

Board of Commissioners Meeting
March 2, 2016

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

Chairman Howard opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and the pledge of allegiance was given. All three commissioners were present.

Public Comments

Frank Thomas, Community Connection – STF Discretionary Grant Application

Frank Thomas, 2204 East Penn Avenue, La Grande, presented two STF Discretionary Grant applications for the commission's consideration:

1. FY2016-17 Rides to Wellness Program - \$42,810
2. FY2017-18 Rides to Wellness Program - \$55,315

Mr. Thomas stated that Community Connection is a private non-profit and cannot apply for the funds directly; Union County has sponsored this type of application in the past after being reviewed by the STF Advisory Committee. Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, stated that Lorinda Johnston staffed the STF Advisory Committee meeting, which met on February 4, 2016. She added that the committee heard a presentation about the applications, after which time they recommended approval of both applications submitted by Community Connection. The availability of funds was advertised by county staff so that if other entities were eligible, they would have had the opportunity to apply; no other applications were received.

Commissioner Davidson moved approval of application recommendations from the STF Advisory Committee. Commissioner McClure second. Motion carried unanimously.

Scott Hartell, Union County Planning Director - B2H Update

Mr. Hartell reported that the B2H Advisory Committee established a subcommittee to address and review the need for the B2H transmission line and the BLM and EFSC application review process. At this point the subcommittee has only communicated through email. They have findings that they would like to send to a PUC meeting that will occur in March and would like the commission's support in the form of a letter. His concern is that the subcommittee has not presented those findings to the B2H Advisory Committee yet. As staff, he is not familiar with the current status of the PUC's processes and criteria in reviewing Idaho Power's Integrated Resource Plan so he is asking for direction from the commission. The resolution that established the advisory committee directed the committee to review the BLM's NEPA process and Oregon Energy Department's EFSC; the subcommittee now wants to focus on information from the PUC. Mr. Hartell is seeking clarification from the commission on whether the county wants the advisory committee to change their focus, or, if the individuals interested in the change need to continue doing so as individuals.

Public Comment - B2H

Irene Gilbert, 2310 Adams Avenue, stated that she is appearing as an individual because the subcommittee is not scheduled to meet in a timely enough manner to present information that is critical to their role. She read the "Need for a Facility" from an Oregon Department of Energy document and stated that this is the issue that has been raised in the B2H meetings but can't be reviewed by the committee because they are not scheduling meetings in a timely enough manner. As an individual, she believes this is critical to the approval process and that if comments are not submitted to the PUC then more work will be required to move forward. She believes the commission really needs to submit a comment to the PUC if it supports the No Action alternative. She stated that she and other members of the public would like to have time on the next agenda to provide information that may be useful. The deadline to submit comments to the PUC is March 24, 2016.

Commissioner Howard stated that he was concerned about the subcommittee working at cross-purposes with the original advisory committee. He stated that he would not like to see it cannibalizing the original purpose of the committee and it seems to be happening a little bit now. Mrs. Gilbert stated that his concerns are the reasons they are appearing as citizens. She added that they had been working on the "need" issue long before the formation of the committee and if it is not going to provide an avenue for information to reach the commission then they feel an obligation to do what they would have done normally. There is a lot of frustration within the committee because there is a perception that the structure and rules are so tight that in many ways it has become ineffective.

Public Comment - B2H

Jim Kreider, 60366 Marvin Rd, stated that he has been a citizen participating in the B2H project for several years. He believes it is important to understand the chain of events that started the B2H project. Idaho Power (IP) is required to do an Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) every two years, which then determines the need for consumer electricity. IP determined that they are not able to meet their need in 2025; their IRP has 26 portfolios of scenarios to meet their need and they chose to build the B2H transmission line. Once the need is acknowledged by the PUC, then they can submit an application to build the power line. BLM then became the lead agency to do the Environmental Impact Statement on that power line. Since the PUC is the one that determines need, they are the critical factor in deciding whether the BLM does the study. The charge of the commission is to develop an understanding and evaluation criteria to be considered by the BLM and the ODE. The criteria for those agencies to consider the power line is the acknowledgment of need from Idaho and Oregon PUC. For the B2H advisory committee to advise the commission on how to interface with BLM and ODE, the committee needs to go to the Oregon PUC to let them know the opinions about the need or lack of need of the B2H line, as well as other alternatives. In his research he found that Idaho did not do a good job of assessing their need. The subcommittee was working on determining the need. Idaho has not done a good job of determining need

because there are three existing lines that could be upgraded. The Cascadia project has changed their route and upgrading existing lines. PG& E has canceled part of their plan because California no longer needs power from Oregon. This is a precedent showing a utility company changing their plans based on the lack of need.

