

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

WORK SESSION

Tuesday, May 27, 2003

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners met in scheduled session with Commissioner Joe Corsiglia and Commissioner Rita Bernhard, together with John Knight, County Counsel, and Cynthia Zemaitis, acting Board Secretary. Commissioner Hyde was not present.

Commissioner Corsiglia called the meeting to order.

TOM WILSON, PORT OF WOODLAND - FERRY TERMINAL

Tom Wilson, 600 Davis Peak Road, Woodland, WA, and Dave Ripe, P.O. Box 87, Woodland are here to discuss the proposal being presented to all the surrounding municipalities to support a ferry between Woodland, Washington, and St. Helens. Due to the situation on the Lewis & Clark bridge, a new look at the feasibility of a ferry has resurfaced. Mr. Ripe indicated that, although there is no funding at the current time, a grant proposal has been submitted. In addition, he understands that the City of St. Helens is also looking into funding. They have two proposals for a feasibility study, both of them for approximately \$30,000. The study will hopefully answer questions on whether this would be feasible, if people would use it, the economic benefit for both Columbia and Cowlitz Counties, whether it will promote business, etc.

The Port of Woodland is not looking at making this a Port facility, but is willing to help get the project started. Eventually, it would be turned over to a private party to run.

Commissioner Bernhard asked whether there were plans to include trucks, which could assist Columbia County greatly in the area of economic development. Mr. Ripe indicated that that was also part of the study.

The proposal is for a buy-in from each of the affected municipalities. Mr. Ripe stated that Commissioner Hyde has indicated he would look into State economic development funding as a possibility for some funding. Commissioners Bernhard and Corsiglia both feel it would be a great boon to all citizens.

Mr. Ripe stated he has been contacted by the Victoria Princess who indicated they would be interested in looking at this project after the study. Permitting would take 18 to 24 months, so it probably would not be in place to capitalize on the Lewis & Clark bicentennial.

Tom Wilson indicated that, if possible, they would like a letter of support from the Commissioners. Mr. Wilson also stated there seems to be 100% support from all agencies. They would like to get all the agencies together at a summit meeting which might be enough weight to bring in ODOT and WADOT. Wilson says the industries on both sides also need to be included.

After some discussion, Commissioner Corsiglia directed that a letter in support of this project be brought back for ratification tomorrow.

DAVE HILL, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR - PURCHASE OF TOOLS

Dave Hill is here with Dave Holinbeck, who is set to retire at the end of June. Dave Holinbeck has used his own personal set of tools throughout his employment with the County and, upon his retirement, has offered to sell the tools to the County. Dave Hill indicated that the tools are in mint condition and that their cost, if purchased new, would be approximately \$30,000; Holinbeck has accepted an offer of \$17,000. Dave Hill has talked with Bill Potter and Jean Ripa, who see no problem with it. Potter has suggested that a Board order exempting this from the public purchasing process is recommended. Hill stated that there is money in the budget for this purchase. Commissioner Bernhard asked whether there is any advantage to buying these over having a mechanic use their own tools. Hill stated that both he and Ripa agree that there could be problems with having private tools in the shop. Holinbeck stated the tools will carry the same warranty through Snap-On for the County as they do for Holinbeck. Dave Hill has already delegated to the other mechanic responsibility for overseeing and protecting the tools when Holinbeck leaves. The tools are kept under lock and key. Commissioner Bernhard believes this is a very reasonable offer and approves the purchase. Commissioner Corsiglia stated he has talked with Joe Schultz, insurance agent, who will need an inventory of the tools.

With no further discussion, Commissioner Bernhard moved and Commissioner Corsiglia seconded to approve the purchase of these tools. An order exempting this purchase from competitive bidding is to be added to the consent agenda.

JEAN RIPA, HUMAN RESOURCES - CLARIFICATION OF INSURANCE AGENT OF RECORD COVERAGE.

Jean sent an eMail last week, which she went over briefly. The employee benefits portion was split from the other coverages in the RFP, and the recommendation from the committee was that the insurance agent-of-record would no longer be involved in employee benefits. Since the County added a Human Resources Department, Jean has handled this. Also, 2 years ago, the Health Care Benefits Committee was formed. This is the method that is now used for health care benefits. After talking with John Knight, it is recommended that a contract identifying what pieces the agent is involved with and what pieces he is not be drafted.

JOE SCHULTZ was present and spoke. He stated that, looking at the proposed changes to be made to the health care benefits this July for sign up in August, it is too late to make any changes. Commissioner Corsiglia stated that he wanted to see the insurance agent of record handle and be involved in all aspects. He supports the involvement of county staff, but sees no reason to cut out the agent. Jean stated that John Knight agreed that it is not that uncommon to not have an agent

involved in employee benefits. She would continue, in relationship to the HCBC, to go forth with the Kaiser proposal – there is no choice. The rates given to the County specifically exclude having an agent involved. At a meeting Jean attended last week, one of the other carriers indicated that with an agent involved, the rates would be bumped up some.

