

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

STAFF MEETING MINUTES

November 13, 2013

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners met in scheduled session with Commissioner Henry Heimuller, Commissioner Anthony Hyde and Commissioner Earl Fisher.

Commissioner Heimuller called the meeting to order.

SHERIFF DICKERSON - JAIL SUMMIT:

Sheriff Dickerson was present to discuss details for the upcoming Jail Summit. This meeting is designed to present stakeholders with information on the jail's future and to give them an opportunity to ask questions. The meeting was set for Monday, November 25, 2013 from 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm at the Fairgrounds Pavilion. Jan will get notice out to the stakeholders.

SCHEDULE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS:

Jean Ripa discussed the process for the annual department head evaluations. She has prepared a list of questions the Board may/may not want to include on the evaluation form. After discussion, the Board decided to include the questions, understanding that they can be modified at any time. Jean was directed to work with Jan Greenhalgh to schedule 2-3 days on the Board's calendar in January/February 2014 for evaluations.

SECURITY OF COURTHOUSE DATA CENTER:

Jean reminded the Board of the issue related to the installation of the State Courts public use desks and terminals right outside the County's Data Center door. This creates a security hazard. The Board approved of Jean's proposal to work with

Maintenance to move the desks, even just a bit, to improve the situation. Jean noted that she had talked to Sue Hill, Trial Court Administrator, about this subject and Sue did not care where the desks were, as long as they had them. Commissioner Fisher also emphasized the need to get the server room moved. Jean reported that she was meeting with Facilities the following week to talk about that possibility.

UPDATE ON IT PROJECTS FOR 2014:

Jean updated the Board on several large IT projects that were in the works:

- Currently, IT is consumed with the work needed to install the network at the new EOC facility and ultimately recover all the many workstations and laptops in the existing EOC for the new network. Given that the current EOC could be activated at any time, IT cannot pull all of the equipment out at once, as it might do with another department, so the move will be a bit more challenging. This process will largely consume IT through the end of December.
- She has hired back Gloria Rice as a temporary worker to help with the conversion of County email to a web based system. Otherwise, it would be near impossible at the current staffing level to accomplish this important project. She will be back in touch with the Board when she has more details on this.
- Early next year, IT will be taking on the large and unpleasant project of upgrading all workstations' operating system to Windows 7. This is required because Microsoft is ending support for Windows XP, the last standard operating system. Without security patches being developed, the County's system will be at risk. This is very time consuming, as each of the County's 200+ workstations will need hands on work, and will be very difficult as many items (hardware and software) won't be readily compatible with Windows 7. Jean responded to Commissioner Heimuller's question as to why we are not moving to Windows 8 by explaining that Windows 8 is not considered a business friendly operating system and has received very poor reviews.

MUSEUM VOLUNTEER:

Jean addressed an item not on the agenda. She has been working with Les Watters on several issues related to the Museum Association. One of these is to get the historical maps, which are still County property, scanned digitally. Les is willing to sign on as a County volunteer and scan the maps, which gives the County a digital copy. Jean asked the Board if they would be willing to waive the fees indicated to give a copy of those digital files to the Museum Association. The Board indicated they would be so willing. Jean said she would come back when the project was actually done with a formal request to waive the fees.

PUBLIC HEALTH ADMINISTRATOR:

Jean then presented the Board with a draft letter to Sherrie Ford whom the Board will be appointing to serve as the .1 FTE Public Health Administrator, in order to comply with the State's ruling that this position must be employed by the County. The Board, along with Sarah Hanson and Jennifer Cuellar, discussed the issue in depth as well as the contract with the Foundation regarding the provision of public health services. The Board directed Jean to set up an informal interview with Sherrie for the 11/27 meeting. Sarah presented a letter addressed to the Oregon Health Authority requesting authorization to hire the administrator at less than full time. After review, Commissioner Hyde moved and Commissioner Fisher seconded to approve the letter.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT/LAND SALES:

Cynthia Zemaitis and Jennifer Cuellar discussed the status of surplus real properties. We are holding on to an estimated 67 properties that may be considered surplus, and our costs at maintaining those properties continues to increase year-by-year. Cynthia recommended that we move toward holding an auction. Commissioner Hyde expressed concern that a hard look needs to be taken at each of the properties before

they are formally declared surplus to ensure there are none that the County would benefit from keeping. After general discussion, it was agreed that Cynthia would seek to obtain at least three bids from property appraisers or real estate agents, after checking with Sue Martin to determine who would best give us the information we need. Before a contractor is chosen, the Board will want to meet with him/her to set the parameters of the scope of work.

