

COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BOARD MEETING

MINUTES

July 10, 2019

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners met in scheduled session with Commissioner Henry Heimuller, Commissioner Margaret Magruder and Commissioner Alex Tardif, together with Robin McIntyre, Senior Assistant County Counsel, and Jan Greenhalgh, Board Office Administrator.

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

MINUTES

Commissioner Tardif moved and Commissioner Magruder seconded to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2019 Budget Hearing, July 3, 2019 Board meeting and July 3, 2019 Work Session. The motion carried unanimously.

VISITORS:

Gainor Riker, Big River Bistro, 305 Strand Street, St. Helen's: Gainor understands her issue/concern falls under the jurisdiction of the City of St. Helens but feels it will also affect the county. The city has been making improvements to Sand Island which will include a total of 60 campsites. Because the city doesn't have a patrol boat, if there is any emergency, it will fall to the county to deal with. She gets a lot of questions from her clientele about emergency services coverage on the island, and she asked if there is any information she can pass on. The Board will discuss this and get back to Gainor.

HEARING: PROPOSED FORMATION OF TRANSIT SERVICE DISTRICT:

This is the time set for the public hearing, "In the Matter of the Proposed Formation of the Columbia County Rider Transit Service District".

Robin McIntyre explained that there is no set procedure for this type of hearing, so the Board can simply take any comments, pro or con.

John Dreezen, Transit Coordinator, came before the Board to give the staff report. As the Board is aware, he, Todd Wood and Angela Garrett have spent considerable time over the past year gaining a detailed understanding of the costs, resources, and business dynamics of CC Rider's operations and they have made significant progress. CC Rider's heavy reliance on grant funding and its lack of unrestricted local funding have led to a recurring cycle of deficits, a recurring dependence on loans from the County General Fund and finally this past year, to the need for a 40% reduction in service to stem the tide of annual losses. This is the second time in the past 10 years that a cut of this magnitude has been necessary. Aside from the direct financial consequences, the ridership experience has diminished significantly in recent years due to Transit's aging fleet, lack of signage and route infrastructure and high fares, and

ridership itself has declined, leading to the vicious cycle of decreases in formula grant funding that includes ridership as a determinant of funding levels. Although some meaningful improvements will become possible as a result of the Statewide Transportation payroll tax (STIF), which does not require matching fund contributions, further service reductions will be necessary beginning in January 2020 in order for CC Rider to begin repaying its debt to the County General Fund. Services most likely to be subject to cuts include the Line #2 PCC service, the portion of Line #3 Flex service was not funded by STIF dollars, and those portions of DAR services not funded by STIF dollars. So while a path exists to reverse the trend of deficits and losses, that path still leads to a sub-standard transit service with steadily depreciating assets, high fares and regional service lines competing against each other for match-free funding. Formula grants requiring match dollars will still constitute over 60% of the total grant funding, meaning CC Rider will remain vulnerable to the biennial funding priorities of the state legislature, which is already moving to reduce its traditional transit funding based on the available new STIF funding. Rather than this downward spiral, staff recommends the path that our neighboring transit districts follow; one with modern and well-maintained buses, identifiable route and stop signage, low fares, growing ridership and the capacity to build reasonable reserves. What is the common denominator amongst our neighboring districts that permits this higher level of financial health? A stable local funding source. With an annual need of \$320K in match for Federal and State formula funds, \$110K match for bus and computer system grants, \$400K to eliminate our reliance on the County General Fund, and at least \$100K to begin building an operating and capital reserve, staff has identified a total annual need of no less than \$930K. To address this need, staff recommends the formation of a transit service district with a dedicated permanent property tax rate of 18 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. This rate will raise approximately \$1 million per year.

The hearing was opened for public testimony.

Sharon Evenger, 52276 SE 2nd Street, Scappoose: She has been before the Board on transit issues from fare increases to a decrease in runs. Rider has been running on a skeleton budget and it has a broken leg. The transit service is one of the most important, vital services to Columbia County.

