

Morrow County Board of Commissioners Meeting
January 3, 2024
Bartholomew Building Upper Conference Room
Heppner, Oregon

Present In-Person

Chair David Sykes, Commissioner Roy Drago, Commissioner Jeff Wenholtz, Matt Jensen, Valerie Ballard, Justin Nelson, Lindsay Grogan, Kevin Ince, Eric Imes, Steve Freeland, Sue Gibbs, Brian Snyder; non-staff: Emily Roberts, Tim Collins, John Kilkenny, Stuart Dick, Kimberly Lindsay, Ryan Hill, Gerry Arnson, Nancy Arnson, Molly Rhea, Carmen Wilson

Present Via-Zoom

Staff: SaBrina Bailey-Cave, Morgan Browning, Mindy Wilson, Robin Canaday, Sandi Pointer, Stephanie Case, Mike Gorman, Stephen Wreccsics, and approximately 46 members of the public

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance: 9:16 a.m.

Public Comment

- Emily Roberts, Chief Executive Officer of Morrow County Health District (MCHD) read a statement representing MCHD on the Ambulance Service Area Plan (ASA)
- Tim Collins of Heppner spoke of his concerns regarding the ASA and wants more public meetings concerning the ASA. He provided a letter and signed petition from residents in regards to the Circuit Court building location
- John Kilkenny of Heppner spoke of his concerns regarding the ASA.
- Stuart Dick of Irrigon spoke on his feelings regarding the new Circuit Court Building and ASA and wants to initiate a recall on Commissioners.

Open Agenda: No Items

Chair Sykes asked to move items 7a-7c and have them presented after the consent agenda. Commissioner Wenholtz and Commissioner Drago approved.

Consent Agenda

Commissioner Drago moved to approve the following item on the Consent Agenda:

1. Minutes: December 20, 2023

Commissioner Wenholtz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Administrator Reports

Ambulance Service Area Plan Update

Matthew Jensen, Administrator

Mr. Jensen reviewed progress with the ASA. He reiterated reasons why there is a new ASA in the works: ORS statutes require the County to be administrator of the ASA. MCHD has done well with their service, but being the provider and in charge of the contract creates a conflict of interest. Public Hearings were held in the Spring of 2023, input was received from interested parties, and the ASA draft was sent to Oregon Health Authority (OHA). Mr. Jensen said the County needs to reestablish itself as controller of the ASA per state code. With the new ASA, it will establish a new ASA Advisory Committee to review services and provide recommendations, and establishes three ambulance service areas which will provide options for service providers, it does not definitively split the county into multiple service areas, but provides the option to do so.

When facing the 90-day notice from MCHD to terminate service, interim providers may be sought while ASA and provider assessments are completed and there will be continued ambulance services no matter what. He will continue to provide updates at every Board of Commissioners meeting.

Circuit Court Building Update

Matthew Jensen, Administrator

Mr. Jensen said there are delays in Circuit Court development, in part finalizing the contract with architect services and stakeholder meetings (outside stakeholders being neighbors, school, fairgrounds etc.) are estimated to be held in February. He acknowledged Mr. Collins' Public Comment regarding the ASA and Circuit Court Building and said more public updates will follow once the contract is ready. Chair Sykes asked if Town Halls will be held in the future, to which Mr. Jensen confirmed more Town Halls will be held as well as stakeholder meetings to get input from neighbors on noise, sightlines, traffic, etc.

Break: 9:51-10:02 Chair Sykes called recess and invited the public to ask Mr. Jensen additional questions regarding his Administrator Update.

Public Hearing

Approve Road Name for Bristol Estates Subdivision; Accept Road Dedication and Approve Final Subdivision Plat for Bristol Estates Subdivision

Stephen Wrecsics

Providing the staff report, Mr. Wrecsics explained the Planning Commissioner approved the Subdivision on April 26, 2023. The Plat includes a new roadway to be dedicated to the public and the County is not responsible to build or maintain it. This complies with the Rural Addressing Ordinance.

Chair Sykes asked for public comment from the room and then via zoom. No comments.

Commissioner Wenholz pointed out verbiage in the packet documents stating "County Court". Commissioner Wenholz moved to adopt Order 2-2024-1 to name Nicole Drive and correct the language to reflect Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Drago seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director, added that this is not a Land Use or Legislative item. Mr. Wrecsics prepared finding that show the request is compliant with the Rural Addressing Ordinance.

Commissioner Wenholz moved to approve the final subdivision plat for Bristol Estates Subdivision and accept the public roadway for the benefit of the public that will not be County maintained.

Commissioner Drago seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval

Business Items

Resolution No. R-2023-2: Yearly Election of Board of Commission Chair

David Sykes, Chair

Mr. Sykes explained prior to 2023, the Chair was a rotating position and changed yearly. In 2023, the new Commission voted to change the Chair appointment to a yearly election.

Commissioner Wenholtz moved to reappoint Commissioner Sykes as Chair. Commissioner Drago seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Commissioner Drago moved to appoint Commissioner Wenholtz as Vice Chair. Chair Sykes seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Budget Committee Position #3 Appointment

Kevin Ince, Finance Director

Mr. Ince explained the Budget Committee Position #3 expired on June 30, 2023. In December 2023, a Budget Committee Vacancy was published in the East Oregonian advertising for interested applicants. Gibb Evans, who previously held Position #3 applied for reappointment.

