

Gilliam County Court
Regular Meeting
4.17.19

Judge Farrar called the regular Gilliam County Court meeting to order at 3 p.m. at the Gilliam County Courthouse in Condon, Oregon. Present were Judge Elizabeth Farrar, Commissioner Leslie Wetherell, Commissioner Sherrie Wilkins, Sandy McKay, Court Administrator; and Ruben Cleaveland; County Legal Counsel.

IN THE MATTER OF CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Judge Farrar noted the following changes to the agenda:

- Discussion: purchase of County vehicle.
- Consent Agenda: Tabled approval of April 3 regular meeting minutes.

IN THE MATTER OF PUBLIC COMMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE

There were no public comments or correspondence.

IN THE MATTER OF CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION by Commissioner Wetherell, second by Commissioner Wilkins, to approve the Consent Agenda. Farrar – Yes; Wetherell – Yes; Wilkins – Yes; **Motion Carried.**

The Consent Agenda included the following:

- Approval of April 4 work session minutes
- Approval of the transportation department's STIF grant
- Approval of general IT services contract with ACC Tech Solutions
- Approval of IGA with Lane County for assessment and taxation IT services

IN THE MATTER OF FRONTIER TELENET UPDATE

Judge Farrar reported that a meeting of the Frontier Telenet Budget Committee scheduled for April 5 was postponed after the sheriffs of the three counties requested that lay people be included in the budget committee rather than them.

A regular meeting will take place Wednesday, April 24 at 1 p.m., following the Tri-County Court meeting in Sherman County. Judge Farrar anticipates that a revised budget calendar will be approved, and that three lay people will be appointed to the budget committee.

Judge Farrar also noted that the Frontier Telenet 911 Board met yesterday, April 16. The budget was approved, which included \$400,000 earmarked for Frontier Telenet. Commissioner Wetherell asked if the new positions on the Frontier Telenet Budget Committee were advertised. Judge Farrar said she didn't believe it was advertised and that the Frontier Telenet Board will appoint one person from each county.

IN THE MATTER OF WEED CONTROL SPECIAL ASSESSMENT

MOTION by Commissioner Wetherell, second by Commissioner Wilkins, to have the second reading of Ordinance No. 2019-01 by title only. Farrar – Yes; Wetherell – Yes; Wilkins – Yes; **Motion Carried.**

Judge Farrar read the ordinance title.

MOTION by Commissioner Wetherell, second by Commissioner Wilkins, to accept the second reading by title only and adopt the ordinance. Farrar – Yes; Wetherell – Yes; Wilkins – Yes; **Motion Carried.**

IN THE MATTER OF GRAIN LAB UPDATE

Commissioner Wilkins noted that a company interested in a short-term lease of the Grain Lab recently toured the facility. However, it must first be determined if the company's proposed use of the building falls under the federal Economic Development Administration criteria. Sandy McKay noted that it would also be necessary for the Planning Department to approve any change in the use of the building.

Times-Journal Editor Mac Stinchfield asked about the situation with the building. Judge Farrar explained that the County is still under a 20-year agreement with the EDA and is no longer making payments, but is paying for the upkeep and maintenance of the building. Money would be owed to EDA if the County decided to buy out the remaining years of the EDA contract.

IN THE MATTER OF ARDENT MILLS REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE NEEDS

Commissioner Wilkins reported that she discussed repair and maintenance needs with Jeff Schott of Pillar Consulting, including repairs of the roof, two doors, and outside lighting. She will meet with Schott next week and will provide an update at the May 1 Court meeting.

IN THE MATTER OF CAPITAL INVESTMENT GRANTS

Judge Farrar noted that Capital Investment Grant applications were discussed and reviewed during the recent budget meetings. Sandy McKay provided a brief overview of the requests and subsequent staff recommendations as follows:

Condon School District: Requested \$440,000 for replacement of the outdated heating system at Condon High School. Review team recommendation was to grant up to \$440,000 on a reimbursable basis.

Arlington School District: Requested \$400,000 to make Arlington Elementary School more ADA compliant. Review team recommended that the project be funded up to \$400,000 on a reimbursable basis.