Commissioner Howard asked Mr. Kreider if his intent was to have a recommendation from the subcommittee for the commission. Mr. Kreider stated that the 'need' committee met last week, understanding that there would be a B2H Advisory meeting on March 9, which then changed. The change created a problem because they no longer had the ability to give input to the committee to give to the commissioners, which is the reason that some members decided to appear before the commission as individuals. He stated that he would prefer to do it through the committee, but if they don't meet then there is no opportunity to get the information to the commission. He thinks they are within the scope of the resolution establishing the committee. When talking to the Planning Director, he was told that the committee's scope includes BLM and ODOE only. Mr. Kreider feels that this project has created a domino effect because the PUC is the lead that affects the outcome with the BLM and ODOE, making it within their scope. He added that he feels that the committee is trying to organize, but there is a sense of control that is limiting citizen participation. For example, at the last meeting there was discussion to restrict allowable comments to residents of Union County only. The recommendation was made to have a form for comments that would be required prior to the meeting; comments would need to be submitted in writing ahead of time. One committee member noted that a lot of citizens cannot read and write or don't have computers; requiring a form ahead of time was restricting access. The committee decided that the form would be required anyway. The Planning Department has posted a notice on their website to complete the form and mail or bring to the meeting. They are requiring citizens to complete a form before they can speak to the committee; he believes this is limiting citizen access. Citizens should be able to walk into a meeting, be recognized at the appropriate time and speak to the committee. He understands that the committee is trying to organize the meetings, but some citizens don't function well in that environment. Some questions cannot be anticipated prior to hearing information at the meeting. There was also an issue at the first meeting when some people wanted to discuss the No Action alternative, but were told it was outside their purview and it could not be discussed. Committee members had to come to the commission for clarification on that. Now members are coming back to the commission to explain that comments to the PUC are valid and within the scope, but are told they are not within the scope. It seems to him that there is some dynamic that doesn't feel right and is not allowing citizen participation to be free and open. He understands there is a balance between administrative control versus hearing from the public.

Commissioner McClure asked what the charge of the committee was in the resolution that established the committee. Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, read the Resolution 2015-18, In the Matter of a Resolution Creating a Boardman to

Hemmingway B2H Advisory Committee, in its entirety. The resolution stated the purpose of the B2H Advisory Committee as follows:

- Gather citizen concerns and comments regarding the B2H transmission line
- Develop an understanding of the evaluation criteria to be considered by the BLM and ODOE
- Develop suggested comments based on citizen input and evaluation criteria reporting issues of substance and the identified criteria being addressed
- Present suggested comments to commissioners for potential submission to the BLM and ODOE

Commissioner Howard stated that hearing comments about ODOE, BLM, and PUC sounds like a jurisdictional argument to him and he would like someone to weigh in on the topic. He stated that in regards to the needs assessment and resource plan, it is probably advisable and wise but he is not sure that it fits within the committee's scope. He is not sure the PUC is appropriate within the jurisdictional statement, and he would have to learn more about it. He knows that it can be frustrating, but the committee deserves credit for what they have done. He recognizes that the committee has been given an enormous task and it is hard and frustrating; that is a sign of credit and esteem for what they have accomplished. He added that the Planning Department has been instrumental in the process and he hopes that the committee will not be pulled apart by the futility of the sense of frustration of the task.

Commissioner McClure stated that the IRP is completed every two years and the B2H project proposal has been around for ten years. He asked if Oregon PUC and Idaho PUC have given approval for the need in every IRP over the last ten years. Mr. Kreider stated that in 2015, the IRP included B2H as a need in the plan for only the second time in ten years. Commissioner McClure stated that discussions with IP began years ago; they brought maps and presented their plan to him and the Planning Department. IP told him that the Idaho PUC told them that B2H needed consideration because they thought it was less expensive than building generating facilities to meet their 2025 demand. IP also told him that the portfolio of scenarios was selected by the PUC for them. Commissioner McClure asked Mr. Kreider if the PUC told IP to accept the portfolio, or if they had made that decision yet. Mr. Kreider believes they made the decision on their own; the Oregon PUC is currently questioning IP's selection of P6 because there are four other portfolios that are less expensive. Commissioner McClure stated that IP told him that the reason they are doing this is because their PUC wouldn't allow it due to the excessive expense for their customers. He acknowledged that there is now contrary information; they were saying that it was not Oregon PUC it was the Idaho PUC that wanted the line, then they convinced Oregon to concur with it. Mr. Kreider stated that that was not his understanding of the process; he believes that they do their IRP and come up with analyses, then present what they want to do. He can't speak to Idaho PUC, but he knows the Oregon PUC is currently questioning P6 as cost effective to the rate payers.

Commissioner Davidson asked if the PUC had already issued their final comments despite being in the middle of their analysis. Mr. Kreider stated that the PUC staff had issued their final comments and that the PUC commissioners are having a special meeting on March 24 to make a final determination.

