

Morrow County Board of Commissioners Meeting
July 17, 2024
Irrigon Government Center
Irrigon, Oregon

Present In-Person Chair David Sykes, Commissioner Jeff Wenholz, Matthew Jensen, Justin Nelson, Valerie Ballard, Kevin Ince, Lindsay Grogan, Mindy Nelson, Tamra Mabbott, Eric Imes; Non-Staff: Stuart Dick, Tess Ann Rehak, Paul Martin

Present Via Zoom Sabrina Bailey-Cave, Bobbi Childers, Sue Gibbs, Morgan Browning, Robin Canaday, Sarah Rhea, Tami Ewing, Vince Guerrero, Deona Siex; Non-Staff: Aaron Palmquist, Andrea Di Salvo, Autumn Morgan, Brandon Hammond, Brenda Proffitt, Jesse Reynen, Jodi Ferguson, Marty Broadbent, Natalia Wight, Nicole Mahoney, Sam Van Laer

Absent Commissioner Roy Drago Jr.

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

Public Comment

Stuart Dick of Irrigon read a quote from the Heppner Gazette-Times regarding the Ambulance Service Area Plan (ASA). Mr. Dick said he believes Morrow County Health District was not in fact awarded the Southern and Northeast ASAs.

Justin Nelson, District Attorney, received a message from staff that the meeting was not online. Staff present in the meeting then realized the wrong meeting ID was used. The meeting was paused at 9:05 a.m. to switch to the correct ID and resumed at 9:09 a.m.

Commenting via Zoom, Aaron Palmquist, Irrigon City Manager, said Irrigon will not be signing the Intergovernmental Agreement provided by Morrow County Health District (MCHD). Mr. Palmquist said it is illegal for government jurisdictions to persuade people to vote a certain way.

Open Agenda No Items

Administrator's Report

Matthew Jensen, County Administrator

The geotechnical report for the Kinzua Mill Site as a possible location for the Circuit Courthouse should be available within the next week.

The Lone Rock Fire in Morrow and Gilliam Counties continues to affect air quality. The Emergency Manager has been coordinating with the State Fire Marshall and has an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) being set up today. Presently, fire updates are coming from the Sheriff's Office Facebook page, and with establishing the EOC, updates should be available twice daily. Level 3 evacuation orders impact The OHV and Anson Wright campgrounds. Reservations for both parks have been cancelled through Monday at minimum. One structure has been lost to the fire, fortunately it was not a residence or a cabin.

It was announced on Monday that the County's Rural Transportation Equity Project was awarded the Achievement in Community Engagement, or ACE Award. This report was a collaboration between Planning and Public Transportation. Matthew Jensen, County Administrator, said Planning Director, Tamra Mabbott, and Public Transportation Manager, Ben Tucker deserve big kudos for their work. The press release with a link to the report can be found on the Morrow County website.

Consent Agenda

Commissioner Wenholtz motioned to approve the following items:

- 1. Minutes, July 3, 2024; July 9, 2024*
- 2. Boardman Fire Rescue District Interim Ambulance Service Invoice*
- 3. Contract with New Public Health Director*
- 4. Transportation and Growth Management Grant Letter of Support*
- 5. Blue Mountain Networks Request for Refund*

Chair Sykes seconded. Vote: 2 approval, 1 absent

Business Items

Columbia Development Authority Quarterly Report

Greg Smith

Mr. Smith was unable to attend the meeting and his presentation has been postponed.

Community Counseling Solutions Quarterly Report

Kimberly Lindsay, Executive Director, Community Counseling Solutions

Providing an update on the deflection program, Kimberly Lindsay of Community Counseling Solutions (CCS) explained the budget had been completed by contractor, Jessica Rose. The County will receive \$150,000 biennially, and Ms. Lindsay hopes the County will contract with CCS to provide deflection program. Umatilla and Morrow County's deflection programs will mirror each other with CCS hiring a deflection program supervisor to guide peer navigators. Peer navigators will be able to work across both counties, providing coverage for each other as needed.

The County is the recipient of Opioid Settlement funds, having received approximately \$100,000 in 2022-23 and will receive \$20-25,000 until 2033, with amounts decreasing until 2039 when funding ends. Ms. Lindsay proposed the County contracting with CCS and allow her and County Counsel to draft an agreement.