There was also discussion about current squatters on County property. Cynthia was directed to begin the ejectment proceedings with a Notice to Vacate.

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 action was taken by the Board.

IGA WITH CITY OF VERNONIA FOR FEMA TRAILER:

Commissioner Fisher moved and Commissioner Hyde seconded to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Vernonia for the FEMA Trailer. The motion carried unanimously.

AGREEMENT WITH CITY OF ST. HELENS FOR TREE STAND IN PLAZA:

Commissioner Fisher moved and Commissioner Hyde seconded to approve the License and Maintenance Agreement with the City of St. Helens for permanent placement of a Christmas tree stand in the Courthouse Plaza. The motion carried unanimously.

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

The Board recessed their regular session to go into Executive Session as allowed under

ORS 192.660(2)(h). Upon coming out of Executive Session, no action was taken by the Board.

PERSONNEL ACTION FOR JAN KENNA:

After a brief discussion, Commissioner Hyde moved and Commissioner Fisher seconded to approve the Personnel Action for Jan Kenna, to increase her position to .17 FTE, effective 11/1/13 and authorize the Chair to sign. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was recessed at 4:30 p.m. to allow the Board to attend the Annual AOC Conference in Eugene, November 18-22, 2013. The Board reconvened again on Monday, November 25, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. with all present.

Commissioner Heimuller called the meeting back to order.

JAIL SUMMIT BRIEFING:

Sheriff Dickerson came before the Board again to narrow down the details for the Jail Summit to be held tonight at the Fairground Pavilion at 6:30 p.m. This will be a public meeting and not intended for public comments.

COMMENTS ON PROCEDURE FOR PROPERTY TAX COLLECTION:

The Board met with Jennifer Cuellar, Finance Director, regarding the way things were handled on Friday, November 15th. As this was a furlough day, there were no staff available to take property tax payments and the deadline was not extended to the following Monday. General discussion held with no action taken.

The Board again recessed the meeting at 12:00 noon. The meeting reconvened on

Monday, November 25, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. at the Columbia County Fairgrounds Pavilion to participate in the Jail Operations Summit.

Commissioner Heimuller called the meeting back to order.

JAIL OPERATIONS SUMMIT:

Present for discussion were: Commissioner Heimuller, Commissioner Hyde, Commissioner Fisher, Sheriff Dickerson, Andy Moyer, Julie Metz, Judge Wally Thompson, Susan Conn, Keith Locke (SH), Jon Ellis (SH), Judge Cindy Phillips, DA Steve Atchison, OSP Yvette Shephard, Scappoose Officer Norm Miller, Scappoose Mayor Scott Burge, Scappoose Judge Nicholas Wood, Clatskanie Mayor Diane Pohl, Walt Pesterfield, Judge Martwick, Judge Grant, Columbia City Mayor Cheryl Young, and Board Office Administrator Jan Greenhalgh.

Commissioner Heimuller stated that this meeting is being held for the sole purpose of bringing together the cities and the law enforcement agencies to look at the issues facing the Columbia County Jail as a result of the defeated operating levy. Commissioner Hyde reiterated that tonight is for stakeholder discussion, town hall meetings will be scheduled in the very near future to hear from the public.

Sheriff Dickerson gave a power point presentation on the "Jail in Crisis". It gave some statistical information on what it takes to run the Jail, increasing costs, reductions in revenue and staffing, liability issues and safety concerns. Basically, if there is no funding, the Jail can't operate. The two options presented were 1) transition to local lockup or 2) total Jail closure and rent beds outside the county, which is the only affordable option at this time.

Commissioner Hyde reviewed the General Fund financial analysis which shows the growing costs of 6% per year and the loss of revenue. Even if the cities were to pay for their own inmates, it wouldn't generate enough revenue. He also explained why the \$3

million from PGE isn't an option as it goes to the Urban Renewal District to pay the debt for the infrastructure improvements within the district. After that debt is paid, then the county can use those dollars.

