

COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BOARD MEETING

WORK SESSION MINUTES

April 28, 2009

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

COLUMBIA RIVER RAIL CORRIDOR STUDY REVIEW:

Janet Wright came before the Board with Deb Redman and Kurt Reichelt of HDR, Inc. to present the Columbia River Rail Corridor Study. They have been working on this study for about 8 months. Once approved by the Board, they can move forward with looking for funding to update the rail corridor.

To recap, Deb explained that they held extensive stakeholder interviews to identify the concerns. They did an inventory of the crossings. Over the last couple of months, they took all this information and identify a first cut at an improvements list that focused on the primary issues of safety, mobility, economic development and future transit capacity. They also identified cost estimates for some of those improvements, such as signalization on the tracks to bridge repair in Clatsop County. After some additional input from the different jurisdictions, they looked at how to best prioritize within communities, those identified improvements. About 6 weeks ago, Deb sent each community a copy of the draft study for their final buy-in. That is what is now before the Board. The next step would be to have the Commissioner's formally approve the plan.

The Board is very pleased with the product and how HDR has worked with the public in obtaining the information. However, the Board would like to have another week or so to review the study before taking any action.

UPDATE ON COLPAC:

Mary McArthur, COLPAC, came before the Board to provide some background and an update on COLPAC and what it is they do. COLPAC is the economic development district. They work with EDA to get federal funding to northwest Oregon. They get money through their partnership planning grant, which is an annual \$50,000, along with other grants such as the EDA Federal Disaster Grant. Their first one was \$125,000 of which the bulk of it went for work in Vernonia. They are getting a second one in the amount of \$200,000, some to fund Bill Haack in Vernonia and

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also picked up an additional \$60,000 to expand the LIDAR mapping already taking place in northwest Oregon. COLPAC is basically the keeper of the regional economic development strategies, i.e., the Needs and Issues projects, the stimulus projects, etc. Because Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook and western Washington counties share similar geography, demographics, industries and community development needs, they joined together as a region in the early 1990's. They address and coordinate the region's economic and community development activities and specific organization have been established with membership from all four counties. Sister organizations include the Northwest Oregon Economic Alliance, the NW Oregon Area Commission on Transportation and the NW Oregon Workforce Investment Board, all with specific goals and priorities.

Mary then addressed the LIDAR project. A consortium of four partnership, COLPAC, ODOT, DLCD and NW Natural Gas, have agreed to collect LIDAR data over approximately 1,540 square miles in NW Oregon. The \$770,000 data collection effort will involve aerial surveys of all the hillsides, floodplains, watersheds and state highway corridors and quality review of the rough data for errors and needed amendments.

COLPAC has funded \$60,000 towards Phase 1. A second, unfunded phase, is data analysis and mapping of the data to identify historic flood and erosion patterns.

Commissioner Hyde explained how the LIDAR system works, it's basically a laser shot from a plane, giving surface details and information through water, trees, houses, etc.. He feels the timing is good on this because he has a regional FEMA meeting next week in Alaska, the topic being prepared for emergencies.

The discussion then moved to the issue of creating a County Economic Development Commission. All five cities have their individual economic development committees, however, they should be grouped together and coordinated. Hyde stated there is funding left over from a project that was funded by NOEA of about \$70,000.

Those funds could be used for hiring a staff person to oversee a county wide ED committee. Hyde suggested there be a group meeting consisting of all the stakeholders to see what they want. There will need to be specifics for this committee and a mission statement. Janet will work on setting a date for a facilitated meeting and check with the Board for availability. Fisher feels there should be a definite plan and objective, with an outcome in mind when going into that meeting. Mary suggested the meeting include what type of person the group is looking for and who will pay for it. After more discussion, it was determined that the first goal is to determine if the stakeholders even want to include themselves on this committee and if they want to hire someone.

EXECUTIVE SESSION UNDER ORS 192.660(2)(d) - BARGAINING:

The Board recessed the regular session to go into Executive Session as allowed under ORS 192.660(2)(d). Upon coming out of Executive Session, Commissioner Hyde moved and Commissioner Fisher seconded to authorize Department Heads to implement furloughs of up to an equivalent of .85 FTE without affecting insurance and/or leave benefits, effective fiscal year 2009-2010. The motion carried unanimously.

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

Dated at St. Helens, Oregon this 28th day of April, 2009.

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: _____

Rita Bernhard, Chair

By: _____

Anthony Hyde, Commissioner

Recording Secretary:

By: _____

By: _____

Earl Fisher, Commissioner

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Jan Greenhalgh, Board Secretary