Commissioner Davidson asked if the PUC is making a final decision on the B2H need or entire IRP; Mr. Kreider stated that they will make their decision on the IRP for IP in Oregon. He added that even though staff has submitted final comments, there is still an opportunity for Union County to submit their own comments. The analyst said he is presenting the staff recommendations to the PUC. If there are points that were not considered in those recommendations and are viable, then the analyst will share that information with the commissioners during the meeting. Mr. Kreider plans to attend the meeting and be available to speak with the PUC commission. He has been in discussions with the Citizens' Utility Board (CUB); they are paid to intervene on behalf of citizens. He has scheduled a phone conference with the Executive Director to inquire about them providing advice and vetting his comments on his behalf.

Commissioner Davidson asked if the CUB was a private non-profit or a public agency. Commissioner McClure stated that the CUB is a private non-profit agency. Commissioner Davidson stated that private non-profits have an agenda. Mr. Kreider stated that they could possibly have an agenda.

Commissioner Howard stated that this was helpful conversation, but the commission needs to return to discussions about the advisory committee's role.

Commissioner McClure asked why the advisory committee was unable to meet before the March 24 deadline to hear the subcommittee's report. He stated that he appreciates Mr. Kreider's comments and knows how complicated and convoluted the subject is.

Public Comment - B2H

George Mead, 57744 Foothill Rd, La Grande, directed the commission to read the two agencies listed on the resolution that the advisory committee is supposed to respond to.

Commissioner Howard asked Mr. Mead to clarify his position with the B2H committee. Mr. Mead stated that he was on the B2H committee and subcommittee looking at the need for the line; he is appearing before the commission as a private citizen.

Mr. Mead asked which agencies the advisory committee was directed to respond to; Mrs. Burgess stated that the resolution instructed the committee to respond to the BLM and ODOE. Mr. Mead stated that in all of his research to determine need, the two agencies that make decisions are the EFSC and the PUC. The EFSC determines the need based on the IRP that the utility makes. When looking at the IRP, comments are forwarded to the EFSC. If you look at the PUC, they ask lots of questions and have a series of questions that speak to need as well. He asked how the committee is

supposed to be effective when it is limited to working with the BLM and ODOE, who are not making the decisions. Mr. Mead stated that according to the IRP, IP plans to build new generating plants; the issue then is not just about whether or not they build a line here or not. IP does not outline their plans to build another line in Wyoming; there are many things they do not disclose in their IRP.

Commissioner McClure stated that this project has turned into more than it started out to be. Pacific Power is a major owner of the line and he wants to know their demand for need. In regards to ownership of the line, he questions why Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) wants to be a part of the plan. When this project started, it was far different than it has turned out to be.

Public Comment - B2H

Irene Gilbert, 2310 Adams Avenue, La Grande, stated that IP went to the EFSC to indicate their desire to build the B2H line but were told that they couldn't unless it was included in the IRP. IP then updated the IRP, making it look like it had been a part of the plan for some time. Idaho PUC had questions about the need for the B2H line. At the beginning of the IRP, they commented that "acceptance of this plan does not indicate agreement." The utilities have to produce the plan every two years. It is a conflict when the PUC indicates that they are not saying that they agree with the plan or think it is a good idea, but must accept it as a federal requirement. There needs to be input in the IRP that states there are conflicts within the information that was provided, which is what she is trying to do. She stated that she was speaking as a private citizen. If the commission determines that the advisory committee can't get its act together, then she and other private citizens would like agenda time to make suggestions to the commission about comments they could include in a letter to the PUC.

Constituent Inquiries

Commissioner Howard stated that he has received constituent comments about the B2H line and the animal shelter. He stated that negotiations with the animal shelter are ongoing. His concern from reading comments from the public is the tendency is to attack without any information. The purpose to reach an agreement with the shelter are in the best interest of the entire county; those negotiations should not be criticized by third parties, specifically those who wish to criticize the county for perceived failings. Those kinds of comments are counterproductive and ill timed. He stated that he was directing those comments specifically towards the newspaper and he is certain they know when addressing those comments, they can only describe them as incendiary. As someone who is relatively new to the commission, he can say that the commission has acted with great aplomb and integrity in addressing this issue. It has nothing to do with any prior decisions, including the Women's Shelter. He commended his fellow commissioners on their ability to take a difficult issue and look out for the best interest of the county.

Elected Official, Department Head & Employee Comments

Scott Hartell, Union Co. Planning Director, B2H Update

Mr. Hartell stated that he is not certain, but it is possible for the advisory committee to meet before March 24. The committee chair has not called a meeting and no materials have been submitted. Mr. Hartell received a request for a meeting, but he indicated to the requestors that it needed to go through the chair. An email survey would need to be sent to committee members to determine availability. He stated that the advisory committee would like to have a packet of information to review prior to the meeting. As he understands it, the resolution was drafted as it was because there were only two applications submitted to IP to build the B2H line. One is to request a use of federal right of way, and the other is to request use of state and private right of way. There is no application that IP has to submit to the PUC to get approval. He would like some direction; if the committee is to follow the PUC, then there will be some catch up.