Scappoose Mayor Scott Burge asked for clarification on bed space for the cities if the Jail were to close. They will need to budget accordingly because he believes it would more than \$100,000 if the cities have to pay for bed space.

Judge Grant commented that the courts are seeing defendants not showing up for court because they know there are no consequences. If they go to jail, they know they're going to be released.

Steve Atchison asked about the cost of transporting inmates. Commissioner Hyde stated that Clatsop County has no jail and can't afford to build one, so they transport their prisoners to Tillamook. The Board has talked about co-opting with Clatsop County but their Sheriff is not interested because he wants his own jail.

Commissioner Fisher asked about the impacts to Community Corrections if the Jail closes. Walt Pesterfield felt it would be devastating. There are convicted prisoners that need jail time and we have to have the jail option as a wakeup tool. Most of the inmates know that they won't serve their full time and will get released early. This in turn effects their work crew because they know if they don't show up for work, they just go to jail and then get released.

Judge Grant would assume that the Drug Court would go away because without sanctions for failing UA's, what's would be the point.

The effects to the District Attorney's office would be a lot of work - a warrant is issued, the person is arrested, they're released from jail, they don't show up for court, get a "failure to appear", another warrant, arrested again, released, no show - a huge circle and a great deal of work.

Yvette Shephard, OSP, addressed the issue of transporting inmates. She is down to 3 people that work the road, so using for one for transport is not an option.

General discussion held on the issue of transporting inmates outside the county - the cost, time, lack of staff, etc. Even if the cities book inmates themselves, which is a possibility, they can't take them to another jail facility without an agreement.

Cheryl Young, Columbia City Mayor, stated firmly that she is adamantly opposed to "cite and release". Why waste the resources to arrest these people, just to let them go. Inmate health care is another issue and huge cost to the jail. We need legislation to get rid of that law. It's pretty sad that her kids and grandkids don't get as much as inmates do. She understands that people don't want to pay more taxes, but you get what you pay for and if we want the jail to remain open, we need to pay for it. She would suggest that, if the jail were to close, that the County consider using the facility as a public safety mall and have other law enforcement agencies rent space.

Scott agreed that the health care costs are an issue. The county should be able to bill back the inmates personal insurance company for any charges. Perhaps everyone could work together to encourage our legislators to change that federal law.

Sheriff Dickerson brought up the "postcard" policy he instituted at the jail to save time for the staff who has to go through all of the mail. A national group sued the county and we lost because we were not giving our inmates adequate paper and taking away their free speech rights. Commissioner Heimuller agreed with the health care costs. It can be very expensive when an inmate is on kidney dialysis or other serious illnesses. The Sheriff stated that they furlough those inmates when possible to avoid having to pay those costs. Scott felt we should not have to furlough them, again, we should be able to bill their insurance. If he was given some hard figures on those costs, he will take this issue to the Oregon Mayors Association for discussion. We all need to work together with our legislators, AOC, LOC and others because this is not only costing the county, it's costing the community.

Keith Locke felt that enough discussion has been held on the negative effects of closing the jail, now we need to discuss how to keep it up and running.

Judge Cindy Phillips asked what inmates are charged per night. Sheriff Dickerson stated that inmates are charged \$10 per night and although the department tries to collect that fee, they're not always successful. Judge Phillips feel that the collection efforts needs to be stepped up. There are a lot of people that will lose their jobs with this closure.

Diane Pohl, Clatskanie Mayor, explained that north county has long been concerned with the Jail closure because it effects economic development. If the Jail closes, no one will want to move here and that jeopardizes our growth. She believes the solution is to go out for another levy. We're all here for a common problems and we need to work together. More attention needs to be made in connecting with the public, more public relations. Maybe if enough are victimized, they will begin to listen. She asked if the Jail can't remain open, will those dollars still be budgeted? Commissioner Hyde responded that the funding would still be needed to house our inmates in another county, so yes, there would still be a budget

The group took a short break from 8:00 pm to 8:15 pm and reconvened.

The group then focused on some options.