Port of Arlington: Requested \$317,000 for two projects:

1. To extend the water and sewer lines on Island Park for eventual building in the area. The review team recommended that the request be denied due to concerns

regarding match contributions from the Port and lack of a complete development plan for future construction at the site.

2. To run a water line from Condon to Linus Pauling Field. The review team recommended against funding due to uncertainty regarding matching funds, and because the City of Condon is no longer willing to partner in the project.

Judge Farrar noted that the Budget Committee was in support of the review team's decisions. Commissioner Wetherell asked how applicants would be notified, and the Court agreed that Judge Farrar should inform applicants of the Court's decisions with basic information regarding review team recommendations. The information will also be posted on the County's website.

MOTION by Commissioner Wilkins, second by Commissioner Wetherell, to award Capital Investment grants to Condon School District in the amount of up to \$440,000; and to the Arlington School District in the amount of up to \$400,000, to be funded from the Fiscal Year 2019-20 SIP Discretionary Line Item with conditions imposed as discussed pending a fully executed grant agreement. Farrar – Yes; Wetherell – Yes; Wilkins – Yes; **Motion Carried.**

IN THE MATTER OF COUNTY COURT STAFFING REALIGNMENT

Summary provided by Judge Farrar: As the roles and expectations of County Government grow and become more complex, so too does the staffing needs of its governing body to meet these new demands effectively. The Gilliam County Court has operated with a single staff member, the Court Administrator, for most of its recent history. And while the individuals who have filled this position, including the current Court Administrator, have served the County with professionalism and competence, the current staffing structure is a barrier to the County Court's ability to address the significant challenges facing our communities.

The County Judge takes on the often competing responsibilities of running the day-to-day operations of the County, serving as a sitting Judge on Juvenile and Probate Courts, advocating for Gilliam County at the local, state, and federal level, and setting policy and pursuing a long-term vision for Gilliam County. Although I am proud of what this Court has accomplished during our first four months in office, on most days, the big picture projects must necessarily take a backseat to the urgent day-to-day operational needs of the County. At the same time, Gilliam County needs consistent, professional human resources management to ensure compliance with state and federal labor laws and to mitigate risk to the County.

Judge Farrar presented a proposal for staff realignment, which would include the creation of two new positions and the elimination of the current Court Administrator position, as described below. The Budget Committee has approved funding.

1. The Chief of Staff /Director of Administration would supervise staff and manage Human Resources functions for the County, as well as supervising non-elected

department heads, leading negotiations of the collective bargaining agreement, etc.

2. The Administrative Assistant position would involve clerical functions including several new responsibilities that are currently assigned to other County staff, as well as managing the motor pool, organizing the safety committee, planning County events, etc.

The Court discussed both positions and also addressed the need for risk management. Judge Farrar said that risk management would be conducted on a team basis depending on each situation. Ruben Cleaveland pointed out that risk management is a big umbrella that encompasses several individuals depending on the situation. Commissioner Wetherell requested clarification regarding the proposed salary ranges. Judge Farrar said the proposed ranges are based on the current Salary Schedule, with the senior level salary based on comparable positions within the County.

MOTION by Commissioner Wilkins, second by Commissioner Wetherell, to create the new positions of Chief of Staff, and Administrative Assistant, and to eliminate the position of Court Administrator effective July 1, 2019. Farrar – Yes; Wetherell – Yes; Wilkins – Yes; **Motion Carried.**

MOTION by Commissioner Wilkins, second by Commissioner Wetherell, to approve the job descriptions for the Chief of Staff and Administrative Assistant contingent on CIS final review. Farrar – Yes; Wetherell – Yes; Wilkins – Yes; **Motion Carried.**

The Court agreed that the hiring process should begin immediately.

IN THE MATTER OF PURCHASE OF COUNTY VEHICLE

The Court discussed the purchase of a new County vehicle, which has been budgeted for this fiscal year. Estimates for a 2019 Chevrolet Equinox were provided by Wright Chevrolet, Fossil, \$28,522; Sherrell Chevrolet, Hermiston, 28,424; and Gary Gruner, Madras, \$30,438. The Court discussed benefits of proximity to Wright Chevrolet, and Ruben Cleaveland advised that the Court isn't required to select the lowest bid, but can make a selection based on the best interests of the County.

