

Union County Board of Commissioners Meeting
January 20, 2016

Present: Commissioner Steve McClure
Commissioner Mark D. Davidson
Commissioner Jack Howard

Chairman Howard called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and began with the pledge of allegiance. All three Commissioners were present.

Commissioner Howard stated that printed copies of the meeting agenda were available near the room entrance. He stated that the microphones for the recording equipment picks up noise easily so any conversations in the back may override the conversation up front, creating inaudible comments for the minutes. He directed the audience to keep murmurs and comments to a minimum out of respect for anyone who is speaking, particularly anyone at the microphone.

Public Comments

Boardman to Hemingway (B2H) Public Comment

Lois Barry, 60688 Morgan Lake Rd, La Grande, requested the commission to delay forwarding their decision to the BLM regarding the B2H transmission line. She stated that she understands that extensions have already been requested by the commission and U.S. Senators. This issue came before the commission seven months ago, but the advisory committee has had just two meetings in less than two weeks to deliberate on a very complex issue. Decisions were made by committee members who were confused by fatigue at 10:30 pm after a four-and-a-half hour meeting, and are bound to be suspect. In 2000, when Idaho Power (IP) first proposed the need for a new transmission line, it probably made good sense. Technological advances in the last ten years have undermined every rationale for IP's application advances now. Committee members have been asked to study IP documents, Environmental Impact Statements in response to IP's proposed routes, but no documents outlining the dramatic changes in power resources, delivery, and storage provided to the committee. Much of the current industry literature compares the past five years of development in the energy industry to the last decade's changes in the telecommunications industry. IP's application is analogous to a cell phone company asking to build hundreds of miles of additional holes to provide for an increased demand for land lines. Cell phones have changed the landscape of communication forever and smart meters, microgrids, and new storage systems are changing the energy industry just as rapidly. The majority of public comments were summarized as 'not in my backyard' and were marginalized as emotional. The data on diminishing demand for energy and amazingly efficient energy delivery and storage are real and they merit close study. Under NEPA regulations, the No Action alternative should have received the same level of attention as the three proposed routes. Because the No Action alternative was dismissed by the Chair at the first meeting, then tabled at second meeting, an opportunity for committee members to examine this information has not yet been available. Many intelligent concerned Union County citizens have been studying issues relevant to this proposed transmission line;

they should have had an opportunity to be involved. The structure of the advisory committee prevented them from offering timely information that would directly impact the committee's deliberations. She has listened to more than eight hours of discussion, which frankly was like watching a bad realty TV show.... nine blind men discussing the separate parts of an elephant, without ever learning that the big picture is that the elephant weighs 8,000 pounds. The advisory committee has been so absorbed by corporate plans and maps of proposed routes, that the big issue of whether the transmission line should be built at all has not even been considered. She lives on Morgan Lake Road, and it is not the reason she opposes B2H; as an environmentalist, she has been interested in alternative energy systems for many years, and as a citizen she hates to see money wasted. When she started researching the B2H several months ago, she became convinced that it was an unnecessary project that likely would be obsolete before it was completed and would be a \$1 billion error that Union County will be embarrassed to have endorsed. In the matter of the B2H transmission line, the appropriate aphorism for the commission's decision would be 'act in haste, repent at leisure.' She provided the commission with a one-page document supporting her statement, as well as the resources.

Commissioner Howard asked if it was possible that the resources needed are not germane to the present stage of study by the B2H committee, since the commission is looking at the least offensive line placement. Mrs. Barry stated that it is how the committee has been structured, but according to the NEPA regulations, the No Action alternative has equal weight of proposed routes; once the commission chooses a proposed route, it has bought into the question of whether or not there should be a proposed route.

Boardman to Hemingway (B2H) Public Comment

Fuji Kreider, 60366 Marvin Rd, La Grande, asked the commissioners to consider pushing the No Action alternative, similar to the neighboring counties, followed by the 'best of the worst' alternative. The main reason she and others have been pushing for the No Action alternative is because the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is woefully inadequate on the statement of need. Per NEPA regulations, the No Action alternatives are supposed to "describe existing and future conditions if No Action is chosen." She asked who is best to describe it and do the analysis. So far, it appears that BLM and the cooperators are taking the applicant's word for it. No one seems to be willing to dig deeper, other than the statements, or they mention the Idaho Power (IP) documents that they are required to produce every two years for their Public Utilities Commission of Oregon and Idaho. As a lay person, she started researching for herself because no one is really digging deeper. Among other things, she found that in 1980 there were decisions to build five nuclear power plants in Washington. She referenced the NW Power Planning Council document and stated that only one of the plants currently operating, Columbia Generating Station, was ever completed. Due to exorbitant cost overruns, the other four plants were abandoned and mothballed prior to completion. Two of the unfinished plants were responsible for the largest bond defaults

in the nation; financing for the other three plants were also backed by the BPA. Even today, 35 years after the NW Power Act was enacted, BPA pays billions of dollars in debt for two of the unfinished plants. During 1978-1984, BPA was forced to raise rates by 418% (adjusted for inflation today), to pay for the cost of the three plants. Congress then concluded that an independent agency (controlled by states without a vested interest in selling electricity) should be responsible for forecasting the region's energy needs, energy load growth and helping determine which resources should be built. The region has come to realize that those earlier decisions, based in part on inaccurate electricity load forecasts, were a disastrous mistake. Congress passed the Northwest Power Act in 1980, which gave Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana more decision-making power in how its energy future is planned and in protecting fish and wildlife resources. The NW Power Planning Council (now NW Power Planning) and Conservation Council was born; it is made up of industry leaders, government agencies, energy agencies, interest groups, and the like. They are charged with doing a twenty-year forecast for the four states, called the NW Energy Power Plan. Every five years it is updated; the 7th NW Energy Power Plan was just released; the draft has been made public and is available on the website. They will vote on it in February. It appears there will not be new changes, but she supposed there could be some tweaking. It mentions upgraded and maintaining of current transmissions systems, possibly even new. Throughout the document, they state, "we can meet our energy needs in the Northwest into the year 2035." Predominantly the strategy is still conservation. In 90% of their scenarios, 800 future modeling, say needs can be met with conservation. They talk about a number of different options, including transmission line improvements and possibly a new line, as well as wind with or without new transmission lines, solar with battery storages, more or improved natural gas plants, and they retire all the coal. The demand improvements, like microgrids and smart meters, will affect the peak demand needs. As IP has presented, the issue is about peak demands because wind and solar are variable and they want to level it out- they call that peak demand. They mention the issue with peak demand and say they still can meet their needs until 2035. They mention other technologies, but they are further out in time. Smart metering and microgrid expansions would help with peak demands, which will be in the next six years. It is not clear how much the transmission feeds into this peak demand; it is uncertain if upgrading will be enough or if new ones will be needed. The IP document that Jim Kreider shared with the commissioners and the B2H Committee has a great summary showing all of the options for meeting the demand needs from their perspective in the future. Four of the options have no B2H power line; three of them retire all of the coal. 54% of the line is expected to be paid for by PacifiCorp - nowhere can you find why PacifiCorp is spending this kind of money or getting any power out of it - how can it be since it is a global grid that has no conversation about it. She thinks there is more to that. It keeps changing all the time or you just get little information about why there are needs in different places. When you look at DEIS, the big thing there is all about BPA. BPA needs the power for its obligations. One of the reasons could be that SE Idaho (where PacifiCorp operates) is pulling out of contract with BPA. BPA is still obligated to provide power to its customers in SE Idaho. There is current infrastructure already

