

UNION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Joseph Building Annex Conference Room
Regular Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 21, 2024

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

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

AGENDA REVIEW

There were no additions made to the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Scarfo asked that public comment be limited to two-minutes per comment.

There were no public comments at this time.

Cove Clean-Up Day Funding Request

Lana Shira, City of Cove Recorder, provided a brief staff report to the Commissioners regarding the Cove Clean Up Day funding request.

Cove Clean Up Day is scheduled for May 18, 2024 from 8 am to 12 pm. This will be approximately the twentieth year of the event. Not only does it enhance the look of the city, but promotes recycling and proper disposal of household waste. The recycling center has been a great asset and used regularly.

This is Ms. Shira's first year as chairman, and she is very excited to witness the success of the event. Once the event is completed, the city will provide a BBQ for those who have volunteered their time.

Commissioner Beverage is excited to see that everyone is working together after attending the last Cove City council meeting.

Commissioner Scarfo asked for clarification on the match amount. Administrative Officer Burgess indicated that the match comes from the Solid Waste District of 50%, up to \$2,000 and should be noted in the motion.

Commissioner Beverage made a motion to approve up to \$2,000 match for the City of Cove Clean Up Day request as presented. Commissioner Anderes seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

North Powder Clean-Up Day Funding Request

On behalf of Mayor John Friebos, City of North Powder, Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, provided a brief staff report to the Commissioners regarding the North Powder Clean Up Day funding request.

The City of North Powder is planning their city-wide clean up day in mid-April. The date has not been determined yet, however, the event is typically held on a Saturday or Sunday.

In the past, 2-3 dumpsters have been donated for the City of North Powder to rid of trash and garbage, other than household garbage. In addition to the dumpsters, the city also arranges for disposing of metal, old tires, batteries, etc.

The total cost for the event is approximately \$2,500 to \$3,000.

Commissioner Anderes made a motion to approve up to \$2,000 match for the City of North Powder Clean Up Day as presented. Commissioner Beverage seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

ELECTED OFFICIAL, DEPARTMENT HEAD & EMPLOYEE COMMENTS

Resolution 2024-03: In the Matter of a Resolution Requesting Support from the State of Oregon and Oregon Legislature in Assisting Union County in Combatting the Current Substance Abuse Crisis

Nick Vora, Emergency Manager, and Sheriff Cody Bowen, presented Resolution 2024-03 along with a brief staff report for their information.

Emergency Manager Vora and Sheriff Bowen would like to resolve the conversations had with people present in the room, as well as ongoing conversations with local partners and other organizations. This is a resolution that is bringing attention to the escalating substance abuse crisis that we continue to experience in not only the entire state of Oregon, but Union County as well.

This resolution is requesting assistance from the State of Oregon to help the county combat this issue, and particularly letting them know that this is a complex problem that requires an interdisciplinary solution with a variety of agencies; and no one agency, or discipline has all of the tools or resources needed to combat.

We as a county, which is worded in the resolution, would be looking to the state in collaborating with and identifying solutions, while working together as opportunities arise.

In presenting this resolution, it would be remiss to not acknowledge the tremendous efforts made by our first responders, Sheriff Bowen, members of his staff, LGPD, Fire & EMS and Public Health. Several years ago, when a Sheriff's Deputy would respond to a call where someone would be experiencing an overdose, and take extraordinary measures to save their life, it would be publicly announced and the Deputy would be recognized in the county. However, today it happens so frequently and is tragically normalized.

The State of Oregon recently received a grim title from the Center for Disease Control as the number one state in the nation in regards to overdose deaths followed by the state of Washington.

Sheriff Bowen thanked Emergency Manager Vora for his kind words, but is definitely a team effort as far as what we've been engaged in the last few months. He provided a little history on

the current situation after Measure 110, and reinforcing the Drug Task Force Team. The Drug Task Force used to consist of Oregon State Police, La Grande Police Department and the Union County Sheriff's office, which slowly started to fizzle out due to funding. The Sheriff's Office facilitated the drug task force for almost a year and a half on their own; and Measure 110 passed with no good avenue for their department to continue being effective in our community.

