



WASCO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION
SEPTEMBER 14, 2017

PRESENT: Scott Hege, County Commissioner
Steve Kramer, County Commissioner
Rod Runyon, Commission Chair
STAFF: Tyler Stone, Administrative Officer
Kathy White, Executive Assistant

At 11:30 a.m. Chair Runyon opened a Work Session for the Board of Commissioners.

Discussion – Eagle Creek Fire/I-84 Closure

Vice-Chair Kramer expressed concern for the extended I-84 closure put in place by ODOT in response to the Eagle Creek Fire. He observed that had the fire run along the I-5 corridor it would have been re-opened in two days. He suggested that the Board consider a letter to the Governor and/or legislators respectfully asking that more resources be applied to the fire suppression and clean-up effort. He noted that the closure has a significant negative impact on the economies of the Gorge and he has been hearing from constituents.

Discussion ensued regarding what resources might be available, the possible effects a letter might have and the idea of calling rather than writing elected officials. A call was placed to Nate Stice, North Central Oregon Regional Solutions Coordinator. Mr. Stice suggested a conversation with the Transport Policy Advisor would provide better answers and offered to arrange for that call. Mr. Stone asked that Mr. Stice provide him with any data that has been gathered regarding the economic impact of the fire.

The Board was in support of a letter drafted by staff based on information provided by Mr. Stice and gathered during a call with the Transport Policy Advisory.

Discussion – Pine Hollow Boat Ramp

County Clerk Lisa Gambée reported that the South Wasco Park and Recreation District Board is resigned to the idea that the Oregon State Marine Board will not likely accept the County's offer to back the boat ramp maintenance for 10 years rather than OSMB's request for a 20 year guarantee. She stated that OSMB has suggested that rather than rebuilding the north ramp along with expanded improvements to the site, the grant could repair/replace both the north and south ramps without doing any of the expanded improvements. She asked if the Board had any thoughts on that suggestion.

Mr. Stone pointed out that the County does not want to become responsible for the maintenance of any already existing facilities. Commissioner Hege pointed out that the County is not agreeing to anything; if there are no complaints lodged with the OSMB, then there will be no problem. He stated that if the OSMB is not willing to meet the County halfway at 10 years of support, it is on them. He said that he will be attending the October 5th meeting of the OSMB to advocate for the project. He stated that he has confidence in the SWPRD – they need to be able to stand on their own and this will help them to succeed.

Discussion – Building Codes/MCCOG Sunsetting

Mr. Stone announced that the MCCOG Board made the decision to sunset MCCOG and move all its programs to new administrative homes. Vice-Chair Kramer explained that the Area Agency on Aging is a State program and they will be responsible for that transition. Similarly, ECWIB will be responsible to Workforce to a new parent agency.

Mr. Stone explained that talks with the City of The Dalles have been ongoing for the administration and management of the Building Codes program which is already a County responsibility which had been delegated to MCCOG. Further discussion ensued regarding the possible scenarios under which Building Codes could be housed and managed and what assistance is available from the State to support the transition.

The Board discussed a communication strategy to help allay fears of both the Building Codes staff and clientele. It was suggested that City and County leadership work together for consistent messaging and that it would be good to have a listening session with clientele to better understand their concerns. Ms. White will coordinate those meetings. Mr. Stone commented that he wants to make sure that the model is chiefly created by the Planning Directors as they

will be administering it; it will be good for them to be part of the messaging and information gathering.

Further discussion ensued regarding the logistics of blending City/County services into a one-stop shop for development. Chair Runyon added that Codes Enforcement could also be a part of that model.

General Discussion

Mr. Stone announced that he will not be at the September 20th Board Session but County Counsel will be briefing the Board in executive session regarding pending litigation.

Mr. Stone went on to say that there has been a resolution to the Armory IGA with Columbia Gorge Community College. A termination agreement will come before the Board for consideration at the September 20th session. The resolution was negotiated with Dan Spatz and Jim Austin as representatives for CGCC.

Mr. Stone reported that an engineer will be coming in to evaluate the repairs that will be needed at the Harding House.


Commissioner Hege stated that he will be traveling to Washington D.C. with the Community Outreach Team and will focus his efforts on the issues related to forest management and fire response funding. He said that anyone that has an issue they would like to have brought forward, should contact him.

Chair Runyon adjourned the session at 1:15 p.m.

Wasco County
Board of Commissioners


Rod L. Runyon, Board Chair


Steven D. Kramer, Vice-Chair


Scott C. Hege, County Commissioner