

COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BOARD MEETING

MINUTES

April 20, 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 April 12, 2011 Work Session; April 13, 2011 Board meeting and April 13, 2011 Staff meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

VISITOR COMMENTS:

Patrick Cunningham, 34698 Bachelor Flat Road, St. Helens: He is looking for some reconciliation for the Columbia Health Board. His wife is a very skilled nurse who admires their efficiency in providing public health services, however most of the Commissioner's feel this is an albatross. There has been poor politics, secrecy and disdain for the voters, an example is Karen Ladd handing out pink slips. He wants to know about the foundation, which seems to be a golden parachute to enable the movement of authority from one era to another. His question is where did the money come from to fund the foundation. Commissioner Fisher suggested that Patrick ask the foundation about that. Commissioner Hyde reiterated that the Board has no intention of conveying the health district to a foundation or anyone else until they have done significant due diligence which will also include public meetings. Pat thanked the Board and is encouraged that they plan to find a solution to this.

Richard Melton, 55141 Columbia River Hwy, Scappoose: He was recently informed of a emergency meeting was held by CHD with no notice or announcement ahead of time. That was not appropriate and should be addressed by this Board. The people are concerned about this issue and the outcome could have serious effects on the public.

Carrie Cason 171 Columbia Blvd., St. Helens: She has worked in intensive care for 30 years as an RN and is running for a position on the Columbia Health District Board. On March 17th, to the surprise of the 5 women running for the CHD Board, not one of the current sitting members registered to run for a position on the CHD Board. If they do not plan to run for a position, what is their next plan of attack. The candidates found out that the current Board obviously planned to dissolve the health board. Their plan was and is to fire all of the staff working at public

health rather than run for office in a democratic election. There has been some confusion on intentional mis-information going around about the current health district. The current board wants to dissolve the board and public health by June 30th so that the newly elected board will not be able to take seat on July 1st. As she understands it, in order to dissolve public health, it would take the current CHD Board and/or public health administration and/or the Board of County Commissioners, with little regard to the vulnerable population they are serving.

If the decision for sending out pink slips to public health employees, it will be done by the current CHD Board and not from those attempting to win the election and serve the people of Columbia County. If Karen Ladd and the current CHD Board follow through with their current plan to terminate staff, those staff members are encouraged to submit a resume on July 1st so they can be included in the hiring process.

The responsibility of this dilemma and the decision making process required rest squarely in the lap of the Board of Commissioners. The citizens of Columbia County who depend on the services of public health are waiting for a decision by the Commissioners. Please help us make a smooth transition from the current CHD Board to newly elected Board.

Jana Mann, 124 Wonderly Drive, St. Helens. She has worked for public health for nearly 25 years and wanted to comment on specific programs they provide and what families will be facing. Public Health has been used numerous times as a model of efficient and caring service delivery. State and Federal officials have visited the office and been impressed with the staff and services. They have long standing partnerships throughout the county, i.e. Head Start, OSU Extension, Scappoose Library, Rainier Senior Center, all of the school districts, Vernonia Learning Center and local churches. The programs are integrated so that a mother who visits the office for WIC may also receive immunizations or a food handlers permit. She works in for the WIC program where they serve 1,400 individuals in this county. They schedule more than 450 appointments every month and offer appointments Scappoose, Rainier, Clatskanie and Vernonia. As a result of the WIC program, stores in our county receive more than \$66,000 in food vouchers which helps sustain our local economy. The problem now is, with the current situation, they are unable to schedule WIC appointments for July. As a citizen, a voter and the WIC Coordinator, she would encourage the Commissioners to quickly find resolution. The families of this county should not be held hostage to political infighting. Jana then submitted letters from the Oregon WIC Coordinators along with county and state statistics.

Nancy Whitney, 40 Wagner Avenue, St. Helens: She wasn't going to speak today but she sees all the people from public health and wanted to say that they all have done an incredible job. It breaks her heart that they think they might be losing their job. That has nothing to do with the people who are running for the CHD Board. The people running for the health board have never had any intention of doing away

with public health and that is well known. Everyone has to work together to help regain the public's trust and there is continuous public health.

Sheri Duran, 58082 Shadley Lane, Warren: She is an employee of public health, has been there for 20 years and loves her job. She has also been a WIC mom so she sees both sides. She has faith in the ways things work and knows the Board will look at everything before they make a decision. She feels it is very important that the Commissioners see the letters from WIC moms and people in the community. Because they don't know what's going to happen, they cannot schedule appointments. Even though she knows that public health is not going away, she sees the fear in her clients.

Commissioner Heimuller is confused as to why appointments are not being scheduled.

There is a commitment for all public health services to continue and appointments should continue to be made. Sheri understands that the contract ends June 30, 2011.

