



WASCO COUNTY COURT
SPECIAL SESSION
OCTOBER 29, 2009

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

At 8:13 a.m. the meeting was called to order by Judge Ericksen.

Commissioner Holliday informed the Court that Young Life is requesting that the Bureau of Land Management exchange some of their public holdings for property currently owned by Young Life. She noted that at some point in time the County will be asked to express our views on their request.

Some discussion occurred.

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL of the Special Session Consent Calendar of October 29, 2009, (Attached as Exhibit A).

{{{Commissioner Holliday moved to approve the Regular Session Consent Calendar of October 21, 2009 as presented. Commissioner Lennox seconded the motion; it was then passed unanimously.}}}

Commissioner Holliday noted that the Court needs to set a date to meet in Special Session with Mike Hernandez, U.S. Forest Service, Barlow District Ranger, regarding the Off Highway Vehicle proposal.

The Court will see if Hernandez is available to meet with them on November 3, 2009 at 10:30 a.m.

DISCUSSION on the reorganization of Administrative Offices.

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Karen LeBreton Coats, Wasco County Clerk, Tyler Stone, Wasco County Employee & Administrative Services Director, Monica Morris, Wasco County Staff Accountant, Fred Davis, Wasco County Facilities Manager, and Dan Boldt, Wasco County Public Works Director/County Surveyor, were present.

Judge Ericksen stated that he has had some discussions with members of the Court and Tyler Stone, Wasco County Employee & Administrative Services Director, regarding the abolishment of the County Judge Position and the change to a Board of County Commissioners. The County Court was not thrilled with the applications received for the County Court's Secretary I Position. They thought if the Court made a change now would be the time to look at the reorganization of the Administrative Offices before any positions were refilled.

Judge Ericksen stated that this is a good time to get input from the key players of the Departments that are involved in this discussion. This discussion will also involve the Assessment and Taxation Office. They are unable to be here today due to their busy season. We can begin the discussion and keep the Assessment and Taxation Office up to date until they are able to attend.

Judge Ericksen stated that he asked Stone to draw up some possible reorganization options of some of the things that they talked about at their meeting.

Stone stated that he was brain storming when he was putting their various options together. These are just ideas. Option #1 establishes an Administrator Position. It takes the Secretary I Position from the County Court and moves the position to the Administrator. This option combines all of the administrative services that have been separated over the years. It also moves the GIS Department under the Information Services Department.

Commissioner Holliday asked if these options are listed in order of his preference.

Stone replied that they were not in order of preference.

Stone explained that the top copy of each of the three options notes the positions and FTEs, and the second page deals with the function of each option listed.

Commissioner Lennox asked if these various options could happen within our current budget cycle. Would we have the money to make these moves now?

Judge Ericksen replied that the County would have the money in the current budget. We could make these changes now, on January 4, 2010 when the County Court becomes a Board of County Commissioners, or at the end of the Fiscal Year. Nothing here increases our costs more than minimally.

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Some discussion occurred regarding the current budget.

Stone noted that Options #2 and #3 are just a variation from Option #1. Option #3 leaves things as they are with the exception of changes in the Clerk's Office and the Finance Office; moving Accounts Payable and Payroll under one position under the Finance Office. It pushes the Recording Person in the Clerk's Office from .8 FTE up to 1.0 FTE.

Karen LeBreton Coats, Wasco County Clerk, stated that Lylas Anderson, Accounts Payable Deputy, is looking to see if she can retire under PERS and work half time.

Monica Morris, Staff Accountant, asked under Option #3 if that is hiring an Administrator, or is it still a Chair of the County Court (Board of County Commissioners)?

Stone replied it could be either, it depends on which direction the County Court wants to go.

Commissioner Holliday stated that the scenario that she is thinking about is not on either handout. We have discussed moving someone in house to the Administrator level and then hire for something else that would not be an Administrator, such as a Chief of Staff.