going to these folks so she thinks they need a new provider, but maybe not a new transmission line. If they did, the gateway 2 project that goes from Wyoming to Idaho might be able to cover that. Is all this about Obama's climate plan? Is it about Obama's executive order wanting to speed up the timeline on seven transmission lines across the nation? Is it about securing the grid? Does it mean we need a new line or maintenance and improvements on existing lines? The security argument seems to be somewhat ridiculous- talking about one terrorist bomb knocking out the whole grid, instead of these small microgrids which disburse power and would be better for national security. You see that there are many possible leads, and nothing is very clear. The more she researches, the better she can explain the need that there are alternatives that have less risk and that might not leave us with a \$2 million bill and stranded assets strung across the local landscape. She doesn't believe this is a 'not in my backyard' (NIMBY) thing; it is about sound and prudent decision making, following the NEPA process in the way it was intended. The No Action alternative also has consequences in our modern day society; it has to be studied and considered. We have neighboring counties that have a longer history than the Union County B2H Advisory Committee- they support the No Action alternative and then the 'best of the worst' scenario. She believes this is what a number of the committee members wanted but they were unable to bring it to the table because of the chair's directions and one of the commissioners that narrowed the scope of their work; at least that is what was said at the meeting. This is what most of the DEIS comments are other than the NIMBY's. Others are saying it needs to be thoroughly researched and no one is pushing them to pay attention to it; these are your constituents talking. The reason the commissioners are cooperators is because they're supposed to bring the constituents' voice to the table. She believes the No Action alternative needs further review in particular because it is not a compelling reason for the transmission line. Although the chair will present the 'best of the worst' option, she feels compelled to request the commission to direct Scott Hartell to push to have the No Action option given extraordinary attention, due to the fact that the need is all over the map and not clearly compelling. As a tax payer and rate payer she does not want another fiscal fiasco to be repeated like what happened 35-40 years ago in the Pacific Northwest.

Commissioner Howard asked if it was fair to compare B2H with the Washington and Satsop projects; he thought they were mothballed because they were always publicly owned. They were built under public bond so there was no private entity driving the decision making; he thinks that is a difference in the B2H process regarding stranded assets. Also, it was a different type of resource - nuclear energy- and in the 80's it had all types of cost issues. With those separating factors, it doesn't seem compelling to him to compare nuclear energy and power transmission lines.

Mrs. Kreider stated that she views them as public and private investments that are wasted if not used because everyone has based it on the premise that there was a need. That need in this process has been determined by the applicant, not by an independent source. She stated that they are on the cusp of reviewing the NW Power

Planning Council report; the process does not have to be delayed another year because this independent agency is reviewing things now and it is a huge piece of information that needs to be considered. Even with IP's assumptions, there are still four options available without B2H.

Commissioner Davidson stated that the privately-owned utility that submitted the application (or now referred to as a consortium of privately-owned utilities and maybe a public agency) has justified it with the Public Utility Commission (PUC); the PUC has agreed with them that there is a need. Mrs. Kreider stated that she does not think they have made that justification; she is unsure that the PUC has ruled on it, but the Idaho PUC has. Commissioner Davidson stated that it is a question that comes to mind; the commission needs to be clear about it and will research it. Mrs. Kreider stated that she really doesn't know all the ins and outs of it, but it seems like no one is looking into it. She stated that it seems to be pushed to the side and isn't a prudent thing to do, especially when talking about the amount of money put into it. Even if it is private companies, it is all coming back to rate payers in the end anyway. She stated that she doesn't have all the answers or know what the right solution is. She is looking forward to the rest of the plan- upgrading was emphasized because of the loss on the lines. Whether that means new lines in a new corridor or using existing lines - that is what the cooperators are supposed to be doing and the timing is right for that to happen. She wants Union County to get on it, have sound research, look into the No Action alternative.

Animal Shelter Public Comment

Margaret Mead, 57744 Foothill Rd, La Grande, stated that she would appreciate an update on the Blue Mountain Humane Association Animal Shelter (BMHA). In October 2014, the county's attorney posted a statement on the website that gave the shelter until June, 2015 to have an audit, as well as a few other things. Then, at the June 30, 2015 meeting, the deadline was extended and Commissioner McClure was going to meet with BMHA representatives, which was then extended six months making it December 31, 2015. She is curious about the status.

County Funding of City Library Public Comment

Margaret Mead, 57744 Foothill Rd, La Grande, stated that at the Joint Work Session with the City of La Grande and Union County, she heard reasons why the county didn't have money or couldn't give more money to the library. She supports the county providing a much higher amount of money to the City of La Grande for the library, and money should also go to other libraries in the county. The county has been spending over \$100,000 to keep Buffalo Peak Golf Course (BPGC) annually, or probably more like \$130,000 to keep it open for several years. BPGC, which is an important recreation area for a comparatively low number of residents, doesn't bring in much from tourist dollars either. Libraries serve more people and a wider variety of people from birth to death and from all economic statuses and interests. La Grande's library offers a wide variety of services and opportunities to all people at no cost to them; she doesn't know

what services are offered by other libraries in the county. She urged the commission to put the tax payers' monies where it would do the most good for the greater number of people, which is to the libraries.

