

Morrow County Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes
May 4, 2022
Bartholomew Building Upper Conference Room
Heppner, Oregon

Present In-Person

Chair Jim Doherty, Commissioner Melissa Lindsay, Commissioner Don Russell, Darrell Green, Roberta Lutchter, Ana Pineyro, Tamra Mabbott, Emily Roberts, Robin Canaday, Paul Gray, Matt Mahaney

Present Via Zoom

Jean Mendoza, Linda Skendzel, Heidi Turrell, Karen Pettigrew, Jaylene Papineau, Mary Killion, Aaron Moss, Amy Van Saun, SaBrina Bailey-Cave, Armando Mendoza, JoAnna Lamb, Brenda Profitt, Carla McLane, Justin Green, J.R. Cook, Mike Gorman, Rafael Romero, Rick Stokoe, Ana Maria Rodriguez, Jenn Rollins, Debbie Radie, Lisa Mittelsdorf, David Sykes

Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance & Roll Call: 9:02 a.m.

City & Citizen Comments: None

Open Agenda: Commissioner Russell asked to add a discussion on scheduling a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Morrow County Government Center.

Consent Calendar:

Commissioner Russell moved to approve the following items in the Consent Calendar:

- 1. Accounts Payable and Payroll Payables*
- 2. Planning Commission Appointment: Mary Killion to Position #1; term to be May 4, 2022 to December 31, 2025*

Commissioner Lindsay seconded. Unanimous approval.

Business Items

Columbia Development Authority Update

Greg Smith, Executive Director, did not provide an update.

Nitrate Testing Update

Chair Doherty said this item, as well as the next Business Item on the agenda (Proposed Collaborative Action between Morrow County Health Department and Morrow County Health District), dovetailed into one another. The Board then listened to multiple speakers. Topics included the nitrate problem in the Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area; home water filtration systems and the importance of routine maintenance; efforts toward obtaining funding; clarification of the areas impacted in Morrow County and potentially Umatilla County; and further clarification that nitrates were not an issue with city water systems. When the discussion concluded, Chair Doherty said a Work Session would be scheduled, adding this was just the beginning.

Discussion: Interchange Area Management Plan – Adoption Fees

Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director

Ms. Mabbott explained in 2019 three entities entered into an agreement to fund the engineering work to update the Port of Morrow Interchange Area Management Plan (Morrow County, Port of Morrow and City of Boardman). The request was to not charge the entities the adoption fee.

Commissioner Russell moved to waive the adoption fees on the Port of Morrow Interchange with the County, City and Port being equal partners. Chair Doherty seconded. Discussion: Chair Doherty said he jumped in because Commissioner Lindsay has been fairly consistent in wanting folks who come to the table...that we be careful going down that path...I was in some of those early meetings, so I'm comfortable enough moving forward with this and waiving it at this time. Commissioner Lindsay said the following: I'm happy to collaborate and partner but my preference would have been for us to cover it internally and pay ourselves. It's interesting that Commissioner Russell and former Commissioner Leann Rea and Judge Terry Tallman told a non-profit entity we do not waive fees and, to Commissioner Russell's credit, it was Commissioner Rea who made a pretty broad statement that I recall during a meeting in Irrigon when I sat in the back of the room and our past Planner made the proposal. It stuck in the back of my head...is it really never? Ok, I can stand by that. So, when the County did a partnership with the City of Heppner to do the Sheriff's building, I didn't even ask, I just found the money internally and we paid ourselves the fee. So, I'd love to collaborate and partner, I just prefer we pay ourselves internally and the County covers the fee. I realize it's awkward and different but at least it remains consistent. Some of our big partners that we give tax breaks to etc., have come and said, "How about a two-for-one and you waive the fees," and my answer was very easy to say – we don't waive fees. So, I'd prefer we pay it to ourselves and thereby we're doing the same thing with our partners in this work as opposed to waiving fees and opening a precedent for future people to argue there's a reason I should get a fee waived. Vote: Aye: Chair Doherty, Commissioner Russell. Nay: Commissioner Lindsay. Motion carried.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Exercise Summary

Paul Gray, Emergency Manager

Mr. Gray reviewed the agenda for an upcoming FEMA Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake Exercise, June 27th-July 1st. He asked that one Commissioner be in attendance for exercises on June 27th and 30th. The Commissioners expressed interest and asked Mr. Gray to send them calendar invites.

Letter of Support – Beef Processing Facility in Umatilla County

Chair Doherty postponed consideration of the letter to next week in order to obtain additional information.

Columbia River Enterprise Zone III Update

Chair Doherty said a Special Meeting was held on April 29th that also included an Executive Session on the "preliminary negotiations involving matters of trade and commerce" citation. Potential action was suspended until today's meeting to get it on the agenda, he said. The County was embarking on a discussion with an organization with three or four of its own economists working on a potential agreement, he said, and it was important the County understood it well enough to avoid any missteps that could cost the County. Chair Doherty proposed bringing in outside legal counsel to represent the County. Discussion.

Chair Doherty moved to go out and seek outside counsel and have Commissioner Lindsay work with County Counsel, Justin Nelson, and see if we can retain an outside counsel and return and put it on next week's Consent Calendar. Commissioner Lindsay seconded. Vote: Aye: Chair Doherty, Commissioner Lindsay. Abstained: Commissioner Russell. Motion carried.

Chair Doherty suggested he and Commissioner Lindsay and Assessor/Tax Collector, Mike Gorman, start considering what a Strategic Investment Program (SIP) committee might look like in addition to the CREZ work. He said he thought that was still on the table, if not for one, maybe multiple sites and ongoing. There were some super opportunities and he said he wanted to move forward and negotiate in good faith.

Department Reports

- The Assessment & Tax Quarterly Report was provided by Mr. Gorman.
- The written Sheriff's Office Monthly Report was reviewed.
- The Administrator's Monthly Report was provided by Darrell Green.

Correspondence

- Flyer for the 2022 Boardman Job Fair on June 1st

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at the Morrow County Government Center

Commissioner Russell said he was working with staff to hold the ceremony on Thursday, May 26th. He reviewed what was being planned and the other Commissioners agreed with the date and plans.

Commissioner Reports

Brief reports provided.

Signing of documents

Adjourned: 11:30 a.m.