

Morrow County Board of Commissioners Meeting
June 5, 2024
Bartholomew Building, Heppner, Oregon

Present In-Person: Chair David Sykes, Commissioner Jeff Wenholtz, Commissioner Roy Drago Jr., Matthew Jensen, Valerie Ballard, Justin Nelson, Kevin Ince, Tamra Mabbott, Lindsay Grogan

Present Via Zoom: Staff: Sabrina Bailey-Cave, Daisy Goebel, Eric Imes, Greg Goebel, Morgan Browning; non-staff: Ryan Hill, Aaron Palmquist, Brandon Hammond, Danielle Hoeft, Emily Roberts, Heidi Turrell-Carr, Jonathan Black, Julie Baker, Kelly Doherty, Lisa Pratt, Larissa Gray, Nicole Mahoney, Sam Van Laer, Sara Bayless, Tami Ewing

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance: 9:00 a.m.

Public Comment: Jodi Ferguson, Lexington: Commenting on the interim ambulance service agreement and agreement amendment on the agenda. The amendment is for an increased daily rate of pay to Boardman Fire Rescue District for coverage in Irrigon (known as the Northeast ASA). Ms. Ferguson is of the opinion that the cost for the South County area be decreased.

Via Zoom:

Ryan Hill asked to provide an update of the Wagon Trail Solar project: Mr. Hill apologized for not keeping the County more informed with the agricultural mitigation agreement. A lump sum payment of \$500,000 is to be split between Morrow County Grain Growers and agronomist, Larry Lutchter with Oregon State University Extension-Morrow County. The Wagon Trail Solar mitigation project is to offset the change in spending in the local agricultural economy, whereas the Sunstone mitigation project is to offset the reduction of spending within the local agricultural community.

Administrator's Report

Ambulance Service Area Plan (ASA) Update

Matthew Jensen, County Administrator

The ASA Request for Applications closed Monday, June 3 and the County has received two applications for the three service areas. The review committee is being organized with one member working on a scheduling issue. Matthew Jensen, County Administrator said he hoped to present the committee's selection at a special meeting toward the end of June or at the first regular Board of Commissioners meeting in July.

At the most recent Boardman City Council meeting, Mr. Jensen relayed to the City that the County is not trying to take a leadership role in the nitrate water issue, but to coordinate planning and funding. Presently, the plan is to meet with the West Glen community to discuss solutions and what they are willing to participate in. Courtney Crowell with the Governor's office has connected the County with Willamette Partners, a non-partisan non-profit advocacy organization which specializes in controversial regional issues and works to find solutions.

Chair Sykes proposed creating a consortium, similar to the Morrow County Broadband Consortium. A county appointed staff member would head the consortium and facilitate

projects. There have been Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEP) fines placed against the Port of Morrow (POM) by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and he said the County doesn't want to run the water system but can help guide projects and find solutions.

Open Agenda

No Items

Consent Agenda

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve the following items on the consent agenda:

1. *Minutes: May 1 and 15, 2024*
2. *Zions Bank Commercial Loan Payment Authorization*
3. *Extend Contract with Seareach for Production of Heritage Trail Interpretive Panels*

Commissioner Drago seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Public Hearing

County Use of Title III Funds: Search and Rescue Vehicle Project

Kevin Ince, Finance Director

After Chair Sykes opened the public hearing, Kevin Ince, Finance Director, explained that notice was posted on the County website giving a 45-day public comment period with no comments submitted.

Chair Sykes asked for public comment in the room to no comments. He then asked participants via zoom for comment. No comments made.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to obligate Title III funds up to the budgeted amount of \$101,608 for the procurement and outfitting of a new search and rescue vehicle for Morrow County Sheriff's Office. Commissioner Drago seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Fiscal Year 2024-25 Annual Budget

Kevin Ince, Finance Director, said as the final step to the budget process, the resolution must go before the Board. The budget was published by the local newspaper, the Heppner Gazette-Times in addition to being posted on the County website and the Budget Committee approved the budget in May.

There were no public comments in-person or on Zoom.

Commissioner Drago motioned to approve Resolution no. R-2024-11 Adopting the budget, making appropriations, and imposing and categorizing the taxes for FY2025.

Business Items

Siting of New Circuit Court

Matthew Jensen, County Administer

After the previous Board of Commissioner meetings and Town Halls, staff and the design team were asked to provide more detail in cost estimates and get written commitments from the Port

of Morrow (POM) and City of Heppner who offered to provide considerations for the mill site. The City of Heppner has approved contributing \$800,000 from the 2025-2026 budget which accounts for over 10% of the annual budget. While POM has not offered anything in writing, a motion was passed to provide a \$500,000 donation in kind for installation of water lines and transfer parcels of land for the circuit court.

Referring to the updated pricing spreadsheet provided by the design team, the pricing included considerations from POM and the City of Heppner. If the Mill site is chosen, POM suggests connecting to city water and developing a septic field as connecting to city sewer with a lift station to be approximately \$70,000/year in operations and maintenance costs.

The estimates for the mill site were broken into two possible locations for construction. From the base cost for the fairgrounds or Boardman, the North mill site would be an additional 1.425 million, and the south site would be \$830,000 dollars. Chair Sykes proposed narrowing down the options to two sites and then voting between them.