Morrow County is a Zero Suicide county, contracting with CCS to provide mental healthcare and support for suicide prevention by providing care for those at risk, and teaching the community how to have conversations with those who are struggling. Assessment of the program provides scores annually with scores improving since its implementation in 2019. Staff continue to train to improve results and feel more confident working with those at risk.

In 2022, counties received funding via the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) to increase the amount of housing and resources available for those with behavioral health issues, with Morrow County receiving just over \$1 million. Previously, the Board requested CCS to gather input from the community regarding housing locations. Meetings were held in

Boardman and Heppner, but no one attended. CCS is moving forward and will identify specific homes to purchase to provide housing for the population.

The two residential programs, Columbia River Ranch in Boardman and Lakeview Heights on the South end of the County are doing well and provide approximately 55 jobs between the two locations.

Lastly, with the wildfires in Morrow County, CCS staff have been involved in debriefings for first responders. Ms. Lindsay said it's a privilege to support the first responders and not something to take lightly. Thursday they will be doing a support meeting in collaboration with Gilliam County Sheriff's Office.

ASA Provider Update and Award

Matthew Jensen, County Administrator

A press release from July 3 mentioned the Board acted on staff recommendation to move forward with the notice of awards. Boardman Fire Rescue District (BFRD) was awarded the Northern ASA with MCHD awarded the Southern and Northeast ASAs. Noting the advisory committee did not take compensation into consideration, staff have met with both entities over the last two weeks, including multiple meetings with MCHD and another meeting with MCHD is scheduled for Monday.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve the ASA assignment to Boardman Fire Rescue District for the Northern ASA and authorize the Board Chair and County Administrator to sign the document. Chair Sykes seconded the motion. Vote: Two approval, one absent.

Looking at the IGA, Commissioner Wenholz asked if the wording precludes the involved entities from working with someone else providing similar services. CCS has been a long time partner with the County, and he wanted to know if the wording could present problems with the County's relationship with CCS.

Mr. Jensen said that he and outside legal counsel, Bob Blackmore, didn't see a problem with the wording when they reviewed it, and that it is not an exclusivity contract. MCHD has expressed an openness to meet with the cities and present their IGA to answer any questions the cities may have.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement for Morrow County Health District and authorize County Administrator to work with the five cities within the County for consideration of the IGA. Chair Sykes seconded. Vote: Two approvals, one absent.

Employee Benefits Renewal

Lindsay Grogan, Human Resources Director; Mindy Nelson, Payroll & Benefits Coordinator

As part of the Request for Coverage (RFC), each year employee benefits are reviewed with the insurance broker, CIS, and this year staff are presenting additional coverage options for employees.

Voluntary employee paid benefits are at no cost to the County (other than administrative costs) with a low cost group rate through the CIS Trust. These benefits include:

- Identity Protection Plan through CIS Allstate
- Trauma Coverage
- Accident Insurance through CIS MetLife
- Critical Illness Insurance through CIS MetLife
- Hospital Indemnity Insurance through CIS MetLife

Accident Insurance, Critical Illness Insurance, and Hospital Indemnity Insurance are currently offered through Aflac, and voluntary employee paid benefits would be an additional option.

The contract with Lifemap, the vendor for long-term disability and life insurance, will be terminating August 31. Lifemap has been acquired by another company, USABLE. The County will either need to sign a new contract with the new vendor, or switch to benefits offered through the benefits administrator, CIS. The current cost per employee per month for \$12,000 of coverage is \$9.51 and the same coverage through CIS is \$6.51. A larger benefit plan offering 1.5 times the employee's salary, up to \$50,000 is available at \$12.42 per employee per month, which would be approximately \$4,200 annually.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve option 1 for voluntary employee paid voluntary benefits for the 2025 plan year. Chair Sykes seconded the motion. Vote: 2 approval, 1 absent.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve switching the vendor for long-term disability and life insurance from Lifemap to Hartford administered by CIS and to increase benefit levels to up to 1.5x the salary up to \$50,000. Chair Sykes seconded. Vote: 2 approval, 1 absent.

