

Union County Budget Meeting
May 27 and 28, 2015

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

Call to Order

Commissioner Davidson called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. with two budget committee members and commissioners present. Gene Hardy was absent. The pledge of allegiance was given.

Election of Chair

Mark Davidson was elected Budget Committee Chair by a motion made by Commissioner McClure. The vote was unanimous.

Budget Message

Budget Officer Shelley Burgess reviewed the written budget message included in the budget packet materials. Shelley explained that all funds are presented to the Committee balanced.

Blue Mountain Translator District

Beverly Beach stated that she is requesting \$5,000 from both Baker and Union counties to help fund a fiber line at the Airport to bring more channels to their customers. They would like to microwave the channels to the mountain to help with their costs. The Portland channels are contributing to the cost as well.

Commissioner Davidson asked if the \$15,000 bottom line includes the counties contributions. She explained that it does not.

Bob Coulter asked if this is a one-time request or if this has been asked before. Beverly stated that they have never requested funding from the County.

Commissioner Howard asked what the revenue projection is for the next year. Beverly stated that they have sent out more bills this year and they are hoping for a close to 50% return which would mean that their revenues would increase greatly.

Union County Safe Communities Coalition

Robin Wortman, Drug Free Communities Coordinator, stated that they have a concern of increased access to marijuana for youth. They are asking cities and other agencies for assistance to go towards education and prevention for youth engaged in marijuana activities. She explained that their grant funds can only be used for the two substances submitted in their original grant which are alcohol and tobacco.

Commissioner Howard asked how the money would be used for outreach.

Robert Kleng, Eastern Oregon Headstart, 304 Sunset Drive, La Grande, the Drug Free Communities has been focused on youth prevention on the use of alcohol and tobacco. There has been a decline on perceived risk from the youth. Marijuana use within the community will increase and he wants to make sure that youth understand the decision to do so is serious. He feels that imposing harsher consequences is not going to decrease use but they would like to educate them on their decision.

Commissioner Davidson asked if the State has any programs to educate youth on marijuana use. Robin stated that she does not believe that the State has any such programs.

Friends of the La Grande Public Library

Ken Bruce stated that the current budget at the library is \$545,000. The use of the facility by County residents is around 30%. The last time the County adjusted the support to the City of La Grande public library was 1994 and that was raised to \$20,000. They are coming to the budget committee requesting an increase in the funding.

Commissioner Davidson asked how much Urban Renewal funds were used for the library. Ken thought it was about \$400,000.

Commissioner Howard asked how the use of the library culminated. Ken talked to the employees of the library and they felt that the percentage of county residents that use the facility is closer to 40%. He feels that there is getting to be more citizens of the county using the library than in the City. Bob thought the question was overall use of the library. Ken explained that there were about 15,000 patrons last year.

Commissioner Davidson asked if the Library is free to users. Ken stated that it is currently free to all users. Commissioner Davidson asked if there is a rate to use the swimming pool. Ken stated that there is a fee and there is a new fee structure for the pool to be implemented July 1st.

Melinda Hassinger, 68011 Lower Cove Road, Cove, stated that there are a lot of things that she loves about the County and one is the library. They appreciate the resources. They attend the library a few times a month. They like to check out the audio books. They have many friends that live in the Cove area that use the library on a regular basis. They have many programs that they do such as craft hour, author visits, and reading programs. She supports putting the library as a priority for funding.

Greg Bogart, 59154 Five Point Creek Road, La Grande, explained that he has a passion for the youth in the community. He has spent the last year on the La Grande School District Board. He has seen a lot of children that have no money. As a community resource the library is essential. He asked what happens to the children who come from a family that does not have financial capabilities to have their own books at home or to pay a fee for the facility. The community needs to take care of each other. He gave examples uses of the library that he has had in his family. The public library is

an essential asset to this community. If not to read books but to have a safe environment for children to come to.

Beverly White, 62876 Monroe Lane, taught many years in La Grande. They have a family literacy center at the library. In the summer they provide one on one tutoring. The children come from many of the communities within the County.

Assessment/Taxation

Linda Hill, Assessor/Tax Collector, gave an overview of her budget. She explained that she is increasing her budget line item for Cartography by \$1,000. As the real estate market rebounds it will increase mapping changes which effects the cost of these services. There is an increase in the telephone line item to give the employees a \$20 cell phone usage allowance for each of her employees. This is for safety reasons while the employees are out in the field.

Commissioner Howard asked what the extra help line item is for. Linda explained that once the tax statements are out it is a busy time. In the past they have hired one or two people to help during that busy time. That line item is there if there is a need for extra help.

Accounting/Treasurer

Shelley Burgess explained that the staff in the accounting department provides all of the Accounts Receivable/Payable and Payroll for the entire County. The revenue that comes into that department is a minimal amount from the Assessment and Taxation funding. They process all of the tax collections to the taxing districts. There is a small staff that is very productive within this department.

Clerk

Robin Church, Clerk, explained that all services of the Clerk's office are mandated by the State other than the passport services. She gave an overview of her budget. Her budget is less than last year because they finished a large microfilm project last year. They anticipate increases in election costs starting January 2016. She also has a part-time employee in her budget.