Susan Conn, 334 S. 3rd Street, St. Helens: She is here to support the transit system. The County is growing and we need a stable transit system.

Bill Eagle, 151 Allendale Drive, St. Helens: He is a member of Citizens Transit Advisory Committee. We need a viable transit system in this county. They exist only on gifts and grants. If we want our community to grow, we need transportation. Cuts mean that people can't get to work, go grocery shopping, doctor appointments, etc. He is in total of support of this transit district. Commissioner Tardif asked what the dollars would pay for if passed. Bill stated that it would go towards more buses and routes.

Joe Turner, 2920 6th Street, Columbia City: His wife comes from Europe where the bus stops right by their door. They don't even need a car because everything is so close. They have a national tax that pays for transportation but we don't have that here.

He is a disabled veteran and gets reimbursed from the VA for his mileage. The state pays employees 58 cents, the VA pays vets 43 cents - CC Rider should raise the rates per mileage.

Pam Heimuller, 224 S. 15th Street, St. Helens: She has been riding transit for 28 years to her job in Portland. She has seen ups and downs but it is a necessary service. People tolerate the cuts because they need the service. Fuel and parking in Portland can be \$130 or more and people can't afford that. Bus service takes vehicles off the road and is a quality of life issue. These are people who are seniors, veterans, students, workforce, etc. Not an issue of expense – it's a quality of life issue.

Gainer Rykor – from a tourist standpoint, she gets asked a lot how to get around the area. As a taxpayer, she is happy to pay the tax for this service because it is a very needed service.

Blanche, Avamere, 2400 Gable Road, St. Helens: she wanted to thank the Board for holding this hearing. She suffered a stroke and has lost her car, but wanting to remain independent, she depends on the transit service. She is willing to pay the \$.18 tax.

With no further testimony coming before the Board, the hearing was closed for deliberations. Robin provided a prepared Order to approve the formation of the transit district and to set the date for August 7, 2019 at 6:30 pm. That gives one more opportunity for public input.

Commissioner Tardif asked John Dreezen that if the PCC line cut, how much would it cut the budget. John – transit would lose the PCC contract of \$84,000 but would save \$220,000, so it would be net gain \$150,000.

Commissioner Tardif asked why Joe Turner appreciates the transit service in Europe but is opposed to the formation of this transit district here. Joe stated that there is not enough tax base. People are already leaving the area because they can't afford the taxes.

After deliberations, Commissioner Magruder moved and Commissioner Tardif seconded to approve Order No. 60-2019, "In the Matter of Approving the Formation of the Columbia County Rider Transit Service District". The motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA:

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

- A. Ratify the Select to Pay for 07.08.19.
- B. Cancel the July 17, 2019 Board Meeting and Work Session.
- C. Order No. 39-2019, "In the Matter of Conveying Certain Real Property in Yankton, Oregon, to Ryan M. Drake, Tax Map ID No. 5N2W36-CO-000300 and Tax Account No. 17589".

D. Quitclaim Deed to Ryan M. Drake, Tax Map ID No. 5N2W36-CO-000300 and Tax Account No. 17589, authorize Chair to sign.

AGREEMENTS/CONTRACTS/AMENDMENTS:

E. C96-2019 - Purchase and Sales Agreement by and between Zephaniah and Lindsay Emmons and Columbia County for Map ID No. 4N4W04-BD-08200 and Tax Account 22976.

The motion carried unanimously.

ORDER 61-2019: EXEMPT CONTRACT WITH ENVIROAD FROM BIDDING:

Mike Russell and Tristan Wood, Road Department, came before the Board to request approval of an exemption from competitive bidding to allow the Road Department to contract and with EnviRoad for asphalt emulsion. Tristan explained that Envi-Road produces a proprietary product that allows the county to utilize recycled asphalt material ground from older roadways. The grindings they will be using are from the Rainier to Clatskanie Hwy 30 paving project a couple of years ago. Envi-Roads product, EBS-RA, is similar to the product used as a dust control on gravel roads, but has a much higher polymer content to allow further binding of the aggregate product together. Due to this process, we are able to create and utilize the mixture of the recycled asphalt as rock at a significant savings to hot mix asphalt - 40-50% savings per ton over plant mixed asphalt. With haul and material costs savings, they are able to greatly reduce the cost of road repairs.

