



WASCO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL SESSION
JULY 14, 2010

PRESENT: Dan Ericksen, Chair, County Commissioner
Sherry Holliday, County Commissioner
Bill Lennox, County Commissioner
Kathy McBride, Executive Assistant

At 10:00 a.m. Commissioner Dan Ericksen called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL of the Order in the matter of holding a Public Hearing to consider the adoption of an Ordinance levying a one (1) percent Transient Room Tax; providing for the administration and collection of the tax; and providing penalties.

The Board of Commissioners considered the approval of the Order calling for a Public Hearing to consider the adoption of the Ordinance establishing a Transient Room Tax.

Commissioner Lennox stated that there are provisions within the proposed Ordinance that omit bed and breakfasts, campgrounds and parks from the room tax.

Commissioner Holliday stated that she did some research. In the City of Maupin and the State of Oregon's regulations they include parks and campgrounds. The state is collecting the tax from the City of Maupin, but she does not believe they are collecting any tax from the Hunt RV Park in Tygh Valley.

Commissioner Holliday is questioning why federal employees on federal business are exempt from paying the tax.

Kathy McBride, Executive Assistant, stated that she will contact the City of The Dalles to find out why they have exempted federal employees on federal business from paying the City's room tax.

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Chairman Ericksen stated that the reason why bed and breakfasts were not included was because the County does not track these businesses. We do not have a master list to determine where they are located. Tracking for the limited amount of businesses that might be collected from might exceed the amount of tax that we would collect.

Commissioner Holliday stated that there are 20 businesses in the County paying the state lodging tax. She has identified 15 of these businesses.

McBride noted that she sent an email to the state; they indicated that they could not disclose the 20 businesses currently paying the state lodging tax.

Commissioner Holliday noted that the state has collected over \$100,000 per year from the 20 businesses currently paying the state tax.

Chairman Ericksen stated that he does not object to distributing the tax requirement to those types of businesses if there is a way to track them. If there are more businesses paying the tax, the debt could be paid off sooner.

Some discussion occurred on the businesses that should be taxed and the possibility of the City collecting the County's one percent tax from the businesses currently reporting to the City of The Dalles.

Commissioner Holliday noted that her phone began ringing after McBride sent out the notices. The folks from South County are saying that the people that stay in Maupin do not go to the Discovery Center. They feel that the transient room tax is unfair.

Discussion occurred with representatives from Shilo Inn, Comfort Inn, Cousin's Country Inn, Balch Hotel and The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce.

Jim from Cousin's stated that only five people that stayed at their Inn over the last two months went to the Discovery Center.

Dana from The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce stated that the transient room tax will kill them. She spends a lot of time getting people to stay in The Dalles. People can stay 20 miles away and pay less.

It was noted in the discussion that the City of The Dalles charges a 9% transient room tax, while the State of Oregon charges 1%. The City of Maupin's tax is 3%.

Chairman Ericksen stated that the County is looking at an \$80,000 to \$85,000 annual commitment to cover the bond payments at the Discovery Center. In addition we are faced with a million dollar increase in PERS costs next year. The County has no control over the cost of PERS. The bonds are associated with the taxing authority of the County.

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Zar from Comfort Inn suggested that the Discovery Center be sold.

Chairman Ericksen noted that the County does not own the building, we only own the land. The County is looking at calling a Public Hearing to discuss the proposed adoption of an Ordinance establishing the transient room tax.

Chairman Ericksen would like to have the hearing since we will not be making a decision until then. He encouraged the Inn keepers to come back to testify at the Public Hearing.

Chairman Ericksen stated that he has a commitment to the Oregon Solutions Team to work towards a financial solution. This was the one thing that we decided on collectively. The Board of Commissioners has not made a decision on this matter; it is not a done deal. The proposal is to put the issue out to a vote of the citizens of Wasco County.

Chairman Ericksen provided some background information as to the construction of the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center and the debt incurred by the County for the infrastructure. The County will be paying off the debt, which is estimated to be around \$700,000 to \$800,000 including interest.

Commissioner Holliday stated that she spoke to the Finance Manager yesterday. Our payment this year is \$86,000; it is \$84,000 next year.

Chairman Ericksen noted that one bond expires in 2017 and the larger bond expires in 2019.

Chairman Ericksen noted the process undertaken by the Oregon Solutions Team to address this financial problem. He noted that there are negotiations going on right now. If the negotiations work out then the County would have the funding needed to cover the debt. The transient room tax would then become null and void.

Further discussion occurred in regards to the control the County has over the Discovery Center, the makeup of the Discovery Center Board, and the obligation for the bond debt service payment.

