



**Court Agenda
January 8, 2025**

9:00 a.m.

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/747990709>

You can also dial in using your phone.

United States (Toll Free): 1 877 309 2073

United States: +1 (571) 317-3129

Access Code: 747-990-709

Additions to Agenda

- 3.2 Non-Smoking Signs
- 3.3 Restrictions on Flavored Vaping Products
- 5.15 Kathy McCullough – Transparency Needed

1.0 Appointment Schedule

- 1.1 9:00 a.m. Dana Pursley-Haner, EMS Quarterly Report
- 1.2 ~~9:30 a.m.~~ 9:24 a.m. Kelsi Phillips – Transit’s STIF Plan Application

Go into Biggs Service District
10:00 a.m. Public Hearing - Mobile Food Cart Ordinance
Come back into Sherman County Court

2.0 Action Items

- 2.1 Budget Officer
- 2.2 Appointment of Sherman County Ambulance Service Board Members
- 2.3 Tarzan Tree Works LLC estimate for cleanup, pruning and potential tree removal at Moro RV Park
- 2.4 Annual Audit Findings
- 2.5 Encrypted Email Service
- 2.6 Oregon Frontier Chamber of Commerce Membership
- 2.7 Visa Card for Tammy Bartlett – New Office Manager, Sheriff’s Office

3.0 Discussion Items

- 3.1 Commissioner Reports and Updates

4.0 Consent Agenda

- 4.1 Minutes of December 23, 2024
- 4.2 Claims – December 2024

If necessary, an Executive Session may be held in accordance with: ORS 192.660(2)(a) – Employment of Public Officers, Employees & Agents, ORS 192.660(2)(b) – Discipline of Public Officers & Employees, ORS 192.660(2)(e) – Real Property Transactions, ORS 192.660(2)(f) To consider information or records that are exempt by law from public inspection, ORS 192.660(2)(h) - Conferring with Legal Counsel regarding litigation, ORS 192.660(2)(i) – Personnel

4.3 Treasurer's Report – November 2024

5.0 **Public Comments**

- 5.1 Kayla & Jesse von Borstel – Proposed Sherman County Solar Farms & Setback Limits Letter
- 5.2 Chance & Caitlin Cruickshank – Solar Farms in Sherman County Letter
- 5.3 Carol and Stuart von Borstel – Solar Setback Letter
- 5.4 Kevin & Kathy McCullough – Solar Setback Letter
- 5.5 Richard and Nancy Simpson – Solar Development in Sherman County
- 5.6 Kock Family – Future of Sherman County
- 5.7 Wendell Clodfelter – Set-backs
- 5.8 Jim & Dorene Macnab – Proposed Solar Projects
- 5.9 Jessica Ball – Green Energy
- 5.10 Jill Harrison – Solar
- 5.11 Kristin Whitley – Solar Siting Concerns
- 5.12 Roy Schafer – Solar Farms
- 5.13 Chris Whitley – Solar Projects
- 5.14 Dan Earl – 1 mile exclusion zone around towns and other things

6.0 **Future Agenda Item**

If necessary, an Executive Session may be held in accordance with: ORS 192.660(2)(a) – Employment of Public Officers, Employees & Agents, ORS 192.660(2)(b) – Discipline of Public Officers & Employees, ORS 192.660(2)(e) – Real Property Transactions, ORS 192.660(2)(f) To consider information or records that are exempt by law from public inspection, ORS 192.660(2)(h) - Conferring with Legal Counsel regarding litigation, ORS 192.660(2)(i) – Personnel



**SHERMAN COUNTY COURT
REGULAR SESSION
SHERMAN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING ROOM**

MINUTES

JANUARY 8, 2025

Opened Court:

Present: Judge Joe Dabulskis, Commissioner Justin Miller, Commissioner Joan Bird, Administrative Assistant Tammi Gaskey

A quorum was present. Times Journal was present.

Pledge of Allegiance

Additions to Agenda

- 3.2 Non-Smoking Signs
- 3.3 Restrictions on Flavored Vaping Products
- 5.15 Kathy McCullough – Transparency Needed

1.0 Appointment Schedule

1.1 9:00 a.m. Dana Pursley-Haner, EMS Quarterly Report

Present: Dana Pursley-Haner, Shandie Johnson, Ormand Hilderbrand, Brittany Dark, Chris Whitley, Lindsay McCure, Daniel Earl, JP, Paul Violante, Zack Justesen, Jean Hulbert, Fred Justesen, Jim Macnab, Eric Desmarais, Theresa Olsen, Kathy McCullough, Georgia Macnab, Dan Meader, Carol von Borstel, Times-Journal

Dana Pursely came to County Court to give her quarterly report. The following were some of the highlights:

- 258 ambulance calls
- 80 calls for Moro Fire
- 50 calls for South Sherman Fire
- 130 calls for North Sherman Fire

Lindsay McCure, MCEDD, presented information on what the Regional Energy Resilience Plan was.

The Energy Resilience Plan

Described as the ability of energy systems, from production through delivery to end-users, to withstand and rapidly restore energy delivery following non-routine disruptions of severe impact or duration.

Community Energy Resilience

The ability of a specific community to maintain the availability of energy needed to support the provision of energy-dependent critical public services to the community following non routine disruptions of severe impact or duration to the state's broader energy systems.

Cohort Option

- Size – no minimum or maximum
- Lead county:
 - Responsible for program processes and paperwork
 - Receives funds distribution on behalf of cohort
 - Responsible for upholding program requirements on behalf of cohort
- Application: Cohort-specific application
- Content: Plan must provide required content for each county in cohort
- Adoption and incorporation: All counties must adopt plan and incorporate it into their natural hazard mitigation plans

Plan Requirements

- Be based on and plan for short-term, medium-term, and long-term power outages
- Identify and map:
 - Existing energy infrastructure in the county including transmission lines, distribution lines, substations, and energy storage systems
- Natural hazard risks
- Communities that experience social vulnerability
- Consult with representatives from environmental justice communities to identify and map socially vulnerable communities
- Identify potential locations for community resilience centers and communication zones that the public can access during a power outage
 - Must use locations of communities that experience social vulnerabilities to prioritize potential community resilience locations
- Inventory the energy consumption needs of critical public services facilities
 - A facility related to law enforcement, fire protection, health and medical services, sanitation services, fuel and fueling, public works and engineering, public information and communications and emergency response.
- Identify critical public services facilities where the development of alternate energy generation and storage resources will meet local energy resilience needs

Motion by Commissioner Bird, second by Commissioner Miller, to authorize Judge Dabulskis to sign the IGA between MCEDD and Sherman County for Regional Energy Resilience Planning. This IGA with MCEDD is with the following counties as a cohort: Hood River, Wasco, Sherman and Gilliam.

