about hating anyone because of their color. There has been a lot of pro illegal immigrant sentiment that has been used to justify economic policy in this county. Our own national corporations and US global economic policy has hurt our economy and done damage to our neighbors to the south. This is why she supports Wayne's suggestion to have a county statement against the use of illegal immigrant workers in Columbia County, with penalties for disregarding the laws that are already on the books, to be on the business owners. She is concerned about the way our county would go about taking this stand. It must be done empathy for the plight of the illegal immigrant with a clear statement of how they have been taken advantage of without a way to protect themselves from sub-standard wages and working conditions. She would also like to see a clear statement to the federal government that this is the federal governments job to implement programs such as this. If they don't, then we are given no choice.

**Elaine Nussbaum, 54729 Reid Road, Scappoose:** She is relatively new to Columbia County but loves the community. She recently heard about this meeting and is just appalled by this. She does agree with Wayne that all politics start at a local level and that our federal government doesn't always do the best job. Looking at the letter from Mr. Mayo, there is an assumption that if an immigrant is illegal, they have a drug history, are kidnappers, etc. This is simply not true. There are a lot of people that come to this country because of the dire situations in their country. They are just trying to do the best they can and feed their families. It is not their fault that we are in the economic mess that we are. By posting these signs, it would be a sign of hate. Someone said this is not an emotional issue - it is a very emotional issue. For us to say at the local level that we don't want these people here, is just not right.

**Bill Blank, 53109 NW 12st St., Scappoose:** He understands the frustration of some people with the immigration issue but feels worse that if we adopt the proposal before the county, it would be creating an atmosphere of intolerance and backlash against Latino citizens. It is easy to prey on the fears of others by crime, drugs, etc., but many citizens of Columbia County are legal, hard working, tax paying citizens that have children born on US soil. They do not deserve to be painted with the same wide brush as suspicion and intolerance such as this resolution creates.

Also, this county does not deserve the image by posting the statement "Illegal Immigrant Free Zone" throughout the county. We live in a county filled with churches and people with progressive minds. We are taught compassion for others. Lets not go backwards. A mere statement will not change the situation. Just as we are taught compassion, we are also taught that if something is wrong, we need to correct it. This is not the answer. Change must come from those that provide jobs, that attract those crossing borders looking for a better life. Change comes from strong law enforcement for those trafficking drugs or committing other crimes. Change will come when fair equity is provided for those wanting jobs and those not willing to work them. Only then will real change come about. He urged the Board to reject this proposal because it creates an atmosphere of backlash and hate.

**Howard Knytych, 52400 SW Jobin Lane, Scappoose:** When we opened this meeting, we started with the Pledge of Allegiance, which includes the line "One Nation Under God". He sees emails all the time that says we should put God back into our constitution, our government, schools, communities, etc., because we seem to be lacking God. It seems to him that to have an illegal worker free zone would be both hateful and hypocritical.

**Dave Ehrenkranz, 55696 Viewcrest Place, Warren:** His family has been in Columbia County since 1978 and feel lucky to be here. He is opposed to what is being proposed here. He knows that the county has limited resources and doesn't want to see those resources spent on things that don't get us anywhere. He doesn't want to live in a community that goes after a sub group. We need to go after the real criminals, instead of scapegoating a sub group because of the assumptions we make about them being the cause of some of our problems. It is easy to blame others for problems that we have, but it's a very non-productive thing to do. He would hope that the county does not adopt this proposal and he would like to see Columbia County remain a hate free zone.

**Bill Eagle, 151 Allendale Drive, St. Helens:** Bill has been in this county since 1964. He has known Wayne Mayo for years and knows that he is a very decent, compassionate and considerate man who harbors no hatred in his heart for anyone. On the other hand, Bill's father was an illegal immigrant. He would hate to have had his dad deported. He was also a decent hardworking man who paid his taxes, obeyed the laws of the land and did his best to raise a decent family. He doesn't think that Columbia County can afford to have this law. We don't have the resources to enforce this proposed law. We only have two road deputies now. Why pass something we can't enforce.

