

Union County Board of Commissioners
Joseph Building Annex Conference Room
Regular Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, June 17, 2020

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

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

Public Comments

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, opened the public comments section by reading emailed comments received from Union County residents.

The first comment read is dated June 16, 2020 from Janet Marrs of Cove, Oregon regarding COVID-19. Mrs. Marrs relayed her disappointment in the Commissioners by holding a private meeting in Prairie City, which she believes brought the COVID outbreak in Union County. She also relayed that an apology would be appreciated.

Commissioner Beverage joined the meeting by teleconference at 9:07 am.

The second comment read is dated June 16, 2020 from Matt Cooper of La Grande, Oregon regarding COVID-19 and the meeting held in Prairie City.

The third comment read was from Lori Shields of Cove, Oregon regarding the outbreak of COVID-19. Mrs. Shields thanked the Commissioners for their work in the community, as their work is often thankless.

The fourth comment read is dated June 16, 2020 from Cathy Nowack of Union, Oregon regarding the outbreak of COVID-19 and the meeting held in Prairie City the week before. Ms. Nowack asked that the Commissioners consider a sincere apology to Union County residents regarding lack of leadership.

The fifth comment read is dated June 16, 2020 from Sandra Roth of Cove, Oregon regarding the outbreak of COVID-19 and their trip to Prairie City.

Commissioner Anderes asked if there were any more public comments at this time.

Mr. and Mrs. Steve Antell addressed the Commissioners with their comments regarding the outbreak of COVID-19. Mr. Antell would like the Commissioners to stand up for Union County regarding the scientific measures to avoid contracting the virus.

Michael O'Connor, Union, Oregon addressed the Commissioners with his concerns. Mr. O'Connor demanded the Commissioners establish mandatory mask coverings.

Dr. Matt Cooper, La Grande, thanked Shelley Burgess for reading his comment letter to the Commissioners.

Irene Isley, La Grande, relayed that she agrees with everything that has been said so far, and would like to go a little further and ask that all three Union County Commissioners resign from their elected roles. She believes there is no other way to reprimand for their trip to Prairie City.

There were no further comments.

Elected Official, Department Head and Employee Comments

Intergovernmental Service Agreement Contract

Cody Vavra, Union County Tax Assessor, 1001 4th Street, Ste. A, addressed the Commissioners with the Intergovernmental Service Agreement Contract for approval.

This is an annual agreement between the Department of Revenue and Union County to produce cartography services which are required by statute.

Mr. Vavra estimated no more than 300 hours at \$60.00 an hour. Total cost is \$18,500.

Commissioner Scarfo made a motion to approve the Intergovernmental Service Agreement Contract DOR#138-20. Commissioner Beverage seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Let them Play Oregon Letter of Support

Commissioner Scarfo presented the "Let them Play Oregon" letter of support to the Commissioners for their consideration.

Commissioner Scarfo is concerned about our children during this pandemic. Being overlooked with the schools closing, he thinks it would be in their best interest to let children play sports in the fall.

Commissioner Beverage commented in light of the recent outbreak of COVID-19 in Union County, she would like to hold off until the next meeting.

Commissioner Anderes also asked to postpone consideration of the letter until the next meeting.

The agenda item has been postponed until the next Commission meeting to be held on June 24.

21-Inch Rule Comment Letter

Commissioner Anderes relayed that the 21-inch rule letter will be postponed to the next Commission meeting to be held on June 24.

Commissioner Anderes encouraged the Forest Service to further explore updating the Eastside Screens. The screens started out as an administrative rule in 1994.

Incident Management Team (IMT) Update

Commissioner Anderes commented that he is very happy to have JB Brock heading the Incident Management Team. He is a professional and has a great amount of knowledge regarding the virus.

JB Brock, Emergency Services Manager, addressed the Commissioners with a brief update regarding the recent COVID-19 outbreak in Union County. Mr. Brock relayed the IMT consists of the Grande Ronde Hospital, law enforcement partners, EMS partners, Public Health, Life flight Network, Oregon Department of Forestry, Sheriff's Office, and the School District. There are liaisons from the Oregon Healthy Authority as well.