Vote: 3-0

Yes: Dabulskis, Miller, Bird

No: 0

Abstain: 0

1.2 ~~9:30 a.m.~~ 9:24 a.m. Kelsi Phillips – Transit's STIF Plan Application

Present: Kelsi Phillips, Shandie Johnson, Ormand Hilderbrand, Brittany Dark, Chris Whitley, Daniel Earl, JP, Paul Violante, Zack Justesen, Jean Hulbert, Fred Justesen, Jim Macnab, Eric Desmarais, Theresa Olsen, Kathy McCullough, Georgia Macnab, Dan Meader, Carol von Borstel, Times-Journal

Motion by Commissioner Miller, second by Commissioner Bird, to approve the 2026-27 Biennium Sherman County Transit STIF Plan Application for Operational Expenses in the amount of \$432,552 and authorize Judge Joe Dabulskis to sign.

Vote: 3-0

Yes: Dabulskis, Miller, Bird

No: 0

Abstain: 0

*Recess at 10:02 a.m. to go into Biggs Service District Meeting
Reconvene at 10:21 a.m.*

2.0 Action Items

2.1 Budget Officer

Motion by Judge Dabulskis, second by Commissioner Miller, to appoint Debbie Hayden, Sherman County Finance Officer, as the Sherman County Budget Officer for 2025.

Vote: 3-0

Yes: Dabulskis, Miller, Bird

No: 0

Abstain: 0

2.2 Appointment of Sherman County Ambulance Service Board Members

Motion by Judge Dabulskis, second by Commissioner Bird, to approve Joe Belshe as the Training Officer and Jennifer Smith as the Vice Chair on the Sherman County Ambulance Service Board and both positions are for two-year terms ending December, 2026.

Vote: 3-0

Yes: Dabulskis, Miller, Bird

No: 0

Abstain: 0

2.3 Tarzan Tree Works LLC estimate for cleanup, pruning and potential tree removal at Moro RV Park

Motion by Commissioner Miller, second by Commissioner Bird, to approve the quote from Tarzan Tree Works LLC not to exceed \$5,500 for cleanup, pruning and potential tree removal at the Moro RV Park with funds coming from Parks and Rec Contingency Fund.

Vote: 3-0

Yes: Dabulskis, Miller, Bird

No: 0

Abstain: 0

2.4 Annual Audit Findings

The auditors found that the finance staff does not prepare their own financial statements and instead has contracted with auditor to prepare the annual financial statements.

The auditors have noted that staff has the necessary skill and knowledge to take responsibility for these statements, but notes their experience in preparing cash basis financial statements and related disclosures is limited, Sherman County has addressed this deficiency by contracting with the auditing firm to prepare these annual financial statements. The finance staff works diligently in preparation of its annual audit providing all reports and documentation immediately upon request. The final audit report is reviewed thoroughly before approval by the Sherman County Court.

Motion by Judge Dabulskis, second by Commissioner Miller, to approve the corrective action plan recommended by auditors and authorize County Court to sign.

Vote: 3-0

Yes: Dabulskis, Bird, Miller

No: 0

Abstain: 0

2.5 Encrypted Email Service

Motion by Commissioner Miller, second by Commissioner Bird, to approve ATS – AccTech Solutions Proposal for 16 Encrypted Email Licenses for an estimated annual cost of \$4,000 and authorize Judge Joe Dabulskis to sign.

Vote: 3-0

Yes: Dabulskis, Miller, Bird

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Judge Dabulskis called Kristi Weis, Clerk’s Office, during County Court to verify how many encrypted email licenses were needed.

2.6 Oregon Frontier Chamber of Commerce Membership

Motion by Commissioner Bird, second by Commissioner Miller, to approve Oregon Frontier Chamber of Commerce Membership Dues in the amount of \$100 for 2025.

Vote: 3-0

Yes: Dabulskis, Miller, Bird

No: 0

Abstain: 0

2.7 Visa Card for Tammy Bartlett – New Office Manager, Sheriff’s Office

Motion by Commissioner Bird, second by Commissioner Miller, to authorize a Sheriff’s Office Visa Card for Tammy Bartlett, the new Sheriff’s Office, Office Manager effective February 1, 2025 with a limit of \$1,000.

Vote: 3-0

Yes: Dabulskis, Miller, Bird

No: 0

Abstain: 0

3.0 Discussion Items

3.1 Commissioner Reports and updates

Judge Joe Dabulskis – Attended a NORCOR Board meeting; met with Gina Nikkel of AOC; went to Madras; met with Senator Nash at Dirty Cowgirl; County Court Special Session; and the Sherman County Swearing In Ceremony for Elected Officials.

Judge Dabulskis has had lots of conversations regarding solar with local residents.

Judge Dabulskis met with Dan Meader, Georgia Macnab and Meredith Smith, County Counsel, regarding a proposed solar ordinance.

Commissioner Justin Miller – Attended a Fair Board meeting; a County Court Special Session; and the County Swearing In Ceremony for Elected Officials.

Commissioner Miller has had many contacts and completed lots of research regarding solar.

Commissioner Joan Bird – Attended a meeting with the director of Mid-Columbia Community Action Council, meeting regarding the amount of paperwork MCCAC has to fill out to help an individual; County Court Special Session; and the Sherman County Swearing In Ceremony for Elected Officials.

Commissioner Bird has had many conversations and completed lots of research regarding solar.

3.2 Non-Smoking Signs

Commissioner Bird stated that Prevention and NCPH have been working together to design non-smoking signs for Sherman County Property and they would like to know how many signs to make and where to put them.

County Court thought that the current design was too busy to be able to read unless someone stopped to read the sign – which is not the purpose of the sign. You should be able to tell what it says as you are approaching the sign. Several people in the audience that that the sign was too busy for the purpose that it was meant to serve.

3.3 Restrictions on Flavored Vaping Products

Commissioner Bird stated that NCPH would like Sherman County to entertain the idea of creating a resolution supporting creating restrictions on flavored vaping products.

County Court decided that they would like more information before weighing in on this subject. Commissioner Bird said that she would do some research and report back to County Court.

4.0 Consent Agenda

4.1 Minutes of December 23, 2024

Motion by Commissioner Bird, second by Commissioner Miller, to approve the Minutes of December 23, 2024 as presented.

Vote: 3-0

Yes: Dabulskis, Miller, Bird

No: 0

Abstain: 0

Commissioner Bird asked when the Minutes of December 18, 2024 might be ready as she has already had requests for them. Tammi stated that they will hopefully be ready for approval during the January 22, 2025 County Court meeting.

4.2 Claims – December 2024

Motion by Judge Dabulskis, second by Commissioner Bird, to approve the Claims of December 2024 as presented.

Vote: 3-0

Yes: Dabulskis, Miller, Bird

No: 0

Abstain: 0

4.3 Treasurer’s Report – November 2024

Motion by Commissioner Miller, second by Commissioner Bird, to approve the Treasurer’s Report of November 2024 as presented.