Cindy Phillips believes it's always good to get difference ideas but personally, she feels that going out for another levy is about the only option out there.

Cheryl Young suggests that, should the Jail close, the building be utilized as a "public safety mall" with space rented out to other law enforcement agencies. She is not opposed to another levy, but that's costly. We need to do more public relations with the costs.

Jon Ellis asked what happens if the Jail closes, what would be the start up costs if and when it were to reopen. Sheriff Dickerson doesn't have the specifics, but it would be a lot of money and about be about 1-1/2 years after a levy was passed. Andy Moyer added that all of the contracts, i.e. food, phones, laundry, etc., would also have to be renegotiated.

Scott Burge - going back to the discussion about the cities not paying for their inmates - maybe we need to have those discussion and the cities should start budgeting for their own bed space. The deal made years ago not to, is no longer a good choice. This may be tough for the city budgets but it needs to be looked at and considered.

Diane Pohl understands what Scott is saying but over 90% of the Clatskanie budget already goes to their police department. Columbia City faces the same thing. Basically, if they could pay for bed space, they would, but they can't. She asked if the County could find some bridge money to keep the Jail open until a solution is found?

Wally Thompson commented that it is the duty of a Judge to dispense justice, not generate revenue. He believes he has a productive court because the staff is trained and they have been creative in being efficient. The Jail issue will definitely be a challenge and we all need to work together and think outside the box.

Cheryl Young feels that a solution may be to save a dollar here and there. If we need to double what the general funds pays toward the Jail, where else can funding be cut, what other services can people live without. Commissioner Heimuller explained that the County has already established 26 furlough days and had to lay off some staff. No where else to cut.

Cheryl asked the Sheriff about the high cost of overtime. If Jeff took the deputies off the road and put them in the Jail, it would eliminate the overtime and staff the Jail. Jeff explained that he has already taken half the patrol deputies off the road but not fair to the public to eliminate all patrol deputies. Further, they are the only officers that do

death calls. They simply cannot go down any further. They will still need some core staff even if the Jail were to close.

Diane Pohl thanked the Board for bringing everyone together because this is all of our problem and she is on board with helping to figure it out.

Commissioner Heimuller asked those present when the next meeting should be held and should it be another stakeholder meeting or move right into a town hall meeting open for public comment.

Scott agrees the sooner the better for another meeting. He would like to see some information on what other counties are facing and how they are handling it.

Commissioner Heimuller wanted to comment that, before this last levy, the Board looked hard at the original ballot measure to build the Jail. The thought at the time was, get the Jail built, wait a few years, then go out for an operating levy. That didn't happen until now (many years later) and as we all know, it failed. Moving forward, we need to get the message out to the public the effects of having no Jail.

Commissioner Hyde stated that before he would support another levy, he would want to hear from the public on what they want.

Scott suggested that perhaps the cities determine their individual needs for bed space, maybe Scappoose needs only 2 bed for the entire year, maybe Rainier has a different need, so on. Also, we need to lay out all the issues to the public to help overcome the objections. We can't be afraid to throw it all on the table. He mentioned that the Scappoose School Levy passed in 2008, but it took a very concerted, local effort to get that passed.

Jon would suggest that each city provide a consistent gauge to determine what the value of the Jail actually is to each city.

Cheryl added that she is willing to have a town hall meeting, but noted that few people show up for them. It's not until after something is done, that people respond.

Julie Metz suggested the need to get the message out to all demographics, i.e. young, old, rural, urban. The use of social media could be very beneficial.

There was general group discussion on when to hold the next meeting, if it should be a stakeholder meeting or town hall, the date/time/place. It was also suggested that this topic be discussed at all of the local public safety committee meetings, city council meetings, grange halls and by social media.

After discussion, it was determined that the next meeting will allow for public testimony. Sheriff Dickerson will survey this group to get a date/time/place and get that information out to all.

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

Dated at St. Helens, Oregon this 13th day of November, 2013.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

By:_____

Henry Heimuller,

Chair

By:_____

Staff Meeting Minutes

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Anthony Hyde, Commissioner

By: _____

Earl Fisher, Commissioner

By: _____

Jan Greenhalgh

Board Office Administrator