

Union County Board of Commissioners

Joseph Building Annex Conference Room
Regular Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, March 18, 2020

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

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

Public Comment

Alex McHaddad, Executive Director of the Blue Mountain Translator District, 1104 K. Avenue, addressed the Commissioners.

Mr. McHaddad reported to the Commissioners that the Blue Mountain Translator District is potentially moving up the timeline for launching the local TV station within the next 30 days, rather than later this year. Specifically, because of the COVID-19 outbreak, the district would like to broadcast Commission meetings and other emergency alerts available to the community.

Elected Official, Department Head & Employee Comments

Emergency Declaration Consideration

JB Brock, Emergency Manager addressed the Commissioners with Resolution 2020-05 Declaring an Emergency within Union County regarding COVID-19.

There has been a national and state emergency declared. What the resolution does, is allow certain emergency authorities under the Emergency Operations Plan and Oregon statute, specifically around emergency spending authority, contract authority and additional authorities within the County.

All emergency response agencies are working diligently at every level to prepare for the outbreak.

At the County level, the Northeast Oregon Joint Information Center (JIC) was implemented with a soft opening on Monday, March 16th and fully live on Tuesday, March 17th. Essentially the purpose of the JIC is a collection point for all of the information that is going out. It will continue for the foreseeable future. The other purpose of the JIC is to get a strategic vision of what is going on information wise and to deconflict any information that is coming from an agency that doesn't make sense.

We are also looking at setting up an Incident Management Team at the County level, which will be done at the point when the need is seen operationally. Which could be very soon. One of the challenges is capacity to create the team. This is

going to be a long-term emergency, anything that can be done to add capacity will be key.

Federal partners are also our key volunteers, who are a big part of our local system. In rural areas, we are very dependent on these volunteers and we need them available in the Emergency Operation Center.

Commissioner Beverage inquired whether or not the Facebook page relayed Northeast Oregon Joint Information Center. Mr. Brock replied that it in fact does.

Commissioner Scarfo noted that the intent of the resolution isn't created to panic Union County residents, it is only precautionary.

Mr. Brock believes that we have the potential to come out of this stronger than before. La Grande is a tight knit community and we all need to be there for one another.

Commissioner Anderes relayed that he spoke with Senator Walden, Murkeley and Wydens office with the request from Emergency Services for Federal partner participation.

Commissioner Scarfo made a motion to approve RES 2020-05 Declaring a State of Emergency within Union County as a Local Response to COVID-19. Commissioner Beverage seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Juvenile Department Garden Plot

Ben Morgan, Juvenile Department Director presented the Garden Plot to the Commissioners for their consideration.

Mr. Morgan would like to utilize the space located on the southside of the parking lot, on J Avenue for a small garden plot. The Juvenile Department has done a garden project at the Community Garden located in La Grande the last two summers. There has been a struggle to get clients to show up at the Community Garden, and he feels if it were onsite there would be a better outcome.

The act of the County would be permission to use the space and the resources would be to apply for a grant to help support the cost of materials.

Mr. Morgan relayed that he spoke with Austin Hawks, Crop & Soil Instructor with Eastern Oregon University. Mr. Hawks would be willing to partner with the Juvenile Department and provide students to mentor the kids with the stages of the process. He is confident that the program will build along the way.

Commissioner Scarfo inquired with Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer about the guidelines for property use. Mrs. Burgess relayed that the property is under County jurisdiction and the Commissioners have the authority to authorize the use. Mrs. Burgess relayed that she did have concerns of the expectations of the Facilities Department. The Facilities Department will not be responsible for maintaining the garden plot.

Commissioner Beverage made a motion to support the Juvenile Department Garden Plot proposal. Commissioner Scarfo seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

Commissioner Scarfo moved approval of the February 13, 19, 20 & 27 and March 5 & 11, 2020 Claims Journals and meeting minutes from the February 19, 2020 Commissioners meeting as presented on the consent agenda. Commissioner Beverage seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Administrative Matters

Court Order 2020-12: Appointment to the Union County Fair Board

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented Court Order 2020-12 to the Commissioners for their approval.

Kevin Lundergan and Sandie Treadway have resigned from the Union County Fair Association Board of Directors leaving unexpired terms. The position openings have been advertised and applications were received from Carrie Bushman and Deb Cornford expressing interest in serving.

The term for Ms. Bushman would begin immediately and expire December 31, 2020 and Deb Cornford with a term to expire on December 31, 2021.

Commissioner Scarfo made a motion to approve Court Order 2020-12 Appointment to the Union County Fair Board. Commissioner Beverage seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Scarfo commented that he is very excited and pleased to have a full Board of Directors.

Court Order 2020-13: Appointment to the Budget Committee

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented the Court Order 2020-13 to the Commissioners for their consideration.

The term of Bob Coulter is due to expire and he has served the maximum number of terms allowed. Advertisement was made seeking a volunteer to serve.

Alex McHaddad has expressed an interest in serving on the Union County Budget Committee.