Commissioner Davidson stated that he is uncomfortable with the subcommittee circumventing the main committee. It is counter to the process setup, tends to discourage participation within the main committee, and is counterproductive in the long run. He acknowledged that they have an identified concern and are frustrated by not being able to meet. He hopes that a main committee meeting can be scheduled before the deadline; the subcommittee's work needs to come through the main committee. The argument about making comments to the PUC is intriguing and there seems to be some validity to that argument. It is curious that Ms. Gilbert explained that the inclusion of the line in the IRP, and acknowledgement of the plan by the PUC, was not an acceptance or approval of the projects within that plan. If she is correct in those comments and he understood her correctly, then this is not about the intent of the No Action alternative or the subcommittee building a case showing the line isn't necessary at all. He does not think that the testimony in front of the PUC, based on that information, would lead to that conclusion. First and foremost, he would want the main committee to meet and the subcommittee's work to go through the full committee. Any recommendation to the commission needs to come from the full committee.

Commissioner McClure concurred and added that the main committee can make the decision whether or not to bring the information and recommendation to the commission. If the subcommittee is not happy, then individuals can bring information to the commission as individuals. He thinks the main committee needs to listen to them, then make a determination on whether to bring it to the commission. He is a little bit confused when hearing Ms. Gilbert say that the EFSC required PUC approval, and then she says that the PUC decision is meaningless. How can you have a requirement for a meaningless decision? EFSC says it has to be through the PUC before they will consider it, then are told that the PUC consideration is meaningless because they don't agree with it and is just something they have to do by federal law.

Commissioner Howard stated that Mr. Hartell may be able to address the distinction of the IRP process itself and its relevance to particular parts of this process. He asked how relevant IP's IRP is to the PUC approval process.

Mr. Hartell stated that he could not address the PUC side of it; he had not been asked to track it and had not done so. Commissioner Howard asked if he had looked at the IRP; Mr. Hartell stated that he had not. Mr. Hartell stated that there is a checkbox in administrative rules through the EFSC that asks if the project is in the IRP. The application was submitted in Oregon a long time ago and they have already met that requirement. He has talked to Renee Straub at BLM Vale District, who indicated that the requirement was met or it would not have gotten through the DEIS. The advisory committee has not identified it as something they need to address because Oregon and BLM have already indicated to him that the requirement had already been met.

Commissioner Howard agreed with Commissioner Davidson in that it is an intriguing argument. He thinks the clear consensus is to see what the advisory committee does and respect the integrity of the committee itself. He requested that private citizens try to restrain any sidebar efforts. That may mean that the B2H committee itself will be in a position to say why they are not doing something, and why they are not participating and producing a separate dissenting report or subcommittee report. There also seems to be a consensus that there is a concern about the functioning subcommittee, especially if they are almost setting themselves up; he added that would be his phrase, and not reflective of anyone else. He doesn't view the functioning of the subcommittee as a positive process. He wants to see full engagement from the main committee; that committee should be making decisions and making clear what they are doing in terms of taking any inaction. His final cautionary note was that he knows how passionate the No Action alternative is and how appealing it is throughout Eastern Oregon. His concern is that the desire to reach that result doesn't drive the overall comment process, or tear apart the main advisory committee.

Commissioner McClure stated that the subcommittee of the B2H advisory committee should be going through the process of submitting to the main committee; if they are unhappy about that process, then they can address the commission as individuals. As a subcommittee, it is their responsibility to go back through the main committee process; the integrity of that process needs to be maintained. If they are having trouble providing the information, then they need to work on meeting dates. That is what needs to happen in order for the commission to honor that process.

Commissioner Howard stated that Commissioner McClure's statements were well said and added that he would like to see the names associated with it, as well.

Commissioner Davidson stated that in regards to Mr. Kreider's comments about the internal committee process and rules, he would assume that those rules and processes were established and approved by the committee. If they weren't, they should be. The

commission expects the committee to set up their rules on how they will operate internally and be friendly to the public.

Commissioner Davidson asked Mr. Hartell to expand on the comment forms the committee requested from the public. Mr. Hartell stated that the committee was stopping speakers to take notes or understand highly technical information during public comment time. The committee wanted to set up a form process for these people to submit a comment form that would identify criteria and studies they were addressing. The committee got off on a tangent where it was becoming too stern on how comments would be accepted, which has since been loosened. The committee would still like to have the comment form, which is made available at the meetings and on the county website. For anyone who cannot read and write, they are welcome to come to the Planning Department office where assistance will be provided. There is a structure for taking comments. The cart is before the horse here a little bit; there is a subcommittee, but no policy on how it will respond and bring information back to the main committee. That issue is on the March 31 agenda for the main committee to make it formal. Commissioner Davidson asked if the comment form was an attempt to assist in reflecting information accurately for the record. Mr. Hartell stated that was correct.

