

Union County Board of Commissioners Meeting  
May 21, 2008

Present: Commissioner R. Nellie Bogue Hibbert  
Commissioner Colleen MacLeod  
Commissioner Steve McClure

Call to Order

Chairman Hibbert called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. with all three commission members present.

Weed Advisory Committee

Alan Guttridge, Vice Chair of Union County Weed Advisory Committee, came to talk to the Commissioners. He first introduced the members that are present and a few highlights of the activities. The members that were present were Jennie Tucker, Phil Hassinger, Dale Case, Joe Justice of Forest Capital, Nancy Dake, Gene Hardy, Sonny Johnson, Ed Hoofnagle, Don Dodson, Curt Howell, Eric Johnson of Forest service, Dan Sharrett of Dept. of Agriculture, Angie Gibbons of Tri-County, Greg Winans of Tri-County, John Paustian of ODFW, Mike McKinnis of Eastern Oregon University Agriculture Department, Mike Burton of Natural Resource and Conservation Service, Cory Parsons, Darrin Walenta of Oregon State University Extension Office, and Bob Kelly of Union County Public Works. Bob introduced the weed crew who go out and spray the weeds, Doug Hollman, Ron Parsons, and Matt Martin. Alan talked about some accomplishments. A year ago a strategic plan was developed for Union County Weed Management. They have continued to try and work under that strategic plan and update it as they go along. Some of the accomplishment of last year were that they held a public open house last June at the Ag service center which had great attendance. They talked about control measures of the different weed types at that event. They also participated in the crop tour last year and are planning on having more participation in this years crop tour. There have been articles in the Observer dealing with Noxious weeds and some of the programs. There were 35,000 bugs released for the Leafy Spurs. One of Mike McKinnis' students has put together a website for noxious weeds in Union County that will hopefully be connected to the Union County Weed website so people can go there more easily. There was a land owner assistance meeting in Cove in February specifically discussing Yellow Star Thistle and cooperative control measures. There was a similar meeting in Elgin in April on Nap Weed control. They could not have done any of this or be where they are today without the cooperation from the Union County Public Works Department. Without their assistance, hard work, and dedication they wouldn't be where they are today with dealing with noxious weeds in Union County.

Bob Kelly, Assistant Public Works Director, stated how much they appreciate everyone that is on the Weed Advisory Committee and all of the cooperative

partners. Bob explained that there has not been a more active, supportive, or professional board than there is today. The core of the group is the three men that get the job done out in the field. The weed supervisor retired and a weed applicator left and the three that are still employed have picked up extra duties and responsibilities to make this work in the field. There are contracts and revenue that is brought in by the spraying. Some of the contracts that are in place now are Baker County, Union Pacific Railroad, Union County Airport, Union County Parks, City of LaGrande, City of Elgin, City of Union, and Ed Staab and Sons. There are sixty-eight new sites of White Top that were plotted on a mapping system. Twenty of those sites were in La Grande. They have been working hard on grants when they are not spraying. There were three more grants obtained with the help from Dan Shar at ODA. Bob stated that without all of the partners working together this program wouldn't work.

Commissioner Hibbert asked if they stated that they released 35,000 bugs for the Leafy Spurs. Dan Shar stated that they are black flea beetles that eat the plants and are specific to Leafy Spurs.

Commissioner MacLeod stated that she believes it is good that they are spraying in Baker County as well because the weeds do not respect boundaries.

Commissioner McClure commented that the Weed Advisory Committee has really stepped up and are engaged. They developed a plan that is very systematic. All of the partners come together and have a monthly meeting. It is a problem for everyone and goes across geographical boundaries and that needs to be realized. He stated that he is proud of all of them and they do the work from the ground and have done a really good job.

Commissioner Hibbert stated that it is impressive to see the representatives from all areas of the County.

Alan stated that the Weed Advisory Committee wanted to thank the Board of Commissioners for their support in the form of funding as well as support by coming to their meetings. The support from funding has really helped by being able to have someone in Union County part time to help get some more programs up and going as well as more grant funding.

