

Union County Board of Commissioners
Regular Commissioners Meeting
January 16, 2019

Present: Commissioner Donna Beverage, Chair
Commissioner Paul Anderes
Commissioner R. Matthew Scarfo

Commissioner Beverage opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was given with all three Commissioners present.

Public Comment

Alex McHaddad, Manager of Blue Mountain Translator District (BMTD), 1104 K Avenue, La Grande, presented the Proposed Translator District Legislation requesting consideration of commission support for the current legislation drafting of two bills. He first presented Senate Bill 393 requesting an annexing of cities and allowing citizens located within the cities to serve on the BMTD Board of Directors. Senate Bill 394 allows the broadcast of emergency alerts and public meeting announcements on their channel. This would also allow BMTD to compete with other broadcast stations. Senator Cliff Bentz sponsored the bills but has not yet received additional support. The goal is for Union County to move to support either or both of the Bills presented. The annexing of cities would allow the citizens to vote on the bill. **Commissioner Anderes moved to support Senate Bill 393 and 394 as presented in draft form. Commissioner Scarfo seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Commissioner Scarfo thanked former Commissioners Howard and McClure for their past service. He also stated that in the past couple of years he appreciated the added input and history provided by Steve McClure.

Elected Official, Department Head & Employee Comments

Cody Vavra, Union County Assessor, requested authorization of a property tax refund to Homestead Country Gathering of La Grande. He explained that Oregon State Statutes indicate that refunds are to come before the Commissioners for approval and distribution. Union County Commissioners established a threshold in 2005 of \$2,500 so that items falling under this total could be addressed directly by the Assessor's office. The Homestead Country Gathering amount is in excess of \$2,500 and was due to a clerical error. The error was corrected but resulted in a refund due to the Homestead Country Gathering in the amount of \$3,266.45. Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, provided some background to the Commissioners for refunds issued. She stated that having the threshold has worked well over the years. **Commissioner Scarfo moved approval of Court Order 2019-05, In the Matter of Refunding Real or Personal Property Tax to Homestead Country Gathering. Commissioner Anderes seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Consent Agenda

Commissioner Anderes moved approval of the December 20, 27 and January 3 Claims Journals and Meeting Minutes from the December 19, 2018 Board of

Commissioners meeting as presented on the consent agenda. Commissioner Scarfo seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Administrative Matters

Court Order 2019-01, Selection Of An Official Newspaper

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, stated that the Commission designates an official newspaper for its obligation for published notices of tax foreclosures and other public notices. This court order would designate The Observer as the official newspaper for Union County for the 2019 calendar year. **Commissioner Scarfo moved approval of Court Order 2019-01 In the Matter of Selection of the Official Newspaper. Commissioner Anderes seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Court Order 2019-02, Appointment Of A Budget Officer For Fiscal Year 2019-20

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, stated that this court order would appoint Shelley Burgess, the Administrative Officer, as the Budget Officer for FY2019-20. **Commissioner Scarfo moved approval of Court Order 2019-02, In The Matter Of Appointment Of A Budget Officer For Union County For Fiscal Year 2019-20. Commissioner Anderes seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Court Order 2019-03, Appointment To The 2018 Board of Property Tax Appeals

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, addressed the Commissioners regarding the appointment of R. Matthew Scarfo to the Board of Property Tax Appeals, replacing former Commissioner Jack Howard. **Commissioner Anderes moved approval of Court Order 2019-03, In the Matter of Appointment to the Board of Property Tax Appeals. Commissioner Beverage seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Court Order 2019-04, Directing The Union County Sheriff To Sell Foreclosure Properties Acquired By Union County

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, addressed the Commissioners regarding the sale of foreclosure properties acquired by Union County. The process leading up to a foreclosure is addressed by the Assessor's office. If a property owner falls behind three years in tax payment and does not redeem within the redemption period, then the property is deeded to Union County. The Commission has maintained the practice of returning the property through a property auction to the public unless otherwise needed. This order is for only one property, which is a single wide manufactured home on a lot located within the City of Union. The Commissioners have the responsibility of setting a minimum bid price in the order to sell. The suggested minimum is 125% of the foreclosure amount. **Commissioner Anderes moved approval of Court Order 2019-04, In the Matter of An Order Directing The Union County Sheriff To Sell Foreclosure Properties Acquired By Union County. Commissioner Scarfo seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Recess was held at 9:27 a.m.

The Commissioners reconvened at 10:00 a.m.

FY 2017-18 Audit Presentation

Chelsea Herron, of Connected Professional Accountants, presented the 2017-18 fiscal year audit to the Commissioners. She began by providing a thorough review of the

process involved in preparing the audit. She also stated that the audit provided is an unqualified clean opinion. The county received a good report on the financial status and reportings provided by the accounting firm stating that the net position of Union County continues to improve. Chelsea also stated that she appreciates the support received from County staff in the performance of the annual audits and encouraged the Commissioners to contact her if any questions arise.

Commissioner Scarfo noted it is very impressive to receive such a glowing report with so many working parts and funds for the county. This reflects highly on the efforts of Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, and Donna Marshall, County Treasurer. Commissioner Beverage and Commissioner Anderes concurred.

Recess was held at 10:27 a.m.

The Commissioners reconvened at 11:00 a.m.

Island City Presentation of Grande Ronde River Greenway Proposed Routes

Karen Howton, Island City Recorder, addressed the Commissioners regarding the Grande Ronde River Greenway proposed routes. Throughout their public process, various routes were explored and it was determined that "Route C" was the best option. This preferred route will keep the trail on Island City and City of La Grande properties, utilizing private land only for emergency access. This option also includes the addition of two bridges across the river that was not in the original plan. Unfortunately Island City does not have sufficient funding to complete the project so are suggesting the project be broken into stages. The City has looked at having two loops on the Greenway (Phase 2) with a third phase project to connect the loops. Island City would like to have Union County support breaking the project into phases. This has not been an approved change to the project through Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) but is a part of the process required for Island City to present to ODOT that the county is in support of the project. Commissioner Scarfo asked if the new option has been presented to area landowners and the public. Karen explained that Island City is still trying to complete the process, and stated that an Intergovernmental Agreement has been signed, a commitment made, and so they would like to see the project to completion. Island City is asking for support of this phase and a dedication to the process of the next phase of the project. Commissioner Scarfo would like to know what ODOT says about the project before offering support. Commissioner Anderes suggested a work session with ODOT to discuss the issue further and obtain additional information. He also asked for clarification of the request for county involvement. Karen explained that Union County would need to apply for grants to fund a portion of the trail (Phase 3). Policing and upkeep of the trail would involve an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of La Grande, Island City, and Union County. Commissioner Beverage stated she would like to see the current phase completed. She also appreciates that private property rights will not be infringed upon and that the path is not going to be a dead end, but instead will be a completed loop. Karen explained that the grant dollars must be spent by the spring of 2020 otherwise the project may be cancelled by ODOT and funds could be issued to other projects throughout the state. Commissioners Scarfo and Anderes stated that they would both like to wait until ODOT weighs in and approves suggested changes before committing to the project.

Next Commissioners Meeting

The next regular Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 6, 2019.

Adjournment

Commissioner Beverage adjourned the meeting at 11:18 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Powers
Sr. Dept. Specialist II
Union County Commissioners