

COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BOARD MEETING

WORK SESSION MINUTES

June 24, 2020

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners met in scheduled session with Commissioner Alex Tardif, Commissioner Margaret Magruder, and Commissioner Henry Heimuller.

Board Discussion:

The Board discussed the AOC weekly call with Leah Horner from the Governor's Office and other representatives from their AOC District. Commissioner Magruder will contact Sarah Gamaney at AOC and let her know which of the Columbia County Commissioners will be attending which meetings.

The Wednesday 07.01.2020 Board meeting and work session has been canceled.

Equal Pay Analysis:

Jean Ripa presented the Equal Pay Analysis for Columbia County, Oregon provided by Evergreen Solutions, LLC This type of analysis, while not required, is advisable given the provisions of Oregon's Equal Pay Act. The Act allows employers an affirmative defense against a claim of discriminatory pay practices, if the employer has conducted an Equal Pay Analysis within the prior three years.

Jean was very pleased to notify the Board that the Analysis found that the County's pay structure does not demonstrate any discriminatory structure. Our highly structured pay system (based on assigned salary ranges and step progression) is highly defensible.

Guidelines for Reopening County Offices:

Jean Ripa HR Director presented the Guidelines for Reopening. After discussion, Commissioner Magruder moved to support the Guidelines for Reopening County Offices, Commissioner Heimuller seconded. Discussion was held on the title. Jean will change the title as amended to Guidelines for Reopening County Offices during COVID 19. The motion carried unanimously

Cost of Living:

Commissioner Magruder moved to Direct Human Resources to postpone processing cost of living adjustments currently budgeted for most non-represented staff due to concerns over the effect of COVID 19 on the County's revenue and the pending salary survey. Commissioner Heimuller seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

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Intra Fund Loan:

Sarah Hanson, County Counsel explained that Resolution 63-2020 had errors. Commissioner Magruder moved to recind Resolution 63-2020 as presented in the 06.24.2020 Board meeting, Commissioner Heimuller seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Magruder moved to approve Resolution 64-2020 Commissioner Heimuller seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Magruder moved to approve Resolution 63-2020 as presented with corrections, Commissioner Heimuller seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Lawrence Road Gate:

Mike Russell, Public Works Director with Tristan Wood, Public Works Assistant Director, and Robin McIntyre Sr. Assistant County Counsel updated the Board on the status of the issues associated with Lawrence Road. Currently, there is a gate at the end of the paved section of Lawrence Road that was constructed by Mr. January and meets Public Works standards for such a structure. Since the road is now considered a County road, we need to formally authorize the presence of the gate under a permit and ensure that the insurance requirements are met and maintained.

In order to formally establish a private gate on a County road, the Board will need to adopt a Board Order to that effect. A draft Order is attached for your review. Staff is seeking directions on the Boards desires related to the location of the gate. The consensus is to move forward with a Board order with the gate in its current location.

Broadband:

Holly Miller provided a brief summary of a proposed private broadband project recently put before the Board by Mr. Joe Franell of Eastern Oregon Telecom (EOT). She discussed several opportunities this project could bring to the County, and made the following general recommendations:

- The board continue to facilitate communication between Western Oregon Electric Cooperative (WOEC) and EOT as necessary, to ensure that WOEC is aware of the community needs and potential benefits of a broadband project in Vernonia.
- Ensure that the Vernonia school district is aware of this potential project, and is given the opportunity to support it by providing geographic data showing the dispersion of students experiencing distance learning challenges due to a lack of broadband, as well as locations of school facilities.
- Provide EOT with a letter of support, signed by the Board, for their grant application.
- Discuss the potential with EOT for including County owned fiber in their fiber run.
- Maintain communication with EOT and observe the project.

The Board asked that Ms. Miller work with County Counsel to draft a letter of support for the Board to sign, and that she work with Mr. Franell to discuss what options might be available for including County fiber in middle-mile areas of the project.

Commissioner Tardif asked County Counsel about the possibility of using CARES Act funding to cover the expense of middle-mile fiber run for the County. Robin McIntyre said she would need to look up the specifics of the Act to determine if the money could be spent on broadband infrastructure.

Commissioner Magruder indicated that she would follow up with the school district, to ensure they are aware of the opportunity and how they might support it.

Ms. Miller also talked to the Board about next steps on the County's broadband project. The consultant for the broadband feasibility study that was previously completed, indicated that the County should first look to create a Broadband Consortium. Some discussion was had regarding the suggestion of a regional consortium with other coastal counties, such as Tillamook and Clatsop. Holly suggested that the County might benefit from having both a more local consortium with other agencies such as cities, school districts, and those with anchor institutions, as well as that group participating in the broader regional consortium.

Ultimately, Commissioner Magruder indicated that she would follow up with the potential regional partners, and Ms. Miller will move forward with putting together a local stakeholder's consortium

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

None

With nothing further to come before this Board the meeting adjourned.

Dated this 24th day of June, 2020

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

By: _____
Jacyn Normine

Board Office Administrator

By: _____
Alex Tardif, Chair

By: _____
Margaret Magruder, Commissioner

By: _____
Henry Heimuller, Commissioner