Board of Commissioners

Shelley Burgess explained that in this department there are the three Commissioners, the Administrative Officer and 1.5 Senior Department Specialists. She is proposing to add a position to the Commissioner's office as a Communication Specialist. This position would provide public information, communications and constituent services for the county. This is the only addition to the budget.

Bob Coulter asked what the personnel benefits increase is for. Shelley explained that it is for the benefits for the new position as well as changes from the current staff benefits.

Facilities

Shelley Burgess explained that this budget is for the maintenance and operating of the County buildings. There are four buildings on site and a few small maintenance uses for County owned buildings. She explained that there is a new building added to the facilities fund for the court house. There is a change to the capital outlay for parking lot improvements. They have found that there will need to be a decrease in funds for parking improvements that are no longer going to be done.

Computer Services

Jason Fouts Information Services Manager, stated that there are 6 servers and 130 work stations that he maintains. They have limited revenues into the department. The department consists of one full time employee and two part time employees. He explained that he increased some line items to replace hardware within the County.

Commissioner Howard asked how the material and services line item decreased by so much. Jason explained that there were a lot of functions that were contracted out and he has been able to bring those functions in-house.

District Attorney

Kelsie McDaniel, District Attorney, stated that they are changing asking for a few new expenditures. They have three departments within their office; Legal Services, Support Enforcement and Victim Impact Services. They have 9.5 FTE which does not include the District Attorney. They prosecuted 916 cases, 213 probation violations and the DUI rates are down 50% in this calendar year. They are supported by several grants. Their fees are governed by Statute. They have included additional line items for outreach prevention programs, effective media messaging as well as increasing the travel and training budget. Kelsie explained that they would like to add outreach to the community and have several ideas to initiate the outreach. The additional media and material line item would include additional resources on topics that are important to citizens such as bullying, elder abuse, social media and others. The last additional line item would be for travel and training for the staff to attend additional trainings.

Juvenile

Ben Morgan, Juvenile Director, gave an overview of the work that his department does. He explained that they do some prevention work with youth as well as oversee delinquent youth within Union County. Ben explained that there is a grant that they received that is not included in the budget. The grant is for workforce support. They are allocating more funding towards prevention.

Bob Coulter asked what the amount of the grant is. Ben explained that it is \$100,000 for the biennium.

Commissioner Howard asked if the 24 hour crisis support is burdensome on the staff. Ben explained that their staff rotate the responsibility and it seems to work out well.

Commissioner Davidson asked what type of work will be done through the grant. Ben explained that they do workforce training such as resume building and there is some workforce reimbursement for the place of employment that employs one of their clients. The reimbursement would pay for training hours.

Planning

Shelley Burgess gave an overview of the Planning Department. She explained that there are no changes to the budget. There will be some staffing changes within the department in the next fiscal year.

Bob Coulter asked about the increase in funding to the department director. Shelley explained that the position is budgeted with a higher increase in benefits because of the vacancy that will be filled next fiscal year.

Emergency Services

J.B. Brock, Emergency Manager, stated that his department is state mandated and is federally supported. He gave an overview of his department. He rewrote the Emergency Operations Plan. He is involved in the Wildlife Protection Plan and emergency exercises. He has also established a new emergency notification system. The only new line item is for the new emergency notification system.

Commissioner Howard asked what was included in his personnel services line item. J.B. explained that it includes the benefits for the 1.5 employees within his department.

Special Accounts

Shelley Burgess explained that this fund provides for costs not specifically charged to each general fund department such as property insurance, legal services, auditing, postage machine lease, Association of Oregon Counties and National Association of Counties dues. This fund also includes support to programs not operated directly by the county such as libraries, senior programs, veteran's serviced, public health, alcohol and drug treatment, rural health nurse, predator control, blue mountain community college and the cherry fruit fly program. The personnel costs within this fund are for the Vector Control Program. The employees are paid through the county system as county employees and all expenses are reimbursed by the Vector Control District.

Center for Human Development

Rico Weber, Carrie Brogoitti, Dwight Dill and Byron Whipple came to discuss the services that are provided by CHD through the contracted services with the County. They are asking for a 4.5% increase in funding. Carrie stated that they are grateful for the county's contribution to the public health department. There are five core services that they are required to do. She gave an overview of what services are provided by the Public Health Department through the general health, public health authority, school-based health centers and health network for rural schools.

Commissioner McClure asked what the staffing level is in the Public Health Department. Carrie explained that they have 15 staff.

Byron Whipple explained that he has about 2500 veterans that he serves within the County. Commissioner Davidson asked how many dollars are coming to the veterans within the community. He estimates that it is \$1.3 million.

Dwight Dill explained that the funding they receive from the County is for indigent alcohol and drug treatment. The state has reduced the funding. CHD has requirements that they cannot turn people away on their inability to pay. Brodney is currently in treatment court and received services at CHD. He shared his story of the success that he has had with the CHD alcohol and drug program. Dwight explained that there is a waiting list to use the services.

Predator Control

Patrick Smith, District Supervisor for the USDA Wildlife Services Program, explained that this primary function is to provide wildlife damage management to protect agriculture, property, human health and safety and natural resources. Curt Mattson, Wildlife Specialist for USDA Wildlife Services in Union County, explained that there are 86,400 acres of property that he has work agreements on which is private land, forest service and state lands. He assist resource owners through direct control and technical assistance. He explained that the emerging issues that he sees in the area are wolves urban mule deer and elk in the Valley. The request is for .56 FTE. In the past the county has funded \$20,000 and the private land owners have tried to fund \$10,000 with the County willing to match what the private citizens contribute. He explained that they have had difficulty raising the \$10,000 in private funds so they need to figure out a better system for collecting money from the producers.

