

## IN THE COUNTY COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON

### IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF GRANT

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**July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

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, Human Resources Manager Laurie Cates, Frances Preston, Charlene Morris, Beth Simonsen, Reporter Logan Baggett, and Reporter Steven Mitchell. A Pledge of Allegiance was given to the United States Flag.

**AGENDA.** MSP: Hamsher/Palmer -- to accept the agenda as amended. Item F was added as a general order to review a request for the Juvenile Counselor to attend training.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS.** Commissioner Palmer attended the Eastern Oregon Counties Association (EOCA) meeting regarding the lobbyist that was hired and then terminated the same day. He attended the Librarian interview and Executive Session that followed.

Judge Myers attended the final walk through of the Meredith House on July 15<sup>th</sup> and reported is has a lot of room and was nicely done. After the walk through, he went to a Mental Health Advisory Board meeting. On the 20<sup>th</sup> he met with representatives of Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative (OTEC) regarding emergency power shutdown procedures in case of a storm with high winds. An emergency shutdown might be necessary in some instances to prevent potential wildfires and Myers added the shutdown can be localized to specific areas as needed. July 21<sup>st</sup> Myers participated in the interview for a Librarian and the Executive Session that followed. Myers traveled with the Roadmaster on July 22<sup>nd</sup> to Indian Creek Road to tour a potential road vacation. Today he will attend a 911 Dispatch Center meeting. On August 4<sup>th</sup> a Special Meeting will be held regarding the Move the Border movement. The court will not present at the meeting, but rather host it. The Greater Idaho initiative that passed requires 3 meetings per year on the first Wednesday of August, December and April. Grant County will host an EOCA meeting at the Airport on August 9<sup>th</sup>. Myers will be attending a River Democracy Act update and discussion with Senator Wyden's staff in Pendleton on August 10<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Hamsher took part in the interview for the Librarian and the Executive Session that followed. He conducted an employee evaluation the week prior. He met with a couple of department heads last week. Hamsher has had discussions with the State on drought relief issues and also spoken with Senator Findley and Representative Owens on issues. Hamsher will also attend the EOCA meeting on August 9<sup>th</sup> and the River Democracy Act update on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

**MINUTES.** MSP: Myers/Palmer -- to approve the July 14<sup>th</sup> regular meeting and July 21<sup>st</sup> special meeting minutes as presented.

9:15 am Tory Stinnett entered.

**TITLE III FUNDS.** Title III Administrator Beth Simonsen requested court approval to obligate 2021 Title III Funds. The County initiated the funds on April 28, 2021 and must obligate the funds and projects now that the 45-day waiting period is over. The 45-day public comment period was published in the Blue Mountain Eagle, which is the County's newspaper of record, on May 26, 2021 and was also broadcast on the KJDY radio station and posted on the County's website. The comment period ended on July 12, 2021 and no comments were received. The amount to initiate is \$74,089.77 and the authorized uses of the public funds are: 1) To carry out activities under the Firewise Communities program, 2) To reimburse the participating county for search and rescue and other emergency services, including firefighting and law enforcement patrols, 3) To cover training costs and equipment purchases directly related to the emergency services described above, and 4) To develop and carry out community wildfire protection plans. The proposed projects and funding amounts are as follows:

Project 1: Firewise Communities Program - \$25,000.

Project 2: Search and Rescue (Grant County Sheriff's Office) - \$15,000.  
Emergency Management Services - \$9,089.77.

Project 3: County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) - \$25,000.

**MSP: Palmer/Myers -- to obligate the 2021 Title III Funds for Project 1, Project 2 and Project 3.**

Simonsen provided a quick update regarding the Meredith House and Heart of Grant County. She said they received chairs yesterday and other furniture will arrive next week. She said that if anyone would like to volunteer to assist with furniture assembly and set up it would be appreciated. Simonsen advised that volunteers did have to pass a background screening prior to being able to work in the facility. This project has been called the Meredith House since inception, but Simonsen said although George and Priscilla Meredith appreciated the honor they have decided they would rather have it called the Heart of Grant County Domestic Violence Center. The grand opening is scheduled for Saturday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**JUVENILE DEPARTMENT.** Juvenile Department Manager Cindy Tirico sent a memo to the court requesting approval to send Juvenile Counselor Charissa Palmer to training. The Oregon Juvenile Department Directors' Association is holding the training in Salem and it is an introductory course designed for Juvenile Counselor's in their first year of employment. Tirico believes this is a great opportunity for Charissa to gain further skills and knowledge of the Juvenile Justice System and it will help her to provide more effective services to the involved youth and their families. The cost of the training is \$734.93 plus food and fuel. The Juvenile Department budget has sufficient funding in the dues and travel line to pay for the training. **MSP: Myers/Hamsher -- to approve the training for Charissa Palmer.**

**ORDER #2021-02.** The court reviewed Order #2021-02 which designates the Blue Mountain Eagle as the newspaper for publication of the annual foreclosure of tax liens as shown by the Grant County foreclosure list. It is a required by law that the County Court designate a newspaper of record for notice of foreclosure. **MSP: Myers/Palmer -- to approve Order #2021-02 and circulate for signatures.**

**BUDGET RESOLUTION.** The court reviewed resolution #21-22, In the Matter of Making Transfer From General Fund Contingency to General Fund Economic Stabilization. Judge Myers read Resolution #21-22 to those in attendance. Economic Stabilization received Coronavirus funds in May of 2021 in the amount of \$243,473 and needs to increase appropriations to expend the funds. From: General Non-Departmental Contingency - \$243,473; To: Economic Stabilization Covid 19 - \$243,473. **MSP:**

**Myers/Palmer --to approve Resolution #21-22 and circulate for signatures.**

9:24 am The court took a short break. 9:25 am Mindy Winegar entered.

