



WASCO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
DUFUR TOWN HALL
SEPTEMBER 11, 2018

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

At 6:0 p.m. Chair Kramer opened the Town Hall Meeting.

Chair Kramer and Vice-Chair Hege introduced themselves and reviewed their activities. They explained that their goal at this meeting is to listen to citizens' concerns. Vice-Chair Hege stated that he is particularly interested in feedback regarding County roads, Building Codes and citizen views on the future of Dufur. He added that Public Health is looking for two Wasco County representatives to serve on their board. He stated that the Fair Board in conjunction with MCEDD is looking at how Hunt Park can be best utilized.

Citizen: Dufur has empty store fronts. She wondered if better broadband would help attract businesses and if so, how can that happen.

Vice-Chair Hege noted that Dufur already has fiber to the home which is the best type but he has heard complaints regarding service in Dufur. He pointed out that the Maupin Fiber Project has cost nearly \$1 million to build but Dufur already has the fiber infrastructure. Chair Kramer stated that Dufur School is talking to LSN. Vice-Chair Hege suggested that it could be something that the QLife Board could discuss. He said that the potential for business is not guaranteed with expanded broadband but it would be difficult to attract businesses without it.

Citizen: We also need water/sewer improvements which the community is working toward.

Vice-Chair Hege encouraged Dufur to work with the Port to help identify

potential businesses.

Maupin City Councilor Sue Knapp said that she found her recent interaction with Building Codes to be confusing.

A local general contractor reported that the new Building Codes office has been okay although staffing has been an issue. He said that the using the website to schedule an inspection is frustrating and cannot be done from a mobile device – the process can take 45 minutes. He said that inspections do happen more quickly now. As far as plan reviews, he reported that it has gone from a 2-3 week turn-around to an 8 week turn-around.

Vice-Chair Hege responded that because of the temporary status of State management of the local Building Codes program, it has been difficult to attract and retain staff. He said that he is hoping that some of the plan reviews can be done locally. He said he would look into it further. He added that he anticipates a decision will be made soon regarding the permanent management of the program; that should help stabilize staffing.

One citizen expressed appreciation to the Board for coming into the communities to hold town halls, saying that the current representative has declined to do so. Vice-Chair Hege replied that the Board is happy to be here; often the regular meetings, held on Wednesday mornings, are difficult for people to attend. He added that all the Commissioners' contact information is on the County website.

Dufur Mayor Merle Keys stated that infrastructure is difficult to manage and expensive to maintain. He said that it will be painful but the City is working toward that; it is the only way we can grow. He reported that the sewer system upgrades will cost approximately \$4.8 million with the water upgrades adding approximately \$2 million to that figure. He added that they are upgrading the wells which will cost \$350,000.

Further discussion ensued regarding the types of businesses Dufur would like to attract with breweries and tasting rooms among those named. Vice-Chair Hege pointed out that Xena Etched Graphics in Maupin has been successful and requires very little in the way of infrastructure; that is a business model that could work in Dufur.

Chair Kramer noted that Dufur recently approved the Enterprise Zone and there is already a business looking at that.

Further discussion ensued regarding the formal visioning for Dufur. One citizen noted that a vision and strategic plan will help bring things together. He observed that the community is going out for a bond to upgrade the school; if we grow the population it would require a new bond. A strategic plan would help inform decisions such as the bond issue.

Further discussion ensued regarding funding for infrastructure and the length of time to complete those projects. One citizen stated he would like to build a 35-50 unit subdivision but cannot do that without the infrastructure.

Vice-Chair Hege asked how the experience with the Planning Department has been. Mayor Keyes replied that they have been excellent.

Vice-Chair Hege asked Ms. Knapp if there is anything to report in Maupin. Ms. Knapp replied that they just had a ground-breaking for a new library/city hall/civic center and should start construction next month.

Chair Kramer and Vice-Chair Hege thanked everyone for coming. They noted that there are others who can help advocate for local initiatives – Representative Bonham, Representative Greg Smith, Senator Hansell and Representative Cliff Bentz.

Chair Kramer closed the Town Hall at 6:55 p.m.

Wasco County
Board of Commissioners



Steven D. Kramer, Board Chair



Scott C. Hege, Vice-Chair

Absent

Rod L. Runyon, County Commissioner