

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

WORK SESSION

August 8, 2006

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

Commissioner Corsiglia called the meeting to order.

ANIMAL CONTROL PROGRAM:

Todd Dugdale, LDS Director, Roger Kadell, Animal Control Officer, came before the Board to request authorization to hire one .75 FTE Animal Control Specialist. Todd noted that this position was approved in the 2006-07 budget, assuming the revenue is realized. Todd went over some options to fund the position as outlined in his memo. The total cost would be \$33,768 with benefits, however, the net increase in cost is only \$18,000. Jean Ripa is recommending that the Board consider filling the position with two .49 FTE positions, primarily because the cost is less and the department would actually end up with more staff time. Roger expressed his concern over staying with less than half time support positions in the program. There needs to be stability in staffing under these circumstances. By offering .75 FTE, with benefits, he can hire, and more likely retain, a solid employee which will greatly add to the services provided by the department. Therefore, he would recommend the .75 FTE proposal.

Commissioner Bernhard has a concern with creating a position around an existing employee. She would rather start with the two .49 employees. She would rather see the savings from not paying benefits, go into services themselves. Discussion was held on the increased revenue coming in from field licenses and late fees, which is over double from last year at this time. Roger feels that by not offering benefits, the motivation is much less for retention.

Commissioner Corsiglia tends to agree with Roger, that this might be the right time to go with the .75 position and see how it works. He questions why this was approved in the budget and now it's going in reverse. There was a budget note to look at this later to see if the revenue projections are being met.

Jean Ripa commented on the part time issue. Part time employees are being paid up to \$15 per hour which is a good family wage job. Further, there are a number of people that are only looking for part time work. She doesn't want the perception that part time people are not reliable.

After discussion, this matter was held over to the 8/22/06 work session to allow Commissioner Hyde to comment.

EXERCISE PROGRAM:

Jean Ripa, Human Resources, approached the Board regarding an exercise program. The 10,000 Step program is now up and running. There has been discussions about getting an exercise room at the Courthouse, however that isn't feasible, so the Health Benefits Committee is looking at other ways to keep the employees motivated and exercising. She spoke with Bill Potter about this and came up with the idea that if we could get a donation of good, solid treadmills or stationary bikes, there are spaces around the courthouse, i.e. the Riverview meeting room, break room, and others that can be used to put this equipment. Employees could use the equipment during their breaks and lunches. There is the issue of liability. She checked with SAIF and it just needs to be made very clear that this is volunteer program. She would notify employees of this and post it on the machines.

Commissioner Corsiglia also brought up this issue of having a room available for employees who may need a place to rest for whatever reason. They may live 20-30 miles away and don't want to go all the way home. If an employee has a headache and just needs a quiet place to lay down for awhile, there isn't any place to do that. Commissioner Corsiglia would like to see both of these issues pursued. Jean agreed and has been asked about this by a number of employees.

Jean feels there are probably employees that have treadmills in their garages that they want to get rid of and can be donated to the county. She will look further into the liability protection and work with Bill Potter on spaces. Bill has mentioned his concern with maintaining the equipment and doesn't want to see this become an issue. Therefore, the equipment must be in good working order when it comes in and, when it breaks down, throw it out. Bill also feels that, if after 6 months, the equipment is not being used, get rid of it. The Board agreed and authorized Jean to move forward with both issues.

PAY PHONES IN COURTHOUSE:

Bill Potter, General Services, addressed the pay phones in the courthouse. Quest is no longer in the pay phone business and a new company is servicing them. We pay \$1,440 per year for both phones, and the revenue last year was approximately \$90. The phones are costing more to maintain than the revenue received. He would recommend that the pay phones be removed and a courtesy phone, off the county system, be made available to the public. There would be no long distance service available on that phone. A person would have the option of using their credit card or call collect. He would site the courtesy phone where the existing pay phones are now. The Board agreed.

MUSEUM STORAGE:

Bill understands there has been a settlement on the museum issue and as of August, the county is paying the storage costs, at about \$2,500 per year. These are items that used to be at the Road Department before the remodel because they weren't valuable enough to put in the museum. He has gone through this stuff and, quite frankly, 80% is junk. Commissioner Corsiglia asked Bill if the items could be moved down to the old jail area until the sorting process is complete. That would at least relieve the \$2,500 annual storage cost. Bill stated that storage space for the courthouse is tight

already and his fear is that if these items are placed down there, they will never be moved out. John Knight recommends that everything be retained for the time being until the inventory is complete. After discussion, it was decided that the Board, John Knight and Bill Potter visit the storage area before making a decision on what to do with the items.

LAW ENFORCEMENT LEVY:

Present for discussion were Phil Derby, Gerry Simmons and Ruth Baker. Phil is here today on behalf of the "Citizens for a Safe Community" to place a Law Enforcement Levy on the November ballot. They are asking for the same amount as the last levy request - \$.39 per \$1,000. Phil went over what this levy will cover. He noted that even with this levy, the number of deputies will still be under what is recommended. Commissioner Corsiglia asked who would respond if the County didn't have any patrol deputies. Phil is unsure because the State Police are short handed also. After discussion, John stated that he has prepared the Order calling for an election, the ballot title, a Resolution for maintaining the funding for law enforcement purposes and the explanatory statement. Ruth has reviewed it and given him the numbers on the amount expected to be raised at the \$.39 rate. He has not received any comments back on the wording on any of that paperwork. He would like to have some feedback on this to make sure it's right and that someone else has read it. The deadline to get the levy on the ballot is 9/7/06. It was suggested that it be taken to the committee on Thursday to have them review it before that Board takes any action.