Vote: 3-0

Yes: Dabulskis, Miller, Bird

No: 0

Abstain: 0

5.0 Public Comment

There were 15 letters presented in Public Comments regarding set-backs. Judge Dabulskis stated that he would open the floor for additional comments that were not related to the draft ordinance on solar setbacks. Judge Dabulskis would like to hold all comments about the draft ordinance on Solar Setbacks till the January 22nd County Court meeting where there would be a Public Hearing regarding the draft ordinance on Solar Setbacks.

Additional comments were made about posting the schedule of Sherman County Court Meetings, posting the draft ordinance of Solar Setbacks, where to find minutes and agendas, where to get copies of the letters presented in Public Comments, not to rush to make a decision, hold more open forums, etc.

Tammi Gaskey noted that the agenda gets sent to the paper the week prior to the meeting as a draft and posted on-line. The final agenda will be uploaded to the webpage by Tuesday, the week of County Court. Any items received by Noon on Monday, the week of County Court will be added to the agenda. Any items received after Noon on Monday the week of County Court will be added to the following County Court agenda.

Tammi also noted that there is a NEWS tab on the Sherman County webpage that lists the next County Court meeting and if there is a Public Hearing at that meeting.

5.1 Kayla & Jesse von Borstel – Proposed Sherman County Solar Farms & Setback Limits Letter

Dear Commissioners,

Please read our letter into the official Court Minutes and we would like to request written response addressing our concerns.

I am writing to you today in regards to the proposed solar farm project and its proposed setback from residential homes as this is a huge concern for many in Sherman County including ourselves. There are many aspects of installing a solar farm in our County that is worrisome and flat out a bad idea. These concerns include lack of privacy, increased traffic, health and safety concerns for families, impacts on residents' way of life, and ecological/habitat impacts of the surrounding areas. Additionally, the use of the word "farm" in "solar farm" is very loosely used, as the term "farm" is defined as *"an area of land and its buildings used for growing crops and rearing animals"* to which these sites will do neither of those things. It is not agriculturally beneficial.

Sherman County is our home and we are very blessed and fortunate to live in such a beautiful and caring place. My husband's family has been a part of Sherman County for decades as he is a fifth-generation farmer. While I may have not been here as long, I, like many others, would like to continue this legacy with our children. However, I feel like this opportunity for Sherman's future generations is quickly disappearing. I moved from a farm in California to a farm in Sherman County for its rural nature, and its beauty to start a family. I wanted to raise them in wide open spaces where they could play and be free without worry, and to learn about taking care of the land and animals. If I wanted to live and raise my family so close to industrial sites, and for them to believe that food came from a grocery store, I could have stayed in California moving to the Bay Area, or moved to places like Portland or Salem. But I didn't, I move HERE.

Adding in solar farms to the County and so close to residences endangers our way of life we have worked so hard to have. Not only does it take away the beautiful views we love, it takes away precious farm land for future generations to build a life. It takes away the ability to have the privacy we paid for when we bought our land, and the quiet roads that come with it. The increase in traffic to build and maintain these sites with heavy machinery and service trucks will increase significantly. Which brings the concern of health and safety in more ways than one to our citizens and our children. This leads to increased endangerment for accidents, theft, and safety for our families as we would now allow strangers near homes on a continual basis. This increases the safety of our families due to fire risk as well. We are increasing our chances of someone not from our area starting a fire on an already dry landscape on the way to/from, or at the site. What are the chances that all this metal equipment is going to start a fire with the heat of the summers or because of electrical issue? When it does, who is going to go fight it and put it out? It won't be Sherman County as we do not have a true paid fire department and will not be allowed on that land. We have volunteer fire fighters who are farmers or community members that have limited resources and work with what they have. Since they will not be allowed on that land, they will have to find ways around it to put it out. Sometimes there may not be ways to safely do so which ultimately could be fatal as they have to work around a huge obstacle. These are our husbands, brothers, fathers, etc. that you are

choosing to put in danger as they work to save their families and others. Along with fire safety risk, what about fire risk with insurance companies? It is already a struggle with coverage as we are considered high risk due to the nature of our area; is this going to make it impossible to be insured because we are TOO high risk? Will we still be insured but the cost to do so be outrageous and unobtainable? If this is the case, is the County going to be held responsible and liable to cover all loss and damage since we as landowners didn't get a vote or a say in how this affects our farm operations or homes? Lastly in health safety, is there any concrete research or evidence that proves having a large plot of solar panels so near is safe for us, our children and our future generations. Can you positively say that there will be no negative or harmful health impacts from EMF's or other radiation that may be emitted? Are you willing to put your community's health at risk for a maybe and some money? What about the damage and effects to the surrounding ecosystem of these sites? You cover and compact the land of these sites and that ground is never useable for agriculture again, it will be ruined. Clearing and tearing up the land for solar or any building negatively impacts the future use of the land and its habitat. The animals that called that area home, such as rattlesnakes and coyotes, have to go somewhere when you destroy their dens and ground cover. We already have issues with both of those moving towards homes in the County, we don't need to take away their space and increase the issue of encroachment.

Currently the setback for the towns is 1 mile, while rural residents have a setback of only $\frac{1}{4}$ mile; which is entirely way too close. To put this into perspective, a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile is the same distance as the County Courthouse down to the intersection of Bank of Eastern Oregon and Apex. If you were to go as far as the Moro Hotel and the Husky Market you've gone too far. As a member of the rural community, I ask that you please think and ask yourself these questions. Why is there a larger per mile setback for the towns of our County and not for your rural residents? What makes town residents any different than your rural residents to make such a drastic change in setback between the two? Are those within city limits receiving preferential treatment? We in Sherman County like to refer to ourselves as a "Community", meaning all 5 towns together as a whole looking out for each other. The word community is defined as "a group of people living in the same place, and, a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests and goals." Does this project look and feel like were working together as community protecting everyone's best interests? The answer to that is unfortunately no; as the leaders of your community, you are failing in this aspect of protecting ALL your people. Would YOU want a solar "farm" as close as $\frac{1}{4}$ mile with all the above concerns to your house/property and your family? I urge you to really listen to your community and reconsider all the impacts, questions, and decisions being made surrounding this project before moving forward.

Respectfully,

Kayla & Jesse von Borstel

5.2 Chance & Caitlin Cruickshank – Solar Farms in Sherman County Letter

Dear Judge Dabulskis, Commissioner Bird and Commissioner Miller

Sherman County has been my family's home for generations and hope for it to continue to be for future generations, and I write this letter with my deepest heartfelt concerns for what is to become of it with these "solar farms". The people who live in Sherman County live here because of the agriculture and the lifestyle we want to live. As someone who has lived in a large city for a few years and never wants to again, we live out here for very specific reasons. The sense of community, safety, beauty and lack of people and high rises. My family doesn't live in downtown Portland for a reason. When you have neighbors show up to a fire on your property before you do, that goes to show you the level of community that we have here. I'm deeply concerned that if the county moves forward with these "solar farms" it will destroy that sense of community and pit neighbors and friends against one another.

