

IN THE COUNTY COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON

IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF GRANT

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September 8, 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, County Court Administrative Assistant Laurie Stinnett, Human Resources Manager Laurie Cates, Kelly Workman, Frances Preston, Millie Lysne, Charlene Morris, Emergency Management Coordinator Eric Bush, Judy Kerr, John Rowell, Reporter Logan Baggett and Reporter Steven Mitchell. A Pledge of Allegiance was given to the United States Flag. The invocation was given by Kelly Workman.

CLAIMS. The court had reviewed and approved claims on August 25, 2021. Hand Checks: 62311, 62390.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS. Judge Myers attended the Bentz town hall on August 12th. Executive Director Gina Nikkel of the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) came to Grant County on the 16th and met with Judge Myers, commissioners and members of the AOC caucus. On the 19th of August Judge Myers met with the Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (LPSCC) and on the 20th conducted interviews for the Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) and convened for an executive session to discuss the EMC hiring. He welcomes Eric Bush to the position. He participated in the interviews for the Assistant Library position on the 23rd, filled by Dovie Wood. He attended a meeting of the Mental Health Advisory Board at Community Counseling Solutions (CCS) building on August 24th and a zoom Community Connections meeting on September 7th. Discussion with the Housing Rehabilitation Committee included finishing details of the grant and no-interest loan that they will be signing in the near future. On Monday, September 13th, Judge Myers will be checking in throughout the day on an AOC meeting via Zoom.

Commissioner Palmer also met with AOC Executive Director Gina Nikkel on the 16th and had a good talk about current issues on the east side of the state. He was present at the Grant County Community Advisory Team (GCCAT) meeting at the airport with Tory Stinnett, Economic Development Director and attendees, and on August 20th sat in by phone for the EMC interviews and executive session regarding hiring for the position. Commissioner Palmer attended a Zoom Town Hall meeting with Senator Ron Wyden regarding the River Democracy Act, and sat in on an Eastern Oregon Counties Association (EOCA) meeting to discuss the results of that meeting. On Friday, he took part in the weekly phone calls the court has resumed with Kimberly Lindsay, Grant County Health Department, in regards to the current Covid testing, tracking and vaccination status in the county. He took part in a conference call with

Senator Finley, Representative Owens and other state senators and representatives, as well as eastern Oregon commissioners regarding redistricting. Those meetings will be held today for Congressional District 2 (CD2); he emphasized that it is absolutely vital that we give our input. Also discussed was an emergency declaration in response to the forced vaccine mandate.

Commissioner Hamsher attended the Bentz town hall and accompanied Representative Bentz to the Grant County Fair; they felt that it was a great fair. He took part in Friday conference calls with Kimberly Lindsay to get updates on Covid activity within the county and state. He took part in the EMC interviews and executive session, and welcomed Eric Bush to the position. He talked with the governor's office, and will have another meeting this afternoon regarding the vaccine mandates and other issues. He also took part in the EOCA conference call and had meetings with the Regional Emergency Management and Oregon Solutions about drought relief issues. On Thursday, he attended a meeting with GCCAT, followed by a meeting with Tory Stinnett, Economic Development Director. The following day Commissioner Hamsher had a conference call with the National Association of Counties (NACo). In the coming week he will be taking part in the natural resource discussions with the AOC and Public Safety Steering Committee.

MINUTES. MSP: Myers/Hamsher -- to approve the minutes of August 11th and August 20th as presented.