Because of recent incidents, he decided with a lot of input from his team, how they could possibly facilitate the reinstatement of the Drug Taskforce. What they did was take two of the patrol duties off of the road, and put them back in the drug task force team with the hopes that he would get some buy in from the city and the state to help staff the program. He knows that Chief Bell has been diligently working on helping with staffing, but is unaware of the current status.

Emergency Manager Vora read Resolution 2024-03 out loud for the record.

Commissioner Beverage thanked the Sheriff's Office for bringing this to their attention, not that they were unaware, but she thinks its very important for the state of Oregon and Union County constituents. We want to lower the number for the sake of our people.

Commissioner Anderes referred to the Coca Cola commercial years ago that had a motto that anywhere in the world you would be able to get a coke, he would hope that at some point, Oregon, especially Union County gets to the point if you want treatment, you can get it. He appreciates the efforts from all of those involved in this process.

Commissioner Anderes made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-03; In the Matter of Requesting Support from the State of Oregon and the Oregon Legislature in Assisting Union County in Combatting the Current Substance Abuse Crisis as presented. Commissioner Beverage seconded.

Commissioner Scarfo indicated that he contacted the Governor's office this morning to notify them of the drafted resolution.

Commissioner Beverage is hopeful that Measure 110 will be revamped.

Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Anderes would like to request that Sheriff Bowen and District Attorney McDaniel work with Administrative Officer Burgess for budget adjustments to help support the drug taskforce. Unfortunately, we do not have the money for personnel. However, if we could continue to make an effect on the supply, his hope is that there will be more people seeking treatment.

Commissioner Anderes made a motion for District Attorney McDaniel and Sheriff Bowen to work with Administrative Officer Burgess to go over budget adjustments to support the Union County Drug Taskforce. Commissioner Beverage seconded.

Commissioner Beverage asked if a budget adjustment is feasible for something like this. Administrative Officer Burgess believes there is room to move some funds around, obviously not

enough to fund stuff. She asked Sheriff Bowen to provide her a list of the items needed for the task force and go from there.

Motion carried unanimously.

Sheriff Bowen thanked the Commissioners and plans to meet with Kelsie as soon as possible.

Kelsie McDaniel, District Attorney, provided a brief statement related to the cost of the drug task force for the Commissioners information. There are some equipment needs that will need updating, renewed certifications, and start up cash is necessary for an effective drug taskforce to run efficiently. There are some grant funding opportunities they will be pursuing in conjunction with any generosity the county can contribute to this important issue.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Beverage moved approval of the consent agenda which included the February 7 & 14, 2024 claims journals as presented. Commissioner Anderes seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Court Order 2024-06: In the Matter of Appointment to the Union County Health and Human Services Advisory Committee

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented Court Order 2024-06 to the Commissioners for their consideration.

Committee member Chris Evans was previously serving as the State Agency Representative, but has recently changed employment and is no longer eligible to serve. The position has been advertised and an application has been received from Savannah Altenburg expressing an interest in serving. She meets the qualifications to fill the vacancy on the Health and Human Services Advisory Committee.

Ms. Altenburg's term is set to expire on December 31, 2025.

Commissioner Beverage made a motion to approve Court Order 2024-06; In the Matter of Selection of an Official Newspaper. Commissioner Anderes seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Commissioner Beverage is working on a lot of legislature items at this time. It is a short session, and everything will soon be coming to an end.

Commissioner Anderes is also working on and listening to public testimonies in the Oregon Legislature related to the Right of Way Bill, which is going to the full Senate as of yesterday evening. Recreational immunity is going to a full vote and has not passed yet, which has major impacts on our parks, particularly MERA. Also looks like wildfire funding has a solution that will move it through the House process.

Commissioner Scarfo is going to attempt to make it to Salem one more time to hopefully close on the Fairgrounds Wastewater Project.

NEXT MEETING

Administrative Officer Burgess indicated there is a need for a special executive session meeting on Friday, February 23, 2024 at 9 AM.

The next regular scheduled meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 6, 2024 at 9 AM

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Scarfo adjourned the meeting at 9:40 AM.

Respectfully submitted,



Allison Moore
Senior Department Specialist