It is almost impossible to get started into farming in today's world and by removing tens of thousands of farmable acres to put in solar you are damning future generations that would choose this lifestyle. You will see a mass exodus of multi-generational farms and families from this county because they will not be able to sustain themselves. These foreign conglomerates are going to buy up the land for more than the younger generations can afford then in return will devalue their neighbor's property because of the massive eyesore next door. I do believe that you should be able to do what you want on your property "so long as it doesn't harm or affect your neighbors negatively."

Besides my own personal feelings on the matter there are several liability issues that need to be answered. Fire crews CANNOT go in and fight fire on these farms. If that is the case what implications does that cause in regard to farm insurance? Insurance out here is already limited due to our "high-risk" location. If putting these indefensible solar farms next door to our already high-risk fire zones, will that cause insurance companies to no longer cover us? Has the county looked into this matter? If not, then the county needs to halt any and all zoning discussions until all implications have been answered and resolved. To put thousands of acres into indefensible fire hazards in an area considered a "tinder box" is absolutely illogical to me, especially without checking into all the ramifications that may accompany it. The first fire that encompasses one of these facilities could be absolutely catastrophic for this county.

Has the County checked into all the EMF and radiation the goes along with these solar farms? We all know that they are not completely green and emit off unsafe EMF's. What are the implications to long term exposure of these to our families, farms, cattle etc? Has anyone researched into this or spoke with an expert (and by expert I don't mean someone who works for the solar companies that make money from putting them in). Where are the research studies that show what long-term exposure will do? If these companies go under, are they required to come in and

clean it up and put the land to how it was before they came in? What do these companies have to do to mitigate risk? If we can't fight fire what do these companies do to keep fires contained?

"Excessive solar radiation can have harmful effects on human health, especially skin and eyes."
www. Iberdrola.com

What impacts will this have on our wildlife and habitat?

"Clearing land for solar power plants can destroy habitats, interfere with drainage and rainfall, and injure or kill wildlife."

"Solar panels contain toxic materials like cadmium, arsenic, gallium, indium, selenium and telluride. These materials can be released into the air or water if not disposed of properly. Use of or spills of chemicals at solar facilities could result in contamination of surface or groundwater. Photovoltaic panels may contain hazardous materials and there is potential for environmental contamination."

By solar energy development programmatic EIS

How much of this has the county looked into? Could it contaminate our natural water resources, could it affect neighboring farms farm ground and cattle?

I truly believe that if the county pursues and allows these solar farms in Sherman County it will absolutely destroy this county. It will become not a Ghost Town but a Ghost County. These companies who are putting in these solar farms do not live here, it doesn't affect them personally, all they care about is the bottom dollar. I would hope before the county makes a decision that they would listen to the constituents who are entrusting them to act on their behalf and do their due diligence in safeguarding their community before making rash decisions that could have such negative impacts and fallout on this community.

Lastly, this county is lacking housing in the worst way and yet it is near impossible to put additional homes on our property due to all of the zoning restrictions to PROTECT our agriculture. Yet, these companies can come in and put up all these structures and buildings on thousands of acres with no protection for our agriculture, in fact we are putting it at risk. Make it make sense.

Chance & Caitlin Cruickshank

5.3 Carol and Stuart von Borstel – Solar Setback Letter

Judge Dabulskis, Commissioner Bird and Commissioner Miller:

Please read into the official court minutes and we are requesting a written response.

Sherman County is an agricultural based community. All of its businesses, residents, public services, etc. are tied to the ag industry in some form or fashion, the energy facilities do not provide the same structure.

Regarding any setbacks for solar or other energy facilities, they should be no less than one mile from any given residence in Sherman County for the following reasons:

Aesthetics. We live in Sherman County for the quality of life. The value of our land and homes includes the amazing views, the quietness, solitude and not having to look at something like a solar facility.

Fire. Fire is a real threat in this county as we all know and have experienced. Solar facilities are an indefensible fire risk. Even if mowed or pastured, there will be no stopping fire from crossing or leaving the property. There is no agency including BLM that will enter or extinguish fire inside the property. BLM will not do any air drops inside the fence. The neighboring residents will have to wait for the fire to leave the property to try to control it. Insurance companies are now disallowing fire insurance in certain areas. Your property may not qualify to even be able to get fire insurance. Every fire that passes through a solar or energy facility will be investigated in hopes of finding someone to pay the bill. We need a defensible space between these solar facilities and our homes. If a mile works for towns, then rural residents should be afforded the same courtesy.

Imagine farming upwind next to one of these facilities. Harvesting on a windy day (which we have many) would be scary... but also imagine having a home downwind of one of these facilities.

A one mile setback should be instituted for protection to our towns and our rural residents of this county. You cannot allow the towns to have a mile setback and not the rural residents. If neighbors to these landowners/projects wish to sign off on a different setback and take the risk, they should have that right as well.

There are so many unanswered issues still not addressed, that even working on the setback seems like putting the cart before the horse. We have not addressed fire, we have not addressed liability/hold harmless, or other critical hurdles that should be addressed before we decide where or when these facilities can be built. It would seem prudent that the setbacks be tabled until these other issues are addressed first. This may be critical, because it may be one of the only control measures the county has over these facilities.

The only fair way to get a true measure of the residents of the county regarding the solar facilities, renewable energy projects and whether they want them in this county, is to go out for a vote of your constituents.

Thank you,

Carol and Stuart von Borstel

Cc: Sherman County Planning commission; Georgia Macnab, Sherman County Planner

5.4 Kevin & Kathy McCullough – Solar Setback Letter 1

Judge Joe Dabulskis, Commissioner Joan Bird, Commissioner Justin Miller: cc. Zoning Commission, County Planner:

Sherman County is mainly agricultural. When people start referring to solar installations as "farming," they are clearly being dishonest.

Solar panels aren't the only components of the energy-generating facility proposed to be located within the Court's quarter mile from someone's home. This is an excerpt from a solar contract:

energy storage equipment, energy storage facilities, batteries, charging and discharging equipment, substations, underground and/or overhead distribution, collection and transmission lines, underground and/or overhead control communications and radio relay systems and telecommunications equipment, mounting substrates or- supports, wiring and connections, cables, wires, fiber, conduit, footings, foundations, towers, poles, crossarms, guy lines and anchors, power inverters, interconnection and/or switching facilities, circuit breakers, transformers, service equipment and associated structures, metering equipment, service roads, utility interconnections and any and all related or associated improvements, fixtures, facilities, appliances, machinery and equipment.

Using farmland for solar energy due to its proximity to transmission lines is misguided. This is the choice developers are making, and the government is allowing it despite laws stating solar should only be placed on marginal land. Land just a mile away may be more costly to develop, but it represents a better choice.

We are the smallest county in the state and we depend on agriculture. Young farmers will be harmed, as there will be less ground to farm with older landlords putting their land into solar. The majority of the CRP money already leaves the county, and much of the solar money will, too. Our cooperatives depend on our farmers and our cropland, as do all our support services.

