

COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BOARD MEETING

MINUTES

April 6 2011

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners met in scheduled session with Commissioner Anthony Hyde, Commissioner Earl Fisher and Commissioner Henry Heimuller, together with Sarah Hanson, County Counsel and Jan Greenhalgh, Board Secretary.

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

MINUTES:

Commissioner Heimuller moved and Commissioner Fisher seconded to approve the minutes of the March 30, 2011 Board meeting and March 30, 2011 Staff meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

VISITOR COMMENTS:

Nancy Whitney, 40 Wagner Ave, St. Helens: She commented on the emergency meeting held by CHD and their decision to dissolve the health district and terminate public health services. She wanted to point out that this is their decision. Karen Ladd sent letters to their clients giving notice of the termination of public health on May 1st, thereby causing panic in the poorest and most needy in the County. Her comments were intended to manipulate and illicit anxiety. There would be no need for any election or any of these problems if they had done this back in December. They didn't do anything until their Board knew they couldn't be re-elected. If they really cared about the people they serve, they would have made the transition without causing extreme anxiety those letters will cause. She sincerely hopes that the Commissioners can do something to stop this.

Joe Cason, 171 Columbia Blvd, St. Helens: He stated that Commissioner Hyde is aware that 10 years ago, Joe and Bob Eckstrom came to the Board asking that they not renew public health services until they banned the ability for abortion services for girls under 18 years of age. That became a huge issue and but then it just went away. We now have a Public Health Board, of which only 3 members are left, who held an emergency meeting this morning at the fire station. They stated the purpose of the emergency was to allow them to present a document at the Board of Commissioners meeting this morning stating that Public Health will be completely dissolved and no more health services will be offered in Columbia County as of May 1st. Joe can remember being accused 10 years ago of trying to stop all health services in Columbia County. The Commissioners stated that would never happen. Now, 10 years late we have a group of 3 elected people wanting to dissolve public health. The sentiment of the people right now is that appears that funds have disappeared and, before

the new elected Board can take office, there is going to be a switch to a self appointed Foundation Board and that the ability to audit the records would then go away. There are a lot of suspicious things going on right now and he, along with everyone else, do not want to see public health shut down. What they want if the for the Commissioners need to take a very hard look at this situation and do the right thing by the people.

Rick Whitehead, 911 District Director: He is the new director for the 911 District and wanted to come in this morning to just introduce himself.

Tammy Maygra, 34319 Cannan Road, Deer Island: She wanted to say that she appreciates Commissioner Hyde's comments in the newspaper - it expressed the feelings of many in the community. She would like to see the full Board make a public statement to the media to squelch some of the rumors and mis-information that's being spread to the community and stop all the confusion. She also has some questions on the Public Health "Foundation" - who are the members, how it works, where does the money come from and how is it spent. It's all very confusing and she finds it very suspect.

Tammy also wanted to make it very clear that everyone running for the Health District Board is not opposed to public health and, in fact, supports these services. The County need to get harmony back with the taxpayers, because this issue is going to effect how people vote on any future tax levies. The people are not happy with the Commissioners right now and are looking at them to do something to get this resolved.

Madeline Anderson, 31704 Cannan Road, Deer Island: Her understanding of the emergency CHD meeting this morning was to allow them to send a letter to the Board of Commissioners indicating their desire to terminate the agreement they have with the County. It seems to her that they are stepping away from the issue and putting it in the Commissioners lap who will have to make the decision on what to do. She was very disheartened to hear Karen Ladd's comments about sending pink slips to the employees and sending letters to patients. If they truly have the public's best interest in mind, they should want to approach this a little more delicately than that. Madeline is hoping that the Board of Commissioners have something in place to serve the needs of the community.

Georgia Keiper, 34403 Sykes Road, St. Helens: She has a copy of the letter that the CHD Board plans to submit to the Board today. She read a portion of the letter where it talks about terminating the agreement with the County and requesting the Board move forward to dissolve the district. The Commissioners have previously stated that once they received this type of request, it would take approximately 6 months to accomplish this. She asked if this is still the case.

Commissioner Hyde stated this is comment period only and that the Board will be reviewing the letter with Counsel before making any comments.

Brady Preheim, 195 Clark St., St. Helens: Any time there is an emergency meeting without notice, on an issue that was voted on by the taxpayers, smacks of the Republicans in Wisconsin. The public is not stupid and there was no reason to have an emergency meeting. The health board has known this was coming and, had they taken action last December, this wouldn't be necessary. Their Board knows they have lost this election and how the public feels about them. He firmly stated that this is not and has never been about public health services, it was about stopping the tax for the hospital. The people who are running for the health board fully intend to function the public health district and keep it going. The current Board is trying to circumvent that process and he personally finds that insulting.