9:10 Sergeants Wade Waddel and Josh Wolf entered

9:11 Sheriff Todd McKinley entered

9:16 Treasurer Julie Ellison entered

GRANT COUNTY JAIL. Sergeant Wade Waddel and Sergeant Josh Wolf presented a proposal to add two (2) full-time positions to the corrections department staff versus the part-time staffing currently used to cover shifts. Corrections feel that there are several advantages to this proposal. The part-time staff have less training than the required trainings given the full-time staff; it cannot be guaranteed that they are not going to be in a crisis situation that escalates beyond their training level. Part-time staff positions are more difficult to fill and retain. Full-time positions garner more applicants, as well as better-qualified applicants who are retained longer. In the last eight years the department experienced a turnover of twenty (20) part-time staff members. This has created a situation where overtime pay last year alone was \$32,000; this number includes some holiday pay, but the majority was overtime. This is the most the department has paid out for overtime in ten years. These issues come into play especially with sick leave, vacation pay, and currently, the Covid situation. There must be two staff members in the facility at all times; oftentimes, Sergeant Waddel and Wolf must fill in, taking time away from completion of administrative duties. These duties include over 300 policies to review and implement on a yearly basis, new legislation that must be matched, jail standards that must be met and bi-yearly jail inspections performed by the Oregon State Sheriff's Association (OSA). Failure to keep up on these policies and standards, along with the lack of extensive training in part-time staff, increase the jail's liability in the long run. Sergeant Waddel included mock schedules in his presentation packet. With the new system they are proposing, a current scenario of ninety (90) hours of comp time would be reduced to six (6) hours. They considered several options such as contracting out the meal service or the running of the jail itself. Neither of those options would have saved costs, which led them to this proposal, which they believe to be the best overall plan to save money. As soon as they receive a go-ahead, they will advertise the position and stagger the hires and training process. Commissioner Palmer commented that

jails and law enforcement don't create income. Sergeant Waddel agreed, and commented that they try to, but that it is not possible. Commissioner Palmer said that he applauded the effort and information in the presentation and their efforts to save the taxpayers money. Sergeant Waddel said that if the numbers are right, they should save \$9-10,000 the first year. Judge Myers commented that a liability issue is hard to put a price on.

Commissioner Hamsher noted that there is cost involved in losing all the training time for staff that are not retained. Sergeant Waddel agreed, adding that in staff turnover, a lot of money is lost overall. In hiring full-time staff, the cost upfront is higher, but saves money in the long-term. Commissioner Hamsher thanked Sergeants Waddel and Wolf for a well-organized presentation.

MSP: Palmer/Myers—to approve the addition of two full-time positions within the corrections department.

FOOD BANK LEASE. The court reviewed the commercial property lease with the Grant County Food Bank. The proposed lease expires June 30, 2023. However, because of parking problems in this location, Judge Myers has suggested that they attempt to find a new location. He noted that the county could rent the office space, which is in high demand. Judy Kerr suggested using the old county road shop for the Food Bank. Myers reported that both Search and Rescue and the Grant County Sheriff's Office are currently using the space, but the court will continue to consider that location and others. Approval will allow time to be looking for other venues; the lease contains an escape clause that would not prevent them from relocating earlier than the two year lease.

MSP: Hamsher/Palmer -- To approve the property lease and circulate for signatures.

EASTERN OREGON COUNTIES ASSOCIATION (EOCA). The court reviewed the membership invoice from EOCA. The membership options include the Basic Membership option of \$7500; an optional Blue Mountain Intergovernmental Committee membership at \$5000, and a suggested donation to the Eastern Oregon Economic Summit of between \$1000 and \$5000.

Judge Myers explained that we are among approximately 15 counties with membership. Frances Preston questioned whether the court should be even be paying for membership and asked what they have done for us. Myers explained that they give us a voice and draft letters of opposition, and Commissioner Palmer added that they pay for lawyers and send leaders to testify on behalf of eastern Oregon counties. Commissioner Hamsher added that they send lobbyists and are very valuable to us.

MSP: Myers/Palmer -- To approve payment for EOCA dues in the amount of \$7500.

9:53am- The court took a short break

10:04- The court returned to session

10:04- Roadmaster Alan Hickerson and Road Department Manager Tammy Workman entered.

