

Board of Commissioners Meeting
May 21, 2014

Present: Commissioner Steve McClure
Commissioner Mark D. Davidson
Commissioner William D. Rosholt

Chairman McClure opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. with all three Commissioners present.

Public Comments

Summer Program

Frank Thomas, Public Transit Manager Community Connections, brought a proposal for transportation to summer programs for a total of \$5,270 to the Commissioners for consideration. He is asking for help with six programs; Union County Fair, East-West Shrine Game, Highland Games, SolWest Fair, Cove Cherry Fair and Union Grassroots Fest. Community Connections will be putting in a 50% match for these programs.

Commissioner Davidson moved approval of Fair and Summer Activity proposal as presented. Commissioner Rosholt seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

USDA Wildlife Services

Curt Mattson, USDA Predator Services, read the attached report of the Union County USDA Wildlife Services Operations to the Commissioners in order to give an update of his program.

Curt explained that wolves effect everything he does by the fact that they are listed as endangered. It creates issues as far as doing Mountain Lion and Bear predation work. Commissioner McClure asked if he works for the Federal Government or the State. Curt stated that he works for the Federal Government USDA Wildlife Services. Commissioner McClure explained that wolves are not listed as endangered in this part of Oregon under the Federal Government. Curt explained that because they are State listed and he cannot violate the State Endangered Species Act by harming or killing a wolf. He has a permit with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife that allows him to operate under certain parameters in areas that are occupied by wolves. There are restrictions to the equipment that he can use. He explained that if he sets a trap that is large enough to hold a mountain lion he has to check that trap every 24 hours. It creates workload issues. He had to get hound dogs because he cannot deal with mountain lion and bear issues with equipment in areas that are occupied by wolves because it is too work intensive. This has added significant cost to the program. So he will be asking for more money from the County during the budget process.

Commissioner McClure asked if he has asked ODFW for additional funding to support the work that is done for additional wolf work and those costs. There are a lot of costs on field specialists even if there is not livestock loss costs. He explained that he has an agreement for some funding. That funding is available throughout the State and is a total of \$50,000 for the State. The State did put an additional \$10,000 to go towards wolf work which is about \$1600 per County.

Fireworks Committee

Steve Combs came to the Commissioners to request funds for the fireworks show in La Grande. He explained that he is the fundraising coordinator for the fireworks committee. They are proud that they have been able to keep this a free event. It is a family event with live music. He stated that he hears from people who live out of the area that are impressed with the fireworks presentation. He explained that they have a \$12,000 budget. The community has supported in the past through a large raffle which has five grand prizes. In the past the Commissioners have given \$2500 and he is requesting that amount this year. **Commissioner Davidson moved to contribute \$2500 towards the community fireworks show. Commissioner Rosholt seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan Resolution

Resolution 2014-02, In the Matter of Adopting Union County's Representation in the Updates to the Northeast Oregon Regional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan, was presented for consideration. J.B. Brock, Emergency Services Officer, explained that this is the regional Natural Hazardous Mitigation Plan. The Plan is required by FEMA in order to be eligible for pre or post disaster mitigation funding. The pre-disaster funding is a nationally competitive program and is challenging for the County to do well in that process. There were some projects identified in the Plan and there is also the ability to add projects. The Plan has to be updated twice a year. **Commissioner Davidson moved approval of Resolution 2014-02 as presented. Commissioner Rosholt seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Livestock District Court Order

Court Order 2014-30, In the Matter of Reviewing a Petition to Annex Land into Union County Livestock District #1, was presented for consideration. Hanley Jenkins, Planning Director, and Sean Chambers, Parks Coordinator, brought this Court Order to the Commissioners to set a hearing date to bring a portion of MERA into the Livestock District #1. The hearing date was set for the June 30 Board of Commissioners meeting at 10 am. **Commissioner Rosholt moved approval of Court Order 2014-30 as presented. Commissioner Davidson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

¾ Minus Bid Quotes

Doug Wright, Public Works Director, brought ¾ Minus Bid Quotes to the Commissioners for consideration. He explained that he requested bid quotes to get an idea on what the suppliers would charge per ton. He added 12 cents per ton per mile haul cost to the contract. Four suppliers submitted bid quotes. He would like to accept all the prices as quotes and as the rock is needed he will figure out the costs per job and purchase by that cost. **Commissioner Davidson moved approval of bid quotes as presented. Commissioner Rosholt seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Used Belly Dump Trailer

Doug Wright brought the purchase of a used belly dump trailer to the Commissioners for consideration. He explained that he would like to add another belly dump trailer to their fleet to be more usable in conjunction with the existing belly dump trailer. They found one locally for \$17,500. They checked out the trailer to make sure there were no problems. He

is recommending purchasing the trailer. **Commissioner Rosholt moved approval of purchasing the belly dump trailer as recommended. Commissioner Davidson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Consent Agenda

The May 5, 8 and 15 claims journals; and the May 7 and 14 Public Works claims journals; and April 2 Board of Commissioner minutes were approved as presented on the consent agenda.

