



Court Agenda

Special Session

December 21, 2015

1:00 p.m.

1.0 Discussion Items:

- 1.1** Introductions
- 1.2** Status of Fiber Build– timing, route, connection with Gilliam and Wheeler
- 1.3** Biggs Junction Water System
- 1.4** Housing/Attainable Housing Revolving Loan Fund
- 1.5** Senior Housing in Wasco
- 1.6** Closer of Grass Valley School – implications for Moro
- 1.7** Sherman County Downtown Plan Next Steps
- 1.8** Mack's to Mouth Trail Update
- 1.9** Other?

Adjourn Special Session

***If necessary, an Executive Session may be held in accordance with:*

ORS 192.660 (2) (d) Labor Negotiations
ORS 192.660 (2) (e) Property

ORS 192.660 (2) (h) Legal Rights
ORS 192.660 (2) (i) Personnel



SHERMAN COUNTY COURT
SPECIAL SESSION
OFFICE OF THE SHERMAN COUNTY COURT

December 21, 2015 - 1:00 p.m.

Present: Judge Thompson, Commissioner McCoy, Alan Daniels, Brad DeHart, Kate Sinner, Clark Jackson, Administrative Assistant Lauren Hernandez

Special Session was called to order by Judge Gary Thompson at 1:00 p.m.

A quorum was present. No news media was present.

1.0 Discussion Items:

1.1 Introductions

1.2 Status of Fiber Build

Kate Sinner, Regional Solutions Coordinator, explained Sherman County has the opportunity to immediately sign an intergovernmental agreement with Business Oregon. The \$820,000 will not be released until the spring of 2017, and the money is guaranteed to Sherman County, so there is no urgency. The county can sign now or wait.

Commissioner McCoy and Judge Thompson updated Kate on recent fiber negotiations. Negotiations with Windwave are going well, but the county has not yet signed anything. One big issue is getting fiber to Gilliam and Wheeler counties. Some cities in these counties would like fiber run directly to households. Sherman County plans to have an entity providing services – the county itself will not be in charge of providing household connections and services. Sherman County fiber will be run much like the wireless internet already in place: the county will provide the mechanism to deliver the service, and other entities will come in and connect the fiber to individual customers.

Commissioner McCoy asked for clarification that the \$820,000 guaranteed from the state will still come to Sherman County even if the fiber has already been built before the funds are released. Kate responded yes. The county can do the build and then get reimbursed. The route for fiber was briefly discussed. Kate asked about the phases of the project. The county has money set aside for the fiber build, and the \$820,000 from the state will most likely fund fiber getting to the Biggs/Rufus area.

Gilliam County and Wheeler County fiber connection points are undetermined. There is still conflict over the need for a fiber connection between Arlington and Condon. Fiber connection to the 911 call center is the key to keeping the 911 Emergency Services functioning and operating. Sherman County does not currently have a fiber connection point close to Condon.

Brad DeHart, Oregon Department of Transportation, explained the fiber work Sherman County is doing is not close enough to leverage connection down to Fossil. The negotiation work with Windwave applied to Gilliam and Wheeler County as well, so the counties are connected in that regard even if their fiber routes are not connected.

1.3 Biggs Junction Water System

Rene' Moore, Biggs Service District Administrator, attended a One Stop Finance Meeting in Salem for the Biggs Service District. Sherman County Court has not yet reviewed the results of the meeting; however, the Court previously authorized the expenditure of up to \$250,000 to start planning for the project and to purchase land for the site. After reviewing the data and looking over the finances, another meeting with residents of Biggs will be scheduled to see if they remain supportive of paying for the project. The county may have to supplement funding for the project to keep water rates at a reasonable level. Kate reported Rene' informed her there were recommendations for funding sources for the project Rene' would like to speak to the Court about. The United States Department of Agriculture could potentially be a lending source. Alan Daniels, Regional Solutions Team Liaison with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), explained the DEQ could possibly be a funding source if there are health issues associated with the current water system.

1.4 Housing/Attainable Housing Revolving Loan Fund

Kate stated currently there is two million dollars in the Attainable Housing Revolving Loan Fund at Mid-Columbia Economic Development District. In the past, Sherman County has discussed possibly placing a senior center in Wasco as well as a possible housing partnership between Sherman Jr/Sr High School (SJSHS), Mid-Columbia Producers (MCP), and Sherman County. Between the three counties able to access this housing fund, Hood River has a few developers who have expressed interest but have not created any proposals, Wasco County is struggling with renovating or rehabbing existing housing stock and would like better terms on the loan, and Sherman County has expressed it would most likely not use the loan because the county could provide more favorable terms. Kate asked the county if any changes could be made to make the loan useful.

Commissioner McCoy updated Kate on a recent housing proposal presented to the Court by Austen Martin as well as the attempted partnership between Sherman County, MCP, and SJSHS. The county has gotten no response from MCP. The school board is interested in the idea but has questions that need to be answered before considering any action.

Kate asked if the county was interested in a senior living project or rental housing projects. The county needs both kinds of housing, but there are very few rental houses available in the area. Sherman County has participated in three minor home repair programs. The first program run through Mid-Columbia Housing Authority was not successful. The two programs run through Sherman Development League were successful. The county invested around \$20,000 for each of these programs.

