

## IN THE COUNTY COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON

### IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF GRANT

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**June 24th, 2020**

Pursuant to notice made to the newspaper of general circulation throughout Grant County, the radio station, county website, and e-mail distribution list, a regular meeting of the County Court was held at the County Courthouse in Canyon City, OR.

9:00 am -- Call to Order. Present were Judge Scott W. Myers, Commissioners Jim Hamsher and Sam Palmer, Administrative Assistant Kim Puckett, Judge Kathy Stinnett, Reporter Steven Mitchell, Reporter Logan Bagett, Frances Preston, and Pastor Justin Demming. A Pledge of Allegiance was given to the United States Flag. The invocation was given by Pastor Demming.

**CLAIMS.** The court reviewed and approved claims and extension district warrants #121, 122, 123, 124.  
**HAND CHECK.** The court approved outside of normal claims day checks#59718 & 59719.

**AGENDA.** MSP: Myers/Palmer-- to accept the agenda as presented

**ANNOUNCEMENTS.** As a board member Judge Myers had a conference call with Community Connections adopting their 10 Million budget, this is the first time ever funding that high had been received.

Commissioner Palmer had continued phone calls with State Legislators and Representatives in regards to Covid-19 and a special session coming up. He talked with Kimberly Lindsey about the Governor's orders and enforcements through the Local Public Health Agency (LPHA). He had meetings with a couple local ranchers over concerns one had with the Resource Advisory Council (RAC) and with some projects going on in the south fork with the weed control and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Palmer will be reviewing some documents sent to him by those gentleman.

Commissioner Hamsher had some telephone calls with local ranchers over their concerns regarding invasive weeds in the Murders Creek area, and conversations about getting the Resource Advisory Council (RAC) going again for the County. He met with various Department Heads. Hamsher also talked with City County Insurance Services (CIS) Attorney in regards to the Covid-19 Office Policy and what needs to be done. He also had a meeting with State Legislators from this region bringing us up to date. Hamsher shared some news that the State of Oregon is now authorizing the next round of CARES Act Funding. It will be \$250,000 for counties, regardless of population, also cities within counties, towns, above 750 population will be able to be reimbursed \$50,000 as long as the expenses are authorized under the treasury guidelines for CARES Act. Towns and cities under 750 population can be reimbursed for up to \$25,000. If they don't have the funds to spend then the state will work with them. Hamsher said for our Cities that should bring in an additional \$225,000 and then \$250,000 for our County. If cities cannot expend the money before the end of the calendar year they can authorize funds to go back over to the County where funds can be spent for things like more Economic Stabilization for the businesses.

It will be going out in July. Hamsher will have another meeting with CIS to formalize the County Offices re-opening plan.

**MINUTES.** MSP: Myers/Palmer-- to approve the minutes as presented and the amended June 10<sup>th</sup> minutes.

Shannon Springer entered 9:05 am, Eric Julsrud, Hailey Boethim, Brenda Percy, Vicky Bond entered at 9:11 am. Mindy Winegar entered 9:24 am, Julie Ellison entered 9:53am

**DEPARTMENT HEADS.** Several County Department Heads individually voiced their concerns to the Court regarding guidelines after receiving the document titled Real Time Risks (RTR) Logistical Guidance for Reopening Local Governments Buildings to the Public forwarded from Commissioner Hamsher through Laurie Wright, Human Resources Manager. Eric Julsrud, Watermaster, questioned the court on why Employees received a draft document instead of direction. Commissioner Hamsher answered, that he wanted County employees input and discussion took place on whether this was appropriate guidance. Hamsher said that a policy needs to be created that works for everyone as each department is different. Julsrud also discussed a county policy adopted years ago regarding the expectations of county liaisons. Questions were asked why liaisons were not communicating with county departments. Many asked why there was not written guidance provided immediately. Commissioner Hamsher read an email that was sent out after the decision to open, it say's during yesterday's meeting the County Court made the decision to re-open to the public Monday, June 1st. Some offices (especially those that serve vulnerable populations) may be uncomfortable with re-opening completely at this time. Please contact your court liaison to discuss any concerns you may have with re-opening and to work out a plan that will work for your department. Commissioner Hamsher has masks available for offices that would like to have them. Hailey Boethin, Assistant Watermaster appeared in County Court to ask about the guidelines presented in the RTR document and why in a National Pandemic that started in March that there is no direction for the employees in the building or for the Courthouse or other offices even after the RTR was submitted by CIS to our County as a guideline for operations. Boethin after reading this document in its entirety submitted an email prior to the County Court meeting to the County Court members regarding the guidelines set forth in the RTR document with questions following the guidelines on how the County should be re-opened, only two of the members indicated they read her email. Additionally two of our court members are serving as active leadership for the EOC that should be able to implement guidelines for operations. Commissioner Palmer said that he believes there has been some confusion because we closed the building and received some emails from Judge Cramer's office stating there are some things we could not shut down, at that time we had put up new notifications on the doors complying with that. Commissioner Palmer said that moving forward we needed to look for resolution, perhaps going over the document Item G from today's agenda and then getting with the Safety Committee for the individual departments that we could come up with some resolution within that works for everybody. Stinnett said that she believes the consensus is that more administration from the Court is needed. Shannon Springer, Planning Director commented that every court member had been to her office and has given her office direction although a little different from each one. Springer asks that uniform and consistent direction be given to all departments and department heads. Vicky Bond, Library Director said some of the inconsistencies come from the guidelines changing daily making it difficult to be consistent because we don't always know. Judge Kathy Stinnett said that she believes the departments and employees are starving for a little bit of administration coming from the County Court. She said