Peggy Crisp, 34571 Millard Road, St. Helens: On a different subject, Peggy addressed a safety issue with the stop sign at Bachelor Flat Road and Ross Road. A fence has been installed by one of the property owners and this has drastically impaired the line of sight. She has discussed this with Dave Hill but nothing that been done about it. There have been many near misses already and asked that the Board see what can be done to correct the problem.

Leroy Johnson, 334 S. 12th St., St. Helens: Leroy feels this is a critical time right now and wants to know, who swears in the Commissioners and what direction are they given on their responsibilities. Commissioner Heimuller stated that Commissioners are sworn in by a Judge and their duties and responsibilities are to follow the Constitution of the United States and State of Oregon and the rules and regulations of Columbia County. Leroy then stated his concern with a Judge recently telling over 11,000 people that their nuts.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Commissioner Hyde read the consent agenda in full. Items (J) & (K) were pulled and held over. With no other changes/additions, Commissioner Fisher moved and Commissioner Heimuller seconded to approve the consent agenda as follows:

- (A) Ratify the Select to Pay for week of April 4, 2011.
- (B) 2011 Liquor License Renewals for: St. Helens Golf Course; Birkenfeld Country Store; Bing's Restaurant.
- (C) Ratify letter from the City of St. Helens regarding requirements of development permit issuance and occupancy of St. Helens Transit Center and authorize Bill Potter and Janet Wright to sign.

- (D) Order No. 23-2011, "In the Matter of Adopting a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Policy Statement and Program".
- (E) Approve the following documents related to flood buy-out for Rosemarie Ruehmann, (58589 Nehalem Hwy S) and authorize the Chair to sign: Letter regarding buy-out process dated December 6, 2010; Site Specific Review dated November 15, 2010; Request for Acquisition Exemption dated November 25, 2010; and Certification of Authorization to Exceed Current Fair Market Value dated March 15, 2011.
- (F) Approve the following documents related to flood buy-out for Murray (600 Jefferson Ave) and authorize the Chair to sign: Letter regarding buy-out process dated December 15, 2010; site Specific Review dated November 15, 2010; Certification of Authorization to Exceed Current Fair Market Value dated March 15, 2011; and Request for Acquisition Exemption dated November 15, 2010.
- (G) Approve the following documents related to flood buy-out for Melody Gray (1066 6th Ave) and authorize the Chair to sign: Letter regarding buy-out process dated December 6, 2010; Site Specific Review dated November 15, 2010; Certification of Authorization to Exceed Current Fair Market Value dated March 15, 2011; and Request for Acquisition Exemption dated November 15, 2010.
- (H) Approve the following documents related to flood buy-out of Schively (1211 Heather Lane) and authorize the Chair to sign: Letter regarding buy-out process dated December 20, 2010; Site Specific Review dated November 10, 2010; Certification of Authorization to Exceed Current Fair Market Value dated March 15, 2011; and Request for Acquisition Exemption dated November 15, 2010.
- (I) Approve the following documents for flood recovery buy-out on Roediger property (1271 N. Mist Drive, Vernonia, Oregon) and authorize the Chair to sign: Buyer's Estimated Settlement Statement; Settlement Statement for 1721 N. Mist Drive, Vernonia, Oregon; Sale Escrow Instructions; Preliminary title Report; Statutory Warranty Deed; and Hazard Mitigation Grant Deed Restriction for Columbia County, Oregon.

AGREEMENTS/CONTRACTS/AMENDMENTS:

- (J) Powerline Easement and Agreement with Portland General Electric Company and authorize the Chair to sign. (***PULLED & HELD OVER***)
- (K) Settlement and Mutual Release in Columbia County v. Portland General Electric Company and authorize the Chair to sign. (***PULLED & HELD OVER***)
- (L) Intergovernmental Agreement with Northwest Oregon Transit Alliance.
- (M) Amendment #45 to the 2009-2011 Intergovernmental Agreement #127291 with DHS and authorize the Chair to sign.

- (N) Amendment #46 to the 2009-2011 Intergovernmental Agreement #127291 with DHS and authorize the Chair to sign.
- (O) Amendment #47 to the 2009-2011 Intergovernmental Agreement #127291 with DHS and authorize the Chair to sign.
- (P) Amendment #48 to the 2009-2011 Intergovernmental Agreement #127291 with DHS and authorize the Chair to sign.
- (Q) Amendment #1 to the Personal Services contract between Columbia County and LRS Architects.
- (R) Columbia County HVAC Replacement, Controls and Lighting Upgrades Construction Contract by and between Columbia County and MacDonald-Miller Facility Solution, Inc.

The motion carried unanimously.