ROAD DEPARTMENT. Grinding and Overlay Project: Roadmaster Alan Hickerson requested court approval to go out for bid for a grinding and overlay project on County Road 62 (CR62, also known as the Summit Prairie Road). Sisul Engineering provided a project estimate of \$243,355. The project would be paid out of Capital Outlay-Road Construction. This is the first section of CR62, by the cemetery just as you leave Prairie City to John Forrest's property; less than a mile. Issues with the road began when the phone company "tore up" the west lane of the road to install their high speed line. Since then, they have tried to put a band aid on it; despite repairs it continues to be rough. They propose to grind down two (2) inches and permanently repair the area. Judge Myers asked if the band aid process runs \$50-70,000.

Hickerson affirmed that it does. Myers then commented that the surface of the rest of Summit Prairie Road is really nice. Hickerson said that it is one of nicest roads we have to access our national forest. He added that our trucks will be hauling debris and gravel and other county equipment will be used on much of the work. It should take three or four days. Commissioner Hamsher asked when they expected to begin. Hickerson replied that state jobs end at the end of September, so he anticipates getting quite a few bids at that time.

MSP: Palmer/Myers -- To approve going out for bid the grinding and overlay project.

Vacation of County Road #72 (CR72): Hickerson presented the proposal to vacate a part of County Road 72 (CR72, also known as the Old Bates Road) to the court. He specified the portion of CR72 from where the road turns west at the gravel that follows the fence line. He then recommended continuing CR72 east 1,584 feet to the closest turnaround. In short, vacating 280 feet of road, but then adding 3/10ths of a mile (1600 ft) to reach and include the turnaround at this location. Hickerson expanded on some of the history of CR72 from 1985, including the fact that since 2011, the road department was under the assumption that the road ended at the turnaround; the department would Hickerson will find out if the road can then be reinstated, or need to go through a survey and description.

MSP: Myers/Palmer -- To approve vacation of CR72 as described and to approve continuing CR72 east as requested.

Judge Myers introduced the newly hired Administrative Assistant to the Court, Laurie Stinnett.

10:14 Tory Stinnett, Economic Development Director and Shannon Springer, Planning Department Director entered

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT. Economic Development Director Tory Stinnett and Planning Director Shannon Springer are requesting court approval to apply for a technical assistance grant through the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD). This grant would be used to ensure that the proper boundaries, urban growth areas, enterprise zones and ordinances are accurate. Problems arise when there are discrepancies between the planning department, city, county and state mapping information. Springer stated that while there are quite a few grants available for housing development, it can be a problem when the fundamentals are not in place. It benefits citizens and departments when the maps for urban growth are all consistent and accurate. Stinnett explained that it is favorable for both departments together to apply for the grant. It would include all cities throughout the county who would like to participate. The City of John Day will probably not be involved, as they have recently gone through this process. Myers asked if it includes a consultant, which Stinnett affirmed. An grant amount has not been specified, as they are asking permission to apply for the grant; however, there is no match involved. The Economic Development Department would track the grant. The deadline is October 1st. Frances Preston asked for the scenario without the grant. Springer replied that the information for the county would remain incomplete with state, county, city discrepancies. If not accurate, issues would default to what the state has on record. The duration of the grant is from 2021-23. Ideally, they would plan to fund an expert to hit the ground running and identify where and what needs to be done, not necessarily to expect to have all issues "fixed" in two (2) years. Springer pointed out that there are discrepancies in every cities information and this would need to be done at some point, regardless. Reporter Steven Mitchell asked how this affects the every-day citizen. Springer gave the example of someone dealing with a piece of property and finding that there is confusion about who has jurisdiction

over it. The potential for running into misinformation makes it difficult to move forward with their plans. Under a system that has not been updated, every request requires digging and research that may lead them, still, to inaccurate information. This then affects what people can do or have done with their property. Springer stated that a downside is the amount of staff time that will be required for the proposal, but believes that the it will benefit the county, as does Stinnett, affirming that a housing needs analysis will benefit the cities.

MSP: Hamsher/Palmer -- To approve application for the DLCDC grant.

PUBLIC COMMENT.

Redistricting was discussed between the audience and court members. This process occurs every ten (10) years following a census.

10:42 -- Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laurie Stinnett
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 the County Court at 541-575-0059 or GCCourtAdmin@grantcounty-or.gov *******