Mutual Aid Agreement

JB Brock, Union County Emergency Manager, submitted a staff report recommending approval of the County-wide Fire and EMS Mutual Aid Agreement. He stated that the county was asked to be a part of it and was requested by the County Fire Chiefs. It would allow the county to enter into an agreement that would create a mechanism to request or provide mutual aid, but it does not obligate the county to do so. There had been some instances in the past where this could have been used and would have been available if there had been an agreement in place. It encompasses all hazards, so there is no limit on emergency occurrences when it could be utilized. Having the ability to request resources prior to an event could be beneficial instead of going to a conflagration when the county is on the hook for some of those funds that are associated with that. **Commissioner Davidson moved approval of the Mutual Aid Agreement. Commissioner McClure seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Ordinance 2016-01, Regulating Burning Outside City Limits

JB Brock, Union County Emergency Manager submitted a staff report recommending approval of Ordinance 2016-01. He stated that it was created after last fire season and brought to the county by the county Fire Chiefs and County Fire Defense Board. Ordinance 1991-19 had many unregulated items and lacked an easy mechanism to enter into a complete burn ban. There were no changes in the proposed ordinance regarding the requirement of burn permits year round, which allows the fire departments to determine controlled burns from other fires when calls come in. The current ordinance does not have a mechanism to regulate fire appliances that are becoming more popular, such as chimineas and campfires. The county needs a mechanism to regulate them and create parameters around how they could be used safely. The use

of burn barrels was also included in the proposed ordinance. An addition included in the proposed ordinance is an opportunity to declare a total burn ban. It would be implemented only when there is an extreme fire danger at the recommendation of the County Fire Defense Board and would require the approval of the commission without a separate resolution. The proposed ordinance would not regulate field burning, as it would remain a separate process.

Commissioner Davidson asked for clarification of the mechanism that would be used to declare a total burn ban. Mr. Brock stated that a total burn ban would require a recommendation by the County Fire Defense Board and approval by the commission.

Commissioner McClure stated that he gets more calls about burn permits because there is no clear understanding of when burning can take place and they cannot get ahold of anyone to get answers. He stated that it has been an issue since 1991 and asked how it could be corrected.

Mr. Brock stated that those questions are directed to the Smoke Management line, which then sends the caller to their fire district. Generally speaking, leaving a message is all that is needed to attain a burn permit. It may be something that needs to be addressed by reaching out and explaining it in a PR campaign. He added that the challenge is having only two full-time Fire Chiefs in the county. Other departments aren't staffed regularly so when citizens are unable to get an answer from the fire department they sometimes call the county. Commissioner McClure stated that if the county is going to require a burn permit, then there should be an easy process to get it. Mr. Brock stated that it is an easy process, it is just not well known.

Mrs. Burgess reminded the commission that a public hearing was required for the ordinance, at which time additional testimony could be heard.

Commissioner McClure stated that he would like the permitting process to be seamless and easy. Mr. Brock stated that he would add the topic to discussions at the next Fire Defense Board meeting. Mrs. Burgess stated that the permitting process is to call 963-4040; the message will indicate whether or not burning is permitted on that day. Mr. Brock added that the process could be pushed out more effectively.

Mr. Brock stated that this would be a first reading of the proposed ordinance and the second reading would take place later.

Commissioner McClure stated that he will continue to debate the issue of permitting because people are frustrated that the process is not clearly defined and do not know when it is required. He would like it to be an easy process and it should be made available on the website and through other means of communication. Mr. Brock recognized it as an ongoing challenge and the county could do a better job of getting the message out.

Commissioner Howard opened the hearing to public testimony.

Larry Wooldridge, La Grande Rural Fire Chief and Union County Fire Chief, stated that Ordinance 2016-01 had been reviewed by all the county Fire Chiefs for months since the last fire season. He sympathized and empathized with Commissioner McClure in hearing from frustrated callers. He tries to get the information out to the public and the Smoke Management phone number is listed on his reader board. The ordinance is needed to help during fire season. They have seen an increase in fire activity and fire danger over the years. The proposed ordinance does not inhibit or prohibit regular fire season burning abilities; it just provides a mechanism for them to minimize the fire danger during fire season. He hopes and encourages the commission to take a good look at it.

No additional testimony was offered. Commissioner Howard closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Davidson moved to hear the first reading of Ordinance 2016-01. Commissioner McClure seconded.

Mrs. Burgess asked the commission if they would like the ordinance read in its entirety or by title only. The commission agreed by consensus to hear Ordinance 2016-01 read by title only. Mrs. Burgess read Ordinance 2016-01 by title only.

Commissioner Davidson moved approval of the first reading of Ordinance 2016-01. Commissioner McClure seconded.

Commissioner McClure stated that last year's fire season was one of the most frightening in Eastern Oregon and it is very appropriate for the commission to take steps like this one. The commission should have the authority to shut down burning when there are conditions like last year. He thinks this ordinance is long overdue. He supports the ordinance and it needs to be seriously considered.