Zar felt that the hotels were being picked on. He suggested that the tax be expanded to include restaurants.

Chairman Ericksen stated that the Oregon Solutions Team did talk about a food tax. That would be a new tax and a new setup.

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Commissioner Holliday stated that the Board understands that the transient room tax will not be popular. If we could find another way to solve this problem we would. Help us find an alternative solution.

Chairman Ericksen stated that the other option was a bond to pay off the bonds. A bond would not fly. He stated a lot of this conversation will happen at the Public Hearing. We have a proposed Ordinance; we may come back with some revisions to that document.

(((Commissioner Holliday moved to approve Order #10-088 in the matter of holding a Public Hearing to consider the adoption of an Ordinance levying a one (1) percent Transient Room Tax; providing for the administration and collection of the tax; and providing penalties. Commissioner Lennox seconded the motion; it was then passed unanimously.)))

Fred Davis, Wasco County Facilities Manager, presented to the Board a handout on proposed costs upgrades to the contract with Roof Toppers for the Reroofing of the La Clinica Building Project, (Attached as Exhibit A).

Davis noted that he now has a proposed contract that Roof Toppers is happy with.

Some discussion occurred regarding the proposal from Davis to increase the scope of work on the Reroofing Project. It was noted that the original bid amount from Roof Toppers was \$426,000. The increase in the scope of work is for an additional \$51,500.

(((Commissioner Holliday moved to accept the final negotiated proposal from Roof Toppers for \$477,500 and that the Contract with Roof Toppers be approved subject to County Counsel approval. Commissioner Lennox seconded the motion; it was then passed unanimously.)))

Davis updated the Board on the construction project at the La Clinica Building. They have had some difficulty getting a final floor plan. They found out that they need a men's and women's ADA restroom. They are asking if that can be amended.

Davis noted that they may be looking at putting in an ADA lift due to the difficulty of installing an ADA ramp.

Davis noted that Friday, July 23rd will be the deadline for contractors to submit proposals for the Parole and Probation Remodel Project. The Board will be asked to consider the proposals at their August 4th session.

{{{Commissioner Holliday moved to authorize the approval of the GASB 45 Actuarial Services Agreement between Wasco County and City County Insurance Services. Chairman Ericksen seconded the motion; it was then passed unanimously.}}}

The Board briefly discussed the proposed Transient Room Tax Ordinance. Staff was directed to include other businesses that would be required to pay the proposed tax.

Commissioner Lennox discussed the request received from Mid Columbia Economic Development District for the County to contribute \$750 towards the cost of the booth at next year's Wind Energy Conference.

*****It was the consensus of the Board of Commissioners to support contributing \$750 towards the cost of next year's Wind Energy Conference Booth***.**

Some discussion occurred regarding the lack of banking assistance for this year's Wasco County Fair. The Fair Board no longer has the assistance from Columbia River Bank.

The Board signed:

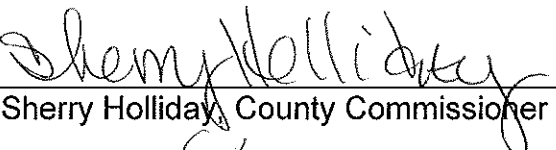
- Order #10-088 in the matter of holding a Public Hearing to consider the adoption of an Ordinance levying a one (1) percent Transient Room Tax; providing for the administration and collection of the tax; and providing penalties.
- Contract between Wasco County and Roof Toppers, Inc.
- GASB 45 Actuarial Services Agreement.

The Board adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

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OF COMMISSIONERS



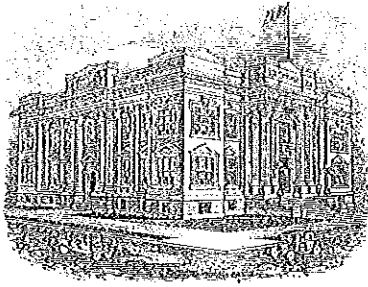
Dan Ericksen, County Commissioner



Sherry Holliday, County Commissioner



Bill Lennox, County Commissioner



WASCO COUNTY

Facilities

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July 14, 2010

Roof Toppers proposed costs of upgrade:

Original Proposal	\$426,000.00
Additional 5KW of Solar @ \$9/ Watt	\$45,000.00
Adhered membrane in lieu of Mechanically Attached	\$16,000.00
5000 SF of 1/2 plywood sheathing overlay	\$7,340.00
	Proposed Total
	\$494,340.00

Final negotiated price \$477,500.00