In regards to Mrs. Mead's BMHA comments, Commissioner McClure stated that the commission is still in negotiations with BMHA. He spoke to the director since the meeting and they intend to meet again the following week. The new contract deadline has passed and it may need to be extended formally at the next meeting. Discussions are continuing and it is taking longer than anticipated, but as long as BMHA is willing to have discussions in good faith then the county needs to do that. That is his recommendation.

Commissioner Howard stated that the county is on good ground and has had a good negotiator - the key is good faith. He stated that he is comfortable with it at this point.

Commissioner McClure stated that if negotiations come to an impasse, then he will bring a recommendation to the other commissioners. He wants to give it every opportunity to move forward and it's in the best interest of the community that the relationship is back on track; the county is trying to do that. He can't guarantee it will happen, but he has not given up yet. If the other commissioners want to make a change and continue in a different way, then that would be fine with him, too. He suggests that the topic be added to the agenda for the next meeting and have a formal discussion about it.

Commissioner Howard stated that in regards to funding for the library, the commission would have comments on it later in the meeting.

B2H Public Comment

Ray Randall, 765 S Third, Union, stated that he is on the B2H Advisory Committee and that there is a significant disagreement amongst committee members. Some believe the No Action alternative must remain viable, while others seem aghast that it would continue to be considered. The committee's charge was to gather public comments, which has been done; public testimony gathered through the draft EIS process has also been reviewed. He stated that many citizens believe the B2H line is not justified; he believes those voices will be silenced unless the No Action alternative remains viable. He stated that there is nothing wrong with healthy skepticism with a project like B2H; the need must be weighed against the cost, which must ultimately be borne by the rate payers and the environmental degradation that cannot be avoided. Specifically, these comparisons must be made for Union County. He stated that as a committee, the jury is not yet in and as deliberations continue the committee must review all the evidence and keep all the options open. It would be helpful to the committee for the commission to offer them some guidance. Regarding PUC's review, he is unsure what Oregon has done about Idaho Power's (IP) plan, but IP based their justification for B2H on their

Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), which is renewed every two years. Recently, Idaho's PUC reviewed and accepted the IRP but said they will not endorse any items in the IRP.

B2H Public Comment

Maxine Hines, 701 D, La Grande, wanted to reiterate that the "not in my backyard" (NIMBY) issue with B2H is a big issue, but the same people who happen to live on Morgan Lake aren't NIMBYs; they are always here paying attention and have done a lot of work. Oregon Rural Action and others have been involved in renewable energy and better conservation; Oregon is better than other states. Idaho has a horrible track record of having large homes with mandated lawn watering and lights, but they have not put solar anywhere; they have not done well with conservation and there is nothing in their reports about conservation. OTEC presented at the landlord meeting and said that there will never be a time that there would be a need for the power from B2H locally. Part of IP's statement was that if they have a surplus, they would sell the power back to Union County, but there is already a plentiful source. Idaho needs to clean their act up before she would go along with it as a citizen. She stated that she felt bad for committee spending four hours talking about B2H; Mr. Taylor was stuck in a tough place trying to follow the commission's guidance on what needed to be done and hearing the public say it doesn't make any sense. Unless the commission is saying this group has to choose one of three alternatives, she doesn't know why it was mandated. She hopes the commission will look at it again and hopes that the committee is not mandated to choose a B2H route.

Communications Specialist Public Comment

Mrs. Hines loves the idea of better communication. As other commissioners have talked about not being able to do computers, Facebook, and things that the rest of the world has learned - the position is needed for the county to get more information to the public and assist in understanding. She added that there is a real shortage of money and everyone is having to learn new technology; she thinks there is enough county commissioner energy and office staff to pull it off without spending money on a communications specialist when things like the library and police are not being funded.

B2H Public Comment

Irene Gilbert, 2310 Adams Avenue, La Grande, stated that Idaho Power (IP) can do contracts with solar that are only extended for two years; in Oregon the contracts have to be 20 years. There are 10 solar power developments that were going to be placed in Idaho that will be placed in Oregon instead. She thinks Oregon is at major risk of becoming nothing more than an energy-generating site for other states; she is not sure local resources can afford that. She stated that IP's 2015 plan was not condoned; it was mandated that they accept the plan, but they did not approve of the plan. The one thing that stuck out for her was that they require IP to carefully track how the increase in power need progresses over the next few years. For a three-year period, IP's customer base and need for energy decreased. During the last three years (which is what they based it on) it increased 1.9%, 0%, and .7%; their projection for increased load is 1.6%

per year; questions remain about their projections. They also stated that their desire for obtaining Oregon power was to purchase the low cost dam-generated power because they are interested in solar and of course they want to reduce the cost to their customers. That makes her question whether or not Oregon should be paying for a transmission line to move our dam-generated power to Idaho for their customers. She had been trying to get a citizens advisory committee for over seven months; she thanked the commission for being willing to start that process. The commission has done a good job of identifying members with varied interests and backgrounds. She is very concerned that the committee that she understood would be a voice for the citizens of Union County is not actually acting in that capacity; the committee chair's recommendation to the commission would not reflect the comments that the public gave in writing or by testimony. She stated that public comments were consistent in recommending the No Action alternative and no one felt there was a need for B2H. When the committee voted on the recommendation to the commission, she felt like she was sitting in the Legislature because the chair would not allow a vote on a recommendation that started with the No Action followed by the choice of the 'best of the worst.' She felt that once that decision was made, the committee would not be allowed to vote on a combined motion. She felt that they were being censored as a committee because they were not allowed to vote on the information received. While she understands that the committee has not had adequate time to thoroughly investigate the No Action alternative, there are a lot of people in the community that have been researching it since 2007. Multiple people have been involved in it for months, if not years; their voices were not heard at the meeting. The commission is not obligated to accept the recommendation of the committee; she recommends that the commission include the No Action alternative in their statement to the BLM. While she is not just accepting of other county's recommendations, she wanted to provide the first few pages that have been presented in Baker and Umatilla. They have had an on-going process for a significant period of time communicating with their citizens and they have both started their recommendations with a statement that the need for B2H is questionable. She thinks the No Action alternative should be at top of list.

B2H Public Comment

Clyde White, 60236 Bushnell Rd, La Grande, stated that he recently learned that the B2H line would run directly in front of his house; previously it was proposed to be further back towards Ladd Canyon and Glass Hill. He stated that someone on the local Planning Commission thinks it should come almost into La Grande and take a westward direction through his property. He would not enjoy seeing it through his dining room window.