Ron Dake explained that he has raised sheep within the valley for 35 years. There were quite a few years that there was no wildlife services program and those years he was devastated by the predator This is the first year that he has not had a loss yet. He is actively working to collect money right now. He appreciates the County's support in the past and he hopes that it will continue.

Transfers

Shelley explained that this fund is used to transfer funds to special funds. The special funds are revenues received for specific purposes.

Sheriff Office

Sheriff Rasmussen explained that the major objectives for the Sheriff's office are to continue the community policing programs including Animal Control with the cities within the County. He explained that they recently took over the mediation services program and has received grant funding to support that program. The Sheriff stated that the City of La Grande billed the Sheriff's department for \$22,000 for the evidence room

maintenance and \$8,500 to process the concealed weapons permits. He would like to combine those duties to an existing part-time position.

Cedric asked why the City is charging a fee for the concealed weapons permits. The Sheriff explained that the background checks are done through the dispatch center because they are LEDS certified.

Commissioner McClure asked why the City has started to charge for maintaining the evidence room. The Sheriff explained that it is based on the cases that the Sheriff handled in the past. He will be training his employees to do the evidence process. Commissioner McClure asked when the last time was that the County sat down to look at the services that are provided to the City of La Grande and the changes in those costs. The Sheriff explained it has been a long time if ever. Commissioner McClure asked the Sheriff to meet with the Administrative Officer to re-evaluate the costs of the services that the County is providing.

Corrections

Sheriff Rasmussen stated that there is a change in the extra help line item is used for the reserve deputies. They have had a lot of savings due to not having to pay the overtime rate for the full time deputies. The Sheriff stated that he will be raising the hourly wage of the reserve deputies and that change is reflected in the budget line item for extra help. He explained that Measure 3194 are State funds that are used when inmates offend and have to be put back in jail. He uses those funds to ship the inmates to the Umatilla County Jail because the jail is always at capacity here. He explained that they are reducing their Jail cook position to a part-time position. They are installing a new camera system to help with issues that they have had in the jail and they hope that will help with medical costs.

General Revenue

These are the funds that are used to support the bulk of the programs within the general fund. This fund includes primary revenues of property taxes, payment in lieu of taxes, interest earnings, and state shared revenue such as liquor and cigarette taxes.

Bob Coulter asked why the liquor tax is budgeted at a lower rate than collected last year. Shelley explained that the State has continued to reduce funding so she has budgeted at the reduced amount received.

Public Comments

Lois Barry, 60688 Morgan Lake Road, La Grande, stated that this process has been very interesting for her and she appreciates all of the information. She has a few questions for the committee. She would like to have an index of acronyms that are commonly used. She asked if everything that is in the other funds that will be discussed tomorrow's meeting dedicated funds and cannot be shifted. Shelley stated that is correct. Lois asked if the MERA is receiving wind farm funds and Public Works funds does that mean if that those funds can be shifted into the fund and not taken out of that

fund. Shelley explained that the funds that go into the MERA fund that are dedicated funds are grant funds. The funds Lois mentioned are the funds that the County has put in from other sources to make that fund balance. By law the funds all have to be balanced. There could be a decision made from the budget committee to choose not to move the wind farm funding to another fund. The MERA specific funds are dedicated. Shelley explained that the MERA fund will be discussed at the meeting tomorrow night and that information may help clear up questions Lois has. Commissioner Davidson stated that one thing to remember about MERA is that when the decision was made to purchase the property the promise was made to the voters that there wouldn't be ad valorem property taxes spent on that project. It would be funded with other sources of funding. The wind farm funds are discretionary funds. Lois stated that there are often contingency funds within each fund and asked what the contingency is for the general fund. Shelley stated that she is anticipating that amount to be \$300,000. Commissioner Davidson explained that the contingency of \$300,000 in a general fund of \$9.6 million is only 3.1%. By comparison when he was at the City of La Grande they ran a similar sized general fund and usually wanted an appropriated ending fund balance of at least a \$1 million with contingency being more than that. Lois then asked why there was no funding for CASA in the proposed budget. Shelley explained that there is no longer a CASA program in Union County but is not being operated as a regional program. There was no funding request received from CASA.

The budget meeting was recessed until 3pm Thursday, May 28th.

The budget meeting was reconvened with all Commissioners and Budget members present.

Public Works

Doug Wright, Public Works Director, explained that the major objectives are road and bridge materials at \$500,000 and controlling noxious weeds at \$80,000. He is requesting to split out the fund exchange dollars into their own line item because those can only be used for roads. The capital purchases that he is proposing are bridge replacements, buy out of the current loader lease and replacement of two pickup trucks and a 3000 gallon water tank. He is also looking at purchasing a used belly dump trailer.

Commissioner McClure asked if he would be replacing the Indian Creek bridge. Doug explained that they are just going to do maintenance on the bridge and not replace it at this time.

Bob Coulter asked Doug to explain the Palmer Junction project. Doug explained that Palmer Junction is the county and Forest Service access to the Umatilla National Forest. The project competed at the state level and received \$6 million. He explained that the project should be able to go to bid January of next year. He had to secure a loan for the match on the project. The funds from the loan will only be used for match if needed.