We are also the only county in Oregon without a forest. Topography in a flat area like ours was one of the main oppositions to wind, and the citizens were right about being able to see it for miles. Solar does not need to encroach on residences when there are thousands of acres to build on. (Our landlord has over 4500 acres, yet BrightNight is choosing the 900 acres in crop closest to the Biglow substation.)

Kevin and I live beneath PGE's Biglow Canyon Wind Farm. Again, calling it a "wind farm" is a misnomer. The wind isn't harvested or farmed, but it sounds much better than saying we live near a power plant. BPA installed a transmission line a quarter of a mile from our house. Our road has become a highway now, and the traffic is swift and unrelenting. We can hear the hum of the substation. The wind turbines are shedding pieces and leaking oil into our fields due to a lack of maintenance. It's a debacle.

I oppose irresponsible development driven by greed, and green energy fits that bill. We should establish a minimum distance of at least half a mile

from residences, and we need to have serious discussions before allowing a developer to build closer than a mile. The rules that applied to wind are not applicable to solar. There's a huge difference between taking less than an acre for a wind turbine versus entire fields for solar.

People can sign up for solar *and* be good neighbors. Developers do not live here and most disregard our way of life. Listening to John Soinenen (Brookfield Renewables) on the Zoom call during the last Sherman County Court meeting was eye-opening. He is a perfect example of a developer who would build right up to your front door: So what if you look out at a chain link fence, solar panels, battery storage, or a substation? It's not your ground. End of story.

Hopefully, Sherman County's citizens and governmental bodies are wiser and have learned from previous mistakes. We were naïve in the early 2000s, as was our county court.

Commissioner Steve Burnett thought green power would be great, and he was all for creating CREA (Community Renewable Energy Association) to lobby for us in Salem. Now, solar and wind have become free-for-alls with gigantic subsidies that create irresponsible installations.

The chairman of CREA should not be our county judge. Our court needs to be careful that their positions are not compromised by their private interests and opinions. If these developments were coming up to the front door of your house, would you still favor quarter-mile setbacks?

Our taxes increase by 3% each year, and the SIPs are responsible for that fiasco. They should be decreasing, but apparently, the SIP wording precludes that. Our assessed property value has gone up 60% in the last twenty years if I understand the process correctly.

Now, let's discuss fire protection. Sherman County lies at the end of the Columbia Gorge, which acts as a natural venturi. Because of this feature, our winds are significant, making us ideal for both wind turbines *and* **fire**. Once a fire ignites, it doesn't cease without everyone's effort. We don't have paid firefighters; we have farmers with tractors connected to discs, pickups with water tanks, and tools like hoes and shovels.

The county court must address the fire issue. Our farm insurance has liability coverage up to \$5 million. If we accidentally start a fire, which occurs numerous times each year in Sherman County, we cannot afford to buy the solar "farm." Replacing solar installations can cost over \$2 billion, and you can bet their lawyers will sue us. They will find a way to deem the cause as negligence. Then, the farmer will have no choice but to sue the county that failed to secure them an **exclusion or a hold harmless clause**.

The three hundred feet of "protection" in the form of gravel and barren ground that the county has discussed is a joke on a high-wind day.

Please rethink your stance on maintaining a ¼ mile distance from residences without fire provisions.

Sincerely,

Kevin & Kathy McCullough

We are requesting that this letter be read at the next county court meeting.

5.5 Richard and Nancy Simpson – Solar Development in Sherman County

Judge Dabulskis, Commissioner Bird, Commissioner Miller,

First, I want to thank you for your service to Sherman County. Serving the community as you do can be a difficult job which at times embroils you in controversy. From my vantage point you have conducted yourselves with fairness and honesty. Thank you.

I am writing today to support your efforts for a ¼ mile setback from residential property for large solar farms if the homeowners and developers are unable to agree on terms. As you may know, our farm 7 miles outside of Moro has been off the grid and well supported by solar energy for 16 years. We have solar panels on the barn roof and an array of panels on the ground. Solar panels have not harmed our ground, home, or health. In fact, grass flourishes and animals enjoy the shade and shelter. In October 2024 we made the decision to receive energy from the grid. We made this decision because of our age and ability to maintain the system. As you may imagine, generating your own power takes constant attention and effort.

Our family and neighbors have negotiated an agreement with a developer to put solar development around our home and farm. We were hesitant to be surrounded by solar panels as this would change the landscape. However, after careful consideration we decided to proceed with the lease. We negotiated a setback around our farm which equates to slightly less than a ¼ mile perimeter around our farm. As you can imagine it is not as straightforward as a ¼ from the property line as topography, land uses, and land ownership enter into the equation. We have stringent agreements about weed control and fire. We understand the benefits of solar energy and have now agreed to have it in our own backyard.

Sherman County is fortunate to have this opportunity to consider. We have the land, resources, and power infrastructure to give the county value in green energy development. As I look out my window, I see high voltage transmission lines crossing our land. With my grandchildren in school sports, I have had the opportunity to travel to schools throughout the state. We have an amazing school and people outside of the community comment on how lucky we are to have this resource. The county commissioners have carefully invested and managed this resource to benefit its citizens for years to come. The land we are leasing to solar development is currently in CRP. We are being paid to not farm this land. Solar development gives us an opportunity to utilize the land to provide US generated energy and jobs, thus decreasing our dependence on foreign oil and decrease government spending.

When considering this change to our business, we talked to our family as they will inherit the land and need to live with our decisions. My daughter in law said something which resonated with me. "Better to have a seat at the table than be part of the menu." It is wise for the landowners and the county to be making these decisions now. A setback of a ¼ mile around a residence is fair and reasonable. If the setbacks were to increase to ½ mile or 1 mile it would shut down solar development in Sherman County. Thus, denying future generations the benefits afforded to us. Providing ¼ mile around homes allows homeowners a buffer from the solar panels.

Things you may consider in the ¼ mile setback:

- How will the quarter mile setbacks be maintained? Fire control and weed control?
- If a road separates the properties in question is that sufficient?
- We don't live in plotted neighborhoods. Topography, land use and landownership will complicate the process.
- In some cases, the setbacks will create isolated islands of land which are not farmable with current farming equipment.
- It will be difficult to control the landowners use of the ¼ mile. As time progresses, disputes may arise between the landowners and the homeowners. I use Azure as an example.

In conclusion, Richard and Nancy Simpson are in support of solar development in Sherman County, with no more than 1/4-mile setbacks for residential homes. Thank you for considering my thoughts. I appreciate your foresight and consideration into this matter.

Richard and Nancy Simpson

5.6 Kock Family – Future of Sherman County

Dear Judge Dabulskis and County Commissioners,

We are writing to you today with our concern about what the future looks and holds for Sherman County. As we sit here watching our nine year old son play with his farm toys as I did when I was his age knowing all I wanted to do was work the family farm one day. With the solar projects that are proposed going in we are concerned about our family farm making it to his generation. We farm around 3000 acres a year and with proposed projects if they go in we will be farming 500 acres a year. So how do we tell our son that he will not be about to farm and continue on the family business. This is all he talks about wanting to do one day.