**Tammy Maygra, 34319 Cannan Road, Deer Island:** She agrees that this is a tough issue, it's not just local, but nationally. She has a problem with illegal aliens and it's not just Hispanics. If people want to come into this country, they should do it the proper way. She has known Wayne for years and feels he is a good person and he goes out of his way to help people. She has had different opinions with Wayne on all kinds of politics, but that's fine, because that's what America is about. She agrees with certain aspects of what Wayne is presented, but not all, like the signs. Her thought on this is the economic issue. A lot of corporations or big companies hire illegals because they can pay them a sub-standard wage and deny them health insurance. This all makes their profits go up. It's the exploitation of these people by those corporations in our

society that are greedy. Union people have worked hard for many years to get the standard of wages and standard of living, that many of us in this room enjoy. For a union person to have to compete with illegal workers, the unions can't do it. So their wages, that were up, are slowly going down to meet what the corporations are paying for sub-standard wages to the illegal workers. Again, she wants to say that it's the exploitation of some people by corporations, which is really the root of the problem. This is not about the people and not a hate issue and doesn't believe that Wayne hates anyone. However, she agrees with Wayne that it needs to start somewhere. The corporations are the problem. This is a big issue and she doesn't see it being settled here today. Tammy thinks there should be something done and if the Board could get together with Wayne and some of the people that spoke here today and possibly come up with some type of policy. Something to make the corporations aware. She wanted to thank Wayne for bringing this issue up and she respects everyone who came here today to give their opinion, whether for or against.

**Ron Ross, 31681 Cannan Road, Deer Island:** He was born and raised in this county and has lived here for 74 years. He has always been successful in working in the area and has always had to be a law abiding citizen. It looks to him like we are inviting these people into our country but they don't have to obey the laws of land. As far as the signs, we have signs all over the place. It shouldn't make a difference what the sign says, it comes down to - if you don't comply with the laws, then they should be punished by the law. He has compassion for these people and know that many are hurting, but if the people who support them want to help them, they should all get in a bus and go down to Mexico and demonstrate against their government.

**Darla Knytych, 52400 SW Jobin Lane, Scappoose:** She and her husband moved here in 1976. She was born and raised in Oregon and proud to be an Oregonian. She likes what Oregon stands for and how our legal process works. She appreciates Wayne's position. She has known Wayne for years, served on committees with him and knows that he a Christian person with a good heart. She does not believe he is hate filled. However, she believes this is a very emotional issue, although some feel it is an economic issue. When economics get involved, when there is fear of failure of ones business, when there is anger about unfair competition, when contracts are lost - those are emotional issues. Let us not act out of emotion, fear or anger, let us act out of justice and fairness. Undocumented workers come here because there is a dire need to help their families survive, because of political and economic oppression. They are not here to take away from, only to have a shot at life. There are many complex issues here and beyond the realm of this Board to deal with. Let us work with the INS and the laws that are in existence. She has worked with many oppressed groups and tried to be a voice for those people because it also happened to her. Maybe we should look closer into our hearts and ask ourselves, can we share the abundance that we have in the country with other people, can we find a way to do this and still serve our own economic needs and do it in a way that works with the justice system that we already have.

**Kathleen Worman, 57588 Bayview Ridge, Warren:** She thinks that Wayne is on the right track. The US has immigration laws for the same reason there are ramp lights on the freeway at rush hour. We cannot have everyone storming our borders just because they think its going to be better here. Mexico's economic problems are due to their government - they need to do social

reform. They are sitting on oceans of oil and all they have to do is drill it. The US tax payers give billions of dollars in aid to countries every year, Mexico included. We do enough and it's not fair to the people who came to this country legally to watch others just get a pass. She knows people that came here legally and they are angry when they see what's going on. She stood in line at Walmart one day, there was a Latino in front of her wiring \$550 to Mexico. They are just pumping it out of the country, they're not giving to the US or even trying to be part of the US. She has stopped by construction sites and ask workers about this issue and they said they don't like it. It's hurting them and one said he was a dying breed. We have a whole industry that is being hurt by this. The construction industry used to be good paying, family wage jobs and our infrastructure was built on the backs of these people. This industry is now being depressed because there are people that are being exploited who are working for less. This is unfair to everyone involved. This is not about hatred. People are talking about economy and feeling sorry for people - well America's economy is going down too. She can afford a lot less now than she could 10 years ago. This is not fair to American's and we don't owe Mexico anything. American's are the most generous country in the world and we give a lot.