Bicycle Path/Project Fund

Shelley Burgess explained that each year the County receives funds for bicycle or pedestrian projects. This year there is no project anticipated.

The other part of this fund is for projects. The project in this fund is for the Courthouse. There is a carryover in this fund because there was \$2 million received from the Oregon Judicial Department and \$750,000 as County contribution to the project.

The other funds are for the Eastern Oregon Counties Association which includes ten eastern Oregon counties. Shelley explained that the ten counties each contribute to the Association and have found that pooling their resources together it helps to impact the processes effecting those counties.

Parks Fund

Doug Wright explained that he oversees the parks and Sean Chambers, Parks Coordinator, delivers the services. He explained that the major objectives for the parks fund are to apply dust abatement, widen and lengthen the RV spaces at Pilcher Creek, improve camp grounds at Wolf Creek, and replace the boat dock at Thief Valley Reservoir.

Commissioner McClure stated that the Park funds come from the taxes on recreational vehicles. The parks in Union County qualify for those funds.

Commissioner Howard asked if there are funds set aside for vandalism. Sean explained that they have not had issues with vandalism at their parks. If there is any vandalism that would need addressed financially there are funds within the materials and services line item to cover those costs.

Animal Control

This is a program that is supported by general fund. The City of La Grande, City of Elgin, and the City of Union contribute to the program. There is a .5 FTE employee and a .75 FTE employee within the program. The contractual services line item is to pay for animals that are impounded.

County Schools

This fund is to be distributed to the schools from local, state and federal funding. These funds have to come through the County and cannot be paid directly to the schools.

Fund 220 (Safe Communities Coalition)

This fund has multiple purposes. The primary purpose is the Safe Communities Coalition. The grant funds a director, clerical position and events to reduce the alcohol and tobacco use in youth. There are also funds for the Healthy Families program. The services for the program are provided by Umatilla Head Start. The programs will all be done by the Early Learning Hubs but the County is still a pass through agency at this

time. There are funds for the Drug Free Relay that is put on by the Safe Communities Coalition.

Court Security

The revenues in this fund are received from court fees and fines and are used for court security. The funds are used for the court security officer that is contracted by the State from the Sheriff's office.

Wind Project Fund

This fund is where the community service fees from the Elkhorn wind project. A portion of those fees are distributed to the taxing districts within the area. There is an agreed upon formula to determine the amount of funds each district receives. The rest of the funds can be used for the County to distribute as decided by the County. The projects that are being proposed to receive funding this year is the Elgin Health District, Fair Support, MERA and Buffalo Peak Golf Course.

STF Fund

This fund is the Special Transportation Fund. The County receives funding from the Oregon Department of Transportation for transportation for seniors and people with disabilities. There are currently two grants received in this fund and distributed to entities who provide the transportation services.

Community Corrections

Travis Miller, Community Corrections Director, stated that they are receiving funding for the Violence Against Women grant and has been reapplied for. This grant funds .5 FTE within his department and allows the department to supervise domestic violence offenders. They also receive funding for .5 FTE of a sex offender Probation Officer position from the rural sexual assault grant. They use Bill 1145 money to pay the Sheriff's office for jail beds for clients that are revoked from probation. They also fund the work crew supervisor position. He stated that there are seven full time employees within his department. He is requesting to spend \$50,000 on a new vehicle. They are looking for an SUV and would like to install a cage in the vehicle. The contingency is high due to collecting and saving client service fees. He would like to save those funds to have when their budgets are reduced by the State in the future to be able to maintain services.

Commissioner Howard asked how many clients they serve in a year. Travis stated that they have 429 total clients there are 265 are active. Travis explained that the numbers are up this year for active clients.

Crime Victim Program

Kelsie McDaniel explained that the Crime Victim Program are constitutionally mandated services. The funds are received through fines from federal and state offenders and the Violence Against Women Grant. The numbers are showing that they are coming under budget this year and they are asking for no changes in this coming budget.

MERA

Sean Chambers stated that the major objectives are to manage sustainable grazing, manage timber, implement forest consultant, maintain trails, maintain and improve signage, construct new trails, develop motocross track, carry out existing grants and seek other grant opportunities. He would like to develop a foldout map of MERA.

Commissioner Howard asked how the grazing lease is determined. Sean explained that he went through a process and requested proposals from potential grazing lessees.

Cedric Shanks asked if the cows are in a fenced area. Sean stated that they are not in a fenced area although there is a border fence around the perimeter of the property. There is one cross fence to close off the Red Apple area to help control the two pastures. He has signs to help encourage closing gates within the property.

Sheriff Reserve Program Fund

The Sheriff Reserve Program receives funding from the event in which the reserves are used as security. Most of the reserves are volunteer and non-paid but they do a few events that are paid events. Those events pay for the security that is provided. This budget was created to accept the fees that are collected for those events and are paid to the reserves that work those events.

Title III Fund

This fund comes from the Secure Rural Schools funding allocation. These funds can be used for Search and Rescue, Community Service Work Camps, Easement Purchases, Forest Related Education Opportunities, Fire Prevention and County Planning and Community Forestry. The County accepts applications for the funding and determines the eligibility of the proposals. These funds can only be used for specific purposes.

