

Union County Board of Commissioners
Joseph Building Annex Conference Room
Regular Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, April 1, 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

There were no public comments given at this time.

Elected Official, Department Head & Employee Comments

There were no comments given at this time.

Consent Agenda

Commissioner Scarfo moved approval of March 11, 12, 19 & 26, 2020 Claims Journals and meeting minutes from the March 18, 2020 Commissioners meeting as presented on the consent agenda. Commissioner Beverage seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Administrative Matters

Court Order 2020-14: Acceptance of Summary of BoPTA Actions

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented Court Order 2020-14 to the Commissioners for their consideration.

The Board of Property Tax Appeals convened on February 18, 2020 and adjourned on February 18, 2020 after the completion of its functions. Margo Terheggen, Clerk for the Board of Property Tax Appeals prepared a Summary of Actions taken by the board.

Initially there were 18 accounts appealed, which 8 of those were withdrawn prior to the hearing. 2 were stipulated under ORS 308.242 which resulted in 8 actual appeals. Of those 8 appeals all of the accounts were sustained. The assessed before and after adjustments at \$19,089,594.00.

Commissioner Beverage made a motion to approve Court Order 2020-14. Commissioner Scarfo seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Scarfo commented on the Assessors office staff doing a fantastic job.

Surveyor Compensation Agreement

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented the Compensation Agreement to the Commissioners for their consideration.

Oregon Government Ethics Commission investigation and resulting letter of education involving Michael Springer, the elected Grant County Surveyor. Legal Counsel Wyatt Baum, County Surveyor Rick Robinson and Shelley Burgess discussed the Ethics Commission outcome and the current payment process for the Union County Surveyor, Rick Robinson.

It was deemed appropriate for the County to develop a Compensation Agreement that outlines the payment to be received by the County Surveyor and have the agreement signed by the Commissioners.

The process was good, except payment was not previously being made to Rick Robinson as an individual which was the recommendation of the Ethics Commission in the Grant County matter. The agreement was developed and has been signed by Mr. Robinson.

Mrs. Burgess' recommendation is to approve the agreement.

Commissioner Scarfo made a motion to approve the Surveyor Compensation Agreement. Commissioner Beverage seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Novel Coronavirus/COVID-19 Emergency Leave Policy

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented the COVID-19 Leave Policy to the Commissioners for their consideration.

In response to COVID-19, changes have been made in federal law and Oregon law regarding employees and protected and paid leave. This is a temporary policy that would be effective only through December 31, 2020 unless extended by requirements of state or federal law. The policy was developed by CIS legal services.

Once approved Mrs. Burgess will notify staff with the new policy via email.

Commissioner Beverage made a motion to approve the COVID-19 Emergency Leave Policy. Commissioner Scarfo seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Blue Mountain Translator District (BMTD) Funding Assistance Request

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented the BMTD Funding Assistance Request to the Commissioners for their consideration.

The Blue Mountain Translator District Executive Director, Alex McHaddad previously offered the opportunity to broadcast Commission meetings to increase public access during the time of social distancing due to COVID-19.

At the that time it was discussed, the service would be available at no cost to Union County. Since that time, BMTD has reviewed vendor proposals for the necessary equipment and found that they are \$5,000 short of needed funds.

BMTD is seeking a one-time request of \$1,000 from Union County for the necessary equipment.

Unfortunately, with the recent pandemic of COVID-19 across the nation, and the need to preserve all resources. The Commissioners would like the time to discuss this request and postponed the agenda item to April 15, 2020.

Commissioner Scarfo made a motion to postponed the Blue Mountain Translator District Funding Assistance Request until the April 15th Commission meeting. Commissioner Beverage seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING: Second Reading – Ordinance 2020-01 Revisions of Transient Room Tax

Staff Report

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented a brief staff report to the Commissioners regarding Ordinance 2020-01.

The Commissioners have been discussing the revisions of Section 15 to the ordinance for several months, beginning with a couple of Work Sessions. The first reading of the ordinance was held in a regular Commissioners meeting on March 18, 2020. Specifically, what the revisions would be are the funding allocations and the categories. It would also appointment a different advisory committee, which would be named the Transient Room Tax Advisory Committee.

The ordinance has been posted on the website, and the work sessions have been published so there has been opportunity for public comments.

Public Comment

There were no public comments provided at this time.

Discussion/Action

Commissioner Beverage relayed that she is happy to see the reorganization of the committee.

Commissioner Scarfo made a motion to approve Ordinance 2020-01 Revisions of the Transient Room Tax. Commissioner Beverage seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Transient Tax Funding Allocation Recommendation

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented the TRT Funding Allocation recommendation to the Commissioners for their consideration.

The ordinance that was approved does indicate that the Board of Commissioners will annually identify the amount of Transient Room Tax for distribution. The timeline identified in the ordinance, indicates once the amount of funding by categories is designated, that would then put into motion the review by the Committee (that is yet to be appointed) with regard to the events and any discretionary fund grants. It would also trigger presentations from the Chamber of Commerce, and the Tourism Promotion in May.

The challenge is identifying an appropriate number in the transient room tax funding. What we are seeing right now is going to affect the current fiscal year, and we have already taken those actions for this fiscal year.

Mrs. Burgess has provided a suggested based on an assumption that by July 1, Transient Room Tax would resume collections at a similar rate to what we saw last year. To start the conversation, that is where Mrs. Burgess got the \$208,000 figure.

The Commissioners will talk about the figure and decide if it is reasonable, making sure that people know it is contingent on recovering from the impacts COVID-19 is having on travel. For the current fiscal year, Mrs. Burgess believes that we will continue to honor the commitments that we have already made because we had a bigger beginning balance of TRT funds.

Mrs. Burgess discussed the categories of the ordinance, which are; Tourism Promotion, Union County Chamber of Commerce, Small City Chamber of Commerce, Tourist Attractions/Facilities, Events and Discretionary Fund. She based a 2% increase in Tourism Promotion and Chamber of Commerce, and increased the Small City Chamber amounts because they had not been increased in years. After splitting between Tourist Attractions & Facilities and Events, there was an increase of \$5,000 to the Discretionary Fund.

Commissioner Beverage asked how the Events category compares to last fiscal year. Mrs. Burgess relayed that there was not an "events" category last fiscal year, it is brand new.

Commissioner Anderes asked if the amount of money we provided to the Chamber for the Blue Mountain Conference Center (BMCC), was out of these funds in the past. Mrs. Burgess relayed it was and her interpretation that the BMCC would be an attraction or facility, if it is continued to be funded.

Commissioner Anderes would like to notify the Chamber of Commerce and Small Chamber that the funds are not guaranteed at this time, due to unknown effects of COVID-19 on transient room tax collections.

The new application process will require a report relaying how the funds were used and the outcome of the event.

Commissioner Beverage made a motion to approve the Transient Tax Allocations for fiscal year 2020-21.

Commissioner Beverage recalled her motion for amendment.

Commissioner Beverage made a motion to approve the Transient Tax Funding Allocation contingent on the collections. Commissioner Scarfo seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Good of the Order

Commissioner Beverage relayed the biggest concern is the safety of Union County residents, and returning back to normal once the pandemic has run its course.

Commissioner Anderes commended the Joint Information Center during these times.

Next Meeting and Location

The next regular Commissioners meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2020 at 9 AM.

Adjournment

Commissioner Anderes adjourned the meeting at 9:52 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Allison Moore
Senior Department Specialist