

COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BOARD MEETING

WORK SESSION MINUTES

July 12, 2011

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 Heimuller, together with Sarah Hanson, County Counsel and Cynthia Zemaitis, Acting Board Secretary.

Commissioner Hyde called the meeting to order.

EXECUTIVE SESSION UNDER ORS 192.660(2)(f), EXEMPT RECORDS:

The Board recessed the regular session to go into Executive Session as allowed under ORS 192.660(209f). Upon coming out of executive session, the Board continued discussion on the PGE Strategic Investment Plan. David Stocker indicated that the agreement by PGE proposes to fund economic development projects for community service with money above and beyond. David has identified some projects that can use those extra monies and handed the Board a copy of his proposal for review.

David indicated that on Exhibits A and B there is an extra amount to Columbia County to further economic development. It is up to the Board to define which economic development purposes will benefit from these extra funds. Commissioner Hyde feels that the object is to roll it into the General Fund because everything we do is economic development. Commissioner Heimuller asked whether the list of goals and projects came out of the Economic Development committee. David stated that he prepared it while acting as the County Economic Development Director, but the discretion and authority always remains with the Board. Commissioner Hyde indicated that the amount would be \$700,000, roughly. David pointed out that it will change every year. Commissioner Heimuller indicated that, from what he is hearing, they are now focusing on putting all those funds into Economic Development when over the past months they have been discussing that the value of the SIP was in helping the County's budget crises. David stated that the Community Service fee, which is \$500,000 in the first year, would be pro-rated and distributed to the County and taxing districts. Commissioner Hyde agreed with Commissioner Heimuller in that it is not money coming to the General Fund.

Commissioner Fisher agrees with Commissioner Hyde's statement that the Board needs to take time to think this all through, to look at any unintended consequences, before making a decision. Commissioner Heimuller indicated that at the hearing tomorrow they will have to state that the decision on how to use this money will have to be determined after the Board has taken the time to consider all the options.

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

The Board recessed the regular session to go back into Executive Session as allowed under ORS 192.660(2)(d). Upon coming out of executive session, no action was taken by the Board.

The Board recessed the meeting and reconvened at 1:00 p.m. with all present.

JANET WRIGHT - TRANSIT UPDATE

Janet Wright came before the Board seeking approval of the settlement for the wrecked transit vehicle. She consulted with Beecher, who agreed that the settlement of \$17,500 is adequate. The Board agreed this was a fair settlement and will add approval to the Board's consent agenda.

JEFF DICKERSON - JAIL BEDS

Sheriff Dickerson presented the Board with a written proposal which contains 2 major cuts in services due to the fact that he does not have the staff to fill those positions. The highlight on the patrol side is looking at 9-1-1 as more of a resource in doing a better job in investigating. They just cannot respond with only 4 deputies and an average of 24 calls a day from the dispatch center.

Now, with one less deputy than they had last year, it is a losing proposition.

So now they have to focus on the more serious crimes and wanted to give the Board a chance to comment on that. The other piece is the jail bed reduction. Right now they are at 185 beds, including the 89 beds for the US Marshall. The goal is to get down to 150 beds, which will allow them to close down an entire Pod.

With medical costs skyrocketing, closing 40-to-50 beds would save considerable food costs.

The Sheriff indicated that the Judges mentioned that their recollection was that the jail was built 15 years ahead and, at that time, St. Helens only needed 10 beds. He would like to give the cities a chance to look at this. The County would limit the beds available and establish a criteria on who will be held.

If the cities want others held, they will have to pay for the beds, which will be difficult in this budget year. It has been decided to hold a summit, which the Judges favor, and advise the cities that next year they will need to budget for extra beds for misdemeanors, and the like. They will need to pay up front and the jail will hold the beds. It simply must be that way so they can plan to have adequate staff.

Commissioner Hyde mentioned a study that the County did in the late '90's before building the jail and what was needed, projecting it out 20 years. The Sheriff

Work Session Minutes

7/12/11

Page 3

would like to see that study.

The Sheriff requested that the Board review his proposal and let him know if they believe any changes need to be made. He wanted to be sure they are all on the same page.

Commissioner Hyde indicated that other agencies have the understanding that according to statutes that they cannot charge for beds. Sheriff Dickerson stated there is an Attorney General's opinion that says this, but the County's situation is different.

Commissioner Heimuller wanted to know the amount of monthly savings by reducing the beds to 150. The Sheriff stated he would have to look at that, as the savings which are reflected are for each year over the next 4 years. He will provide those numbers.

BETTY HUSER - FRIDAY RECORDINGS:

Betty needed clarification on what she can do on the Fridays that are not a furlough day. She needs to know, when the mail comes in Friday morning, whether she can process the mail. Commissioner Hyde stated we are closed those days so staff can catch up. On those non-furlough days, the counter is closed and the Clerk does not answer the phone. Commissioner Heimuller pointed out that the way the Order is written, the Clerk cannot certify anything on the non-furlough Fridays.

Sarah Hanson stated that the Clerk needs to tell her what she wants to do and Sarah can then amend the Order. Betty wants to record the mail that comes in on Friday morning, whether it comes regular, by Fed X or UPS.

Commissioner Fisher wanted to know whether Betty can totally operate the Clerk's office by herself. Betty indicated that she has done it in the past. She can do some, but if there is an election going on she would need help. Her part-time help, who isn't union, has been coming in on an as-needed basis.

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

Dated at St. Helens, Oregon this 12th day of July, 2011.

NOTE: A tape of this meeting is available for purchase by the public or interested parties.

Work Session Minutes

7/12/11

Page 4

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

By: _____

Anthony Hyde, Chair

By: _____

Earl Fisher, Commissioner

Recording Secretary:

By: _____

Henry Heimuller, Commissioner

By: _____
Cynthia Zemaitis, Acting Board Secretary