LETTER FROM COLUMBIA HEALTH DISTRICT:

Commissioner Hyde addressed the letter received today from the Columbia Health District and read it into the record. This puts before the Board of Commissioners the issue of the contract between the County and the Columbia Health District for public health services. Sarah stated that the existing contract includes a termination clause and there would need to be a mutual amendment to the contract that would terminate the contract. She would suggest that the Board direct her to prepare an amendment, to be signed by both parties, to terminate the contract effective 6/30/11. With that, Commissioner Fisher moved and Commissioner Heimuller seconded to direct Sarah to prepare an amendment to the contract with Columbia Health District to terminate the contract, effective June 30, 2011.

Under discussion, Commissioner Fisher stated that this issue has been before the Board a number of times over the past few months. There have been a lot of accusations made against individuals of the CHD Board and those who suspect financial mismanagement. The Board has explained that they do not have the authority to eliminate the \$.38 tax and that the district would need to be dissolved to get rid of the tax. The resolution by the CHD Board to reduce the tax to \$.07 created more anxiety. It is his suggestion that the County take public health back and look for other providers for these services. There should be a series of public meetings to hear from the citizens and providers on the options for these services.

Anticipating this, he has already been in contact with agencies such as CCMH, Washington County and OHSU as options. There is also the possibility of having it go back to the State.

Commissioner Heimuller first wanted to say that throughout this entire process, since the election last November, it has been his priority to make sure that public health services in this county continue. The hospital project was often times confused with the health district and public health and it was hard for some to differentiate on function from the other. The point is that we must make sure that public health continues. Commissioner Fisher has been talking with other potential providers with the one focus in mind - keeping public health services. He wanted to assure everyone that whatever is done, it will be done in a public forum because it absolutely needs to be a transparent process. He also wanted to point out that, at the end of the day, the fact is that we don't have 24 hour health care in this county and we can't lose sight of the need we have here.

Commissioner Hyde wanted to echo the comments made by Commissioners' Fisher and Heimuller and reiterated that their underlying responsibility is to ensure public health services in Columbia County. Although 3 months (June 30, 2011) is not a long time to look at other options, Commissioner Fisher has already been talking with some potential providers. We have before us a system that is broken and what comes with that, is a change. This starts with taking back Public Health and moving forward. After discussion and with the vote taken, the motion carried unanimously.

Nancy Whitney asked the Board that, if at all possible, please stop Karen Ladd from sending out letters saying there will no longer be any public health services. Commissioner Hyde stated that are lines of authority and that would be beyond their authority. Nancy asked that, even if the Board doesn't have the authority, they could at least say something to Karen.

Georgia Keiper sees a gray area between stopping the agreement and the dissolution of the district. Commissioner Hyde stated that the discussion here today is specific only to the termination of the agreement. There has been no discussion about the dissolution of the district. Georgia then asked about the audit for public health and what does she tell people who are asking her about it. Commissioner Hyde stated that whenever public funds are being used, an audit is required.

COMMISSIONER HYDE COMMENTS:

Commissioner Hyde attended the funeral of Polk County Commissioner Mike Propes. Mike was a very good public servant. Commissioner Hyde worked with Mike for several years and considered him a friend. This is a huge loss to the State of Oregon.

The State budget moving along and he will be in Salem this week to testify on the Economic Development budget. Some good news is that the Western Oregon Plan is meeting the requirements and the logging plan was reinstated. This is the plan that was created to manage our state timberlands and directly effects Columbia County.

He is also working very hard on the re-authorization of the Secure Rural School funding, which means \$2.4 million to Columbia County. It is now in the House budget and the Presidents Budget.

He as very pleased to be part of a presentation in Vernonia with FEMA and the Governor, accepting a check for \$2.2 million for the construction of the new K-12 Vernonia School.

COMMISSIONER FISHER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Fisher attended the CEPA meeting yesterday. There was a lot of good discussion on disaster preparation.

The next Hwy 30 Safety Committee will be held on April 12th at Best Western in St. Helens.

He has been in conversations with OHSU looking at options for providing assistance on Public Health services.

COMMISSIONER HEIMULLER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Heimuller reminded everyone that there will be a meeting Tuesday, April 12th at 6:00 pm at the Pavilion to discuss budget issues for the Fairgrounds. They will be soliciting public comment and assistance on the operations of the Fair & Rodeo.

He attended a meeting last Friday with representatives of PCC. He got a good feeling from them and believes they are really stepping up their services in Columbia County and are willing to look at the communities concerns.

Commissioner Heimuller wanted to recognize Master Sergeant Larry Lucas who retired from the Oregon State Police last week. Larry has served Columbia County for 30 years and also served the community on a lot of boards and committees.

There was no Executive Session held.

BOC Minutes

4/6/11

Page 8

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

Dated at St. Helens, Oregon, this 6th day of April, 2011.

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: _____
Earl Fisher, Commissioner

Recording Secretary

By: _____

Henry Heimuller, Commissioner

By: _____
Jan Greenhalgh, Recording Secretary