Commissioner Davidson concurred with Commissioner McClure. Ordinance 1991-19 has been in effect for 25 years and it is probably a good time to update it for the county's current needs considering the experiences from last fire season.

Roll Call: Commissioner Davidson, yes. Commissioner McClure, yes. Commissioner Howard, yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Burgess stated that the second reading of Ordinance 2016-01 would be scheduled for March 16, 2016 @ 10:00 a.m.

Consent Agenda

Commissioner McClure moved approval of the Consent Agenda, which included Meeting Minutes from January 20 and Claims Journals for February 10 and 11. Commissioner Davidson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Administrative Matters

Court Order 2016-09, Appointment to the 4-H Extension District Advisory Committee

Mrs. Burgess stated that there was a need to reappoint members to this advisory committee. Donna Heffernan, Bill White, Nancy Dake, Ken Patterson, Robin Gerber, and Don Sands have been active members and want to continue serving. Terms would expire on 12/31/2018. **Commissioner Davidson moved approval. Commissioner McClure seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Court Order 2016-10, Appointment to the NEOEDD Budget Committee

Mrs. Burgess stated that a vacancy was created by the relocation of Charlie Mitchell and John Lackey expressed an interest in serving. His term would begin immediately and would expire 12/31/2017. **Commissioner Davidson moved approval. Commissioner McClure seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Court Order 2016-11, Appointment to the Union County Fair Board

Mrs. Burgess stated that the passing of a board member created a vacancy; Nanette Putney applied for the position. Her term would begin immediately and would expire 12/31/2016. **Commissioner Davidson moved approval. Commissioner McClure seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Resolution 2016-05, Appropriating Unanticipated Funds

Mrs. Burgess stated that Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization awarded grant funds to the Sheriff's Office Mentor Program after the adoption of FY 2015-16 budget. Expenditures will be for the Mentor Program in the amount of \$50,000 as a contractual services arrangement. **Commissioner Davidson moved approval of Resolution 2016-05. Commissioner McClure seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Meeting was recessed until 10:30 a.m.

Unfinished Business

Veteran & Military Affairs

Commissioner Howard stated that he would like to see Veterans and Military Affairs added to the list of commissioner responsibilities. He sees this related specifically to Commissioner McClure considering his expertise, knowledge, and background.

Byron Whipple, Union County Veterans Services Officer, 2301 Cove Avenue, La Grande, stated that he was available to answer any questions the commission may have on establishing a portfolio.

Commissioner McClure complimented Mr. Whipple on the job he had been doing; he really appreciates his work. He thinks the county has an obligation to be more engaged in helping Veterans. He asked Mr. Whipple to share what he thinks the county role should look like.

Mr. Whipple stated that there are a few committees within the county that focus on Veterans already. One of them is the La Grande Community Based Outpatient (VA) Clinic Advisory Council (CBOC) that includes representatives from the community, American Legion, and VFW. They comment on the quality of service provided by the La Grande VA Clinic. He intends to resurrect Operation Enduring Support, which began in 2010 when the 3rd Battalion 116th Cavalry returned home. Making the committee active again would be successful with stabilized staffing at EOU and the help of Commissioner Howard, who is also a part of the Veterans and Active Duty Military Organization. There are three good committees that are currently in place where he gets input and guidance to provide services to Veterans.

Commissioner Davidson reiterated support for Mr. Whipple and the Veterans Services Program; he complimented him on the exemplary job he does representing Veterans and helping them acquire benefits. There is a noticeable increase in benefits returning to Union County that is attributed to Mr. Whipple's hard work. He thinks the money invested in CHD to employ Mr. Whipple is some of the best money the county spends dollar for dollar and there is a great return on the investment of outside dollars supporting our Veterans' standard of care and quality of life. Their contributions to our community are very impressive and outstanding. Mr. Whipple stated that he could not take all the credit; there are some great organizations that support him like the American Legion, VFW, and CBOC Advisory Council. He can challenge any other county in the state to do what is accomplished in Union County because of the network of organizations that support him.

Commissioner Davidson thanked Mr. Whipple for his willingness to help Wallowa County when their officer was on active duty. He stated that Commissioner Roberts spoke highly of Mr. Whipple's service and they appreciated it.

La Grande School District (LGSD) - Out of District Contract

Larry Glaze, (LGSD) Superintendent, stated that they have been working on a plan to offer career education opportunities for adults and high school students. Needs for the program have been determined by local and state research, which indicated that access to career education through a community college is needed in order to be an economic factor in bringing businesses into the community. They are seeking consideration in the county's FY 2016-17 budget for an Out of District Contract with Blue Mountain Community College (BMCC).