Kate said it will be difficult to change the loan program to a grant program. The loan program does have to have better terms to be more attractive. Commissioner McCoy added a partnership to fund a housing project between MCP, SJSHS, and the county is the most favorable option. The county does not want to involve Mid-Columbia Housing Authority because it needs middle-income, not low-income housing. Kate suggested the possibility of a minor home repair program with more favorable terms than the housing loan. Judge Thompson explained the problem with the home repair programs is many existing homes are beyond repair due to old age.

Clark Jackson, Business Development Officer with Business Oregon, explained it is hard to find funding for new builds for rentals because the cost of building is so high and the rental market fluctuates. The Court was

asked to contact Kate if the county can think of ways to modify the loan program to be more responsive to the unique needs of Sherman County.

The team discussed funding possibilities for the housing proposal by Austen Martin and housing projects in other local areas.

Judge Thompson brought up there is currently no port in Sherman County. Economic Development money needs to be funneled, and a port would be the best way to handle this. The suggestion was made to turn Biggs Service District into the Port of Biggs. Barge, rail, and truck traffic all flow through Biggs. The county owns land in the commercial district. The benefit of having a port is the county can secure additional economic development funds, grants, and loans. Gilliam County and Wasco County both have ports. Alan explained a port becomes a legal taxing district, but it allows for special considerations and funding opportunities. A port district is very advantageous and is worth looking in to regarding economic development. Brief discussion was held about ports in the local area and how they function.

1.5 Senior Housing in Wasco

Senior housing is a feasible option to explore at the Wasco Annex. The senior housing development in Moro has a waiting list. Senior housing in Wasco is being discussed with Mid-Columbia Housing Authority. Clark suggested looking at other local senior living housing projects in Arlington and Maupin. Commissioner McCoy summarized Di Loreto Architecture is exploring if they can remodel the new part of the old school into something that can be used with lower operating costs, but that nothing in the plans will hinder senior housing if the county chooses to pursue it. As soon as the county decides what action to take with this project, Mid-Columbia Housing Authority and Regional Solutions can help with what they can. Current use of the Wasco Annex was briefly discussed.

1.6 Closure of Grass Valley School

Kate talked to Wes Owens, SJSHS, about the consolidation of schools in Moro. Road access to the school is an issue that has come up multiple times. Brad is the contact on this issue. Brad met with the school to get a scope of the project and to see if there was justification for ODOT to look at changing the intersections. Currently, there is not, but this could change if funding changes.

1.7 Sherman County Downtown Plan Next Steps

After looking at the downtown plans Sherman County cities created, Regional Solutions is looking at how to follow up with state-related items. If cities in the county pooled together for a proposal for multiple cities for street improvements, the proposal might possibly be pushed through even though it is low on the priority list. There might possibly be other funding opportunities for streetscaping activities available through ODOT. Brad added there are small funds available to help with streetscaping and beautification type projects. If the small fund amounts can be pooled with Sherman County money, it might be possible to do some smaller projects in each community. The proposals have to come from the cities so cities have input and buy-in in the process. Brad explained it is a benefit if locals show strong interest in smaller projects to show there is commitment to the process. Local cities and plans were briefly discussed, including Wasco, Kent, and the benefits of having Oregon Raceway Park in Grass Valley.

Kate spoke with Wes Owens about the closure of the school in Grass Valley. Various ideas about uses for the building have been given, including using the building for the BLM, as a fire station, and others. Until Grass

Valley has an idea about what to do with the building, Kate doesn't want to throw out options residents are not behind. Having fiber in Grass Valley will be a plus when deciding what to do with the school building. Discussion was held about what other cities have done with empty school buildings. The county already has an empty school building in Wasco. A viable plan for both buildings is needed.

1.8 Mack's to Mouth Trail Update

Kate reported Sue Mabe is taking the lead on this project and is working within different land management plans to get more buy-in so a proposal can be created. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is concerned about bringing more people onto the land without any type of revenue structure. Fee possibilities and strategies were discussed.

Philippi Park will open in the summer of 2016 with the help of a private investor.

1.9 Other

Lower John Day Pump Storage

Funding is available for this project. There are still negotiations underway regarding the management of this project, as well as other issues.

Iberdrola

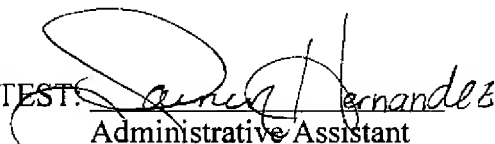
Iberdrola contacted Judge Thompson regarding a 10 megawatt solar project at Klondike on about 80 acres of land. Information was supposed to be received about this and discussed during the last Court meeting, but it was not received. The biggest foreseen issue with the project is land use. Iberdrola needs the project to be as close as it can be to the Klondike substation and is working with Sherman County's Planning Department. Jefferson, Crook, and Deschutes counties all have solar farms and would be good resources to collaborate with.


Golden Hills

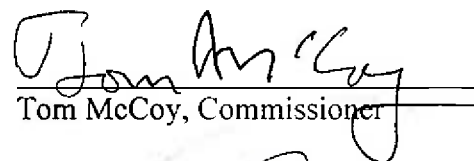
Golden Hills contacted Judge Thompson about a 400 megawatt wind farm. They now have clearance from congressional staff in Washington DC and have cleared up the issue with radar.

Being no further matters at issue, the Special Session was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

ATTEST:


Administrative Assistant
Lauren Hernandez


Gary Thompson, County Judge


Tom McCoy, Commissioner


Mike Smith, Commissioner