B2H Public Comment

Jenny Pagliarulo, 60238 Bushnell Rd, La Grande, stated that she lives on property along one of the proposed B2H routes. She thinks some consideration should be given to residents along the route; her neighbor's home would be extremely close to the line. She is concerned about health and environmental issues it would cause; the line needs

to be kept away from homes as much as possible. She thinks the transmission line will detract from La Grande's scenery and community as a whole.

Elected Official, Department Head & Employee Comments

Memorandum of Understanding for Office on Violence Against Women (OVAW) Grant Application

Cathie Falck, Union County Sheriff's Office, Valerie Schlichting, Union County District Attorneys Office. Ms. Falk stated that the MOU outlines cooperating entities with Union County as the lead agency. Commissioner Davidson stated that the county has been through this process many times; once the commissioners sign it, it is submitted with the grant application to ensure that entities will work cooperatively.

Commissioner Davidson moved approval of MOU for OVAW Grant Application. Commissioner McClure second. Motion carried unanimously.

Boardman to Hemingway Update

Scott Hartell, Union County Planning Director and Ted Taylor, B2H Advisory Committee Chair. Mr. Taylor stated that he was happy the commission appointed a solid advisory committee; they are good people who are working hard and doing a lot of research. He added that they have had super support from the Union County Planning Department. At the January 7 meeting, BLM's Don Gonzalez made a presentation and stated very clearly that the county needs to recommend a route by January 22; they did not want any new lines proposed. Mr. Gonzalez's statement was the reason there was so much time spent looking at the proposed routes. He believes the main task was to recommend one of the three proposed routes because the BLM said they would not be open to hearing anything else.

Commissioner McClure asked if Mr. Taylor felt that BLM was getting pressure from someone to get it completed after eight years, such as Washington D.C. He feels a real push by BLM to get it done. Mr. Taylor stated that he thinks Commissioner McClure is right. He added that he told Mr. Gonzalez at the January 7 meeting that when a U.S. Senator asks for a 45-day extension, they are usually granted it, but in this case that did not happen. He stated that Mr. Gonzalez indicated to him that the BLM is planning to come up with an agency-preferred route by January 31; he thinks that deadline is one that someone has more or less imposed on the BLM.

Mr. Taylor stated that there was no way the committee could have made any progress without the maps and overlays that Scott Hartell provided; they were invaluable.

Mr. Hartell stated that he presented a Google map tour to the advisory committee, starting at the north side of the Powder River. Union County submitted a comment to Idaho Power (IP) requesting to keep the B2H line out of the cultivated crop land areas and out of the viewshed of La Grande. Commissioner Davidson asked if the route was following the 230 volt line areas; Mr. Hartell stated that yes, in parts it does, but there

are some variations going over the hill. The proposed route skirts around La Grande and does not need to tie into a substation in La Grande. There was a second route that was presented through the draft EIS comments from a landowner on the hill; he did not like the environmentally preferred or IP-proposed route on his property that came through elk habitat. He expressed to the advisory committee that his proposal still puts the impact on his property, but lessens the cost of the route and shortens the distance of the route. There was another proposal that would affect salmon steelhead habitat; BLM did not support it because of the crossing of the fisheries in that area, as well as extensive road building that would need to occur. The committee looked at all the routes in detail via the GIS system with Mr. Hartell. At the Advisory Committee meeting, a motion was approved to support the 230 route.

Mr. Hartell asked if the commissioners wanted to see more detail on the route that was recommended by the B2H Advisory Committee. Commissioner Davidson asked for a closer look at the areas in regards to public comments that were received on that day, specifically Mr. White's property. Mr. Hartell showed the commission the areas requested, including properties of and around Mr. White and Ms. Pagliarulo. Mr. Hartell stated that the line would be approximately 551 feet from a residence on Mr. White's property and 125 feet from the Fenn residence. Commissioner Davidson asked if there were other residences along the route that were as closely affected. Mr. Hartell showed a map with the route and other residences and stated that he had not measured all of them. The residence that was closest on the west of the water tower is approximately 950-1000 feet away from the line. Mr. Hartell stated that the galvanized dull-painted steel lattice towers are 160-180 feet high, similar to the towers that parallel I-82 north of I-84.

Mr. Hartell stated that he prepared an evaluation form based on environmental concerns and distributed it to the committee members at the meeting; it was used during the map tour and route presentation. The committee shared comments and questions and took notes; at the end of the presentation, the evaluation forms that they filled out were used to help them come to a route selection. He wanted to reiterate that BLM, with very stiff sideboards, directed cooperating agencies to indicate which alternative route they preferred and supported, and nothing more. They didn't want comments on any other issues from the cooperators, and gave no opportunity for general public comments. The next opportunity for comments will be at the final EIS release, which will provide a 30-day window for those comments.

Commissioner Howard asked how much input the commission has on the No Action option. He asked if the commission was obligated to follow the alternatives in terms of being useful in giving suggestions since the BLM asked them to look at three alternatives. Mr. Hartell stated that the way it was presented to him was that if it doesn't pertain to a selection of a route, it will be set aside because they do not have the ability to accept comments on anything else at this point. That was BLM's directive from their process.

Mr. Taylor stated that the commission can accept, reject, or add to the advisory committee's recommendation. There is some opportunity to comment on the final EIS, but in his twenty years' experience, the comments that come in at that point are never considered. He has never seen an EIS changed after the final has been issued. The commission can weigh in on the No Action. He stated that he thinks it is premature; they just don't know enough and the energy supply and demand is very volatile. He stated that they will be able to help the commission with that at a later date and they plan to. This committee may or may not consider it at the next meeting because the motion was made at the January 13 meeting that the bulk of the people commenting favored the No Action alternative and there was a motion made to amend that motion, which failed. Then there was a motion to table it, which passed 8-0. He stated that the committee has the opportunity to consider it at the next meeting. It is not completely accurate that he did not allow any discussion on it, he just wanted it divided between two separate motions. He would like the advisory committee to take a hard look at the projections, which can be attained from the State of Oregon and reliable councils. There may also be good projections about solar and wind.

Commissioner Howard asked if including the No Action alternative in any correspondence sent from the commission would be viable and realistic in terms of the deadline.

Commissioner Davidson suggested that the commission consider submitting a statement indicating that due to the preponderance of public comments of Union County citizens supporting the No Action alternative, the advisory committee would continue to study the No Action alternative and justification for the B2H line.

