

COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BOARD MEETING

WORK SESSION MINUTES

September 14, 2010

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners met in a regularly scheduled work session at 10:00 a.m. with Commissioner Tony Hyde, Commissioner Earl Fisher and Commissioner Rita Bernhard, together with Robin McIntyre, Assistant County Counsel and Cynthia Zemaitis, Acting Board Secretary.

Commissioner Hyde called the meeting to order.

JIM TIERNEY, COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM – BROWNFIELDS SITES

Jim Tierney wanted to let the Board know about what he believes is a great opportunity which he learned of through a series of events which have taken place since the flood, such as attempting to find a new home for the senior center in Vernonia. State Parks is in the process of donating some land on Rose Avenue for the senior center which has had some environmental damage. CAT has been working with the State and are very close to getting a No Further Action decision. During the process, it was brought up that many properties in the County are contaminated, some of them near by. Mr. Tierney has brought a list from one DEQ database of the contaminated properties in the County. DEQ and OBDD have indicated there is a funding source from EPA where the city would receive \$200,000 to start clean-up; once its started, you can go back to the EPA for additional monies to clean up additional sites. However, the State has indicated there was a vendor that would help the County apply for grants of approximately \$1M to do clean-ups county-wide.

He is here to ask if the County would like to be the lead applicant in getting this grant, partnering with the cities that are effected. Mr. Tierney believes this is an opportunity that should be considered. The application is due by the middle of October. They have an engineering firm that's willing to put the application together, but the question of who the applicant would be remains.

Commissioner Fisher asked what the up-front costs would be. Mr. Tierney indicated there are in-direct costs that could be an issue and not be covered. He thinks they may be looking at 5% administrative costs that wouldn't be covered, but believes they can look to donations. In-direct costs are space rent, telephone, that sort of costs. Mr. Tierney recommends the County hire the engineering firm to do the work for them, contracting out most of the in-direct costs. Commissioner Fisher is concerned about how much this would impact the County. Commissioner Bernhard is amazed by the number of potential sites in the County. Commissioner Bernhard has noticed there are a lot of large companies on the list and wonders if they

couldn't help to cover costs. Mr. Tierney stated that is possible. Commissioner Hyde wondered if its worth raising a red flag.

Mr. Tierney understands that the EPA, if cleaning up a site, wants the local government to have at least partial ownership of the site, so some arrangements would have to be made. Commissioner Hyde says the goal is to have developable land at the end of the day. Commissioner Bernhard says

citizens will complain that we have developable land that isn't being used, so why would we go to this expense? Mr. Tierney stated that many of the developable properties are not useable because of pollution problems.

Mr. Tierney stated that the County is the first place this has been presented. He believes we need to reach out to the potential players and ask them if they are interested in joining in. Commissioner Hyde felt that the Port's property is not useable because of the lack of infrastructure and pollution. Commissioner Hyde thinks the County needs to partner up with the Cities and the Port, and suggests that a column be added to the list for "zoning". Again, Commissioner Fisher wants to know what its going to cost the County. Mr. Tierney responds, potentially, nothing, and the County would end up with some valuable property. Commissioner Hyde indicated this could be really big for economic development in the long run. Commissioner Bernhard is a little concerned about asking the cities to kick in more money after recently asking them to assist in economic development, emergency management, and other things. Mr. Tierney indicated that, perhaps, the cities would be asked to contribute money, but right now CDBG and other funds are available. Commissioner Hyde suggested sending letters to each of the cities on the list and the Port asking for their support. Commissioner Fisher and Commissioner Bernhard agree that, if they proceed with this, they are going to have to contract out any legal or financial work that needs to be done.

Commissioner Hyde stated that he would like to give David Stocker this list and get him involved; this is a great economic development tool. Commissioner Fisher stated he could not support this if the County is on the hook for in-direct costs.

Mr. Tierney stated that the CAT and the County have to get to where they build a trusting relationship so that the County can rely on CAT to do most of the administrative work.

There was no Executive Session held.

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

Dated at St. Helens, Oregon this 14th day of September, 2010.

Work Session Minutes

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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: _____
Anthony Hyde, Chair

By: _____
Earl Fisher,

Commissioner

Recording Secretary:

By: _____
Cynthia Zemaitis, Acting Board Secretary

By: _____
Rita Bernhard, Commissioner