Cam Preus, President, BMCC, PO Box 100, Pendleton, thanked Mr. Glaze for ongoing dialog that had taken place as they developed programs to expand opportunities for La

Grande High School students and the public. It has helped BMCC navigate a path back to the commission to propose options on how to bring training and experiences that the LGSD would like and how to make them available to the community at large. She presented two options for the commission to consider that differed in cost based on the time allocated to the Program Coordinator position. The program would include basic general education courses that are not currently offered in the evening by Eastern Oregon University (EOU). She stated that they are trying to remain committed to not stepping on toes while leveraging available resources. Courses offered to high school students would include business, welding, and preparatory courses.

Commissioner McClure asked what discussions have taken place with Eastern Oregon University. He stated that Union County provides \$24,000 to EOU for a Coordinator that works with BMCC so that preparatory courses taken through BMCC are charged at half the cost. He asked if there would be a continuation of those programs. Ms. Preus stated that through her research, although not exhaustive, she did not find any EOU-BMCC dual-enrolled students who were taking those types of courses but she would like to do more research on that. She added that there could be EOU students taking those classes through EOU. It could be that the funds are being spent as intended, just not flagged as BMCC courses or students. She stated that BMCC currently offers dual-credit courses with LGHS and Elgin High School. If the program proceeds, the Program Coordinator would meet with Imbler, Cove, and Elgin to increase the number of students participating. It is expected that most students would be from LGHS. They want to springboard off their relationship with LGHS because they have very willing partners with a plan, scope of work, and funds to do it.

Commissioner Davidson stated that it is not on the list now, but the Program Coordinator should be engaged with Union High School also. He noted that he is encouraged by the list of courses including writing, math, welding, emergency medical technician, nursing assistants, fire, business and leadership, and mechatronics. He thinks it does a good job of serving all high schools as well as the training needs for businesses and employers that Union County is trying to attract. There is an identified shortcoming in the county of these training opportunities through a community college. He is very supportive of it because it is needed in the community to be competitive in economic development. He appreciates the work that has been done for the program from the LGSD, BMCC, and community members. There are a lot of challenges that are difficult to address, but this is one that has the means and opportunity to make a difference. He whole heartedly supports it; it is very affordable and has great potential for return.

Commissioner McClure asked if dual credit would be offered to college and high school students. Ms. Preus stated yes.

Commissioner McClure stated that having qualified teachers to teach dual-credit courses had been a problem in the past and asked if that is still an issue. Ms. Preus

stated that it is not a current problem, but it would be a better question for the LGSD. The State of Oregon has been reevaluating the rules governing the credentialing of instructors for dual credit. BMCC feels comfortable that they are headed in the right direction and that not all teachers can or want to be certified to teach those courses. Commissioner McClure sees a real monetary benefit in taking higher education courses during high school.

Commissioner McClure asked how many counties are not in a community college district. Ms. Preus estimated that there are six in Eastern Oregon. Commissioner McClure stated that for Union County to have an Out of District Contract, they would need to contribute 20% of the cost to the program.

Commissioner McClure asked about the process of joining the district. Ms. Preus stated that it is a rather involved process. An advisory committee would be formed to gather community input about joining a district, which would not be specific to BMCC. After which time, signatures in support would be collected and it would go to a vote. The County would then request to be annexed to the district through the state. Counties who currently make up the district also get to vote; it is the same process to leave the district.

Commissioner McClure stated that he appreciated the proposal and thinks it is something that should be considered in the budget process. He also wanted to have a conversation with EOU regarding the \$24,000 funding that is given to them and wondered if the program still exists. Ms. Preus stated that it may still exist, but she just had not found any students that were dual-enrolled between the college and university. She stated that she will look into it further and bring information back to the commission.

Commissioner Davidson stated there should be some assurance that the model that is produced works with others currently operating so that there are no competing programs.

Commissioner McClure stated that if the county is making contributions to the program, then it has to be available county-wide for all school districts; it would only be fair to be uniform in presenting it to the community.

Commissioner Howard stated that the proposals presented were pretty modest in relation to the benefits of a Program Coordinator. He stated that having a Program Coordinator at least half time would be the way to go; he asked if the position would be based in La Grande. Mrs. Preus stated that it would be based in LHS, where the LGSD has offered free office space. He asked for further clarification about the pay structure for faculty and enrollment process. Mrs. Preus stated that the budget anticipated hiring some teachers in Union County, as well as some from BMCC. There would be no stipend for high school faculty unless classes were taught during the summer. BMCC would certify instructors as dual-credit instructors, who would be paid by the district.

Mr. Glaze added that the LGSD is willing to commit the space in the new vocational building for community classes.

Commissioner Howard noted that county impacts would include staffing, programming, and opportunities to adults.

Brett Baxter, LGHS Principal, 708 K Avenue, La Grande, stated that they talk in general terms as it relates to LHS, but it could be extended to all schools in the county who need the services. A partnership with BMCC would benefit students through an increase in college credits, top quality and high engagement instruction, hands on experience, higher graduation rate, and improved workforce development. The new facility at LGHS will be available for county-wide use and classes could be streamed to other facilities. The program will allow for tailoring courses for needs and demands.