Commissioner Davidson asked how precise the routes on Mr. Hartell's maps were and what opportunities there were to shift the route through micrositing. He stated that he could not in good conscience endorse a route that would be so close to homes; he believes that the 1000 foot distance is still very close when considering towers that are approaching 18-20 stories tall. There are a lot of positive elements to the 230 volt route, up to the point where it starts to approach homes. He thinks the commission needs to craft some micrositing recommendations to limit the impacts to residents. He stated that he just could not support the route so close to homes and hopes that the other commissioners would not either.

Commissioner McClure concurred with Commissioner Davidson. The recommended route would make it more visible from La Grande. He doesn't know if it can be microsited or not, but it could be looked at. He would be concerned about recommending a route that would place it in someone's backyard. Regarding the No Action alternative, if Pacific Power is willing to invest their money in 54% of the cost of the line, there must be some kind of a plan for it; they are known for being a company that makes a lot of money. He is starting to see pressure from the federal administration; the B2H line has been lumped together with other lines that the

administration wants taken care of and he doesn't know the extent of those implications. He thinks the commission needs to make recommendations based on what the community feels and thinks. Even in the face of all the outward pressures, the commission has an obligation to listen to what the public says and try to make a presentation or argument that represents them. He doesn't know how successful it will be, but that is what the commission is here for.

Commissioner Howard stated that as a matter of conscience he also concurred with Commissioner Davidson. He stated that it sounds like there is a consensus to include some language about the No Action alternative in the letter to the BLM.

Commissioner McClure stated that the community has expressed concerns about the reasons for the line and added that in regards to advances in technologies, No Action is an alternative. Commissioner Davidson added that it is part of the NEPA process.

Commissioner Howard stated that the commission is moving to the point of saying they would preserve whatever rights they can in this process by communicating in a timely manner. He stated that he would draft a letter and circulate it through Mrs. Burgess in order to have it distributed to Mr. Taylor, Mr. Hartell, and the BLM by the end of the week. He added that the letter needs to include the possibility of micrositing, which would help alleviate matters of conscience as it applies to the line being installed too closely to homes. He is curious about how many homes would be affected.

Mr. Hartell stated that in reference to an earlier question, the definition of micrositing is a change within 250 feet of the proposed right of way; there is a slim ability to do micrositing. Commissioner Davidson stated that he thinks the commission wants to consider something more aggressive than micrositing. Mr. Hartell stated that in regards to a more aggressive approach on private lands, the federal government is not giving any approval for a right of way on private land, it will be done through the EFSC process. However, through the EFSC process, if the commission wants to consider micrositing and changing some routes more than in the right of way, there would be a huge amount of study that would need to be done before IP could submit that application to EFSC. He would like the commission to give the advisory committee some direction on whether they should continue discussing the No Action alternative or micrositing a proposed route. It would help eliminate competing interests bogging down the process to the extent that nothing is accomplished. If micrositing is a direction that the commission would like the committee to take, then it would be helpful to have a specific list of tasks to complete at meetings, and then focus on other tasks at other meetings.

Mr. Taylor stated that he declared recesses four or five times at the last meetings so the committee could interact informally with the public, and he would like to continue doing that. The committee will not meet again before January 22, so they cannot get involved with discussing micrositing, but the commission certainly could. He knows that for a \$1

to \$2 billion project, moving a line a mile or two would not change the cost much. If Mr. Hartell and the committee can look at that, they certainly would like to. They have just been working within the constraints that were given to them by Don Gonzalez with the BLM, even though they didn't really like them.

Commissioner Davidson stated that every parcel is owned by a private party and drawing a line would affect them in some way. He noticed that there was a disturbance with the pipeline on the map. He suggested that rather than specifics, the commission could submit a letter with parameters and criteria. He suggested including a statement that indicates that in concept the commission supports the 230 volt route, with the exception of the areas where it encroaches upon residences; they would like to see significant changes to the route to ensure that the route avoids all residences by a predetermined distance - at least $\frac{1}{4}$ mile. Someone should be able to come up with a route that limits the impacts to people and their homes, because NEPA is the study of the human environment and humans and needs to be considered. He stated that if he were looking at that, he would consider something along the lines of paralleling the route with the existing disturbance if possible. He stated that in good conscience he could not support a route that is known to run within hundreds of feet of homes.

Commissioner Howard agreed that including Commissioner Davidson's suggested statements and specific limitations in the letter would be good.

Commissioner McClure concurred and added that the community support for the No Action alternative needs to be included in the statement to the BLM; it probably won't be considered, but still needs to be expressed that it has been heard in the local community.

Commissioner Howard stated that he will draft a letter based on the commission's comments. He asked if there was anything the commission was discussing that was inconsistent with the advisory committee's recommendations? Mr. Taylor replied no.

Mr. Hartell stated that his department, Union County Planning, was assigned to staff the B2H Advisory Committee. However, the additional expense of a direct mailing to residents along the proposed route was not a part of his original budget; he requested funds to cover the costs. Commissioner Davidson asked if he had discussed it with Administrative Officer Shelley Burgess; Mr. Hartell stated that he had talked to her and she suggested that he make the request. He stated that the \$200 budget request would cover basic office supplies, such as envelopes, paper, printing, and CDs; the amount may grow. Commissioner Davidson asked if the county is reimbursed the costs for the BLM process; Mr. Hartell stated that the county would not be reimbursed for the BLM process, but could be for the EFSC process. Commissioner Davidson stated that it would be \$200 well spent. Commissioner McClure suggested that the commission grant his request and increase it to \$500 so he doesn't have to ask again in a week. Commissioner Davidson stated that the commission might need a proposal that is a bit

more extensive. The commission agreed by consensus to approve Mr. Hartell's request of \$500 for costs associated with staffing the B2H Advisory Committee.

Commissioner McClure thanked Mr. Taylor, the committee, and Mr. Hartell for their efforts and acknowledged that it is a difficult task.

Commissioner Howard recessed the meeting for 5 minutes.

Constituent Inquiries – Joint Work Session with City of LG

Commissioner Howard asked other commissioners for comments about the joint work session and what kinds of actions are needed.

Commissioner McClure stated that he viewed it as a request from the City of La Grande to provide additional funds for their library and should be treated as other requests; it has to go through the budget process. He is not sure if the city expected the county to make a decision at the work session and he doesn't think they can or should. The county has a budget process to follow and they have to follow it for all requests, like the City of Elgin's request and others that are probably coming. The commission will need to look at how much money is available and make some tough decisions. He understands the nature of the City of La Grande's request; the under levy needs to be considered in the context of the county's budget process. The county's budget process is later than the city's, but he did not feel in good faith that he could give them a commitment at the work session because there are legitimate processes that need to be followed.