First off we would like to say we are not against green energy where it makes sense. Taking out productive ag ground does not make sense. Also we don't want to tell neighbors what they can do on their own ground. But when they build something across the fence that will ruin our livelihood is very concerning. If our machines accidentally start a fire and burn into a solar project we cannot afford to carry enough insurance to cover the damages to it. A good set back is a good start. For us I don't think a half mile is too far out of the question. But a mile gives you a good border and fire protection. If neighbors are willing and wanting closer setbacks then that should be put in their contracts. 200 feet is not adequate for a setback. We all remember the substation fire that burned across 180 feet of disk line in a matter of seconds. And these fires are starting to be more common.

Second, allowing to lose this much ground in Sherman County will have a huge impact on our dealerships, coops, fuel stations, markets and school. Solar projects will put out some of the family farms that have dedicated hundreds of years to the county. Yes the solar projects will add few new jobs but we are afraid that the impact will be harder on the family farms. Less farmers and ranchers means dealerships will not be able to move as much equipment/repairs making it harder for them to keep their doors open. With most people signing up for solar not living in the county most of the money will be leaving the county. With less acres to work means less fuel going through our fuel stations. With less productive acres means less grain making our coops harder to be competitive in the grain industry. If we lose family farms, dealerships, coops there will be less people to frequent our markets which will make it harder for them to stay open. Yes during the building period jobs will be up and the market will be profitable but in a couple of years they will only have a handful of workers on solar projects. Look at the wind tower projects when they were built.

Third, is this really what we want our county to look like? An industrial park? An eye sore? An environmental hazard? I don't know if you have driven out Hwy 216 and looked 20 miles away and seen the reflection over on the Bake Oven project. At the right time of day it is completely blinding. And like we said it is 20 miles away. With the proposed projects it will be very hard to drive down Hwy 97, Hwy 216 and other main roads without huge solar glares affecting driving.

What happens to our soils, streams and air quality if a solar project has a fire? How do we know what the dangers are with living close to them? Nobody wants to live in the middle of a power plant.

Lastly Sherman County has always been known for golden wheat fields, beautiful views, flourishing wildlife and taking care of your neighbors. We feel like with the proposed projects it has started to divide the county more than it has ever been. With putting huge blocks of solar in what happens to our mule deer and other wildlife populations? Please think long and hard about the county and the members that have voted you into your positions and not just the money.

We cannot be SHERMAN COUNTY STRONG with the division this is creating.

Sincerely,

Keegan, Tionie, Kyle and Clara Kock

Kock Farms LLC and Kock Ranch LLC Est.1929

5.7 Wendell Clodfelter – Set-backs

Dear Judge Dabulskis.

I am one of the landowners that has property within the proposed Buckley Solar Project.

I am in my eighties and have lived my entire life on this property. My family and I have produced wheat, raised cattle and participated in programs to plant species that will improve environmental health, quality and habitat.

We have controlled noxious weeds and have supported each other and neighbors the best that we can over the years. With our farmland being so shallow (we are lucky to get 30 bushels per acre) and the astronomical costs of farming equipment, supplies and farmland my family and I would not be able to produce enough wheat for us to be able to afford to farm anymore or create financial sustainability throughout the future. In addition, we would not be able to afford to rent out our property to another farmer.

We have carefully considered this solar project and reviewed the information provided. We have attended open houses and formal meetings. The Oregon Department of Energy requires Clenera LLC to have strict and complete mitigation procedures in place. We feel that these procedures will address/mitigate the concerns that have been shared throughout all of the meetings.

We attended the December 18, 2024 Solar Set-back ordinance public hearing. We agree with Eric Desmarais from Clenera LLC that Section 4 should specifically clarify "what is the property line".

John (didn't catch his last name) from Renewable Energy shared that he has been a part of many solar projects. He stated that the set-back is generally 300' (even from the inverters that create some sound). He stated that a ¼ mile is the largest proposed set-back he has heard of and is very restrictive on landowner rights.

We are in support of a 300' set-back and/or a mutually negotiated set-back with the resident which could be less. We support the Buckley Solar Project.

We appreciate all the time and effort you have put into this subject.

Sincerely,
The Clodfelters

5.8 Jim & Dorene Macnab – Proposed Solar Projects

As a fifth-generation farmer in Sherman County, we felt the need to speak out against the proposed solar projects that are being pushed onto our community. These projects threaten not only our way of life but also the future of farming in this county—a future I intend to pass down to my children and grandchildren. Just like your family has done for you, Sherman County has always been an agricultural community, and that's how it should remain. Using terms like "solar farming" is misleading. These windmills and solar projects aren't farms, they're industrial power plants.

Developers and outside corporations are using our productive farmland and our proximity to transmission lines for their gain, with little regard for the long-term consequences to our land, our economy, or our neighbors.

The current proposal for quarter-mile setbacks from residential properties is unacceptable. A one-mile setback should be the minimum, and anything closer should be negotiated directly with affected landowners. This isn't about telling people what they can or can't do with their land—it's about respecting neighbors and protecting the rights of those who don't want eye soars dumped in their backyard. If we allow these projects to encroach on residences, we'll be stuck with chain-link fences, solar panels, substations, and battery storage units right in our backyards. That's not progress; it's a disregard for the people who live here. Why is the County even considering/proposing a ¼ setback for the Rural and one mile for Cities?

We've already seen the negative impacts of wind projects. The promises of economic benefits and lower taxes never materialized, and instead, we got higher property taxes, increased traffic, noise, and ongoing maintenance issues. These solar projects will likely follow the same path—temporary workers who don't contribute to the community, profits leaving the county, and locals left to deal with the consequences.

There's also the issue of fire. Sherman County's high winds make us vulnerable, and solar installations add a significant fire risk. As farmers, we

already take responsibility for protecting our land and our neighbors when fires break out. But who's going to pay billions of dollars to replace solar installations if a fire spreads through one of these developments? Liability could ruin families and our county. This risk is not something we should accept without protections in place.

I also want to address the larger picture. Sherman County's future depends on its agricultural foundation. Converting productive farmland into industrial energy sites hurts young farmers and the businesses that rely on their restaurants, equipment dealers, local stores, and schools. When farmland disappears, so do the jobs and the way of life that sustain this community. Solar installations should be placed on marginal land, not on the farmland that has fed and supported generations of families here.

The fact that these companies are doing the projects under LLC, which means that no one person can be held liable for damages or the removal of the project. Companies can walk away, but landowners will be left holding the hardship (you can't get money out of a bankrupt LLC).

As an elected official, your job is to represent the people who put you in the office. The majority of Sherman County residents are not in favor of these projects, and I urge you to take their concerns seriously. This is a decision that will impact our community for generations. Please ensure that any development protects the people who live here, supports our agricultural way of life, and includes meaningful setbacks and safeguards.

We are requesting this letter be read in the record at the next County Court meeting, and I look forward to seeing how you plan to address the voices of Sherman County's citizens.