Mike McKinnis, professor at Oregon State University Extension Program, explained that his part of the efforts are involving students and raising public awareness through outreach and educational programs. A few things that have been done in the past are being involved with master gardeners by giving a four hour short course on noxious weeds that has involved over 100 master gardeners, at the request of the weed board members he put together a senior level seminar on noxious weeds that resulted in a few articles that came out in

the Observer, and a student of his has developed a website that will hopefully be linked to the Union County website that will list the Noxious weeds. Future projects could be informational brochures or pamphlets that can be distributed at the Planning Departments in the County and the City as well as Realtor's offices. Another program that he is involved with is that he is a member of the La Grande Community and Landscape Forestry Commission who is re-writing their master plan and there is a part in it about noxious weeds within the city limits. There is concern in the Valley that within city limits there are harbored noxious weeds and they are working on a program to raise awareness about noxious weeds.

#### Dust Abatement

Jim Hollensworth, owner of Eagles Hot Lake RV Park, 65182 Hot Lake Lane, La Grande, OR, gave an update on where the RV Park has been in the past three years and asked for some help with dust abatement. Jim explained that they are going into their fourth season and he has completed a multi-purpose building located at the RV Park that can be used by the campers as well as anyone who would like to rent it out. The use at the park was up by 22% in 2007. Jim explains that one of the reasons they are losing customers is because some people do not want to drive their RV's on the gravel roads. Jim expressed his desire to seek a grant to pave the road in order to fix this problem in the future. Jim requested that Union County do the dust abatement earlier than last year because he has a large group of campers coming in June. Commissioner McClure explained that the dust abatement wasn't done until late last year because the Public Works Department could not get the supplies needed to do the dust abatement. The Commissioners agreed to do the dust abatement on the road leading into the Eagles Hot Lake RV Park.

#### Vehicle Bids

Boyd Rasmussen, Sheriff, reviewed the bid amounts that were given to the Commissioners at their last Commission meeting. Boyd stated that through SB 400, which is a new bill that passed regarding safety with unions, a problem could come up because the union could make an issue of safety with the vehicles having such high mileage on them. Boyd wanted to make sure that the Commissioners were aware of SB 400.

Commissioner Hibbert asked which vehicles would be replaced, the Impala with 120,000 miles and the vehicle that was rolled. Boyd explained that the Impala needs to be replaced the most and the vehicle that was rolled has already been rotated out. The new charger replaced that vehicle. One of the new vehicles will replace a truck with 150,000 miles. Boyd explained that he plans on giving the truck that will be rotated out to Emergency Services if he receives the three vehicles he is asking for. Boyd stated that they will recycle the equipment that is still functional from the old vehicles to put on the new vehicles.

Commissioner Hibbert asked Boyd what it will cost to outfit the vehicles. Boyd stated that the budget has \$22,500 which should be an average of \$7500 per vehicle but it could be lower because of recycling some of the equipment from the vehicles.

Commissioner MacLeod asked Boyd if there would be any insurance from the vehicle that rolled. Boyd stated that Wal-Mart donated a vehicle to the Sheriff that had more miles than originally stated. He planned on having that vehicle for the reserve program but it had too many miles on it so he thought to utilize that vehicle as a travel vehicle and he could use the insurance money to purchase a new vehicle for the reserves. Commissioner MacLeod stated that it would be nice to put the insurance money into the vehicles that would be purchased and not another new vehicle.

Commissioner Hibbert explained that the Commissioners had a work session and found that the budget is out of balance. She explained that the Commissioners will take the information on the vehicle bids to the budget committee for them to look at and make a decision on what needs to happen to make the budget balance.

Commissioner MacLeod stated that contrary to what gets out they want the officers to be safe and have a strong department and they need to get past the accusations that the Commissioners don't want the Sheriff to have cars.

#### Computer Proposals.

Kathie Powell, Computer Services Director, explained that she put out a request for quotes for PC maintenance and service. She had the advertisement in the newspaper and had developed a list from a prior advertisement in the paper of vendors locally that wanted to do any new requests for quotes. She sent the request to Byte Me Computers, Beaver State Computers, EONI, All Around Geeks, and Union-Baker Education Service District. She received a quote back from Beaver State Computers and an email and phone call from EONI declining to send in a quote and nothing from the rest of them. The quote from Beaver State Computers was for \$50 an hour. She would like to enter into a three year contract with Beaver State Computers to provide the maintenance and service on the PC's for Union County.