Mr. Brock reported that the IMT is facilitating a testing clinic to test up to 400 people through the 2-day clinic. Administratively supporting that is the Oregon Health Authority by bringing contractors to run the testing clinics, along with numerous local volunteers.

The IMT voted unanimously to recommend to the Commissioners to voluntarily move back to Phase 1 in Union County due to the recent outbreak.

Mr. Brock announced the Incident Management Team who were present in the room. Present are Public Health Director Carrie Brogoitti, Deputy Incident Commander Gary Bell, and Sheriff Rasmussen. One of the key challenges both state and nationally is the enforcement side of the pandemic, which is very valuable for the ability to implement.

Chief Gary Bell, La Grande Police Department, relayed that he and Sheriff Rasmussen support the idea of moving towards the voluntary Phase One. He also commented it is very difficult to enforce the regulations from a criminal law perspective. Their approach from the beginning of the pandemic, is if someone is not following the recommended guidelines, law enforcement will contact the person and educate them on the importance of following the guidelines.

Sheriff Boyd Rasmussen echoed the comments from Chief Gary Bell. He said the main focus is to keep Union County safe, county employees safe, and functioning. Moving forward the community has the commitment of all law enforcement staff.

Carrie Brogoitti, Union County Public Health Administrator, addressed the Commissioners with her message from the Center for Human Development. She believes that the only way to overcome this pandemic is to continue to follow the guidelines of Phase 1. Responding in a way that slows the pandemic is the only way.

Mr. Brock asked the Commissioners to consider a motion for Union County to voluntarily move back to Phase One. The IMT believes it is the right way to go, especially for the community.

Commissioner Scarfo thanked the IMT for all of the information provided.

Commissioner Beverage likes the idea of trusting Union County residents in a voluntary pull back to Phase 1 in order to get through this crisis. It will slow things down in the coming months.

Commissioner Anderes inquired with Mr. Brock about the type of test that will be administered at the drive-thru testing area. Mr. Brock relayed it will be nasopharyngeal swab or saliva test.

Commissioner Scarfo made a motion to have the Governors Phase One Guidelines recommended to Union County effective immediately. Commissioner Beverage seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Anderes addressed the Commission with the recommendation from the City of La Grande Mayor for the mandatory wearing of face coverings.

Carrie Brogoitti relayed that the Oregon Health Authority recommends that face masks be worn if 6-foot distancing cannot be achieved.

JB Brock relayed that wearing masks is already addressed in Phase One, however if a motion is needed, he supports that.

Commissioner Scarfo made a motion to recommend Union County residents wear mask coverings that are stated by Oregon Health Authority in Phase One & Two. Commissioner Beverage seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

JB Brock relayed that the NE Oregon Joint Information Center is available on Facebook. He also recommended going to the Center for Human Development and Grande Ronde Hospital website for formal updates regarding COVID-19.

Governors Committee

Commissioner Anderes relayed that the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) has created a committee for one Commissioner per county for the opportunity to hold discussions with the Governor's Office on occasion.

Commissioner Scarfo relayed that Commissioner Anderes would be the appropriate representative for the committee.

Commissioner Beverage made a motion to appoint Commissioner Anderes as the representative for Union County on the Governors Committee. Commissioner Scarfo seconded. Motion carried.

Consent Agenda

Commissioner Scarfo moved approval of May 14, 20, 21, 27, 28 & June 3, 4 & 10, 2020 Claims Journals and meeting minutes from the May 18, 19 & 20, 2020 Commissioners meeting as presented on the consent agenda. Commissioner Beverage seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Good of the Order

Commissioner Beverage commented that the Commissioners care for Union County as a whole. We don't know what tomorrow brings, and moving into a Voluntary Phase One is the appropriate step. We can get through this together.

Commissioner Scarfo shared the "Let them Play Oregon" letter to Superintendent George Mendoza, and passed it along to get the word out.

Commissioner Anderes relayed he has had the opportunity to work with the Grande Ronde Fire Zone Class. Because this time cannot be a volunteered position, his earnings will be donated to the Wildland Fire Foundation.

Next Commission Meeting & Location

The next regular Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 24, 2020 at 8:30 AM.

Adjournment

Commissioner Anderes adjourned the meeting at 10:06 AM

Respectfully submitted,



Allison Moore
Senior Department Specialist