Emergency Operations Center Invoice to Oregon Department of Energy

Matthew Jensen, County Administrator

Morrow County Emergency Operations assists with emergency preparedness exercises for the Columbia Generating Station, a commercial nuclear energy facility at the Hanford Site in Washington. The County is eligible for reimbursement for these exercises and is asked to sign an IGA with the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) with set reimbursement amounts through 2028 to the sum of \$61,000.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to sign the IGA and direct staff to invoice ODOE \$10,000. Chair Sykes seconded. Vote: 2 approval, 1 absent.

Idaho Power Road Use Agreement

Eric Imes

Commissioner Wenholz stated he is on the Board of Umatilla Electric Coop (UEC) and while UEC does not have any current agreements with Idaho Power he is declaring a potential conflict of interest as agreements may be made in the future.

Idaho Power has a proposed 300 mile, single-circuit transmission line throughout Morrow County. The Road Use Agreement (RUA) helps ensure road integrity and the safety of motoring public. Negotiations have been thorough, and the RUA includes every road Idaho Power will be using.

Justin Nelson, County Counsel, added for clarity that this is just a Road Use Agreement. This is not saying the County approves the path or the project but acknowledges roads may be used during construction and the condition of the roads may be adversely affected and those affects will be taken care of.

Chair Sykes motioned to approve and enter into the Road Use Agreement with Idaho Power. Commissioner Wenholz seconded the motion. Vote: 2 approval, 1 absent.

Tower Solar Road Use Agreement

Eric Imes

This solar project is on 947 acres of land near Boardman Airport on Port of Morrow property. Some access via county roads will be required, necessitating the RUA.

Commissioner Wenholz inquired about a price disparity of \$25/hour for reimbursement to the County for pre-construction inventory work between the Tower Solar and Idaho Power RUAs. Eric Imes, Planning Director explained that the Tower Solar negotiations predate Idaho Power's Boardman to Hemingway project. Moving forward, the \$100/hour will be standard for Road Use Agreements.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve and enter into the Road Use Agreement with Tower Solar. Chair Sykes seconded. Vote: 2 approval, 1 absent.

Columbia River Heritage Trail Interpretive Panels

Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director; Landon Jones, Planning Technician

The interpretive panels for the Columbia River Heritage Trail have arrived and the project is nearing completion. County staff are working with Boardman Parks and Recreation District, Irrigon Community Park and Rec District, and Port of Morrow to get Army Corps of Engineers permits for installation and display of the panels.

The panels, manufactured by Seareach LLC, are a combination of new panels with new content, and updating older panels that have been in the park for many years. Each panel is in both English and Spanish and include informative graphics. There will be a more formal unveiling of the panels at a later date, yet to be decided.

Department Reports

The Justice Court Report was presented by Judge Glen Diehl
The Planning Department Report was provided by Tamra Mabbott
The Emergency Management Report was postponed
The Sheriff's Office Written Report was submitted by Melissa Camarillo
The Fair Report was presented by Sue Gibbs
The Treasurer Report was provided by Jaylene Papineau
The Accounts Payable Report was provided by Kevin Ince

Recess 11:13 a.m.

Resume 11:19 a.m.

Correspondence None

Commissioner Reports

Brief reports of Commissioner activity were provided

Executive Session

Chair Sykes read the following Executive Session citations:

ORS 192.660(2)(e), to conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions.

ORS 192.660(2)(h), to consult with counsel concerning the legal rights and duties of a public body with regard to current litigation or litigation likely to be filed.

Chair Sykes then read the following:

Representatives of the news media and designated staff shall be allowed to attend the executive session. All other members of the audience are asked to leave the room. Representatives of the news media are specifically directed not to report on or otherwise disclose any of the deliberations or anything said about these subjects during the executive session, except to state the general subject of the session as previously announced. No decision may be made in executive session. At the end of the executive session, we will return to open session and welcome the audience back into the room.

Return to Open Session from Executive Session 12:28

Chair Sykes moved to authorize County Administrator and Morrow County Weed Department to continue negotiations to find a short term lease for the Morrow County Weed Department and equipment based upon space and environmental needs for the Morrow County Weed Department. Commissioner Wenholtz seconded. Vote: 2 approval, 1 absent.

Adjourned 12:29 p.m.