Commissioner McClure stated that Kathie advertised in the paper and contacted people that might be interested in sending in a quote. It was a fair way to do it and gives everyone a chance. Marlene Perkins stated that it has been the same \$50 an hour for several years so it is not an increase in cost. Commissioner Hibbert stated that the service in the years past have been excellent and right for Union County. **Commissioner Macleod moved approval of three year**

**contract with Beaver State Computers. Commissioner McClure seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

ODOT/Public Works Contract

Richard Comstock, Public Works Director, stated that he has the 2008 fund exchange agreement from ODOT that is done annually. Public Works receives money from the Federal government that comes through the State at a 94% exchange. The amount is \$219,000 Federal funds for \$206,000 State funds. It is project specific and the Public Works Department uses the money for chip sealing. **Commissioner MacLeod moved approval of the contract between the State and Union County Public Works on Federal funds for transportation. Commissioner McClure seconded. Motion Carried unanimously.**

Catherine Creek Flooding

Richard Comstock talked to the Commissioners about the flooding at Catherine Creek. The Catherine Creek drainage is flooding and crews have been out working on it. There have been two homes impacted. The Public Works Department built levies around the two homes. The water has moved now only impacting farm land but the water has not come down yet. There is a breach in the levy in two places. It will be monitored all weekend. Catherine Creek Lane will not be open. It looks like there will be \$25,000 to \$30,000 in of road repairs from damage.

Assignment of Lease

Hanley Jenkins, Planning Director, talked to the Commissioners about the radio tower up on Fox Hill Landfill. In the past that radio tower has been sited there through a lease that went through Grande Ronde Recovery to the lessee Grande Ronde Recovery no longer operates the landfill so it is necessary to re-assign the lease to the Solid Waste District. Commissioner MacLeod asked Hanley how much the lease was for a year and Hanley stated that they pay \$1200 a year. **Commissioner McClure moved approval of the re-assignment of lease to solid waste district as presented by Hanley. Commissioner MacLeod seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Consent Agenda

**The May 2, 8, and 12 claims journal and May 7 and 14 public works claims journal were approved as presented on the consent agenda.**

Appointment to Planning Commission

Court Order 2008-27, In the Matter of an Order Appointing a Member to the Union County Planning Commission was presented for consideration. A member resigned leaving an unexpired term and that needs to be filled. **Commissioner**

**MacLeod moved approval of Court Order 2008-27. Commissioner McClure seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Appointment to Farm Advisory Board

Court Order 2008-28, In the Matter of Appointment of a Budget Officer for Union County for Fiscal Year 2008-09 was presented for consideration. The Commissioners need to appoint a Budget Officer and Shelley Burgess has accepted the Administrative Officer position that qualifies and agrees to be the Budget Officer. **Commissioner MacLeod moved approval of Court Order 2008-28. Commissioner McClure seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Conditional Use Appeal – Fay & Rod Swanson

Hanley stated that the Commissioners made a tentative decision on May 7, 2008 to find that Fay Stein Swanson and Rod Swanson did not have standing which means that they waited too long to file an appeal of the Conditional Use permit for the Horizon Wind Project. The Commissioners asked Hanley to prepare a findings document for a final decision that explains why the Commissioners believe that they waited too long to file an appeal and therefore do not have a right to appeal the decision at this point. Hanley has prepared a brief findings document that has two letters attached to it that have been received that outline in more detail the reasons why the Swanson's did have actual notice and also had constructive notice or knowledge that this decision had occurred more than 21 days before they actually filed the appeal. Collectively between the document and the reference documents attached to it explains the reasons why the tentative decision was made. **Commissioner McClure moved to adopt the findings that support the tentative decision which was to deny standing to Fay and Rod Swanson as it relates to their Conditional Use Appeal. Commissioner MacLeod seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Wilhelm  
Department Specialist