Commissioner Bernhard asked agent Schultz what he does now that would change if this passed. Schultz stated that he used to be very involved in this area, and since Jean came on she has taken over more and more of these duties. He would like to be involved, since he thinks he can bring something valuable to the process. However, at this point, with the coverage period ending soon, he recommends the County move forward with the Kaiser proposal. Schultz indicated that he is involved in workers' comp and it is typical to deal with an agent.

At this point, Schultz offers to help the transition to Kaiser; doesn't care whether there's any commission involved. Commissioner Corsiglia stated that it is his experience that it makes sense to take advantage of the agent's expertise. Since the Commissioners have approved the move to Kaiser, Schultz believes the County needs to just proceed in that direction.

John Knight has reviewed the last order approving the insurance agent-of-record, and has begun work on the new order. He needs to know how to handle health benefits and workers' comp. John pointed out that we have an appointed insurance agent-of-record for this year, and the carriers wonder why they are not dealing with the agent.

Jean has nothing against Joe personally, and has no problem with leaving him involved in workers' comp. Commissioner Bernhard commends Jean and the committee for what they've done, and would like to see it continue with Joe Schultz staying in the wings in case he is needed. Jean says he has always been in the wings, but thinks its unfair to ask him to do the work without getting compensated for it. The problem is that it frequently creates difficulty in dealing with the insurance representatives. When an agent is involved, there are some things the representative cannot do without passing it through the agent. That's very valuable when you don't have the in-house expertise to handle this, but Jean has developed the expertise. Commissioner Bernhard stated that she does not want to cut Schultz out; Jean needs to work to keep him involved.

John Knight will draft the order appointing insurance agent-of-record for liability, property insurance, for workers' comp, etc. The order will not appoint an agent-of-record for health insurance benefits, because Jean can do it more efficiently that way.

Schultz stated he would be comfortable with that but, personally, he would like to remain in that loop. He says the Board needs to clarify that the Human Resources Director has the authority to negotiate the health care benefits herself.

John Knight stated that an order appointing an insurance agent-of-record is essential, and approves

of Schultz' suggestion that gives Jean authority. Jean says that's part of her job description, so an order is probably not needed. Commissioner Bernhard believes it should be in the order. John Knight confirmed that Pieper Ramsdell will be appointed as insurance agent-of-record in all areas, but the Human Resources Director will be given authority to negotiate health care benefits directly.

Commissioner Corsiglia feels really uncomfortable cutting the insurance agent-of-record out of the process, but directs that this order be added to the consent agenda tomorrow.

CYNTHIA ZEMAITIS, LEGAL ASSISTANT:

Mass Dedication of County-owned Property. Cynthia reminded the Board that last year, in preparation for the land sale auction, both the Board and the Road Department went through the list of county-owned property and made a determination on what was to be deemed surplus. During that process, those properties which have been designated "save for road purposes" were also reviewed, and the determination made by Lonny Welter that most could be dedicated as public rights-of-way. Commissioner Bernhard believes it is a good idea to have these properties dedicated. She and Commissioner Corsiglia agree that the dedication of these properties are to be handled with one Board order and directs Cynthia to move forward.

Clarification on Road Vacation Fees. Cynthia stated that the Board order setting road vacation fees at \$1,000 non-refundable does not address the situation where a petitioner is requesting that more than one road be vacated. She reminded the Board of the recent request for an indication of the fees involved in having approximately 9 roads vacated within an 80 acre area in the Hillcrest subdivision, and the Board made the decision that the process could be completed for \$3,000. Cynthia stated that she received a petition last week from someone asking that two roads be vacated in the Neer City subdivision, and a \$2,000 fee was paid.

Commissioner Corsiglia suggested that we charge \$1,000 for the first two roads, and \$500 a road thereafter. Dave Hill stated that if someone requesting four connected roads be vacated, the work would not be more complicated than a request for one long road. John Knight suggested that fees could be based upon the number of affected properties.

Commissioner Corsiglia directed Cynthia to meet with the Road Department, Land Development Services, perhaps Joe Flori, and any other department affected and come up with a recommendation to bring back before the Board.

PHIL DERBY, COUNTY SHERIFF - LAW ENFORCEMENT LEVY

Chris Iverson, 36360 Smith Road, Columbia City, is here with Sheriff Derby and Lt. Simmons to talk about the 3-year operating levy they are proposing. They have scaled the levy down some since the last levy was voted down. Iverson stated that all other Counties in the State have four times the

number of officers per 1,000 citizens than Columbia County. The levy would add two patrol sergeants, four corrections deputies, nine patrol deputies – four of which are replacements for lost positions – and two corrections technicians. For a \$100,000 home in the County, taxes would increase \$4.38 per month.

