

**Biggs Service District  
Water System Improvements Project Public Hearing  
Minutes  
December 6, 2016**

Opened meeting: 11:00 a.m.

Present: Judge Gary Thompson; Commissioner Tom McCoy; Commissioner Mike Smith; Administrative Assistant Lauren Hernandez; Anderson Perry & Associates President Brad Baird.

Citizens Present: David Wentz - Linda's Restaurant

The Sherman County Court met as the Biggs Service District Board of Directors. The Biggs Service District Board of Directors opened the public hearing at 11:00 a.m. County Counsel Will Cary explained he received an email from Jessica Metta, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District, stating the state refused to provide financing for the water project because the service district did not have the ability to provide water. After looking at the original orders issued, Will determined the orders only allowed sewer. The district, however, was not called the sewer district, but the Biggs Service District. Will wrote a letter stating the reason no water was supplied in the original order was because at that time it was being supplied by private sources, and the county did not want to take business away from private entities. The district originally intended to provide both water and sewer services. The state's legal department reviewed the letter and stated the district had to follow Oregon Revised Statutes Chapter 541. Instead of creating a new service district, an Order will be passed stating that the private entities providing water cannot receive funding for the necessary environmental requirements that must be met to provide water, but public entities can. The Biggs Service District has opted to also provide water, which was discussed in a public meeting on June 29, 2016. Business owners present at the meeting did not object to the district taking over providing water services.

Judge Thompson stated a water pump in one of the privately-owned wells went down last week. Brad Baird, Anderson Perry & Associates, stated the new water tank would have kept providing water due to gravity. The new tank will hold 400,000 gallons, and one of the existing wells will function as a backup well, so water service should not be interrupted. Judge Thompson asked Brad if the district was going to buy water rights from the existing wells. Brad explained the paper work is finished to apply for the water right for the district.

Will stated the public hearing is for interested parties to be informed about the district adding water service and to propose the Sherman County Court sign the Order adding water services to Biggs Service. Brad observed the Order uses the language "citizens within the Biggs Service District" and asked if there were citizens in the district. Will answered the term *citizens* refers to citizens as well as business owners to make sure water rights are provide to all those in the Biggs Service District, not just business owners.

Brad explained the Order makes it legal for the Biggs Service District to receive funding for the water project. David Wentz, Linda's Restaurant, expressed the water project was going to be a positive change. He explained that currently, when electricity goes out, if the pumps are running, the pumps run out of water. Brad stated if the electricity goes out under the new system, there will likely be no disruption to water service.

Judge Thompson stated the water system will help with fire liability. The county runs on volunteer fire departments. The biggest impact on insurance is the location of fire hydrants, and the hydrants being installed every 400 feet as part of the new system will help with fire ratings. Commissioner Smith asked if the businesses in Biggs could form a volunteer group under North Sherman Fire Department. Discussion was held about the

possibility of placing fire equipment in town in case of fire emergency. Equipment needed includes firehose, a tool to open the hydrant, and nozzles.

Brad explained the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funding application is under preparation. It will be turned in at the end of December. The county funded the design ahead of time, so design work should be finished by January or February and ready to go out for bid. If everything falls into place, the project could begin in 2017. Judge Thompson stated Biggs is the economic hub of Sherman County. David estimated around 2,500-3,000 people stop in Linda's Restaurant per day, and this number does not include other businesses in town.

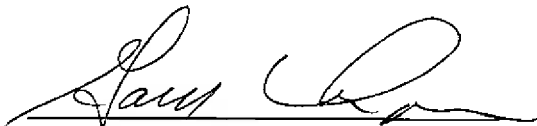
Commissioner Smith stated the North Central Public Health District is trusting the district to get the water project done as soon as possible for public safety reasons. He asked if portions of the project can be started with prefunding provided by the county before the USDA loan is awarded. Brad stated the goal is to have the application for water rights turned in, the partition ready to go, and all upfront design work finished. After this, once funding is received, the project can go out for bid. He also needs to communicate with the Road Department about the test pits and earthwork.


No further public comment was heard.

The hearing was closed at 11:17 a.m. The Biggs Service District Board of Directors will recommend the Sherman County Court pass the Order at the next Sherman County Court session.

The meeting adjourned at 11:17 a.m.

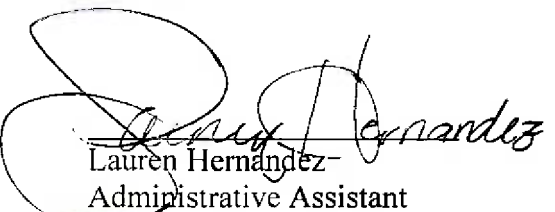
Biggs Service District Board

  
Judge Gary Thompson

  
Commissioner Tom McCoy

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Commissioner Michael Smith

ATTEST:

  
Lauren Hernandez  
Administrative Assistant