Sincerely,
Jim & Dorene Macnab
Fifth-Generation Farmer

5.9 Jessica Ball – Green Energy

Hello everyone,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to express my concern about the potential installation of additional solar panels and wind turbines on local agricultural land. I believe that dedicating valuable farm and range land to green energy installations could have significant long-term negative impacts on our land and community.

Preserving farmland is not only essential for maintaining our local economy but also for protecting the heritage that has shaped our communities for generations. The loss of these lands would represent a loss of cultural and historical significance that cannot easily be replaced.

I believe it is important for our community to take a stand and encourage developers to explore alternative locations for solar and wind farms. By doing so, we can help ensure that the development of clean energy does not come at the expense of our local heritage, resources, and future generations.

Thank you for considering this perspective.
Jessica Ball

5.10 Jill Harrison – Solar

Hello,

I just wanted to let each of you know that Trent and I are both vehemently opposed to solar "farms" in Sherman County.

I personally think they are sinister/evil and will ruin this once great county that we have all loved for so long.

The wind towers are an eye sore. The solar panels will be much worse. Money is not everything, and in this case, it is the root of evil. In my honest opinion. Admittedly, I am not as educated on this issue as you and others are no doubt, but I am using common sense and discernment. They are a bad bad deal for Sherman County.

Thanks for listening,
Jill Harrison

5.11 Kristin Whitley – Solar Siting Concerns

Good morning Joe, Joan and Justin

I am writing to you as a landowner in Sherman County to express my strong concern about the potential siting of solar energy projects in close proximity to residential areas. While I understand the growing demand for renewable energy, I ask that any future solar installations in our county be constructed no closer than one mile from human residences.

My perspective comes not from a position of making money off the land I own, but from a deep-rooted desire to preserve the solitude and beauty that this area has offered me and my family. I do not make my living from wheat, cattle, wind, or solar energy. My property is small – just nine acres – and the value of my land lies in the quiet, rural lifestyle it affords me, not in its potential to be sold for development or industrial projects. The views of Mt. Hood, Mt. Adams, and the Deschutes River Canyon area a significant part of the charm of this area, and I value the

uninterrupted landscape that surrounds my home, which lies on Highway 216 just 11 miles southwest of Grass Valley.

As a descendant of the early pioneers of this area, my family has deep ties to Sherman County. Joseph Sherar, the uncle of my great-great-grandmother, Caroline Ella Sherar-Holmes, built the Sherar's Falls Highway – now known as Oregon Highway 216 – the very highway I live on today. The Barlow Cutoff Trail also runs through my small property, and through the properties of several proposed solar projects in my area. I ask that we find a balance between honoring Sherman County's rich pioneer history and embracing renewable energy. A one-mile setback from residential areas would help protect both the historical and the natural beauty of this place while accommodating progress in energy development.

In contrast to large corporate interests that are buying up land in Sherman County for speculative purposes, I have chosen to stay here because of my deep connection to this land and the values instilled in me by my family's history in the county. I am a fifth-generation resident of Sherman County, and my small property is not a financial investment; it is a place where I find peace and solitude.

The recent sale of three thousand acres of land that surrounds my small parcel to a Seattle-based corporation for over \$1,000 per acre has had a significant impact on the local economy, driving my property taxes up and making it harder for working people like myself to afford the land we call home. My mortgage payments are increasing due to inflation, but I continue to work hard every day as a school principal while raising my daughter and pursuing a doctoral degree in educational leadership. Despite these challenges, I am committed to staying here because of the value I place on hard work and the satisfaction of living in a rural area where the land is not commodified for short-term profit.

If Sherman County wants to keep people like me – the small, country-loving landowners who have lived and worked here for generations – it is crucial to protect our way of life. I ask that you enact measures to ensure that no solar projects are sited within one mile of residential homes. It is critical for preserving the quiet, rural nature of this area and maintaining the quality of life for those of us who have invested our time, energy, and hearts into this community.

Thank you for considering my request. I appreciate your attention to this important matter and trust you will give it the careful thought and consideration it deserves.

Sincerely,
Kristin Whitley

5.12 Roy Schafer – Solar Farms

Please no more green energy scams in Sherman County, wind towers and solar farms benefit no one in the community other than the 590 dollars, what a joke

Roy Schafer

5.13 Chris Whitley – Solar Projects

Dear Judge Dabulskis, Commissioner Bird and Miller,

I am writing to express my concerns about the growing number of solar projects being planned in Sherman County and the potential impacts these developments could have on neighboring residents. While I realize that there is challenges to meeting energy needs and demands, I also believe we need to be careful about how they are done. I believe it is essential that we implement appropriate setbacks for solar installations in order to protect the health, safety, and quality of life for residents in proximity to these projects.

I feel strongly that the placement of these projects should be done thoughtfully, especially in relation to nearby homes. They can have a number of unintended consequences for those living nearby. These issues can be related to visual aesthetics, noise from inverters and other equipment, and potential impacts on local wildlife. More importantly, the development of large-scale solar projects without sufficient setbacks can lead to reduced property values and a diminished sense of privacy and tranquility for people who have chosen to live in rural areas for their peaceful surroundings.

One primary concern is the potential for visual pollution. The sight of large solar panels can be a stark contrast to the open, natural landscapes that many of us value. Without proper setbacks, these industrial-scale projects could be visible from homes, roads, and public spaces, detracting from the aesthetic appeal of the area and diminishing property values. I have firsthand knowledge from close friends, as to what happens to their residential property values within sight of such projects. Losing out on 10-20% on their property values due to the pollution of industrialized projects is nothing to joke about. Making residential or neighboring properties harder to sell when needed, because of what these types of projects do to their visual pollution and value, needs to be carefully considered. These are coming from people I trust and value, as they are people I worked with during my 9 years in Wind Energy at the Klondike Wind Farm. The same people who still work in the energy field and understand the needs and challenges for Power generation.

I have heard from several government officials, residents and potential landowners of such projects, make a point of not being able to tell people what they can or cannot do with their properties. I would like to point out that we already do in many instances. Many towns have rules that don't allow structures or homes on land under certain sizes, like a single city lot. There are also county rules in place as to not being able to construct homes on agricultural zoned land under 160 acres, unless neighbors don't object and the county approves it. How are these not the same? My position is that we need checks and balances, so that one person's rights don't harm or supersede someone else's. If it does, then those residents need compensated or protected from any negative impacts or damages that is created.

Appropriate setbacks would provide a reasonable buffer zone between solar installations and residential properties, helping to mitigate many of the concerns raised by residents. These setbacks would ensure that solar projects are developed in a way that respects the rights of local landowners, protects the natural landscape, and minimizes the risk of conflicts between neighbors.