Commissioner Davidson stated that the commission requested information from the city that he will be awaiting; there is value in having the commission review it and inform themselves to a greater degree of the city's financial situation. He thinks the point made about the city working on short term solutions and not actively pursuing a long term fix is accurate and the commission should review the information with that in mind. The city has asked the county for help, and he does not think it needs to be limited to financial contributions because both entities are affected by the situation with the general fund budgets and the Urban Renewal District (URD). They have an effect on the county's revenues. He concurs with Commissioner McClure and that to do anything other than be accepting of their request and consider it during the county's budget process would circumvent the process that is prescribed in statute and would be improper. The county's budget committee will need to consider it with other requests and make a value decision about how the county's resources are allocated to benefit the community.

Commissioner Howard stated that one take-away was that Commissioner Davidson offered to work with the city to review their financing and books that are relevant to this issue. The problem he had going into it was that he expected a formal request, and he was disappointed because he can't say there was a specific request, other than through the newspaper and private conversations. He was disappointed in the final conclusion

because he didn't feel they started a process, and that is regrettable. Going forward, the county will be able to have their own discussions about their own priorities about the URD. One concern he has, looking at statutes, is with ORS 457. He wonders if the commission voted on going into URD in 1999. He stated that the question came up at the work session and was not well explored, but he knows that the special districts don't have to agree to the URD. He thinks that in the case of *Dennehy v. Portland*, it is very clear that counties have a very proactive role in agreeing to be a part of the URD, and he is not sure Union County did that.

Commissioner McClure concurred with Commissioner Howard regarding the county's participation in the process. He thinks that needs to be part of the discussion that Commissioner Davidson brings up: what is the proper role for the County in the discussion as they make plans to go forward?

Commissioner Davidson stated that further research needs to be done to see if there was action taken by Union County to support the creation of the URD and whether or not it was required; it is not entirely clear. The commission should explore their legal options and responsibilities, then discuss it internally and with the city and the district. All the commissioners have been visited by constituents who have a great deal of concern about the way the district has been operated and whether or not it is meeting all of its legal obligations; that may be something the commission wants to pursue discussing. Half of Union County's population lives in La Grande; a significant portion of their tax base is affected by the URD. It has a significant effect on the county's general fund revenues and through the extension of the county's ability to expend the funds for the benefit of all of Union County's citizens, it has an effect on everyone throughout the county regardless of where they live. It is a significant issue to the citizens of Union County. There was a discussion point raised by Commissioner McClure about how much revenue the county had foregone over the life of the URD, which was challenged to some extent by one of the La Grande Budget Committee members. They claimed that the county wasn't taking into account the effect of the investment back into the URD and that the appreciation over the years and value of the district wouldn't have occurred at that rate but for that investment. They claimed that the amount of the lost revenue that the county cited was inflated. He stated that he understands the argument, but it would be interesting to have an analysis that compares, on an annualized basis, the rate of appreciation of property within the URD compared to property outside the URD. Because of the size of the community and nature of the area that is within the district, it is impossible to have an apples to apples comparison, but it would be an interesting piece of data to inform the commission's opinions on whether the URD has been successful or not because that is the measure - does the investment that is being made into projects within the district accelerate the rate of property value growth? That is the promise that is made to the silent partners - through that activity, they are going to receive at the end of the district an increase in property tax values and thus revenues to those districts that would exceed more than what would have naturally occurred without

the investment. He thinks it is a question that he would like to ask the Union County Tax Assessor.

Linda Hill, Union County Tax Assessor, stated that even though new value went to the new district, Safeway was already in the works when the URD was formed. The city can point to certain successes, like ODS or the medical building. She thinks it's about how much URD money went into those projects; she does not know the amounts because she is not involved in that. There are a lot of things that go into infrastructure that could be important down the road, but you don't see an increase in value from it. She stated that one of the underlying premises of URD is that when there is a given area that has blight, the URD will cure that. She doesn't know if the city has had a real good focus for that and that is their business, but the idea is that the blight would be cleared, values will be raised, and when the URD ends and is turned back to all the districts, it would be at a higher value. The premise is that there is an end in sight to the URD, which is what she has had a lot of people ask her about. The end of the URD has been a matter of discussion for years because although the consultants presented the URD as a 20-year plan, the plan documents do not indicate that it would be 20 years. She remembers having Eldon Slippy and Colleen Johnson in her office who also remember it as a 20-year plan. She also had a member of the public bring in a document titled "Report on URD"; it wasn't part of the plan that was given to assessor's office at the time it was created, but it is dated the same and it seems like it should have gone hand-in-hand. She stated that she had never seen the document before that day. That report indicated that the URD was estimated to be a 22-year plan. The Department of Revenue has told her, and she recently confirmed, that the plan is termed a "window plan"; because it was formed before 2001, there is not necessarily any end date. It will end when they reach the maximum indebtedness, but the plan can be amended. There is some concern from the public that has been voiced to her asking when the URD will be completed.

Commissioner Howard stated that the original term he read was 20 years, but he also read in statute that if there is a significant change in the URD, it requires a new plan under current statutes. Ms. Hill stated that when you look at statutes, you have to be very careful because they have changed Urban Renewal so many times. At a conference she attended the week before, the Department of Revenue couldn't talk to her about the URD without a sheet that showed which plan it was and which statutes affect the plan. There were some significant statute changes in 2001 but they were not retroactive. That is why the Department of Revenue has told her that there is an end date of maximum indebtedness, but it can be amended to increase it. Commissioner Howard asked if that type of amendment would qualify as a significant change in the URD. Ms. Hill stated that she thinks that it would. Commissioner Howard stated that he, like Commissioner Davidson, is interested in some of the legal aspects of the URD so they can be resolved.

Commissioner Davidson stated that the plan has been amended and there are changes to projects that are cited in it; the city didn't need anyone's approval or acceptance of those changes. Ms. Hill stated that she never got those amendments. Commissioner Davidson stated that the library project was not part of the original plan, but the city amended the plan to allow an expenditure of URD funds for it. He was on the URD advisory committee when the request came in to support a \$400,000 allocation of UR funds. The advisory committee's recommendation was to loan the city money from the URD; there may not be minutes on that, but he could point towards several other members who would have the same recollection. It ended up not being a loan, but instead was a direct payment into the project. It clearly does not create an assessed value increase, but they justify it through the indirect benefits- increasing the desirability of the area, it is an amenity, creates trips - it is a plausible argument, but it does not provide the direct benefit back to the silent partners in the way it is promised.