After discussion, it was decided to eliminate Boardman and the North mill site from consideration and focus on the South mill site and fairgrounds.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to instruct staff for Geotechnical study of the Southeast mill site. Commissioner Drago seconds. Vote: Unanimous approval

Resolution R-2024-8 Non-Discrimination Policy

Lindsay Grogan, HR Director

Lindsay Grogan, HR Director explained that a nondiscrimination policy is required for receiving grants and was written with general terms in order to apply to multiple funding sources. The policy will be posted online, accessible to the public, and includes a formal complaint procedure.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve R-2024-8. Commissioner Drago seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Request For Proposals for Traffic Engineer of Record

Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director

The County has a need for a traffic engineer of record for Planning and Public Works. The Engineer of Record, Anderson Perry, does not have a traffic engineer. While the Public Works director has extensive practical experience, questions can arise as he is not a licensed engineer. The traffic engineer of record would peer review reports of traffic impact analyses and act as a second set of eyes on the County's behalf. Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director said that the need for a traffic engineer has arisen multiple times recently.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve the RFP and to proceed with the selection process. Commissioner Drago second. Vote Unanimous approval.

Amend GSI Water Solution Water Coordinator Service

Tamra Mabbott, Planning director

At the County's request, GSI Water Solutions, Inc. performed additional services in relation to the Congressionally Directed Spending for the local nitrate water issue. This will build back funds spent last year putting together the SEP proposal.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve the contract amendment with GSI Water Solutions. Commissioner Drago seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval

Wagon Trail Solar Project

Tamra Mabbott

Commissioner Wenholz recused himself from the discussion and vote as he is on the Board of Directors with Umatilla Electric Coop.

The Board of Commissioners has been asked to approve and sign a comment letter to the Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) regarding the Wagon Trail Solar Project. This is the second mitigation proposal as referenced in the public comment earlier by Ryan Hill.

Commissioner Drago motioned to approve and sign the Wagon Trail Solar comment letter. Chair Sykes seconded. Vote: Two yes, one recused.

Break 10:39 a.m.-10:45 a.m.

Authorization of Supplemental Environmental Project Application

Matthew Jensen, County Administrator

As the Port of Morrow works on their water treatment center, they continue to receive fines from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). In April, POM received a fine in the amount of \$727,000. The previous fine was much higher, and the money went to Oregon Health Authority (OHA) for water distribution to affected well users. POM reached out to DEQ to see if money from their fines could be used locally for solutions to the nitrate problem, and with DEQ's approval, an estimated \$528,000 is available for projects. Business Oregon has funding available for infrastructure improvements and staff would like to apply for two technical grants in addition to the \$528,000 from the fine to POM.

The West Glen neighborhood in Boardman is a good opportunity as a smaller project for water solutions with a proposed scope of work using minimal county funds. Residential well testing has shown high levels of nitrate contamination, and the community is densely populated compared to other unincorporated areas.

Road and sewer improvements were included as other possible infrastructure improvements to go with the water project. The County has contacted Oregon Rural Action (ORA) for assistance canvassing and getting signatures to determine if a supermajority wants these improvements.

Commissioner Drago motioned to authorize the County Administrator to submit an application for the Supplemental Environmental Project and two Business Oregon technical grants to

develop mitigation efforts for the West Glen community and surrounding areas. Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Amendment to Interim Ambulance Agreement

Matthew Jensen, County Administrator

With the adoption and implementation of the Interim Ambulance Agreement, there was public concern regarding staffing in the City of Irrigon. Crews will be housed in Irrigon rather than Boardman as originally planned, and crews will be available 24/7. The daily charge for ambulance services will change from \$3,960 to \$5,280 with the amendment to the contract. Funding will be covered through the County's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve the proposed amendment to the contract and authorize the County Administrator to sign the amendment with Boardman Fire Rescue District. Commissioner Drago seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Heppner Request for ARPA Funds

As we near the exhaustion of ARPA funds and the deadline for use, the City of Heppner has reached out for infrastructure improvement funds. Heppner uses Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) to monitor, control, and analyze water supply and distribution. This system is aging and in need of replacement. The new system will be more efficient with less water wasted, and wastewater improvements will be included in the project.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to commit \$110,779 to the City of Heppner for improving the City's SCADA system and authorize staff to coordinate necessary agreements. Commissioner Drago seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Department Reports

- The Local Public Safety Coordinating Council Quarterly Report was provided by Jessica Rose
- The Public Works Monthly Report was provided by Eric Imes

Correspondence

A letter regarding the revised Blue Mountain Forest Plans was acknowledged and taken into consideration by Commissioner Drago.

Commissioner Reports

Brief reports of commissioner activities were provided

Executive Session 12:14 p.m.

ORS 192.660(2)(i) To review and evaluate the employment-related performance of the chief executive officer of any public body, a public officer, employee or staff member who does not request an open hearing.

ORS 192.660(2)(d) To conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to carry on labor negotiations.

Resume Regular Session 2:02 p.m.

Signing of Documents

Adjourned 2:03 p.m.