that she knows some are very involved with certain departments and what they feel they thought was their best role during this emergency, but perhaps with that many qualified people who some said are very experienced with what they do, and the money, and the staff, and equipment that they had and to move forward perhaps more time should have been spent in the current building, and with employees, and less time at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Stinnett said that she thinks some people are getting the feeling that everything was devoted to the one Emergency Department, and some were left to figure out what to do. Whether it is a perception or not she was just conveying this as a possibility. Appropriate guidance is needed on the functionalities of the building not individual offices. Department Heads have been very good at maintaining and managing their offices and finding out what's appropriate for their protection as employees, the staff in their offices, and how they deal with the public. Judge Myers had a conversation with City County Insurance Services (CIS) and they said as long as we follow the guidance from the Governor they would cover us in a claim. He said that we can follow the social distancing guidelines including visitors and employees.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.** Stephanie LeQuieu of Oregon Rain gave the court an update on the Grant County Small Business Stabilization Project. Treasurer Julie Ellison asked LeQuieu where the funds would be coming from for all the advertising and LeQuieu said hopefully it would be donated from the media and she also would like to put flyers in utility bills in each city.

**FISCAL YEAR 2020-21 BUDGET HEARING. MSP: Myers/Palmer --to open the public hearing.** The budget hearing fiscal year 2020-21 was entered into at 10:30 am. Treasurer Julie Ellison presented changes to the budget to the court. Ellison explained the budget hearing is to approve what the budget committee approved. She said some changes have been made since last budget committee meeting. Ellison answered questions regarding some of the changes to the budget. Commissioner Palmer stated for the record that the Budget Committee wanted the Sheriff's office to put vehicles on a rotating basis this was agreed on last budget cycle. Things have changed this year and they are at only one new vehicle for the Sheriff's Department due to funding. **MSP: Hamsher/Myers --to approve the budget changes as presented. MSP: Hamsher/Palmer --to close budget hearing.** Commissioner Hamsher said that he believes until the county gets finalized word on what the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) funding will look like next year he recommends freezing any new hires other than Department Heads until the county finds that out. There has already been some reductions made in staff to make sure we don't have to do any layoffs of existing employees until we find out what the budget from the state and PILT will look like. The positions would remain in the current budget but the positions would not necessarily be filled. **MSP: Hamsher/Palmer--to suspend new hires unless it is a Department Head until they see what the State Funding is going to look like.** Ellison discussed the PILT and how it is already figured in this year's budget, it is over \$900,000 and she has cut expenses to have \$200,000 in her contingency this year. Ellison said if we didn't receive it in the next budget year \$700,000 would need to be cut and she asked the court members to please remember that when making any financial decisions and suggested they start cutting things anyway. Ellison would like \$900,000 in contingency when she does the budget next year. Commissioner Palmer stated the importance to engage with the Legislators letting them know how important it is to the county, also saying that \$700,000 cut would be devastating.

**RESOLUTION #20-20 ADOPTING COUNTY BUDGET.** The court reviewed Resolution #20-20 to adopt the annual budget, impose taxes and make appropriations for the county budget for fiscal year

2020-21. Myers read the first page of the Resolution to those in attendance. **MSP: Hamsher/Myers--to adopt the wage scales as presented and the annual budget for fiscal year 2020-21 and circulate Resolution #20-20 for signatures.**

**RESOLUTION # 20-21 GRANT COUNTY EXTENSION & 4-H SERVICE DISTRICT BUDGET.** The court reviewed resolution #20-21 to adopt the annual budget. **MSP: Myers/Palmer--to adopt the 2020-21 budget for fiscal year 2020-21 and circulate Resolution #20-21 for signatures.**

**GRANT COUNTY POLICE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION.** The court reviewed and approve the union contract with the Grant County Police Officers Association. **MSP: Hamsher/Palmer --to approve the contract and circulate for signatures.**

**COVID-19 PUBLIC OFFICES PLAN.** The court reviewed the plan to open County Public Offices. Judge Myers agreed to contact Ryan Palmer, Safety Committee Chairman in an attempt to get Safety Committee involvement with the re-opening guidelines.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.** The court reviewed the contract proposal for Title III Admin/Project Help. **MSP: Palmer/Hamsher –to create a contract with Beth Simonsen for Essential Organizing Services and to allow Judge Myers to authorize/increase the hours on a case by case basis if necessary, following review from legal counsel.**

**TREASURER.** The court reviewed and signed Treasurer Resolutions. #20-18 General Fund Watermaster from Materials & Services to Personnel Services in the amount of \$1100.00. **MSP: Myers/ Palmer –to approve and sign as presented.** #20-19 Road Department from Capital Outlay to Materials & Services in the amount of \$40,000. **MSP: Myers/Palmer --to approve and sign as presented.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT.** The court accepted public comment.

11:37 am Adjourned

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim Puckett  
Administrative Assistant

**\*\*\*\* Please note the court minutes are a summary of the court proceedings. An audio recording of each court session is available, after approval of the minutes, by contacting Kim Puckett at 541-575-0059 or [puckettk@grantcounty-or.gov](mailto:puckettk@grantcounty-or.gov) \*\***