9:32 am The court returned to session.

**RV PARK.** Fair Manager Mindy Winegar requested court approval to apply for a State of Oregon Parks and Recreation Grant. Winegar said due to housing issues in the county they have been forced to turn away an average of 30 patrons per month because the RV Park is full. She would like to apply for a grant to add additional RV spaces. The grant is large and Winegar said Economic Development has agreed to administer the grant. She believes they have the time and knowledge to do so. Economic Development will bill the RV Park for the time spent administering the grant. If this grant is awarded to the RV Park, and once appropriate permits are secured, 25 additional RV spaces would be placed on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street across from the Fairgrounds. This would be a fenced RV Park and used for mainly long-term renters and overflow rentals. Palmer asked why they were only asking for 25 RV spaces and Winegar said they already have plans drawn up for the project. She added that 25 additional spaces is really all they can keep up with. The grant does require a 25 percent match, but it can be in kind. Winegar has already discussed this with Roadmaster Alan Hickerson. **MSP: Myers/Palmer -- to authorize Winegar to apply for the State of Oregon Parks and Recreation Grant.**

**FAIR CONTRACTS.** Fair Manager Mindy Winegar presented several contracts for Fair entertainment and services to the court for approval. Winegar is still waiting for two additional contracts from Spitfire Cocktails and The Stockgrowers for alcohol service at Fair. The contracts are with: Juke Box Express for bounce house, rides and staff - \$9,215; Blue Mountain Old Time Fiddlers for music - \$700; The Hypnosis Company for entertainment - \$4,000; Jessie Leigh for entertainment - \$3,000; Antonio Sombrero Balloons for balloon artistry - \$1,600; Carlson Sound and Light for the stage – 11,000; and Hamsher Fighting Bulls – \$14,000. **MSP: Palmer/Myers – to approve the contracts with Spitfire Cocktails and Stockgrowers when they come in and approve Judge Myers signing those with a single signature and to approve the other contracts as presented. Commissioner Hamsher declared a conflict for the Hamsher Fighting Bulls contract.**

Mindy advised there will be one additional contract that isn't signed yet for the stage set-up and take down. She also needs volunteers for the Fair.

**STAND 4 FREEDOM.** Citizen Frances Preston thanked the court members for being allowed to be on the agenda this morning and said in mid-June she contacted several businesses asking them to collect signatures for the Stand 4 Freedom petition. She reported a total of 18 businesses participated from Prairie City, John Day, Mount Vernon and Dayville. She went on to explain the criteria for bringing in executives from Stand 4 Freedom. In order to do this 4 percent of the population must sign the petition. She added they have met this mark. Preston read a prepared statement to the court regarding the Stand 4 Freedom movement whose mission is to provide relief and protection for individuals and businesses suffering under the emergency declarations and restrictions of the Oregon Governor. The goal of the movement is to empower local governments and law enforcement agencies to uphold the higher law of the US Constitution when there is a conflict with lower law. The objective is to pass local resolution(s) and/or ordinance(s) that require adherence to the US Constitution above all lower laws and executive orders. Preston requested that the court schedule meetings with John Day and Prairie City, or a Town Hall meeting for all of Grant County to discuss this matter. Preston stated this is an exciting time for citizens in the county. Preston asked the court what their plans were to schedule a

meeting with executives from Stand 4 Freedom. Palmer said he is open to whatever type of meeting the executives might prefer. Myers suggested now might not be the right time to meet with John Day or Prairie City. Palmer suggested a Wednesday or Friday for a meeting. Hamsher would prefer Friday because he has Prairie City Council Meetings on Wednesday's after County Court. Myers stated there is a lot to consider due to the agreements signed by entities and small businesses for the COVID funds received. Preston agreed and doesn't believe the proposed resolution interferes with those agreements. Myers said personally he would follow orders from the State regarding mask mandates in county buildings because of his concern that the county's insurer would not cover claims made if the mandates weren't followed.

**PUBLIC COMMENT.** Preston asked for clarification on the August 4<sup>th</sup> meeting regarding moving Oregon's border to Idaho and asked if it would be held as an executive session. She requested information regarding the time and place. Myers stated it will be held as a special meeting, not an executive session and will likely be in the County Courtroom at 9 am on August 4<sup>th</sup>. Palmer asked that the court be advised of how long the presenters will need for the meeting. Steven Mitchell asked the court's opinion on the initiative. Myers said he does not believe the State of Oregon is going to agree to the initiative and will not be willing to give up the tax revenue. He added that the State of Washington, State of California and State of Oregon would all need to agree and he doubts this will happen. Palmer expressed concern regarding licensing costs and licensing itself if portions of Oregon became part of Idaho. The court members all agreed there are many questions that will need to be addressed.

Mitchell asked if there was a charter for the Natural Resource Advisory Committee (NRAC). Hamsher stated there isn't a charter, but there are by-laws. The purpose of the NRAC is to give advice to the court regarding natural resource projects and issues and to stay current on pending legislation. Mitchell asked how the NRAC came about and Hamsher reported at one point the court had set money aside for a Natural Resource Advisor, but due to budget constraints, the court decided to form an advisory committee.

10:04 am -- Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laurie Cates  
Human Resources Manager

**\*\*\*\* 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 the County Court at 541-575-0059 or [GCCourtAdmin@grantcounty-or.gov](mailto:GCCourtAdmin@grantcounty-or.gov) \*\*\*\***