Commissioner Howard asked if internship opportunities would be available. Scott Carpenter, LGHS Vice Principal, stated that the internship program would be driven by the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Coordinator. Her primary function is to connect students with employers. While in a superintendents meeting several months ago, he asked area superintendents if they were supportive of having BMCC return to Union County; their response unanimously supported it.

Mr. Carpenter explained that by advertising the BMCC programs across Union County, there is an opportunity for area high schools to earn \$1600-1800 per student to support CTE programs when students earn three CTE credits or a CTE certificate recognized by the State of Oregon. When a high school student uses the CTE tech facility at LGHS to earn a certificate that is not available at their own school, the money is sent back to the student's high school to support their CTE program. All schools financially benefit from having BMCC programs available in Union County.

Mr. Baxter added that the LGSD has fought hard to ensure that there would be a separate public entrance to the CTE building.

Commissioner Davidson reiterated how exciting the program and opportunities are for the community. It is a great project and it is really encouraging to come together to address an identified challenge. The county has an opportunity to be an integral part of it and it would benefit everyone across the county.

Mr. Carpenter added that many donations have been received from businesses to support the program. He advocates for the half-time Program Coordinator position; having a person to connect with on-site helps address the weakness of students looking outside the area for post-high school education.

Commissioner Howard stated that North Powder should be included in the list of schools.

Commissioner Davidson stated that the proposals are affordable and wondered if a half-time coordinator was enough. Mr. Baxter stated that there was discussion about starting the program with a half-time position, then consider building upon it later. The LGSD invested in a full-time CTE Coordinator because it takes someone dedicated to drive the program. He thinks the LGSD is all in and views it as a valuable contribution for the county. He stated that he is more than willing to reach out to other school districts.

Commissioner McClure asked if he understood correctly when a comment was made that area high school superintendents are in favor of BMCC coming back. Mr. Glaze stated that they unanimously agreed that they would want it as part of their program. He expects the program to become more available county-wide over time.

Mr. Glaze stated that BMCC is LGSD's first community college choice when entering into an Out of District Contract; LGSD receives Perkins grant money for CTE advancement in the schools and that consortium and the IMESD serve the same geographical location. BMCC also has the career opportunities that students and the adult population need, in addition to their willingness to shape their program to meet the needs of LGSD, the county, and local employers. LGSD is benefitting from it in various ways, but they also are committed to the promise they made to make it available to the community for adult education. He added that they have tried to be very careful in not stepping on toes.

Commissioner Howard asked if there would be flexibility with the minimum student enrollment per class when employers are in need of on-site training. Mr. Baxter stated that they could absolutely do that within their facility.

Mr. Baxter stated that there has been an ongoing effort to ensure that the program offers what the CTE Advisory Panel has requested based on needs; he feels they have been very responsive to the panel and want to be relevant in the county and region.

Commissioner Howard asked if there was a possibility of having consortiums with other colleges to fill training gaps. Mr. Glaze stated that there is and the question had been raised already; BMCC was open to it and LGSD is too. Mr. Baxter stated that LGSD has collaborated with EOU, Oregon Technical, and Treasure Valley Community College because each offers something unique to the students.

Commissioner McClure stated that there were problems with an Out of District Contract with BMCC in the past, but this program excites him. The county has needed this kind of cooperation to make a difference in the community and the commission needs to consider it. It is known that there has been a need for these skills for students in this

area. If the county can do it, then it should. There are other funding requests, but this one really impresses him.

Christine Jarski, City of La Grande Economic Development Director, 1000 Adams Avenue. She stated that the 2014 site selector survey identified the lack of a community college as the largest impediment to economic development. This project has been exciting because industry leaders were engaged in discussions to determine needs and develop curriculum. This program provides the gap between the needs of local industry and students' skill set. When meeting with clients locating here, they first ask about the available workforce. With this program, the community has a great team working on workforce development and has the resources to customize training specifically for a company. This sets the community apart from others who have similar offerings. She sees this program as critical to the economic development efforts.

Deb Gargalis, Oregon Employment Department Senior Manager, 1901 Adams Avenue. She stated that there was a long history of BMCC's presence in Union County followed by its absence. Now, the opportunity to see the program's fruition is exactly what is needed on the workforce end. She also serves on the Eastern Oregon Workforce Board; she continually hears employers state that they need welding classes and youth remaining in the community. This program supports those needs 100%; she is in strong favor of the program. There are real opportunities to connect youth transitioning into adulthood. The potential to be able to utilize the equipment and facility for adult education and youth transition education is critical to supporting local employment needs.

Commissioner Davidson added that the LGSD being a foundational partner in the program could not be overstated. Their willingness to be a partner, the school bond, and grant are what makes it all possible.

Mr. Glaze stated that this is an opportunity to take advantage of a number of resources all at once, as well as an opportunity to give back to the community.

Next Meeting and Location

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, April 16, 2016.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lorcinda Johnston
Sr. Dept. Specialist II