Commissioner Bernhard stated that everyone knows this is desperately needed, but the current economic climate may not support increased taxes. Iverson states they will need to get out and encourage people to support this levy. It has been cut back virtually as far as it can be cut. Commissioner Corsiglia asked whether this would cure the understaffing in the jail. Derby says it would go a long way to fix the staffing problems and offset the increased costs of running the new jail. Commissioner Corsiglia stated that we need to be sure that it cures the other problems, such as courthouse security and overtime. With regard to the overtime issue, Sheriff Derby stated that an additional 10 hours of overtime for the new people were added into the levy. As far as the courthouse, they would go forward as they do now, trying to get some funding from the courthouse security fund. Derby agrees that in 6 months, if the levy fails, there will no longer be a courthouse deputy.

Iverson indicated that they are considering adding this to the September ballot. Commissioner Bernhard is concerned there's not enough time to educate the people. Iverson stated this is a double-edged sword – if you go too far out, people forget about it.

John Knight has a draft order regarding the proposed levy, and is waiting for comments from the interested parties. There will be a ballot title attached to the order when approved. Commissioner Corsiglia directed that authorization to call for an election be added to the consent agenda.

RAC PRIORITIES:

Dave Hill stated that the County is submitting two RAC project proposals - the Linear Trail improvements in crossings and paving sections of the Scappoose-Vernonia Highway. He understands that other agencies have submitted projects, and that RAC is asking the Board of Commissioners to prioritize all projects that were submitted. Hill indicated that Commissioner Hyde advised that RAC had no interest in funding the Camp Wilkerson study, so it has been deleted. They are looking at getting a RARE student to do that master plan.

Hill is not prepared to talk about each of the projects today, and would recommend that Commissioner Hyde be included as he has talked with RAC frequently. He also confirmed that the monies are not for the purchase of the Linear trail extension, but for improvements of the crossings.

Commissioner Bernhard moved and Commissioner Corsiglia seconded approval to prioritize the RAC-funded projects as the Linear trail first, and the Scappoose-Vernonia overlay second. Commissioner Corsiglia directed this be added to the consent agenda.

ODOT LETTER:

John Knight stated that the ODOT Public Transit Division notified the County by letter that COLCO will no longer be considered qualified to handle federal funds, which will be cut off on June 30, and has directed COLCO to surrender the majority of its vehicle fleet on that date. He participated in a teleconference on Friday w/ Carol Landsman, Jean Palmatteer, Kathy Stratton, Steve Dickey, Martin Lohring and Jeff Bronson to discuss the situation. John suggested that the State fund the County to proceed with (1) having Carol Landsman or Chris Watchie meet with COLCO to discuss current operations, routes, drivers, etc.; (2) come up with a proposal for service as of July 1; (3) develop an RFP for a transportation provider which would not be ready to go as of July 1. John stated he believes there will be a period of time when the County is in an emergency situation and will have to do best we can. Hopefully, can find someone by September or October to take over for COLCO.

Carol Landsman is preparing a proposed amendment to the contract outlining the scope of work on these issues. Martin Lohring was a little surprised that any funding might be available, but others at the agency believe they might have the flexibility to provide funding.

John also stated that Ray Godsey had called this morning, and wanted to meet with John and Commissioner Corsiglia at 1:30 today to discuss a smooth transition.

Commissioner Bernhard asked whether COLCO was actually going out of business, and, if so, what would happen to their building, and if ODOT could contract with the drivers to continue the service in the interim. John stated he did not believe the Council of Seniors was going out of business – they will be left with four vehicles and would still be eligible for STF funds. He can't provide answers to all the questions right now.

John stated that the STF funds were going to be needed as the match for 5311 funds. However, ODOT prefers that we do not use all of the STF funds for this match, but to use a soft match as a portion.

Commissioner Bernhard stated that the Board received a letter from Norma Hendrickson expressing interest in the STF committee, and Dan Garrison has also expressed some interest.

John indicated that Carol Landsman had recommended the committee be comprised of 2-3 representatives from the five senior centers; a representative of CAT; a disabled person or a representative of disabled persons; a representative from Riverside and from SDS. The Board directed John to contact each of the senior centers, and the other recommended entities, to see if they would like to send the names of two nominees to this committee after which the Board will make the final appointment.

VISITORS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION UNDER ORS 192.660(1)(i) - Performance Evaluations

The Executive Session was not held.

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

Dated at St. Helens, Oregon this 27th day of May, 2003.

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: _____

Joe Corsiglia, Chair

By: _____

Rita Bernhard, Commissioner

By: _____

Anthony Hyde, Commissioner

Recording Secretary:

By: _____

Cynthia Zemaitis