

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

In the Matter of Calling an Election to Consider)
the Columbia County Law Enforcement Local)
Option Tax)
_____)

ORDER NO. 37-03

WHEREAS, the old Columbia County Jail was built in 1969, was designed to hold a maximum of 39 prisoners, but was frequently overcrowded, and as a result arrestees often had to be released into the community after booking and before arraignment, prisoners had to be released into the community before their sentences were served, and there was constant fear of litigation over the unsatisfactory conditions in the jail; and

WHEREAS, on November 3, 1998, the electors of Columbia County approved a measure authorizing the issuance of bonds to finance the construction of a new County jail and related law enforcement facilities; and

WHEREAS, the new Columbia County Jail and Justice Facility was completed in January 2001, and is designed to house up to 195 prisoners; and

WHEREAS, the cost to operate the new jail and supervise a greater number of prisoners was unknown at the time the electors authorized its construction, but it was obvious that it would be much greater than operating and staffing the old jail; and

WHEREAS, even though it was known the cost of operating and staffing the jail would increase, the Sheriff and Board promised to run the new jail for at least a year without additional funding to determine the minimum amount of new funds which would be necessary; and

WHEREAS, in order to temporarily run the new, much larger facility, and supervise about four times as many inmates without additional funds, the Sheriff and Board promised to try to raise as much money as possible through bed rentals to agencies such as the Immigration and Naturalization Service, save money by shifting road deputies into the jail to assist the regular correctional deputies, and temporarily shift additional County General Fund money into the Sheriff's Office and Jail budgets; and

WHEREAS, the amount of revenue that can realistically be expected from bed rentals to other agencies has now been established; and

WHEREAS, after almost 19 months of operation without additional revenue for operating and staffing the new jail, the Sheriff and Board have determined how much additional revenue is necessary; and

WHEREAS, it will be very difficult to continue to run the new jail without adequate additional revenue to hire and train the staff necessary to supervise the inmates and operate the facility; and

WHEREAS, while the Columbia County Sheriff's Department has received additional funding in recent years for specialized services such as Sauvie Island Wildlife Refuge patrol, Marine patrol, and temporary Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grants, the number of road deputies available to respond to emergencies, burglaries, citizens' complaints and distress calls is only five; and

WHEREAS, because there are so few road deputies, response time to all but the most serious complaints is delayed, many calls go unanswered, and it is impossible to provide meaningful coverage to the entire County, jeopardizing the safety of the deputies and citizens of Columbia County; and

WHEREAS, the result of not having enough road deputies results in an excessive amount of overtime pay, compensatory time off, overruns in unused vacation time, difficulty in providing followup on cases, and is likely to lead eventually to poor morale and turnover; and

WHEREAS, the various demands for County General Fund monies have resulted in a decreased amount of cash carryover and a reduced contingency fund, and has increased the likelihood that layoffs may be necessary and that County services will have to be cut; and

WHEREAS, the Sheriff is requesting that the Board of County Commissioners refer to the voters the question of approving a local option tax at the rate of approximately \$0.68/\$1000.00 of assessed value for three years; and

WHEREAS, the proposed local option tax would raise approximately \$1,989,939 in 2003-2004, \$2,057,457 in 2004-2005, and \$2,126,988 in 2005-2006; and

WHEREAS, the estimated total outlay for such purpose over the three-year period would be approximately \$6,174,384; and

WHEREAS, the purpose for which the funds to be provided by the proposed local option tax are to be expended would be to hire an estimated four new corrections deputies, two new corrections technicians, nine new patrol deputies, two new road sergeants; provide uniforms and duty belts, vehicles and equipment cost, and miscellaneous costs for new hires; provide funds for the additional costs to operate the new jail and sheriff's office including, but not limited to, office supplies, operating supplies, food, laundry, jail clothes, medical costs, utilities, programs, equipment maintenance fees, facility repairs and maintenance; and for other law enforcement purposes as necessary; and

WHEREAS, none of the funds proposed to be raised by the local option tax are currently included in the proposed budget for fiscal year 2003-2004; and

WHEREAS, the period of time authorized by the electors pursuant to ORS 280.060(3) would be three years;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED as follows:

1. An election shall be held on Tuesday, September 16, 2003, to consider the Columbia County Law Enforcement Local Option Tax. The Columbia County Clerk is hereby directed to place the question of the proposed local option tax before the electors of Columbia County on the

September 16, 2003, election ballot.

2. The purpose for which the funds to be provided by the proposed local option tax are to be expended would be to hire an estimated four new corrections deputies, two new corrections technicians, nine new patrol deputies, two new road sergeants; provide uniforms and duty belts, vehicles and equipment cost, and miscellaneous costs for new hires; provide funds for the additional costs to operate the new jail and sheriff's office including, but not limited to, office supplies, operating supplies, food, laundry, jail clothes, medical costs, utilities, programs, equipment maintenance fees, facility repairs and maintenance; and for other law enforcement purposes as necessary.

3. The estimated total revenues will be \$1,989,939 in fiscal year 2003-2004, \$2,057,457 in fiscal year 2004-2005, and \$2,126,988 in fiscal year 2005-2006, for an estimated total outlay for such purposes of \$6,174,384.

4. The period of time for the local option tax will be three years.

5. The proposed taxes are outside the limitation imposed by Section 11(3), Article XI of the Oregon Constitution.

6. The Board of County Commissioners adopts and approves the Notice of County Measure Election and ballot title which is attached hereto, labeled Exhibit "A", and incorporated herein by this reference.

DATED this 11th day of June, 2003.

Approved as to form

By: John M. [Signature]
Office of County Counsel

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

By: [Signature]
Chair

By: [Signature]
Commissioner

By: [Signature]
Commissioner

EXHIBIT "A"
NOTICE OF COUNTY MEASURE ELECTION

ORS 250.035
ORS 250.041
ORS 250.175
ORS 254.103
ORS 254.465

COLUMBIA COUNTY
(Name of County)

Notice is hereby given that on Tuesday, September 16, 2002
(Date of Election)

A measure election will be held in Columbia County, Oregon.
(Name of County)

The following shall be the ballot title of the measure to be submitted to the county's voters on this date:

CAPTION (10 Words)

Three-Year Local Option Levy for Law Enforcement

QUESTION (20 Words)

Shall Columbia County levy \$0.68/\$1000.00 of assessed value for three years beginning 2003-2004 for law enforcement operating funds? This measure may cause property taxes to increase more than three percent.

SUMMARY (175 Words)

This measure may be passed only at an election with at least a 50 percent voter turnout.

Currently, the Sheriff has only five full-time road deputies providing County-wide coverage. As a result, response to emergencies is delayed, calls go unanswered, and public safety is jeopardized.

In 1998, county voters approved a new 195-bed jail, 156 more beds than the old jail. To avoid new taxes the Sheriff has been renting jail beds to agencies like the Immigration Service. However, with local jail population growth, less beds are available to rent. General Fund money is limited and often dedicated by law to other purposes.

The proposed levy would fund additional road deputies and sergeants, and additional jail deputies and technicians; uniforms, equipment and other costs for the new personnel; help fund the additional costs of the new jail; and provide funds for other law enforcement purposes.

The estimated money raised will be \$1,989,939 in 2003-2004, \$2,057,457 in 2004-2005, and \$2,126,988 in 2005-2006, for an estimated total levy of \$6,174,384.

The following authorized county official hereby certifies the above ballot title is true and complete.

Signature of authorized county official (not required to be notarized)

Date signed

Joseph Corsiglia

Chair, Board of Commissioners

Printed name of authorized county official

Title

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ORS 254.103
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