

COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
EMERGENCY BOARD MEETING
MINUTES

January 12, 2004

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners held an emergency meeting on Monday, January 12, 2004 at 11:00 a.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room, Room 308, Columbia County Courthouse, 230 Strand St., St. Helens, Oregon. Present were Commissioner Rita Bernhard, Commissioner Anthony Hyde and Commissioner Joe Corsiglia, together with John Knight, County Counsel and Jan Greenhalgh, Board Secretary.

Commissioner Bernhard called the meeting to order and led the flag salute.

Commissioner Bernhard explained that the purpose of this meeting is to consider declaring an emergency. John Clouse made some contacts on Friday and there is a possibility of obtaining some funding to help cover some costs associated with the recent snow/ice storm. Commissioner Bernhard spoke with Ray Naff of the Governors office who stated that the Governor would not be declaring an emergency outright, however, if local governments did declare an emergency, he would consider it. There have been a lot of expenditures caused by the storm.

Erin Clodfelter, Road Department, spoke with Terry Miller and Kelly Lundberg to obtain an estimate of the costs involved. There is approximately \$20,000 in overtime alone, which is a low figure. That equates to approximately 50 hours per employee. This does not include any other costs.

Commissioner Bernhard stated that, when the snow melts, there is a possibility of flooding which could increase expenses. Terry Miller also expressed his concerns with what will happen during the thaw. The slide area near Bonnie Falls is a concern. She stated that if an emergency is declared, all the paperwork would need to be in order to apply for any funding.

Terry stated there are more expenses than in just overtime, i.e., equipment maintenance, snow removal, chains, etc.

Brian Little, City of St. Helens, stated that he doesn't have the total amount of overtime hours yet for the City of St. Helens, however, there will be significant overtime hours for the police and public works. He would encourage the County to declare an emergency to help with funding.

Terry Grice, Columbia River Fire & Rescue, Rainier, stated that they also had some additional costs associated with the storm in overtime and equipment. He noted that this is only January and the worst weather usually comes in February. He would just like to go on record that this storm has created additional expenses for the department.

Commissioner Hyde stated that the power companies also have some significant costs involved with this storm. His only reluctance in declaring this an emergency is what will happen if we have a real catastrophic event.

Ron Youngberg, Columbia River Fire & Rescue, St. Helens, stated that this storm has created a significant increase in expenses. He explained that we don't normally experience this type of weather in this region and they don't budget for it. He feels they were in a state of emergency. They were operating in an emergency situation. He is not sure if it's worth it to push for this funding, but there definitely were impacts.

Brian Little referred to the 12 hour wind storm in 1995 and the city was reimbursed for that. This recent snow/ice storm was more significant in duration.

Commissioner Hyde will be speaking with someone at Oregon Emergency Management (OEM) about this situation. This will certainly benchmark any future emergencies. For the record, the County received an e-mail from West Oregon Electric regarding their expenses which was way above what they had budgeted for, and they budget for these types of emergencies.

John Clouse reported on his conversations with Oregon Emergency Management. He originally spoke with Dave Castle at OEM on Thursday and, at that point, no one had declared an emergency. On Friday, the City of St. Helens inquired about declaring an emergency and John gave them the instructions on how to do that. When John spoke with OEM on Friday, he was informed that Coos County had sent in a declaration on Friday and other counties would be following. It now sounds like OEM is encouraging local governments to declare an emergency to see if there is enough costs involved to obtain some funding. John feels that, even if we don't get any funding, this is a good exercise.

Considering what John Clouse has heard back from OEM, Commissioner Hyde doesn't have a problem declaring an emergency. We already know there have been some significant impacts on the power companies.

Terry Miller explained that it may take a full time person just to complete the "Preliminary Damage Assessment" (PDA).

Ron Youngberg, explained that on Thursday the Mayor signed the declaration. The city wanted to time stamp the event. He supports a preliminary declaration by the County.

Commissioner Corsiglia feels it makes sense to approach the state with this, however, he does not feel the declaration should be too detailed at this time. If there is money out there to be had, we need to at least try.

John explained the process. An order would need to be drafted for Board approval. The Road Department started overtime on 12/29/03, which would be used as the effective date. With that, Commissioner Hyde moved and Commissioner Corsiglia seconded to declare an emergency with an effective date of December 29, 2003. The motion carried unanimously.

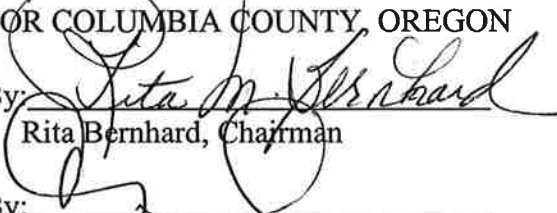
John Clouse was directed to contact all appropriate agencies in the county to obtain a list of storm related expenses.

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


Dated at St. Helens, Oregon this 12th day of January, 2004.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

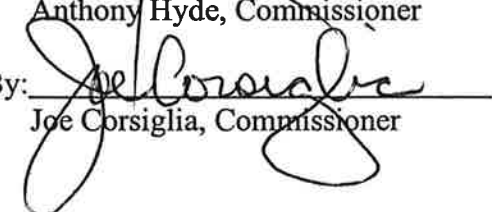
By:


Rita Bernhard, Chairman

By:



Anthony Hyde, Commissioner

By:


Joe Corsiglia, Commissioner

Recording Secretary:

By:


Jan Greenhalgh