Budget Officer Appointment

Kevin Ince, Finance Director

Mr. Ince said the Oregon Local Budget Law requires the Board to appoint a budget officer for Fiscal Year 2024.

Commissioner Wenholtz moved to appoint Mr. Ince as Budget officer for 2024. Commissioner Drago seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Commissioner Drago moved to appoint Gibb Evans to Position #3 of the Budget Committee. Commissioner Wenholtz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Consideration to Amend County Administrator Job Description

Matthew Jensen, Administrator

Mr. Jensen provided a modified job description with three specific modifications. the County Administrator will act as, or designate a Purchasing Agent for the County. The County Administrator will be authorized to negotiate the sale, purchase, or lease of properties in for the County without going before the Board if it adheres to the procurement policy. Lastly, cleaning up language around the Budget Officer assignment, removing Budget Officer from the County Administrator job description. The Finance Director, acting as Budget Officer would then report to the County Administrator as the County's Executive Officer.

Commissioner Wenholtz moved to approve the amended job description of County Administrator. Commissioner Drago seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Contract for County Counsel Services

Matthew Jensen, County Administrator

Mr. Jensen provided an updated contract reflecting new Deputy District Attorney Greg Goebel as Co County Counsel with Mr. Nelson.

Commissioner Wenholz moved to approve the County Counsel Contract with Justin Nelson and Greg Goebel. Commissioner Drago seconded. Vote: Unanimous Approval

Road Use Agreement with Wheatridge East Wind

Eric Imes, Public Works Director

Commissioner Wenholz said since Wheatridge East Wind (WEW) is a customer of Umatilla Electric Coop and he is on the Board of Directors, while he will receive no personal benefit from the decision, he will recuse himself from any discussion or decision.

Mr. Imes explained WEW has a proposed wind energy site in the Butter Creek area. The Road Use Agreement (RUA) will help maintain the safety of the motoring public and road conditions. WEW will be responsible for any damage to the roads from construction. Mr. Imes and Ryan Hill from WEW will conduct a road survey prior to the project to assess road condition and repairs needed once the project is complete.

Commissioner Drago moved to approve the Road Use Agreement with Wheatridge East Wind. Chair Sykes seconded, Commissioner Wenholz abstained. Vote: 2 approval, one abstention. Motion carried.

Wolf Depredation Advisory Committee Appointment

David Sykes, Chair, Board of Commissioners

Chair Sykes explained the Wolf Depredation Advisory Committee hears issues concerning wolves in Morrow County regarding mitigation etc. Mr. Sykes was appointed to represent the Board of Commissioners on the Wolf Depredation Committee when he took office. Mr. Sykes wants to resign and appoint Commissioner Drago to the Wolf Depredation Advisory Committee as he is a long-time hunter and more familiar with the Blue Mountains.

Commissioner Wenholz moved to accept Chair Sykes resignation from the Wolf Depredation Advisory Committee. Commissioner Drago seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.
Commissioner Wenholz moved to appoint Commissioner Drago to the Wolf Depredation Advisory Committee. Chair Sykes seconded. Vote: Unanimous Approval.

Fair Board Appointment Requests

Sue Gibbs, Fair Manager

Ms. Gibbs said two positions on the Fair Board expired in December. She received two letters of interest, one from Braxton Adams, the other from Keira Klein. Ms. Gibbs added that she received notice a third position will open as a member of the Fair Board told her they would be resigning.

Commissioner Wenholz moved to appoint Keira Klein and Braxton Adams to the Fair Board. Commissioner Drago seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Administrator Updates Continued

Board of Commissioners Meeting Schedule

Matthew Jensen, Administrator

Mr. Jensen explained at the beginning of 2023, the Commissioners decided to change the meeting schedule to meet twice a month. He had staff run a report of time spent in regular Commission meetings in 2023 and compare it to the last two years of holding weekly meetings. The time spent in bi-monthly meetings was found to be comparable to meeting weekly with streamlined procedures and the reduction of reviewing expenses. Meeting bi-weekly allowed for other meetings and commitments and he recommends continuing the schedule.

Department Reports

Community Counseling Solutions Quarterly Report

Kimberly Lindsay, Executive Director

Ms. Lindsay provided consumer survey results for Community Counseling Solutions (CCS) patients. Responses were largely positive with many saying they would recommend CCS to others and staff are sensitive to cultural and ethnic backgrounds, taking care to keep personal information confidential.

Morrow County Youth Suicide and Overdose Response Protocol was moved to January 17th to be addressed as a Business Item.

Ms. Lindsay continued to Measure 110, (House Bill 755) CCS received approximately \$1 million on behalf of Morrow County, to purchase housing for behavioral health recovery transitional living. These funds must be used by December 2024. She thinks housing should be purchased in Boardman, Irrigon, and south County. Since this can be controversial, she is looking for input and asked how involved the Commission would like to be.

Chair Sykes asked how property has been purchased in the past and if public hearings will be held for each property. Ms. Lindsay's plan is to identify property that would potentially work and then hold meetings for feedback from neighbors.

Department Reports Continued

- The District Attorney Quarterly Report was presented verbally by Justin Nelson
- The Public Works Monthly Report was presented by Eric Imes
- The Sheriff's Office Monthly Report was presented by Sheriff Bowles
- The Fair Report was presented by Sue Gibbs

Correspondence: None

Commissioner Reports

Brief Reports of activity were provided.

Signing of Documents

Adjourned: 11:39 a.m.