I believe that Sherman County should adopt reasonable setback requirements for solar projects of 1 mile, or out of view from neighboring landowners that object, in order to strike a balance between promoting clean energy and preserving the quality of life for residents. Otherwise those impacted like myself, need compensated as a part of the approval process. These measures would ensure that the growth of renewable energy in our community occurs in a way that is both responsible, sustainable and preserve the rights of everyone potentially impacted. After all many residence like myself, have chosen the rural community over the urban for a reason. It would be a shame to be lose one of the biggest reasons we chose to live in such a beautiful setting and be forced to move, or want to move but cannot because our property has become unsellable.

Thank you for considering my concerns. I trust that you will carefully weigh the interests of both renewable energy development and the well-being of Sherman County residents as you make decisions about these important issues. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely, Chris Whitley

5.14 Dan Earl – 1 mile exclusion zone around towns and other things

Joan,

Are there maps available that show the 1 mile exclusion zone areas around the towns in Sherman County? It seems for solar since there are no flashing lights, moving blades (moving shadows) or 400' tall structures, that 1 mile is quite an excessive exclusion zone for solar. Add to that, except for Kent, all the other towns in Sherman County are located in valleys. A 1 mile exclusion zone area would basically come to my house, eliminating the ability to build on land already leased for solar on Rolfe, Justesen and my property. All of which would have very little visibility from Grass Valley. It needs to be considered that each 1/4 mile exclusion zone removes 125 acres of land for potential development. A 1/2 mile exclusion removes 500 acres, a 1 mile exclusion zone around a single point removes 2010 acres. That figure is greater when you consider those points are set on the perimeter of each city limit. I have included a couple screen shots of Google maps I have drawn up with the 1/4 mile exclusions around each house and 1 mile exclusion zones drawn at various points around the GV City limit. I cannot see how the energy companies would continue considering building projects in an area where there are so many large holes in where they are allowed to build. Solar farms are linear in nature. Designing and building a project amongst all those exclusion circles is the definition of trying to fit a square peg in a round hole.

I am also very excited about meetings we have had with Chad Higgins, the agrivoltaics expert from OSU. He testified before congress last week about agrivoltaics and their inclusion in the new farm bill. He is considered the foremost expert in the field in the world, enough so that the Chinese Minister of Agriculture sought him out for an extended meeting about agrivoltaics. We are very fortunate to have him meeting with us and interested in working with Brookfield on implementation of his findings in the local project. We have talked to Brookfield about incorporating his findings into their local project. They have indicated that they are very open to investigating the prospect. John Soinenen, (Brookfield VP) has met with Chad when he was in the area and is impressed with his knowledge and ideas. I believe it would turn the project into a large scale proof of concept that would end up not just being "another solar farm" but an opportunity to put Sherman County on the leading edge of the Agrivoltaics movement and would a be draw to the county for those wanting to learn from literally around the globe.

Thanks for your time,

Dan Earl



Close up Grass Valley.



Area view.

5.15 Kathy McCullough – Transparency Needed Letter 2

Sherman County Court:

Our county court needs more transparency.

Years ago, in the early 2000s when the wind towers were coming to the county, we signed up with Orion (later PGE) but the county was blocking it. We went to a court meeting to find out why. Mike McArthur, the county judge, said publicly at a County Court meeting that there were no wind projects that he knew of coming to Sherman County. In actuality, the ground he was farming in Sherman County (and Judge Laura Pryor's land in Gilliam County) was slated to be the first project built. He was forced to admit that the county had been contacted by wind developers.

A few months ago, at the DCLD (Department of Land Conservation and Development) meeting, the members of this court would not tell us how many acres were being leased for solar. The next day, (at the meeting where CREA Director Mike McArthur apologized for the rudeness of the county citizens the night before for daring to question Jon Jinings about solar on farm ground), we learned that over 66,000 acres had been signed up. When did this information become so proprietary and secretive? Why weren't the people informed all along? Why wouldn't the court tell us, and how did they know?

It might be years before solar goes in. Without transmission, there are only a few places where there is room on the lines. But CREA (community Renewable Energy Association) has been using our money from SIP agreements to lobby in Salem for solar for years. Now, their work is coming to fruition. Sadly, most of the people in Sherman County don't even know who CREA is or what they do. And our county judge is the Chairman of CREA.

It is time to start being transparent and informing the people who elected you.

I was elected as a PCP (Precinct committee person) in Sherman County a few years ago. In the last election, over three-quarters of our population voted Republican. Our PCP Facebook page has been blowing up – over 9000 views over Brad's letter on the solar issue, which tells me people care and are concerned. (I sent the Court email copies of the page) Many of your citizens work full time, either farming or in farming support jobs. That is why we count on your to keep us apprised. In fact, Justin interviewed for his court position with the PCP group after his position opened up mid-term.

Justin, from your job with MCP, you know that a lack of transparency can create a real problem. One day, it's business as usual, and the next, the COOP is on the verge of bankruptcy over the base-priced contracts. None of the members knew how far out some of those contracts were or how dangerous it was to extend them years out – especially with the premium-based pricing. No one understood it, not Jeff Kaiser, not you, not the board.

I believe unchecked solar is just as dangerous to our county. Your constituents should be informed. That's why we elected all of you to represent all of us.

The minutes and budget need to be better publicized. No one has time to check a webpage every day, and the meetings and minutes seem fluid and ever-changing. A good start would be to create a Facebook page and post it in the post offices. However, I want to see the court agenda and minutes in my email box. I would like to be on a list of people you keep informed.

I want to see the SIP agreements, and I want to know when they are being negotiated and who is doing the negotiating. I think the county needs to hire a contract lawyer. This is much too complicated for the average citizen, lawyer, or county court member to decide.

You have received many letters from concerned citizens. You shouldn't need the letters: you have attended the same meetings I have, and you know your citizens are worried about gigantic solar projects. But you aren't listening to us. Maybe night meetings.

I don't understand how developers can tell you what to do in our county. Why would you listen to someone like John Soininen from Brookstone Renewables go on and on about how he should be able to build wherever he wants to (at the last court meeting, on Zoom) without reminding him that he doesn't live here and that we didn't elect him?

You say it is up to the zoning commissioner or the fire department, yet that isn't true. Many of these projects will go straight to the state. You are out last line of defense.

The tax-paying residents of Sherman County, should be heard – all of us, not just those signed up for solar. We are extremely concerned about fire and its proximity to our homes.

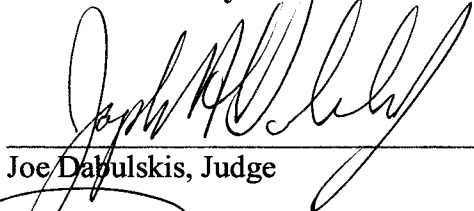
Sincerely,

Kathy McCullough

6.0 Future Items

Being no further business before the Court, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Sherman County Court



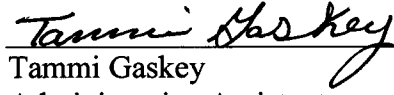
Joe Dabulskis, Judge



Justin Miller, Commissioner



Joan Bird, Commissioner

Attest: 

Tammi Gaskey
Administrative Assistant