MOTION by Elizabeth Farrar, second by Commissioner Wetherell, to accept the bid from Wright Chevrolet in the amount of \$28,522 for a 2019 Chevrolet Equinox. Farrar – Yes; Wetherell – Yes; Wilkins – Yes; **Motion Carried.**

IN THE MATTER OF APRIL 3 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The Court agreed to table the minutes of the April 3 regular Court meeting.

IN THE MATTER OF COURT MEMBER REPORTS

Commissioner Wetherell:

- Said she looked into a bill she received via email from Eastern Oregon Counties Association and determined the County hasn't paid dues since 2014. The Court agreed to take no action at this time.
- Attended a meeting of the North Central Public Health District. Discussions included future expenses and other financial concerns, and plans for a POD (Point of Dispensing) drill scheduled for May 1 at Mid-Columbia Fire and Rescue building in The Dalles.
- Participated in Senator Wyden's Town Hall meeting held at the Gronquist Building in Arlington.
- Reported that she was unable to attend the first meeting of the newly formed Road Committee, which met the day of the Court's first Juvenile Program listening session. She said unless the committee would consider changing their monthly meeting date/time she may not be able to attend many committee meetings due to conflicts in scheduling. The other court members indicated that they would be willing to attend.
- Said she received an invitation to attend Governor Brown's reception on May 2. The event will honor women who hold public office.
- Said that while looking through accounts payable, she noticed that a check had been written for an employee's child and asked if the Court has a nepotism policy in place. Sandy McKay said he is unaware of any uniform policy on the hiring of part-time and temporary help, which has been left up to each department.
- Received correspondence from Port Manager Peter Mitchell regarding discussions held at last week's meeting of the Budget Committee. He is concerned that the Court is saying no to small business job creation and to having a strong Port and noted worry about job loss associated with the Court's decisions. He is particularly concerned that the Court declined to fund the student internship program, as well as the Court's decision not to fully fund the Condon Chamber of Commerce request.

Sheriff Bettencourt asked to comment about the North Central Public Health District and the District's decision to conduct POD drills without Gilliam County's involvement. He suggested that such events should be coordinated with member counties rather than supporting Wasco County, and that the District could use that money to provide services to Gilliam County. Commissioner Wetherell suggested that conversations should continue.

Commissioner Wilkins:

- Met with Portland Metro Solid Waste representatives, including Paul Aingler, who is retiring after serving as liaison between Metro and Waste Management for 20

years. Metro hopes to re-establish a connection with the Court and has suggested a June meeting.

- Noted that Waste Management has improved and clarified signage regarding the disposal of tires.
- Met with Sheriff Bettencourt regarding the NORCOR budget, etc.

Judge Farrar:

- Spoke with Adam Haas regarding the progress of the fiber build. The project is ahead of schedule despite adverse weather conditions, holidays, etc. Judge Farrar also noted that the City of Condon is currently in discussions with Columbia Basic Electric Coop regarding a carrier neutral facility. The Court agreed that Judge Farrar should pursue the possibility of the County joining the partnership.

IN THE MATTER OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sandy McKay noted the following announcements:

- County College: April 19, Salem
- Bill MacInnes Retirement: April 20, Fossil
- Tri-County Court: April 24, 10 a.m., Sherman County
- Frontier Telenet Meeting: April 24, 1 p.m., Sherman County
- Gilliam County Court, regular meeting and budget hearing: May 1, 3 p.m., Courthouse
- Listening Session, Juvenile Court Operations: May 1, 5 p.m., Courthouse
- Gilliam County Court meeting: May 15, 1 p.m., Emergency Services Building, Condon
- ODE-Montague Wind Public Hearing: May 16, 5:30 p.m., Lori's Place
- County College: May 17-19, Salem
- Metro meeting and tour: June, TBA

IN THE MATTER OF NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Gilliam County Court will be Wednesday, May 1, 2019, 3 p.m., at the Gilliam County Courthouse in Condon.

IN THE MATTER OF ADJOURNMENT

It appearing to the court that there was no further business to be conducted at this time and no additional matters to be considered, Judge Farrar adjourned the meeting at 4:22 p.m.

GILLIAM COUNTY COURT

By _____
Elizabeth Farrar, Judge

By _____
Leslie Wetherell, Commissioner

By _____