ASBURY ACRES:

Peggy Crisp, 34571 Millard Road, Warren: She has received a letter from Irene Barnes, Ms. Asbury's daughter, who informed her that Ms. Asbury broke her hip and can no longer stay in her home. Peggy expressed her disappointment with Commissioner Bernhard, Commissioner Hyde and the Fairgrounds. Commissioner Corsiglia has helped her more than anyone of you in getting Asbury Park done for this lady. Irene has a grandson who is a scout and working on his eagle project and would like to do something at Asbury Park in the picnic area. This has to be done before his 18th birthday. Irene stated in her letter that the county is giving him the runaround on this. Peggy is very disappointed that the county will not help this boy get his eagle scout badge on his grandfathers property. Commissioner Bernhard stated that there is a scout working on a project out there and Dave Hill is helping coordinate that. She also stated that the wetland mitigation issues and things are moving forward, however slowly, there is just no money. Peggy questioned why there is money for the CZ Trail and not Asbury Park. Commissioner Corsiglia understands what Peggy is trying to say and his discomfort in this is the big thrust for the linear trail, but not for Asbury Park. He is disappointed as well and feels the best solution may be to give the property back to the Asbury's. Today, he would vote that way but hopefully this can all be resolved within the next

year. This could be a great thing for both the Fair and the Parks. Commissioner Bernhard just wanted to add that Dave Hill and the Parks Committee has worked very hard trying to deal with this issue and have done a good job trying to get through this in the most economical way possible. Peggy stated that Commissioner Hyde promised her two years ago that he would go to Salem for some funding and she is still waiting. It's been 20 years and something just needs to be done, either make the improvements or give the property back.

Tammy Maygra, Cannan Road, Deer Island: Tammy feels that Peggy pretty much summed it up for Asbury Acres. She knows there was a lot of money available for parks and Asbury Acres hasn't seen any of it and it's a slap in the face.

Another point she would like to make is on the Animal Control position. She feels that it's a very petty of Commissioner Bernhard to deny someone good wages and benefits. The Board has good benefits. Commissioner Bernhard stated that she is only trying to do the best with the dollars available. Tammy feels the important part of this issue is that the Board needs to start listening to the people that are actually doing the work. Robert Crain does a great job for the county has brought money in and Tammy is not happy with the fighting over someone's benefits.

On another subject, Tammy asked if the septic system at the Fairgrounds has been fixed. The answer is no, it has not been fixed. Tammy has complained about this for years and it just keeps getting pushed under the carpet. This is a ground water contamination issue and the county can be held liable for those types of infractions. She wants the Board to know this has still not be fixed.

Her last issue is the conversation for an exercise room. This is an asinine idea - there are more important things going on in this county than worrying about the employees getting exercise. This is not a private company, it is a government building and not an exercise club for employees. Commissioner Corsiglia explained that this would not be done on work time, the county would just be providing the employees with an opportunity for exercising during their breaks or lunches. This may enhance their work life and maybe make it a better place to work. This is done at a lot of other places. He stressed it is not an exercise room, only a treadmill available for employees. Tammy again expressed her feelings that this is a dumb idea and there are more important things to do than this. Commissioner Corsiglia is constantly hearing about Columbia County, but not the other districts that are funded by public dollars. He felt that if Tammy did a study on every position that is funded by public dollars, she would find that the Commissioners and department head jobs fall at about 30 or 40 down on the list. The benefits we offer are as frugal as the salaries.

Thelma Bonar, Way Lane, Warren: She agrees with having an exercise program for the employees and even has a brand new piece of equipment she would sell to the county. As for Asbury Acres, she feels it should be developed. It was designated as a park to get the funding. Regarding the animal control issue, she feels that Robert Crain is doing a great job. The County is going to lose him because of the bureaucracy. He needs help out there. Commissioner Corsiglia explained that a decision was not made today because Commissioner Bernhard feels one way, he feels the other, so we need to discuss it again when Commissioner Hyde is present. She also wanted to comment on the museum artifacts and suggested the museum be housed at the Fairgrounds. The Board felt that was something to check into. Her final comment is that Roger needs help out there to do his job.

Georgia Kuiper, 34403 Sykes Road, St. Helens: She has said for years that for every person that comes before the Board, there are ten more that can't be here. As for Asbury Acres, there was a \$150,000 grant that was lost. The plan presented to the neighbors and community was an RV park. The people did extensive research on that, to the point of being threatened with arrest, showing why an RV park should not be sited at Asbury Acres. Commissioner Corsiglia stated there is a diversity of opinions on that site and stated that he would like to see the park to be. His only stipulation is

that kids play there because that is what the Asburry's wanted. Again, he doesn't feel that this project has been given enough thrust. Commissioner Bernhard stated that the mitigation plan has been submitted. Georgia would rather see the County give it back to the Asburry's if there can't be a park developed. She was also at the meeting where Commissioner Hyde stated that there was grant dollars available and he would help get it, but will speak to that another day when he is present.

Regarding this idea about an exercise area, there are three gyms in the area where the employees can go to. She does however agree with a rest area and believes it may even be law that that is available. But the idea of an exercise room is ludicrous. Commissioner Corsiglia stated this would not be a gym and feels this issue is being overplayed. Georgia stated she would make it her mission to let everyone know about this. She is appalled that this is even being considered at a time when there are money problems. The Board reiterated that this would not be a gym, simply a couple of treadmills and there would be no cost to the county. Georgia still objects to this idea because she feels it is an inappropriate use of the courthouse and the liability concern. There are facilities in the county for employees to use.

The Board recessed the meeting at 11:45 a.m. to allow the Board to visit the storage unit housing museum artifacts.

There was no Executive Session held.

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

Dated at St. Helens, Oregon this 8th day of August, 2006.

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

Board Secretary:

By: _____

Jan Greenhalgh

By: _____

Anthony Hyde, Commissioner