Judge Ericksen responded by stating that Option #1 may be what Commissioner Holliday is looking at since there is no Employee & Administrative Services Director in Option #1. Stone could become an Administrator under Option #1.

Commissioner Lennox stated that ideally that would be one of the scenarios changing the job description for Stone.

Commissioner Holliday feels that we need to write our own job description for the Administrator.

Judge Ericksen stated that the Administrator is not a County Administrator; he is the Administrator of the rest of the County Appointed Departments. The Administrator would have the oversight of all non-elected officials.

Commissioner Holliday stated that she likes the terminology of Chief of Staff instead of Administrator.

Judge Ericksen stated that the only urgency is trying to decide the replacement of an employee. We now have two employees to replace since Celeste Morgan, Administrative Assistant of the Wasco County Employee & Administrative Services Office, who will be leaving our employment at the end of next week.

Some discussion occurred regarding refilling the Secretary I and Administrative Assistant Positions.

Morris informed the Court that the County cannot have someone doing both payroll and human resources. In Option #2 it is a more appropriate situation when it comes to human resources. The IT Department can be under the same supervisor but it needs to be different duties.

Commissioner Lennox stated that there is no job description that a person adopts as an Administrator. The duties of the Administrator would be assigned by the County Court. Part of his thinking regarding an Administrator is to have some input on how the County runs which includes to some degree Elected Officials. The Administrator has input overall for the function of the entire County. The County Court either approves or disapproves what the Administrator does. Part of the reason for having an Administrator was to help relieve the duties of the County Judge. The Court has oversight and can still take on responsibilities over the various Departments.

Some discussion occurred regarding Commissioner Lennox's comments.

Stone stated that the Administrator in this scenario would be more of a support for these Departments, the same with the Elected Officials. There will not be any administering going on unless there is a staffing or attendance issue.

Dan Boldt, Wasco County Public Works Director/County Surveyor, stated that may or may not be. That is not how the City of The Dalles is structured. Almost every decision of the City of The Dalles Public Works Department is not made unless there is support from the City Manager.

Stone stated that how we have it currently set up with our Directors of those various areas we would not be operating like the City of The Dalles.

Coats stated that she would think that the new Administrator would want some of those issues clarified before taking on those duties. Where does the Administrator stand in the hiring and firing of personnel in various Departments?

Judge Ericksen stated that Stone has taken on a fair amount of administrative issues. There are a lot of things that could come out of the Court's Office to an Administrator's Office. That would significantly change the workload in the front office. That could distribute some of the paper load to the Administrator's Office. That is where some of the efficiencies could be made. The Administrator would have the oversight to where those items will be handled; could organize where those things would be done. Part of the whole discussion needs to include the Finance Office. The Finance Office needs to have more FTEs added to take on the load. The County currently has 2 FTEs in there;

we need at least 2.5 FTEs, especially if we add some more responsibilities. That would allow some cross training which is critical. All Departments need some cross training.

Discussion occurred.

Commissioner Holliday feels that the County needs to move forward as to what we are going to do with Judge Ericksen's Position.

Commissioner Lennox stated that we do not need to do anything with the Judge's Position now since we have the finances; we could move forward with an Administrator.

Judge Ericksen stated that they are filing for a County Commissioner; a Commissioner is part time.

Stone stated we have a good opportunity right now and having a person working side by side with Judge Ericksen while he is full time. You kind of have the same thing with Celeste, Lauren and Lylas leaving.

Some discussion occurred regarding the title for the administrative position. Stone felt that if they are going to be the Administrator then the County needs to call it for what it really is. We should be able to map that position at a like position in the market.

Also discussed was the effect to various Departments if the Employee & Administrative Services Director was appointed as the Administrator.

Judge Ericksen sees the Administrator dealing with the grants and working with the Finance Office at the same time. The grant work would come out of the County Court's Office.

Coats stated that she appreciates the focus on administration. Times have changes and we need this huge focus on administration.

Everyone seemed to agree that the Administrator becomes the starting place.