Ms. Hill stated that as far as amendments, since there were some substantial statute changes in 2009, if the URD does a "substantial amendment", such as changing their area or maximum indebtedness, then they fall under those changes in legislation in 2009. At the time of those statutes, they did not affect URD. She gets a lot of questions in her office that do not fall under her authority indicating that people are not able to get any kind of financial reports from the city about the URD. They tend to have the door closed on them and are told that they would have to pay a lot of money to have the information because it is just not easy for them to get. She thinks the city would have an accounting system that would be pretty easy to get the information that people are asking for. When inquiring about local budget laws, the Department of Revenue told her that the city and the URD are two separate entities; there can be no co-mingling of funds or joint accounts and money isn't transferred like you would between departments. She doesn't know if there is any truth to it, but some people contend that those things are occurring with the URD and it is being treated like a department of the city. If it is violating local budget law, that is concerning.

Commissioner McClure thinks that the commission needs to go forward and ask those questions.

Constituent Inquiries – County Assessor Foreclosure Properties

Commissioner Howard stated that he is interested in the nature of the foreclosure process. He thinks that there are quite a few more foreclosures recently and wants to know if that is common for this time of year. Ms. Hill stated that more have occurred just since the downturn of the economy. In the past, foreclosures were for little slivers of land that were left out of a legal description, something that had no access, or other similar oddities. It has been in the last three years that the county has had dwellings, some occupied, and that is new for the county. People go into the foreclosure process when they are four years delinquent, at which time the assessor's office works with the District Attorney's office. There is a judgment through circuit court, then a two year redemption period, after which time the county takes the deed. The process is complete

in six years. Prior to the DA's judgment, they can pay one year's taxes and stay out of foreclosure. The list generally starts with 80 properties, but by the end of the year when the list is published it is closer to 20.

Commissioner Howard asked if there is a possibility for the county to be aware of a property owner in the foreclosure process that could be helped. He thinks there may be some potential to solve some problems that may be related to mental health, physical health, or military veterans. Ms. Hill stated that it could be possible but she wouldn't know if someone was a veteran unless they have a veteran's exemption.

Commissioner Howard stated that he took the liberty in contacting Byron Whipple of Union County Veteran Services to make him aware of homes that were going into foreclosure. He asked the other commissioners to brainstorm and let him know what they think might be helpful in plugging these people into social services or other help.

Commissioner McClure concurs and stated that they need to look at them on a case by case basis.

Ms. Hill stated that the county spends quite a bit of money to go through the foreclosure process. If the commission is considering taking a more proactive role, then it should be done during the two-year redemption period before the county takes the deed. Her staff sometimes gets a little insight into specific circumstances behind foreclosure. Notices required by statute are sent; she has also added an extra letter to be sent during the last redemption year. The new letter was drafted very specifically to alert people that they have one year left and they could lose their home, hoping to get some attention that way.

Constituent Inquiries – Elgin City Council Requesting Library Funding

Brock Eckstein, City of Elgin Administrator and Allan Duffy, Elgin Mayor, submitted a request to be considered during budget time for additional funds for the Elgin library. The library has done a great job servicing the youth of the community, but the new librarian has a lot of great ideas to also serve adults. Some of the facility is degrading and in need of repairs. The extra funding would help them start new programs and keep up with the repairs of the building. The current library budget is \$70,000, and since libraries don't make money all of the funds come from the general fund.

Commissioner McClure stated that this is the type of response the commission will have if it gives additional funding to the City of La Grande for its library; other libraries will ask for more funding. He remembers that when library funding began, Doc Savage created the formula that would be used in funding all of the county's libraries. The intent was that if the commission funded the La Grande library, then it would proportionately fund other libraries in the county also. Mr. Savage spent a long time coming up with the formula and that is how funding has been allocated to libraries over the years. It was very important to Mr. Savage that the commission was fair to all the communities, which

is the reason the commission gives the City of Elgin \$3,000 for their library each year. Mr. Eckstein stated that they absolutely appreciate the \$3,000.

Commissioner Davidson asked if the formula was based on population. Mrs. Burgess stated that Commissioner Savage met with the libraries and recommended a fixed dollar amount. At the time, it was based on the other revenue going into those budgets; when it was set up, it wasn't designed as a formula that would perpetuate. The contribution amounts have not been adjusted. Commissioner McClure stated that it started 20 years ago. Mrs. Burgess clarified that the library funding from the county is for Elgin, Cove, North Powder, Union, and La Grande.

Commissioner Davidson stated that the commission would consider Elgin's request during the budget process.

Commissioner Howard stated that it is amazing that libraries don't request funds from the commission and the City of Elgin should be commended for doing so. Mrs. Burgess stated that she typically receives letters from libraries that have had funding in the past to continue receiving funding. There haven't been any requests for increases. She includes the amounts in her recommended budget. Often times the cities send a thank you letter to the county after they receive the funding; they continue to want the money and appreciate it, they just have not asked for an increase.

Mr. Duffy stated that their librarian does a great job with grants, but some of those are going away, placing an extra burden on Elgin's general fund. He added that costs for computer equipment, facility maintenance and repairs are going up. Mr. Eckstein stated that the librarian is a part-time employee and weekly hours were just increased to 32. Commissioner Davidson added that grants almost always require match.

Annual Board Work & Goal Session

Commissioner Howard was informed that he would have to wait until October to take on the BOPTA responsibility. He stated that they are making progress in terms of scheduling a meeting in the next few weeks.

Commissioner Davidson stated that there was some discussion about switching the Tourism Committee, Conference Center, and Chamber of Commerce responsibilities. Commissioner Howard asked how Commissioner Davidson would feel about taking Tourism now, or would he prefer to take it as a package. Commissioner Davidson is not sure what Commissioner Howard is working on, but the committees are related, not exclusive. Commissioner Howard stated that it would be helpful to him for Commissioner Davidson to take on the Tourism responsibilities. Mrs. Burgess asked to clarify if the Joint Tourism Promotion Committee would be moved from Commissioner Howard to Commissioner Davidson. Commissioner Howard confirmed that to be accurate.