Community Corrections Intergovernmental Agreement

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented an Intergovernmental Agreement Amendment to the Commissioners for consideration. She explained that these funds pay for the standard services as well as Measure 57 services done on the Community Corrections Department. The amendment extends the date of the Agreement to June 30, 2015 and identifies the money that will be received for the Measure 57 program and the standard services. **Commissioner Davidson moved approval of the Intergovernmental Agreement Amendment as presented. Commissioner Rosholt seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Appointment to Tourism Promotion Advisory Committee

Court Order 2014-31, In the Matter of Appointment to the Union County Tourism Promotion Advisory Committee, was presented for consideration. This Court Order would appoint Terry Hale on the Tourism Promotion Advisory Committee as the Business Attraction Owner/Manager representative. **Commissioner Davidson moved approval of Court Order 2014-31 as presented. Commissioner Rosholt seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

La Grande Mavericks Property Tax Exemption Request

Annette Williams, La Grande Mavericks Secretary, 3114 N. 4th Street, La Grande and Carol Graham, 3108 N. 4th Street, La Grande, came to the Commissioners requesting tax exemption for the La Grande Mavericks Property. They explained that they were a tax exempt organization years ago and they are not sure when that was revoked. They have worked on getting their tax exempt status back which was done and back dated to October 2012. They are also considered a non-profit in the State of Oregon. At one point in time they were exempt from property taxes. They feel that exemption went away the same time the tax exempt status went away. They do not charge admissions to their activities. The only charge is for the events where other agencies use their facility.

Commissioner Davidson asked if he wasn't a member of the mavericks and he wanted to exercise his horse would he be charged to use the arena to ride in. They explained that they would require him to fill out a membership form because it also has a statement in it that relieves them from liability. It is \$35 a year for a mavericks membership. It is similar to the fairgrounds where they call it a permit but the mavericks has a membership. It also allows the members to participate in other invitational activities. Members are allowed to rent their pens as well.

Linda Hill, Assessor/Tax Collector, explained that she did a site visit. She talked with the caretaker to learn more about their activities and how the organization operates with the community. She carefully reviewed the Statutes and Administrative Rules. What she found is that they have to meet the standards for ownership and public use. They do not meet the standard for public use. In the Administrative Rule, Public Use is defined as: use of the property is not considered public use when access is restricted to events or activities determined by the owner, access is limited due to the owners activities, entry is by invitation only by the owner and entry is controlled by the desires of the owner. It also states that the owners sponsoring special events for public attendance or things that are a byproduct of the owners use does not constitute public use and recreation. She explained that the stalls are rented to specific people and are only for the use of that person and not the public. To her it is evident that the facilities are not routinely open to the public. The public access to the facilities is restricted based on the owners activities and desires. The primary purpose of the La Grande Mavericks is to serve their membership not to serve the public as a recreation site. She doesn't feel that the La Grande Mavericks qualify for an exemption as a public park or public recreation site. They are comparable to the La Grande Country Club which is a private club where although outside groups can rent the facilities and non-members can golf there two times in a calendar year their focus is for their membership who pay dues.

Commissioner McClure asked what differentiates the La Grande Mavericks from the Elgin Stampede grounds or the Eastern Oregon Livestock grounds. Linda explained that the other organizations do not collect dues to be a member. Their focus is to put on one large public event. The Mavericks purpose is to serve their membership.

Commissioner Davidson explained that he feels Linda has analyzed it and summed it up correctly. Even though they are somewhat similar there are fundamental differences that directly correlate to the applicable criteria that is used to judge whether they qualify for an exemption. He stated that they could probably change some of their policies to address those criteria and reapply at some point in the future. At this point they do not qualify.
Commissioner Davidson moved to deny the tax exemption application as presented. Commissioner Rosholt seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Executive Session

An executive session was held under ORS 192.660(h) for pending litigation.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:14 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


Ashley Wilhelm
Sr. Dept. Specialist II



United States
Department of
Agriculture

USDA APHIS Wildlife Services Report of Union County Operations 2013/14

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service

Wildlife Services currently has work agreements on 49 properties totaling 58,000 acres. There were a minimum of 38 direct control complaints worked on 33 of the 49 properties. Range band sheep operations cover 56,000 acres of Forest Service land in Union County. Verified losses of livestock to predators totaled \$8,912. These losses were attributed predominately to coyote and mountain lion.

Wildlife
Services

Eastern Oregon
District Office

60015 Smith Loop
La Grande, OR 97850
(541)963-7947

Wolves in Union County:

There are 5 confirmed wolf packs utilizing parts of the county. WS receives reports of wolf activity in most other areas that are not officially occupied. There were 5 reported livestock losses to wolves (3 cattle and 2 sheep). These were investigated and verified to be due to other causes. There appears to be an upward trend in coyote losses to cattle, but I believe that to be due to a higher loss reporting rate over wolf predation concerns. Union County Sheriff's Office requested information regarding identification of livestock depredations. Wildlife Services provided training in regards to typical predation patterns of coyote, mountain lion, black bear and wolf.

Workload trends:

The spring season is centered on lambing operations in the valley. WS is starting to concentrate more on preventative work in historic trouble spots.

Summer grazing season is centered on the range band sheep operations. There are 3 bands utilizing public lands and 4 grazing private land in the county. The dominant predation issues are with mountain lion and bear. The presence of endangered wolves has complicated the resolution of lion and bear issues.

Incidental take concerns regarding traps and snares have necessitated the acquisition and use hounds on these livestock operations. WS also works with sunflower growers through harvest with blackbird and starling issues.

Winter work includes starling and blackbird control as well as the cleanup of unresolved mountain lion issues.

Coyote control work is ongoing year around on several properties.

Financial Partners:

The county program has strong support from Alicel Feed and Seed whose contribution represents about 10 sunflower growers. Five smaller sheep producers continue to provide support annually and several range band operations have pledged financial support this year. The Union County Cattlemen are committed supporters of the predator program.

Questions may be directed to Curt Mattson, Wildlife Specialist, at 541-963-7947.



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