

IN THE COUNTY COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON

IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF GRANT

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August 4, 2021 – Special Meeting

Pursuant to notice made to the newspaper of general circulation throughout Grant County, the radio station, county website, and e-mail distribution list, a special 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, Sandie Gilson, Reporter Logan Bagett, Reporter Steve Mitchell, John Rowell, Charlene Morris, Bill Newman, Anita Newman, Dennis Gilson, Justin Galbreath, Kurt Kleinstick, Dorothy Palmer, Rex Blackstone, Cheltzy Cox, Corinne Stennett, Dale Stennett, Raymond Martin-Souza, Patrick Irwin, Linda Irwin, Frances Preston, Richard LaMountain, Katy Nelson, and Lorelei Hinton. A Pledge of Allegiance was given to the United States Flag.

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

CITIZENS FOR GREATER IDAHO. Sandie Gilson stated she believes the purpose of this meeting is to discuss issues citizens may have regarding changing governance from Oregon to Idaho and what the commissioners can do moving forward. She said some concerns she has heard from people are items such as PERS retirement, minimum wage, and business and personal licenses. Gilson believes the citizens of Grant County have spoken as 62 percent of voters approved the initiative. She reported the rules passed by the Oregon governance affect all of us and are detrimental to business, our way of life and against our values. Rick LaMountain is a fairly new resident of the community and moved here from Portland. LaMountain moved from Portland as it was becoming increasingly more alien to his values and beliefs. He reported he is more comfortable here. LaMountain supports moving to Idaho and said the values in this community more closely align with those of Idaho. LaMountain believes a formal declaration from the County Court indicating desire to incorporate with Idaho would be a powerful demonstration of the seriousness of this movement. Frances Preston read a prepared statement to the audience. Preston has observed potential future candidates for Oregon Governor wanting to know more about the movement. She believes it is possible for eastern Oregon to join Idaho and thinks the movement will become stronger across the state between now and 2022. Preston stated that in May, 62 plus percent of voters voted for this initiative and spoke directly to the County Court. Preston requested the court work with County Counsel Dominic Carollo and begin to move this forward and urged the court to get to work to make it happen. Bill Newman reported last week he was trying to add an excavator to his insurance policy and was told by his insurance company that due to recently passed legislation some companies are in the process of cancelling a lot of rural property fire policies. Newman's understanding is that the Fire Marshall now has the power allow insurance companies to drop policies for ranchers and said this is another example of government not knowing what we need here. Dale Stennett stated he believes this movement is well worth the effort and even if it fails it sends a much needed message to our government. Justin Galbreath reported that he was at a school board meeting last night and the parents in this county are done with masks and are not doing it again. He believes that if masks remain mandated there will be at least 50 kids who will not be going to school.