Economic Development

This fund receives revenues from transient room tax and state lottery. The transient room tax is distributed through an Ordinance that was established to pay the funds to specific entities. The lottery funds can be used for economic development or tourism within the county. Shelley Burgess explained that there are several loans within this department.

Bob Coulter asked if the County is actively promoting the Baum Industrial Park. Shelley explained that UCEDC is actively promoting that location as well as a local real estate agent.

Community Development Loan Fund

This fund was used to sponsor a housing rehabilitation program. At the time the County was eligible to administer the program but it can now be done by a private non-profit. These are left over funds that need to be transferred to the non-profit that currently administers the program.

Watershed Fund

The County employs the watershed employees from revenues received from the BPA and other funding sources. This is a self-balancing fund.

Agri Services

This fund has revenues to support the assistant watermaster and materials and services within the funds. These are grant money for the purposes of water management and reporting. The County collects the funds and uses those funds to pay for the employee. The contingency is grant money that has not been expended. The money can only be used for the watermaster services and the needs vary from year to year so the revenues are not always expended every year.

Non-Med Transportation

This fund is a pass through grant. This is for non-medical transportation for Medicaid clients. The match money comes from the non-profit that provides the services. There are no County funds used in this fund.

Human Services Program

The revenues in this fund are received from the State and are contracted through the Center for Human Development. This fund also houses the CARE coordinator positions. There are two positions that serve the school districts. Their services link the families with services.

Mediation/Conciliation Fund

This fund is operated by the State courts. These funds have to come to the County. They are collected from fees through the court system. The State requires any couple filing dissolution of marriage to participate in mediation. The services are paid for through the revenues collected. There is no staff expense only contract services.

Ambulance Fund

This fund is remaining from an Air Ambulance Levy. These funds can only be used for ambulance providers. It is currently available for education needs and is dispersed through the Ambulance Advisory Committee.

Library Project Fund

This fund has remained after a completion of a major project. There was a library district formation project. They received grant funds to go through what a library district would look like. The funds are available for library purposes.

911 Fund

Shelley Burgess explained that Union County receives the 911 tax for all of the communities within the County. There is a contract with the City of La Grande who provides the 911 services. The fee is based on the budget submitted by the City of La Grande.

RAC Maintenance

This fund receives rent funds from Community Connections who utilizes the Riveria Activity Center that is owned by the County. These funds are used to provide maintenance to the building.

Law Library Fund

This fund is from fees that come to the County from the State of Oregon. They are only allowed to be used for law library expenses. The current law library is located at EOU. They submit a budget to operate that library. There is a project proposed this year to use these funds. The projects are to purchase the necessary subscriptions and titles to maintain the legal resources, to codify Union County ordinances providing more efficient access and to expand law library access in the new Circuit Court building by providing kiosks.

Drug Court

This is the treatment court fund. It is operated through the State courts and they receive grants through the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission. There is an adult and juvenile treatment court program. The funds are used to pay for one program coordinator, drug and alcohol testing as well polygraph testing.

Building Reserve Fund

This fund is established to accumulate funds to address major building expenses. There are no additions proposed into this fund this year. There is an appropriation of \$25,000 is included to allow for major repairs or improvements if the need arises during the year.

Senior Center Maintenance Fund

Funds are received from a monthly rent payment received from Community Connections. The funds are used for building maintenance and repair.

County Fair

This budget comes from the Fair coordinator and comes from the Fair Board recommendation. It is required to be within the county budget.

Justice Court

This program was set up to help generate fees to help offset law enforcement costs. There is an elected Justice of the Peace that is paid for out of this fund. There is also one staff. There are some transfers out of this fund to go to the public safety programs, the District Attorney's office and the Sheriff's Department. One change this year is that the City of Elgin has arranged that all of their citations now go through the Justice Court.

Clerk Equipment Fund

These funds are set aside out of the Clerk's budget to use on equipment for the Clerk's office or special projects for the department. There are no projects proposed for this year.

AT&T Fund

These funds are set aside out of the Assessor's budget to use for equipment or projects in the Assessor's office. There are some funds set aside in case the need arises for some assessment and taxation changes that may come this year.

Vehicle Reserve

This fund was established to accumulate funds for vehicle replacement as needed in order to provide county services. Funds are transferred from general fund and revenues are also accumulated from vehicle usage charges assessed to departments.

GIS Fund

This fund receives revenues from recording fees to utilize and develop computer-based mapping. There is a contract with a GIS specialist to help improve the GIS system. The major objective is the creation of a web interface for GIS. The new interface will make it easy for any employee on campus to access the GIS data and tools through a web browser eliminating the need for extensive software. It will also be beneficial by making the data easily accessible to any internal user without needing knowledge of the GIS software.

Transit Hub Maintenance

Funds are received from a monthly rent payment received from Community Connections. The funds are used for building maintenance and repair.

Communications System Fund

These funds are to support maintenance and upkeep to the county operated communication system. Emergency services constructed the communication system through federal grants. A user fee is implemented for the 911 user board designed to maintain the investment. There is an expense of \$5,000 to contractual services to support radio updates and programming. There is \$20,000 budgeted annually in order to facilitate a potential radio replacement or maintenance if needed.