**Chalky Worman, 57588 Bayview Ridge, Warren:** Her comments are related to the Fair and the problems she has had getting to volunteer at this years Fair. When she called to ask about volunteer positions, they said they may have a few but didn't know at the time. Chalky gave them her phone number. She went down to the Fair the next day to ask again about volunteer positions. They said they would need to check again. Chalky left her name and number again and waited for them to call back, but they never did.

Kathleen stated that she and her daughter, Chalky, have volunteered at the Fair the past three years. Chalky had a wonderful time doing it and did any odd jobs she was asked to do. She was looking forward all year long to volunteer again. Part of the highlight of her summer is to be a part of the Fair. For some reason, the Fair doesn't seem to need volunteers, however they are hiring people.

The Board stated that they would check into this and get back to Kathleen and Chalky.

**Lisa Lewis, 52113 Baumgardner Lane, Scappoose:** She just wants to say that she agrees with the comments made by Mr. Blank and Marcy Westerling.

With no further comments, the Board will take is issue under consideration and do some further research prior to making any decisions.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA:**

Without reading, Commissioner Corsiglia moved and Commissioner Bernhard seconded to approve the consent agenda as follows:

- (A) Ratify the Select-to-Pay for 7/10/07 & 7/17/07.



- (B) Resolution No. 123-2007, "In the Matter of Appointing William L. Boysen as Justice of the Peace, Pro Tempore, to the Columbia County Justice of the Peace District".
- (C) Final Order No. 124-2007, "In the Matter of the Applications of the Fred Luttrell Trust for 5 Conditional Use Permits for Non-Resource Dwellings in the Primary Agriculture (PA-38) Zone".
- (D) Order No. 125-2007, "In the Matter of Designating a Temporary Maximum Speed of 15 MPH for a Portion of Scappoose-Vernonia Road".
- (E) Order No. 126-2007, "In the Matter of Amending the Fee Schedule for Services Provided by the Columbia County Surveyor's Office".
- (F) Approve the DEQ Notification of Temporary Closure of Underground Storage Tanks [Tax Account No. 7216-042-01800] and authorize the Chair to sign.

**AGREEMENTS/CONTRACTS/AMENDMENTS:**

- (G) Approve the 2007-2009 Intergovernmental Agreement with the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife for Sauvie Island Law Enforcement.

The motion carried unanimously.

**AGREEMENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN FEMA RECERTIFICATION PROGRAM:**

Commissioner Corsiglia moved and Commissioner Bernhard seconded to authorize the Chair to sign agreements on behalf of the County which have been signed by Levee Districts prior to the July 26, 2007 deadline to participate in the FEMA Levee Re-Certification process, subject to County Counsel review. The motion carried unanimously.

**COMMISSIONER BERNHARD COMMENTS:**

Commissioner Bernhard stated that it has been extremely busy this past week.

Over the weekend, she spent time at the Rainier Days, which was a lot of fun.

On Sunday, she attended at town hall meeting in Scappoose, with speakers Senator Johnson and Representative Witt.

After this meeting, the Board will be heading out to the Fair for the official grand opening.

**COMMISSIONER HYDE COMMENTS:**

Not present.

**COMMISSIONER CORSIGLIA COMMENTS:**

Commissioner Corsiglia also spent time at the Rainier Days and had a great time.

He encouraged everyone to attend the annual County Fair, which starts today.

There was no Executive Session held.

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

Dated at St. Helens, Oregon this 18<sup>th</sup> day of July, 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: 

Rita Bernhard, Chair

By: Not Present

Anthony Hyde, Commissioner

By: 

Joe Corsiglia, Commissioner

Recording Secretary:

By: 

Jan Greenhalgh