Commissioner Hyde stated that the request to terminate the contract has been made but not accepted by the Commissioners. Commissioner Heimuller has heard from members of the public that the County Commissioner's are cutting off the WIC program and there is absolutely no truth to that. No matter what, public health services will continue to be provided and appointments should to be made. Commissioner Hyde explained that if the contract is terminated on June 30th, state statute requires that all of the employees and public health defer, by default, to the county. The program doesn't go away, it just has a different oversight.

Lori Peterson, 324 S. 10th St., St. Helens: She has worked for public health for over 20 years. She has a letter from the staff that breaks down their programs and the state and federal monies they receive for those programs. She feels that people don't understand that when they see the total budget think they can do this.

They don't understand that these monies are dedicated funds. On a personal note and as a member of the voting public, her fear with the people that are running for the CHD Board are that 3 are from the Constitutional Party. With a 5 member Board, that's a majority. As Commissioner Hyde will remember, some years ago the Constitutional Party was very vocal about the County providing money to public health who provides birth control services and they were not happy about it. These services are mandated by law and she would hate to see these services at risk.

Nancy Whitney wanted to clarify that there are no Constitutional members running for the CHD Board. There are 3 Democrats and 2 Independents, however this is a non-partisan position.

Brady Preheim, 195 Clark St., St. Helens: There seems to be a lot of confusion on this whole matter. He understands that the Public Health Board was appointed by the Commissioners to also serve as the CHD Board. Commissioner Hyde explained

that there is only one Health District Board and it is elected, not appointed by the County Commissioners and the county has a contract with the health district to provide public health services. Brady feels that, because of all the confusion, he would suggest that the Commissioners clarify that in a press release. It would also eliminate a lot of stress by the citizens if the Commissioners publicly explain that there is going to be an election, there is going to be public health services and that the County will appoint that Board to oversee public health. Commissioner Hyde clarified that if the CHD Board dissolves, there is no way to contract with a Board that doesn't exist. There are a lot of moving parts here and the Commissioners are working to make a substantive decision on a good delivery of public health. Brady still feels the Commissioner's need to do a press release to dispel all the confusion.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Commissioner Hyde read the consent agenda in full. With no changes/additions, Commissioner Heimuller moved and Commissioner Fisher seconded to approve the consent agenda as follows:

- (A) Ratify the Select to Pay for week of April 18, 2011.
- (B) Authorize a one year extension to the contract with Pauley Rogers for auditing services.
- (C) Resolution No. 25-2011, "In the Matter of a Resolution Regarding USACE and ODOT Consultations for HMGP/FMA Acquisition Project 2007 Flood Event.

AGREEMENTS/CONTRACTS/AMENDMENTS:

- (D) Addendum #6 to the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Contract DR-1733-OR with Oregon Emergency Management and authorize the Chair to sign.

The motion carried unanimously.

COMMISSIONER HYDE COMMENTS:

Commissioner Hyde attended the O&C meeting last week. With the passing of O&C Board member Mike Propes, he will be assuming Mike's position as Vice President to the O&C Board.

He also wanted to mention that Coos County Commissioner Nikki Whitty recently passed

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away. She was a long time Commissioner who was very active on various statewide boards and commissions and will be sorely missed. Coos County has lost two Commissioners since November.

Yesterday he was in the Governors office talking about the carbon sequestration program. He is working on this program with Kathryn Mader, who is in charge of sustainability at OSU, and found out that this ecosystem project was named in the top 10 in the world. This is the only project like it in the world and the Governor's office is very excited about moving forward on it.

COMMISSIONER FISHER COMMENTS;

Last Friday he attended the Koffee Klatch at the St. Helens School District office. Our school districts, like many others, are having significant issues in maintaining the great those programs.

Regarding public health, which has consumed a great deal of his time over the past 6 months, he finds it interesting that 5 months ago, there were some citizens coming before the Board demanding the health district be dissolved. Now, many of those same people are asking that it not be dissolved. Commissioner Fisher stated that if the County gets a request to dissolve the district, there is a process to be followed and it would be put on a ballot for the voters to decide. Public Health is an entity that provides very necessary services and those services are not going away. The Commissioners are working hard to determine just how those services will continue to be provided in the future.

COMMISSIONER HEIMULLER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Heimuller attended "Be Our Own Hero" earthquake seminar at the Best Western. This was put on by the CERT group who did a great job. It was very well attended and glad to see the community involvement.

He met with the Veterans Committee yesterday. This group is working to enhance our Veterans customer service here locally with use of volunteers. There has been some great community participation willing to help support the VA services.

He attended the AOC County College last Friday and Saturday in Washington County. He can't say enough good about this program and how beneficial it is.

There was no Executive Session held.

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

Dated at St. Helens, Oregon, this 20th 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