Commissioner Holliday asked if the County Court moves Stone up to the Administrator Position if we could move Morgan up to the Executive Assistant.

Stone stated that the County would need to move Morgan up to a Manager Position in order to keep her.

Discussion occurred regarding retaining Morgan.

Stone stated in looking at the Administrator Position; it is not about the salary, it is about what he would be doing. He would hate to give up a lot of the facilities work that he has

been working on. Stone likes those projects and he likes the success of that. The change is about the duties. He would have to seriously think about taking on the Administrator Position.

Commissioner Lennox stated it would be nice to hear from Stone at some point as to how he would imagine his role as Administrator; what would he visualize his duties being.

Stone stated he does not see the position at this stage and structure doing a whole lot different than trying to understand all of what these big boxes are doing. He would not walk into a position and change everything. The administration change has needed to happen for a long time; we will gain a lot of efficiencies.

Further discussion occurred regarding the duties of the Administrative Assistant Position for the Employee & Administrative Services Department. Also discussed was the accounts payable process.

Morris stated that one thing that has not been addressed yet is reducing the Treasurer.

Kathy McBride, Wasco County Executive Assistant, noted her conversation with County Treasurer Patty Latham as to the option to reduce the Treasurer Position to half time.

Some discussion occurred on the duties in the Finance Office; finance duties versus treasury duties.

The Court recessed at 10 a.m.

The Court reconvened at 10:07 a.m.

Coats asked if County Counsel will be a part of this conversation.

Judge Ericksen responded by stating that it is probably a budget issue. It is really not a part of our organization.

Coats stated that she and Linda Brown, Chief Deputy Clerk, have been doing a lot of legal work on forming Districts, including McBride.

Some discussion occurred on legal work in the County.

Fred Davis, Wasco County Facilities Manager, asked if there is any potential or logic in looking at making contracts with individuals seeking employment with the County to keep them in place.

Stone stated that the County could potentially do something with a Manager's Position.

The Court returned to discussing retaining Celeste Morgan. Stone suggested that we make her a Human Resource Manager. Morgan would need to go back to school to obtain more education.

The Court decided to continue this discussion on Tuesday, November 3rd.

Some brief discussion occurred on the new assessment and taxation software.

Stone noted that The Dalles Historical Landmarks Commission approved the IT Room at the County Courthouse.

Judge Ericksen stated that our plan would be to come back on Tuesday and narrow down the possible scenarios. In the meantime Stone should have a conversation with Morgan and let her know we are reorganizing. No promises should be made.

Judge Ericksen stated if we do not do anything with the Human Resource Position on Tuesday then we could throw things up in the air a little longer.

Morris stated that we will need to address the opening in the Human Resource Office.

Judge Ericksen stated that the Finance Office is also a high priority.

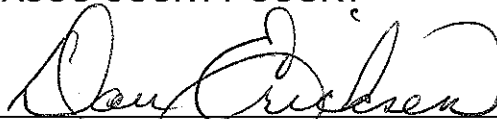
Coats stated that we also need to address the help in the Office of the County Court.

The Court signed:

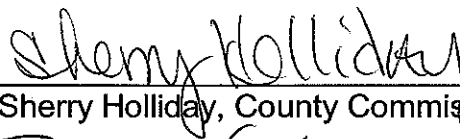
- Regular Session Minutes of October 21, 2009.
- Executive Session Minutes of October 21, 2009.

The Court adjourned at 11:02 a.m.

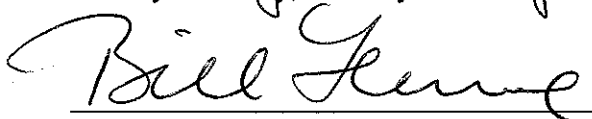
WASCO COUNTY COURT



Dan Ericksen, County Judge



Sherry Holliday, County Commissioner



Bill Lennox, County Commissioner

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CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Regular Session Minutes of October 21, 2009.
2. Executive Session Minutes of October 21, 2009.