Commissioner Davidson mentioned that he may be interested in the Hospital Facility Authority in return, then added that he was not truly interested and was just being facetious. Commissioner Davidson stated that the Hospital Facility Authority must meet once a year to maintain their status. Commissioner Howard stated that his understanding of the Hospital Facility Authority was that they would be more active if there would be more bonds; Mrs. Burgess added that they would have to. Commissioner McClure stated that the purpose of that is to get the tax-free status for any bonds they want to issue; when he was on the committee, the hospital was a part of it because there were bonds out. There was a contract with Grande Ronde Hospital to operate it, but the committee actually owned the hospital. Mr. Mattes then paid off the bonds and the ownership was transferred to the hospital from the nonprofit. When they built it, they used it to get a tax-free status for those bonds. They have maintained that organization since then in case there is a need for it in the future.

Consent Agenda

Commissioner McClure moved approval of Claims Journals for December 30, December 31, January 6, and January 7. Commissioner Davidson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Administrative Matters

Resolution 2016-01, Transferring Appropriated Funds

Mrs. Burgess stated that the purpose of this resolution was to transfer appropriated funds; she read the resolution in its entirety. Mrs. Burgess explained that the RAC maintenance fund is a special fund; within that, the county receives rental payments from Community Connection of Northeast Oregon. They administer the RAC under a contract and part of that requires CCNO to pay monthly rent. The rent received is put into the RAC fund for maintenance projects such as this. For several years there has been a need to update the entrance to meet ADA requirements. The job was put out to bid and the county anticipated that the project would be completed during this budget year. The bids that they received fell within the \$10,000 that was budgeted, but when the building inspector was on site, they learned that it required an additional platform and clearance for the door, which increased the actual price of the project. She needs the commission's approval to transfer the funds from contingency to the materials and services within the RAC fund. **Commissioner Davidson moved approval. Commissioner Howard stated that if there were no objections to his seconding from the chair, he seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.**

Resolution 2016-02, Appropriating Unanticipated Funds

Mrs. Burgess stated that she is requesting to make an adjustment to the 2015-16 budget. Union County became eligible for a grant that was unanticipated at the time of budget development; it is through the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission for the Justice Reinvestment Program. This resolution would accept the money from the CJC in the amount of \$147,183 and would appropriate and incorporate it into two funds-

\$42,768 into the Crime Victim Program Fund and \$104,415 into the Community Corrections Fund.

Commissioner McClure moved approval. Commissioner Davidson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Court Order 2016-04, Appointment to Grande Ronde Model Watershed (GRMW) Board
Mrs. Burgess stated that the purpose of this court order was to appoint Mark Davidson to the GRMW board; his term would expire November 30, 2016. **Commissioner McClure moved approval. Commissioner Davidson seconded.**

Commissioner Davidson thinks it will be a useful relationship with some upcoming projects.

Commissioner Howard stated that Commissioner Davidson has been instrumental in finding potential funding for projects, and this appointment would be perfect for his portfolio.

Roll Call: Commissioner Davidson, yes. Commissioner Howard, yes. Commissioner McClure, yes. Motion to approve Court Order 2016-04 was carried unanimously.

Communications Specialist Position Description

Commissioner Howard thinks clarification is needed on this topic as the position has already been created in the budget cycle. Current discussion is only about what will be included in the job description. He has heard some public comments about it and wants people to understand it. He stated that his own position has been to ask for some clarification, which has been provided by Mrs. Burgess. He doesn't think the commission needs to take any action on it. His concern is that he knows it is a campaign year and some people have been raising it as a campaign issue; he wants to be sure it is not presented that way. If he were to vote on it again, he would not vote against it, he would vote to abstain because he is not sure the county can afford it. He is also convinced by the expertise of the other commissioners that it will serve a useful function. He is neutral on this and he doesn't think any action needs to be taken at this point.

Commissioner McClure concurred. He sees a real need for the position; this person could put Mr. Hartell's presentation or the advisory committee's recommendation on the website. Getting information out to the public as fast as it happens so that people know what is going on at the county is what is really needed. To him, that is not political, that is information. This position has to be maintained as informational; when it is done honestly, then it works fine and that has been his position all along. The county has struggled trying to keep information out there and has been criticized for not having an updated website. He still supports it and it is something the county needs to do. He mentioned that Lois Barry brought up the topic by saying that the world is changing; the

county better change or it will get left behind even further than it already is. Commissioner Howard concurred and added that he received an email from her supporting it.

Commissioner Davidson stated that the position was proposed during the budget process and thoroughly vetted and debated then. The county has been badly behind in communications, particularly in regards to the internet and website. Great strides have been made with a staffing change within the computer department, but they don't have time to do all that is required in the job description. He concurred with Commissioner McClure in that the world has changed a lot and continues to change; it shouldn't be perceived as a political tool because it clearly isn't. It shouldn't be perceived as a criticism or perceived slight toward local media outlets either because they can't keep up with all the stories given the financial challenges, particularly newspapers in this rapidly changing world. The newspaper is now only three days a week and its staff is cut down to the bone. A position that would inform constituents in a timely manner is a valuable addition to county staff and the county has already budgeted for it. He thinks it has been given the due consideration and the county needs to move forward with it. He doesn't think there is any action that needs to be taken and he still supports it. Commissioner Davidson stated that the Administrative Officer should proceed.

Receipt of Union County Solid Waste District Annual Report

Commissioner Howard stated that this is an informational item only and asked if the public gets to see it. Mrs. Burgess stated that it is an annual report, which is different than an audit because it has to do with the amount of money that the district handles. It is separate from the county, but the three commissioners are the governing body of the district. This explains why staff is provided by the Administrative Office and Planning Department provide staff for the work that is done. Due to the amount of funding that is handled, a full audit is not required. This annual report is submitted to the Secretary of State's office, just like an audit; it is online on their website because the SW District doesn't have their own. It is a public document and a paper copy is kept at the county office also.

Commissioner McClure stated that the SW District closed the landfill on Fox Hill, creating a 30-year obligation to monitor it; it has now been six or seven years. That is the reason it must remain and the county pays someone to go up and monitor the wells. If anything goes wrong, this district is responsible for it. The other piece of it is that Union County is the fiscal agent for the Tri-County Household Hazardous Waste Program. Commissioner Howard asked if the county is the permanent fiscal agency. Commissioner McClure stated yes and the county is paid a 5% administration fee. Mrs. Burgess stated that the Fox Hill Landfill was closed in 2006, so the county has 23½ years left.

Next Meeting and Location

Commissioner Howard stated that the next meeting would be in the same location. He added that the commission should consider holding one of the March meetings outside of La Grande.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lorcinda Johnston
Sr. Dept. Specialist II