

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. 57-02

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, continued subsidization of the Sheriff's Office and Jail budgets with County General Fund monies has 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, on March 13, 2002, the Board of County Commissioners created a committee to look at jail operations and needs, and the needs of the Sheriff's Office and law enforcement in the County generally; and

WHEREAS, the committee investigated the jail operations and needs and came up with four options for the Board of County Commissioners to consider with regard to law enforcement generally within Columbia County, to-wit:

OPTION ONE - Do Nothing (maintain or possibly decrease current service levels)

OPTION TWO - Levy \$0.77/\$1000.00 (cover new jail costs and added jail personnel; add nine road deputies, two road sergeants and one civil deputy)

OPTION THREE - Levy \$0.88/\$1000.00 (cover new jail costs and added jail personnel; add eleven road deputies, three road sergeants, one civil deputy, and one deputy district attorney)

OPTION FOUR - Levy \$0.94/\$1000.00 (cover new jail costs and added jail personnel; add eleven road deputies, three road sergeants, one civil deputy, two deputy district attorneys and one parole/probation officer); and

WHEREAS, a copy of the Summary Packet for the four Options considered by Sheriff's committee is attached hereto, labeled Exhibit "A" and incorporated herein by this reference; and

WHEREAS, the majority of members on the Sheriff's committee recommended the Board of County Commissioners adopt Option Four; a minority recommended the adoption of Option Three; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners considered the committee's recommendations on August 7, 2002, and two commissioners voted to adopt Option Three; one commissioner voted to adopt Option Four; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Board's vote on August 7, 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 \$0.88/\$1000.00 of assessed value for five years; and

WHEREAS, the proposed local option tax would raise approximately \$2,603,409 in 2003-2004, \$2,689,516 in 2004-2005, \$2,778,206 in 2005-2006, \$2,940,693 in 2006-2007, and \$3,034,785 in 2007-2008; 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 seven new corrections deputies, two new corrections technicians, eleven new road deputies, three new road sergeants, one new civil deputy, two new support staff, and one new deputy district attorney; 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, telecommunications systems, facility repairs and maintenance; and for other law enforcement purposes as necessary; and

WHEREAS, the estimated total outlay for such purpose over the five-year period would be approximately \$14,046,609; and

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

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED as follows:

1. An election shall be held on Tuesday, November 5, 2002, 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 November 5, 2002, 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 seven new corrections deputies, two new corrections technicians, eleven new road deputies, three new road sergeants, one new civil deputy, two new support staff, and one new deputy district attorney; 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, telecommunications systems, facility repairs and maintenance; and for other law enforcement purposes as necessary.

3. The estimated total revenues will be \$2,603,409 in fiscal year 2003-2004, \$2,689,516 in fiscal year 2004-2005, \$2,778,206 in fiscal year 2005-2006, \$2,940,693 in fiscal year 2006-2007, and \$3,034,785 in fiscal year 2007-2008, for an estimated total outlay for such purposes of \$14,046,609.

4. The period of time for the local option tax will be five 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 4th day of September, 2002.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

By: _____

Chair

By: _____

Commissioner

By: _____

Commissioner

Approved as to form

By: Joan Kelly
Office of County Counsel

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, November 5, 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)

Five-Year Local Option Levy for Law Enforcement

QUESTION (20 Words)

Shall Columbia County levy \$0.88/\$1000.00 of assessed value for five years beginning in 2003-2004 for law enforcement purposes? This measure may cause property taxes to increase more than three percent.

SUMMARY (175 Words)

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, using road deputies in the jail, and supplementing the jail budget with General Fund money.

However, with local jail population growth, less beds are available to rent. Road deputies are needed to respond to emergencies. General Fund money is limited and often dedicated by law to other purposes.

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 could be jeopardized.

The proposed levy would fund additional jail deputies and technicians, additional road deputies and sergeants, a civil deputy and support staff, a deputy district attorney; the uniform, 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 \$2,603,409 in 2003-2004, \$2,689,516 in 2004-2005, \$2,778,206 in 2005-2006, \$2,940,693 in 2006-2007, \$3,034,785 in 2007-2008, for an estimated total levy of \$14,046,609.

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

Anthony Hyde

Chair, Board of Commissioners

Printed name of authorized county official

Title