With that, Commissioner Magruder moved and Commissioner Tardif seconded to approve Order No. 61-2019, "In the Matter of Exempting the Contract with EnviRoad LLC for Asphalt Emulsion from the Competitive Bidding Requirements of ORS 279B.070". The motion carried unanimously.

C117-2019 – CONTRACT WITH ENVIROAD - EARTHBOUND STABILIZER ASPHALT:

With the approval of Order No. 61-2019, staff is recommending approval of the contract with EnviRoad, LLC. Commissioner Tardif moved and Commissioner Magruder seconded to approve the Public Procurement Contract with EnviRoad, LLC. The motion carried unanimously.

POWER UPGRADE ALONG GABLE ROAD:

While present, Tristan Wood wanted to brief the Board on two easements he will be requesting approval on. They are with Columbia River PUD for a 5 foot strip of land on county property and the other is for a 10 foot strip of land on county property. The reason behind this is to allow CRPUD to do some upgrades to their poles. These will be added to an upcoming agenda for approval.

ORDER NO. 32-2019 (CORRECTED) REIMBURSE AGENCIES FOR HTC RELAY:

Commissioner Tardif moved and Commissioner Magruder seconded to approve Order No. 32-2019 (Corrected), "In the Matter of Reimbursing Public Agencies to Columbia County for the Cost Impacts of the Hood to Coast Relay". The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC ROAD EVENT PERMITS:

The following Public Road Event Permits and Indemnity Agreements for the Seattle to Portland Bike Ride, Hood-to-Coast Relay, Ralph Painter Memorial Run, Wings and Wheels Half Marathon were discussed last week and are now ready for approval. With that:

Commissioner Magruder moved and Commissioner Tardif seconded to approve the Public Road Event Permits for the Cascade Bicycle Club – Seattle to Portland Bike Ride, Ralph Painter Memorial Run; the Wings & Wheels Half Marathon and the Hood-to-Coast Relay and authorize the Chair to sign. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Tardif moved and Commissioner Magruder seconded to approve the Indemnity Agreements for the Cascade Bicycle Club – Seattle to Portland Bike Ride, Ralph Painter Memorial Run; the Wings & Wheels Half Marathon and the Hood-to-Coast Relay. The motion carried unanimously.

COMMISSIONER MAGRUDER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Magruder had a great time at Clatskanie 4th of July Parade. Rainier Days is coming up on July 14th.

Thanks to everyone who took the time to come out and speak at the hearing today.

COMMISSIONER TARDIF COMMENTS:

Commissioner Tardif hopes all had a great 4th of July.

COMMISSIONER HEIMULLER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Heimuller reminded all that the Columbia County Fair opens Wednesday July 17th. Free admission and lunch for seniors and veterans on Wednesday starting at 12:00 noon.

The Fair Board is always looking for volunteers so, if anyone is interested, please contact the Fair Office (503) 397-4231 or Board of Commissioners Office at (503) 397-4322. The Fair schedule is on their website and Fair Books are available around the county.

Means Nursery will again be donating plants/flowers to the Annual Fair Plant sale, at no cost. This is the biggest fund raiser for the Fair, which brings in around \$30,000 for the fair annually.

There was no Executive Session held.

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

Dated at St. Helens, Oregon this 10th day of July, 2019.

NOTE: An audio CD of this meeting is available for purchase by the public or interested parties. A video of the meeting is also posted on our website at www.co.columbia.or.us.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

By: _____
Henry Heimuller, Chair

By: _____
Margaret Magruder, Commissioner

By: _____
Alex Tardif, Commissioner

By: _____
Jan Greenhalgh
Board Office Administrator