Buffalo Peak Golf Course

Shelley Burgess explained that the Buffalo Peak Golf Course Fund is broken out into three sections; anticipated revenue, maintenance and clubhouse. This budget is put together based on previous history. She has tried to cut back expenditure as much as she could based on the previous costs. This fund is not self-supporting. There is a transfer in from the wind energy and the economic development to support the Golf Course. It is not currently operating in a position that covers the expenses.

Bob Coulter asked about the difference in revenues through the years. Shelley explained that the fund has been operating at a loss for a number of years so it is difficult to see what revenues have come in this year. There is a negative beginning fund balance so that has to be taken out to see what the revenues are.

Cedric Shanks asked how long the County is going to keep throwing money into the Course. Commissioner McClure stated that Cedric is a golfer and asked what his opinion is. Cedric explained that at close to \$1 million in the hole he would say it is close to the end. Bob Coulter explained that there is only \$68,000 in the hole this year but accumulated it is about \$1 million. Shelley explained that the County has made a little bit of progress in the fact that the Course is losing less but it is a continued loss.

Commissioner McClure explained that part of the issue is that the County has a loan with the State and there are agreements with that loan that have to be paid off before the Course could close down or be sold to an interested party. Bob Coulter asked how much the County owes on that loan. Commissioner Davidson stated that he believes the County owes about \$1.5 million or more. Commissioner McClure stated that the question then becomes if the County cuts the losses and closes it. It is used as a dispersal system of the affluent of the City of Union so that complicates it as well.

Commissioner Davidson explained that if the Course's revenues and expenditures were looked at with a business standpoint the County would find a way to cease the operation and cut the losses. The County knows that the capital indebtedness will have to be paid back to the State. There is an obligation to the City of Union for the partnership that needs to be more fully understood. In his mind the County would lose less money if the Course is given to the City of Union and refinance the debt to separate the debt from the asset. The City could then operate it as a golf course and subsidize it with their rates or they could irrigate the areas. The Course has never truly approached paying its own way.

Cedric Shanks asked Shelley if she stated that the Course is losing less. Shelley stated that it depends on the year and the golf season. She stated that it is not consistently going down. Commissioner Davidson explained that it is very weather dependent. Cedric asked if the County could have someone look at the Course and project out and see how many years out to pay its way.

Bob Coulter asked if the Course is paying its own way even without a loan payment. Commissioner Davidson stated that it is not.

Commissioner Howard stated that profitability for a publicly owned course is not the same as profitability for a private course. He has been working on a plan to see how long the County can continue on this trajectory. He wants to have the issues fixed within a certain term of years. He is not at a point to have that term set and what changes would need to be made but he feels he will have more information by the end of this season.

Commissioner Davidson explained that the infrastructure will also need to be looked at because as it ages it will need to be updated and maintained which will cost money as well.

Dispute Resolution

This fund is fully funded through a grant program. The grant comes from University of Oregon for mediation services.

Surveyor

Rick Robinson stated there are two parts to his fund. The first fund is for Monumentation. This request is higher to work on getting the corners in Union County completed. He is suspecting that next year the fund will go down. They have used the fund for a GIS system. The contractual fund is to update the database for the surveys, subdivisions and partitions filed in the County They furnish the Assessor with the current electronic copies of the tax maps with the surveys shown.

Map Fund

This fund was established to set aside funds to develop quality county base maps. The goal was accomplished and transferred for expenditures in the Assessment and Taxation budget for an overall map digitization project. This year the remaining balance in the fund has been budgeted for implementation of a technology upgrade for assessment functions currently under development for five-county cooperative.

Airport Capital Improvement Fund

This fund is to receive and expend funds for capital improvement projects at the La Grande/Union County Airport. The major objectives within this fund is for the final completion of the Runway Safety Area Project, the completion of Runway 12-30 overlay project, preparation of an updated Airport Master Plan through grant funding and to continue to collect rent from the Forest Service to pay the debt service on the new fire cache and dispatch center constructed for their use.

Airport Operations

This fund maintains and develops the Airport for general aviation purposes and provides on-site services and products as needed. They provide for after-hours calls. The major objectives within this fund is to maintain a high quality FBO and increase fuel sales. There are currently six part-time employees to provide customer service and grounds maintenance. There is a capital purchase of a brush mower to maintain the grounds.

Commissioner Davidson asked why the year to date hangar rent is up this year. Shelley explained that there has been delinquent rent collected this year.

Public Comments

Lois Barry, 60688 Morgan Lake Road, La Grande, stated that she feels that it is important for her to represent citizens within the County that in some ways are represented in the budget and some ways not. She stated that everyone sitting in the room is a privileged group. Everyone here has had opportunity to be educated and go to the doctor when needed. There is discretionary funding when wanting to go have a good time. She wants to encourage the budget committee to think outside the budget. Every year the budget is like the previous year. She stated that they are good budgets

but she thinks the County has reached a point where there should be a new line item in the budget. She would like the line item to be for quality of life in Union County for people whose lives are constrained by their economic circumstances. 18% of the residents in Union County are below the poverty level. About 50% of the children in Union County are eligible for free or reduced lunch. She is glad that the Committee decided to fund the Elgin Health Clinic. That is something that the County needs to be funding to increase the quality of life for any number of people who live in Union County. At the moment she is not seeing anything, even with all of the wonderful services done by CHD, that is going to keep the teenagers busy this summer. If there is no line item for any suggested programs that come than it cannot be funded by the County. She feels it is important to let Union County display its generosity to people who pump our gas and stock the shelves in the stores and serve the food when eating out. She doesn't see that concern on how people will have a happy life in Union County if their parents don't have enough money to take them to the three county parks which are considerably outside the main population area. Most of the underprivileged do not have boats. It is not a possibility for them. The Committee heard stories yesterday of programs that are helping individuals. She read letter to the Committee about a time that she gave a scholarship to a child to attend camp. She stated that is the kind of opportunity that she is hoping Union County can have the generosity to think about in terms of quality of life. Things have turned around for senior citizens. She asked if there are programs in Union County for children. She stated that there is the Riveria Activity Center who serves children age 5-12 years old and their parents have to pay \$2.50 an hour for that program.