Commissioner Scarfo made a motion to approve Court Order 2020-13 Appointing Alex McHaddad to the Budget Committee. Commissioner Beverage seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) Grant Agreement

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented the grant agreement to the Commissioners for their consideration.

The grant is a technical assistance grant agreement between Union County and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. The Upper Grande Ronde Water Planning Committee is preparing to complete Step 5.

The grant is funded by Oregon Lottery funds or another state fund in the amount of \$100,000.00.

Commissioner Scarfo made a motion to accept the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Grant Agreement. Commissioner Beverage seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Anderes inquired about the blank exhibits at the end of the agreement. Mrs. Burgess relayed that those would be filled in before the agreement is sent back.

Commissioner Scarfo amended his motion to accept the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Grant Agreement as completed. Commissioner Beverage seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Bank Account Authorization

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented the request to open a new bank account to the Commissioners for their consideration.

Umpqua Bank closed their doors in Union, and Old West Credit Union has recently opened a branch. Mrs. Burgess is requesting to open a bank account with Old West Federal Credit Union for the business of Buffalo Peak Golf Course to facilitate bank deposits.

Commissioner Beverage made a motion to open a bank account with Old West Federal Credit Union for the Buffalo Peak Golf Course. Commissioner Scarfo seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Eastern Oregon Counties Association (EOCA) Intergovernmental Agreement

Commissioner Anderes presented the agreement to the Commissioners.

The agreement is on the table for revision only. It will be revised with the EOCA at their next meeting. Any suggestions will be noted for consideration.

Commissioner Beverage requested adding an alternate that has voting rights in the absence of a member.

Miscellaneous Items

Accommodating COVID-19

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, addressed the Commissioners with a request from Alex McHaddad, Blue Mountain Translator District Executive Director regarding livestreaming Commission meetings in light of COVID-19.

There would be no cost to the county for this service.

The Commissioners relayed that it would be appropriate during this time, and are in full support.

Mrs. Burgess will have Union County Information Services staff work with Mr. McHaddad regarding set up.

Another topic of discussion was the option for constituents to have a call-in option for Commission meetings. At the time of this recommendation, the Governor set the limit for gatherings at 250 people per space. Since then, it has been changed to 25 people and currently 10 people per space.

We typically do not have more than 10-25 attendees at any particular meeting unless it is a very strong topic for Union County residents.

At the last work session, the discussion of ordinances being adopted was discussed between Commissioners. Mrs. Burgess would like to postpone any other ordinances at this time, to limit the amount of people wanting to attend and provide public comment. The recommendation is to allow constituents to submit written comments, or call in to participate by phone.

Commissioner Anderes believes the public having access to the Commissioners is crucial, and is in full support of the measures taken to protect ourselves. With the assistance of the Emergency Services department, has kept us mindful and not overreactive.

Commissioner Scarfo also believes that the Union County doors need to remain open, and in support of the public having the option to call in to Commission meetings to voice their comments.

PUBLIC HEARING: Ordinance 2020-01 – Revisions to Transient Tax

Commissioner Anderes opened the Public Hearing at 9:45 AM.

Staff Report

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, provided a staff report to the Commissioners with the reason for revising the ordinance.

During previous work sessions, the Transient Room Tax revision had been discussed. Mrs. Burgess created a timeline from her understanding of the discussions that were held with the Commissioners. The first hearing notification regarding the Ordinance was added to the Union County website.

The reason why there have been so many revisions to only Section 15 of the ordinance is because it is the section dealing with fund distributions. The remainder of the ordinance governs applicability, collection and reporting, and we have never changed that because it was a substantive part of the ordinance when it was put in place.

This revision would change the categories and the allocations of the Transient Room Tax, designates the categories that would receive funding, the discussion of a new committee of seven (7) members with representation that is designated. This committee, in addition to, reviewing the Discretionary Fund Grants would also review annual applications for event funding. Those decisions will be made once a year, with a deadline, and go to the Commissioners for final approval.

Commissioner Beverage inquired about 5(a), "Applications for event funding will be due on April 1 of the current fiscal year for the following fiscal year". Mrs. Burgess replied that July 1st would be the following fiscal year.

Public Comment

There were no public comments at this time.

Discussion/Action

Commissioner Scarfo made a motion to approve the First Reading of Ordinance 2020-01 Revising Union County Transient Room Tax. Commissioner Beverage seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The second reading of the ordinance will occur on April 1st at 9:30 am.

Good of the Order

Commissioner Anderes commented that his schedule is clear and offered his assistance during this difficult time.

Commissioner Beverage commented the importance to get information out through the Joint Information Center.

Commissioner Scarfo commented that he held an employee meeting for the restaurants and it was an emotional experience for all.

Next Commissioners Meeting

The next regular Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 1, 2020.

The next work session will be held on Wednesday, April 8, 2020.

Adjournment

Commissioner Anderes adjourned the meeting at 9:58 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Allison Moore / Senior Department Specialist