Galbreath said as parents they are done being jerked around by Kate Brown. Paul Sweaney, via telephone, reported he is about a 3 year resident of Grant County and has learned a lot since he's been here. Sweaney asked the elected officials of Grant County to commit a revolutionary act. He said he was reluctant to give his testimony, not because he doesn't think county leadership can commit a revolutionary act, but because he doesn't believe they will. He said good people have become compromised by fear and the threat of losing funding and stated he hasn't seen elected public servants lose anything. Sweaney stated all he has seen is elected officials protecting their positions, budgets and livelihoods. He requested each court member stop playing it safe and asked them to approach the Eastern Oregon Counties Association (EOCA) to request EOCA to issue a statement in favor of moving the Oregon Idaho border. Lorelei Hinton stated our founding fathers had a good plan with the way leadership was set up for towns and counties and they were close to the people and knew what the people wanted. She added she has never seen anything like this in her life where we are being told what to wear and where we can go or not go. She asked the court members to represent the hearts of the people. Pat Irwin doesn't think this is anything new to us and the west dictates what the east gets to do. Irwin hopes the commissioners and judge will back the people and said the people have put their trust in the court members. If the people don't stand up and make this an issue now it will negatively affect the younger generation and it is time to make a stand. Kurt Kleinstick said we keep hearing the narrative from the state and Washington, DC about being a democracy, but this is incorrect information because this nation was founded as a constitutional republic. He explained the difference is, as a result of the US Constitution and Declaration of Independence, we have the Bill of Rights. Kleinstick believes the politics out of Salem and Washington, DC, are running our state as a republic instead of a constitutional republic. Rex Blackstone wished to reiterate further on what Newman said regarding property insurance. Blackstone said he has a mortgage on his property and he is concerned about fire insurance and asked what would happen if ranchers can't get this insurance any longer. Blackstone acknowledged there will be complications in changing to Idaho, but it's time to stop letting Kate Brown not care about what happens here. John Rowell reported he is a native Oregonian and retired Sergeant Major in the Marine Corp. Rowell sees a poison in this Country taking us all out, where our rights are not being recognized, like freedom of speech, second amendment rights and property rights. They are all being stomped on. Rowell stated he really doesn't want to go to Idaho, but it seems like the only choice. Ideally Rowell would rather see Oregon become like it should be. Rowell added the Boise and Treasure Valley area are also changing and questioned whether by the time this happened if we would be facing the same issues in Idaho. He has never seen the suppression that is happening now in his lifetime. This movement may fail, but at least it is making noise and maybe some change will happen. Gilson suggested a few steps forward including letting Senator Findley and Representative Owens know it is the intent of Grant County to become a part of Idaho, form a committee to look into Grant County issues and to make sure negotiations start between Oregon and Idaho, and to talk with other county commissioners who are dealing with this measure along with the Idaho legislature and Governor. A solid plan is needed regarding changes that would need to happen to move from Oregon to Idaho. Gilson encouraged the court to move forward and speak with Senator Findley, Representative Owens and the Idaho Legislature. Gilson stated there are currently 7 counties that have voted to pass this and 5 counties who will be voting on this in the near future. 11 counties are currently working to gather signatures to get this on their ballots. Palmer asked if counties had to be connected for this to go through. Gilson stated the boundaries are set by state legislatures and don't even need the counties to vote. The seven counties who have voted to move to Idaho are Grant, Jefferson, Lake, Malheur, Union, Sherman and Baker. Gilson added as people we want our voices to be heard and currently residents on the east side of Oregon are not being heard by the legislature. Gilson and Charlene Morris both volunteered to serve on a committee if it is formed. Gilson asked the court to speak with Baker County

who have already formed a committee. Palmer said he has only received one email in opposition that said if people aren't happy here they should just move to Idaho and asked Gilson how she should respond. Gilson responded that just because people disagree doesn't mean it's wrong and our liberty is for us to live and pursue our happiness in the way we choose, not the way our neighbors or government tell us to. The next meeting on this matter will be the first Wednesday in December. Hamsher said he knows it is very frustrating for our legislatures that are in the minority in Salem and have to deal with a super majority. Gilson said she is in a unique situation in that the business she owns she meets new people who move here and frequently gets questioned about whether Grant County wants to move to Idaho. She said the majority of people she tells that Grant County voted to move to Idaho are happy about it and moved here to get away from the issues in the larger cities. Preston asked the court members what their next steps would be. Judge Myers said he will talk to Bill Harvey, Senator Findley and Representative Owens for their recommendations on how to move forward. Newman asked how the public would find out what the court discovers. Palmer suggested having an update on a future court agenda and reminded people that the court members cannot talk individually. Palmer added that if he gets relevant information he will pass it on to Newman. Rowell stated when the government can print all the money they want to and sanction it wherever they want is extremely troubling. Rowell added the fact we have career politicians in our system is also troubling and leads to corruption. He believes constitutional work needs to be done including term limits and requiring a balanced budget. Gilson believes the power of the people when they stand up and make their voice heard works. Katy Nelson said she respects the accomplishments of Findley and Owens and the work they have done. She said the effort and accomplishments they put forth during the last session were formidable and asked that people respect the work they have done for us. Gilson agreed with Nelson's statement. Palmer has heard that a lot of things that come out of Salem are done behind closed doors and our representatives don't even know about some things until they are done. Palmer added a super majority is not a good thing. Gilson said US Representative Cliff Bentz has been looking at the movement and discussed it during an interview with KTVZ news and other places. Gilson said Representative Bentz is willing to listen as are our other representatives. Myers advised the audience that Representative Bentz will be in Mt. Vernon on Thursday, August 12th at 9 am for a Town Hall meeting. Gilson said anyone who would like more information can contact her anytime and she is usually in her office at Land Title.

9:49 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 *****