Lois stated that the renewable energy fund drizzled away but she noticed that the projected OTEC bill for the Joseph Annex building is \$37,500. She stated that there are considerable subsidies if solar panels are installed. It would be worth getting into. The County could transfer money back into the renewable energy fund so people can use OTEC and other government programs.

Lois feels that the quality of life funds could be found in the MERA budget. She feels that the MERA budget is bigger than it needs to be. The office supply line item is budgeted at \$9,500. She stated that the actual cost of office supplies was \$145. The budgeted amount for this coming fiscal year is \$6,000. Lois stated that Shelley explained that the wind farm funds are being transferred to the MERA budget in order to balance the budget. She feels the MERA budget is bigger than it needs to be. The MERA is not serving the low income and underserved population. She stated that the County can use the discretionary funds for the citizens of the County and not subsidizing MERA.

Sean Chambers, MERA Coordinator, explained that the office supply line item does not just have the typical office supplies but it does include the office administration costs as well such as secretarial support and oversight from the Public Works Director. He explained that his department is primarily grant funded. The grant is on a reimbursement basis. Sean stated that the grant reimbursement is not received for this

fiscal year until later in this current fiscal year. The actual numbers are not including all of the reimbursements. Lois stated that she understands that the County is interested in the forest management program but Sean must have chosen the most expensive services available. Shelley explained that the \$138,000 in the budget for the forest management is not just for the consultant fees. When the consultant sees that a thinning project needs to be done the County will then pay a contractor to do the thinning project. That amount is for the entire project. The idea of the project is to only expend what can be generated in revenue. If the project costs less than that amount allotted than the County will spend less.

Commissioner Davidson explained that there is a program done through the Title II funding a youth work crew in association with the Training and Employment Consortium and the Forest Service which gets at risk kids out in the forest doing improvement projects. That may help address some of the concerns Lois is addressing to the Committee. Commissioner Davidson stated that there is far more demand than there is money to fund everything the County would like to fund.

Bob Coulter stated that what they are doing as a community is maintaining the quality of life so that citizens that can give funds programs that help this underprivileged like Lois did. He feels that is better than a government funding the programs. He would argue that the Committee is doing what Lois is asking but with a different scenario. They are providing quality and for those citizens that can afford to assist other people can do so. Lois asked if that that means that the County will depend on private generosity as opposed to the County funds. Bob stated that is his wish and understands that was how Lois was able to help the child in the letter she read.

Commissioner McClure thanked Lois for coming and participating in the process. He believes that Union County provides more support than she realizes. Union County participates in the Riveria Activity Center, Senior Center, Public Transportation and others. The County provides a lot of services to this community through support of the programs. The County does not participate as directly as Lois may think it should. He feel that it is better for an NGO to do that work and support the relationship between the County and NGO's that do that work.

Commissioner Howard thanked Lois for exploring the issues and thanked her for encouraging the debate. He stated that the government never spends a dollar as well as the private industry does. He stated that in January he had an accident where he ended up in the hospital. He takes exception to the statement that all of the people present are affluent. He has lived in poverty as a single father and a single man despite his education. He looked up into a lot of faces in January and a good number of them were people that live in Union County. They saved his quality of life. Government may get a bad rap from him sometimes but the people in the community have a quality of life that is aided by the County government.

Valerie Morrow, 403 O Avenue, La Grande, asked what type of secretary services are done for MERA. Sean explained that the Public Works secretary that does the billing, grant reporting and payroll for his department.

Valerie asked who owns the sidewalk in front of the police station and the new courthouse. Commissioner Davidson stated that it is City Right of Way right now. Valerie asked when Gary, the Union County Maintenance worker, goes and cleans that sidewalk does the City pay him or does the County pay him for cleaning the sidewalk. Commissioner Davidson explained that the City of La Grande and most cities expect the adjacent property owners to maintain the sidewalks. Commissioner Howard stated that he is not sure this is relevant to the budget process. Valerie stated that she is wanting to know which line item in the budget Gary washing the sidewalks would be under. Commissioner Davidson stated that it would be under facilities maintenance. Valerie asked if that would be under that line item even though the City owns the sidewalk. Shelley explained that the County is responsible for maintaining the sidewalks from hazards or debris as the property owners and is a routine function of the facilities department. It would be part of his salary for whatever function he is providing on behalf of the County. Valerie asked if chalk would be considered a hazard. Commissioner Davidson asked if that is pertinent to the budget discussion. Valerie feels that it is as a tax payer. Commissioner Davidson stated that Commissioner Howard expressed his doubts and he agrees. He asked Valerie if she has a comment on the budget. He asked her to confine her remarks to the budget. Valerie stated that she believes her questions have been pertaining to the budget.

