

COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
BOARD MEETING

WORK SESSION MINUTES

January 26, 2010

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners met in a regularly scheduled work session at 10:00 a.m. with Commissioner Anthony Hyde, Commissioner Earl Fisher and Commissioner Rita Bernhard, together with Sarah Hanson, County Counsel, and Jan Greenhalgh Board Secretary.

Commissioner Hyde called the meeting to order.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR PROCEDURE:

Jean presented the Board with a questionnaire that she asked be used during the interviews for the Emergency Management Director. The Board will take some time to review this first.

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

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, no decisions were made by the Board.

PAYMENT TO NW NATURAL GAS:

Jennifer Cueller came before the Board to address payment to NW Natural Gas. As the Board is aware, NW Natural has filed a lawsuit for a refund of a portion of their property taxes. That lawsuit is now before the Supreme Court and a decision is pending. The amount of the tax is \$1,950,612, with 12% interest accruing monthly in the amount of \$24,000. By statute, the County is allowed to pay the refund at any time, prior to the court decision. Jennifer has \$3,073,224 in reserve for this refund should NW Natural prevail. To "stop the bleeding" in interest accrual, she is recommending that the Board authorize payment of the estimated tax refund in the amount of \$1,950,612, not including interest. After discussion, Commissioner Fisher moved and Commissioner Bernhard seconded to approve this recommendation and direct staff to prepare a Board order. The motion carried unanimously.

ORDINANCE FOR NON-PARTISAN COMMISSIONERS:

Sarah has reviewed the statutes and went over the options for adopting an ordinance to change the position of County Commissioner to a non-partisan position. She asked for a time frame on when the Board wants this done so that she can prepare the ordinance and, if it is the Board's intent, to schedule a public hearing. Commissioner Bernhard strongly suggests that a public hearing be held. Commissioner Fisher feels a hearing may not be necessary because, once the ordinance is adopted, it will be put on the ballot for the people to vote on. Personally, he would like to see this on the November 2010 ballot. Commissioner Hyde was indifferent on this issue of holding a public hearing, however, if Commissioner Bernhard strongly feels that we should, he would agree. After discussion, the Board directed Sarah to prepare the ordinance for the first reading on February 24, 2010, and schedule to public hearing for March 31, 2010.

EXECUTIVE SESSION UNDER ORS 192.660(2)(h):

The Board recessed the regular session to go into Executive Session as allowed under ORS 192.660(2)(h). Upon coming out of Executive Session, no decisions were made by the Board.

UPDATE ON LAW LIBRARY:

Commissioner Bernhard asked for an update on the Law Library. She spoke with Maddy Sheehan about a stall in the process regarding the Bar Association. Sarah hasn't worked on this for some time, but there is an agreement that needs action. She will resume work on the agreement.

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

Dated at St. Helens, Oregon this 26<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2010.

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: \_\_\_\_\_

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Anthony Hyde, Chair

*Work Session Minutes*

*1/26/10*

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Recording Secretary:

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By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jan Greenhalgh, Board Secretary

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Earl Fisher, Commissioner

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Rita Bernhard, Commissioner