Valerie stated that there were two applications received to sit on the budget committee and one of the applications was vetoed due to a long standing history or tradition and that this particular person was told the position was already filled. She asked if there is a statute that addresses that the vacancy should go to a business person. Commissioner Davidson explained that is an issue for the County Commission. It was an appointment to this Committee. Commissioner McClure was expressing an opinion. There had been some traditional representation. He feels that Bob Coulter is an extremely well qualified member of the community. He was voted upon and approved. Commissioner Davidson asked Valerie if she has a question about the proposed budget. Valerie feels that is a relevant question at a relevant time.

Valerie stated that she has not had the opportunity to read the over 200 page budget. She stated that the current planning director, Hanley Jenkins, is retiring and a new planning director will come on. She believes that Hanley will stay on to mentor that new person. She asked if that is correct. Commissioner Davidson stated that is not correct. Commissioner Howard stated that this question is still not relevant to the budget.

Valerie asked if there will be consideration given to having another person such as Bill Rosholt who did the six month stint to get Buffalo Peak out of the red. She is asking if there is money within the budget to bring someone in comparable to the amount Mr. Rosholt received. Commissioner Howard asked if she is recommending that action or is

she opposed to having a consultant. He explained that type of conversation would be relevant by taking a position of some kind. She explained that approximately six years ago Bill Rosholt was given a six month trial to bring Buffalo Peak Golf Course out of the red and she doesn't know if there was ever any information publicly that said he did a good job or he didn't do a good job. She asked if there were positive results from Mr. Rosholt's performance during the six months in the position would that position be considered again. Commissioner Davidson explained that Bill Rosholt was hired at the County before Commissioner Davidson became a Commissioner. He was hired on as the economic development director. He left the County as an employee when he ran for office. He is no longer an employee so Commissioner Davidson sees no reason to refer to him. If Valerie is asking the question on whether the County would consider hiring a consultant to work with Commissioner Howard and the team at Buffalo Peak to see if efficiencies could be found he would defer to Commissioner Howard as the liaison of that department. Commissioner Howard stated that coming from here forward he is depending on volunteers to help him do some research.

Discussion and Deliberation

Shelley is suggesting some adjustments be made to the budget. She is requesting that the Juvenile budget be increased by \$50,000 to accept the Youth Development Grant as revenue and the expenditures be increased by \$40,000 into the personnel line item and \$10,000 for the workforce incentives. She is requesting that the Corrections budget be increased in the extra help line item to \$85,000 and to reduce the inmate overflow line item to \$100,000 which is a \$10,000 decrease.

Gene Hardy moved approval to amend the budget to show the changes presented. Bob Coulter seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Davidson asked the Budget committee if there was anything in the budget that they would like to see removed or reduced.

Commissioner McClure stated that the rent on the law enforcement building should be re-examined. Commissioner Davidson stated that he supports looking at the rent that is received. He feels that is something that the Commissioners can take away from this process and should be separate from the Budget process.

Commissioner Howard asked about how to capture fees from animal licenses. Shelley explained that license fees were not included in the budget because another facility collects those fees now. She would think the committee would like to keep those funds within the Animal Control fund and use the fees collected for those services.

Commissioner Davidson explained that the County provides funds for the libraries throughout the county through dedicated funds.

Commissioner Howard stated that he would like to see a specific request from the library and have it become more of a negotiation. He would like to leave it out of the budget and invite the representatives back for further discussion.

Commissioner Davidson explained that if it is left out of the budget it takes away the ability for the Commissioners to fund them in other ways.

It was a consensus of the group to leave the amount that has been designated to the La Grande library in the budget and not increase the allocation. The Committee felt there should be negotiations before the funds are released.

Commissioner Davidson asked what the Committee felt about funding the Blue Mountain Translator District request.

Commissioner McClure stated that he feels that the County should not put any funds into the project if Baker County does not contribute any funds.

Bob Coulter pointed out that the liquor tax revenue collected last year was more than what is proposed in the budget. Shelley explained she has to estimate what the collection will be.

Bob Coulter moved to allocate funding the Blue Mountain Translator District request of \$5,000 and raise the liquor tax revenue by \$5,000 subject to the match by Baker County. Commissioner McClure seconded. Motion carried with Commissioner Howard voting; No.

Commissioner Davidson asked what the Committee thought about funding the Safe Communities Coalition request. He explained that if the County would be able to put a tax on the marijuana that those tax funds should be used for the education of marijuana use.

Bob asked Dwight Dill if he knew what kind of State laws or funds go towards prevention or education of marijuana use. He stated that he did hear that there will be a State tax and some of the funds from that would be used for prevention.

Commissioner McClure suggested to add a line item into the budget to fund this if funds are received for prevention.

Commissioner Davidson asked Dwight what amount of money CHD is spending on prevention. He thinks that it is between \$50,000-\$75,000 per year.

Dwight thought that if the State were to use some of the taxes for prevention programs the funds would likely come to CHD and they could use those funds for projects like the request from the Safe Communities Coalition.

The Committee decided that CHD could fund this request if they receive funds from the State of Oregon.

Bob Coulter moved to approve the budget for publication. Gene Hardy seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Wilhelm
Sr. Dept. Specialist II