

Gilliam County Court
Regular Meeting
6/5/2019

Judge Farrar called the regular Gilliam County Court meeting to order at 1 p.m. at the Gilliam County Courthouse in Condon, Oregon. Present were Judge Elizabeth Farrar, Commissioner Leslie Wetherell, Sandy McKay, Court Administrator; and Mary Dyer, Recorder. Commissioner Sherrie Wilkins was present via speaker phone.

IN THE MATTER OF ADDITIONS/REVISIONS TO AGENDA

Judge Farrar noted the following change to the agenda:

- Day Wireless System: Discuss updated invoice for emergency radio installation in Road Department vehicles.

IN THE MATTER OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

IN THE MATTER OF CORRESPONDENCE

Judge Farrar read a progress report submitted by David Lowe, Director of Disposal Operations for Waste Management, Pacific Northwest Area.

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 May bills pending review
- Approval of May 15 regular meeting minutes
- Approval of OSU Extension request for release of budgeted funds.

IN THE MATTER OF FRONTIER TELENET UPDATE

Judge Farrar reported that the Frontier Telenet budget committee met May 23, and it appears that the financial situation is better than expected, although there will be a slight cost increase for each county. The board of directors met that afternoon and approved a contract with Inland Development (WindWave) for an independent audit of the entire system. The board will also be soliciting proposals for new telecom legal counsel.

The budget hearing is scheduled for June 12, with the regular board meeting later in the month.

IN THE MATTER OF GRAIN LAB UPDATE

Commissioner Wilkins reported that she continues to work with Port of Arlington Manager Peter Mitchell on issues concerning the grain lab. She said the company

previously interested in leasing the lab may no longer be interested, and commented that the situation with the Economic Development Administration is still in limbo.

IN THE MATTER OF ARDENT MILLS BUILDING UPDATE

Jeff Schott of Pillar Consulting told the Court that he and Commissioner Wilkins recently toured the Ardent Mills building. He pointed out several issues, including roof leaks and concern about the condition of the back steps, which were rebuilt in 2017. Schott said the problem with the steps isn't structural, but the scrub layer on top is coming off. Additionally, a handrail has popped out of the brackets and needs to be repaired, and the front landing shows ice and snow damage. Ardent Mills is also considering security upgrades. Schott also reported that the exterior lighting controls aren't working. The court directed Schott to contact an electrician regarding repairs.

IN THE MATTER OF COURTHOUSE ROOF UPDATE

Jeff Schott told the court that he met with Travis Wilson of Brown Roofing and Jeremy Tunney of Class A Roofing Consultants on May 24. He said that although they assumed there wasn't moisture in the insulation, they found there is saturation in about 60 percent of the insulation. He said the roof and the insulation need to be removed and replaced, which he estimates will cost approximately \$150,000 to \$200,000. He suggested a PVC roof with roughly 3 inches of insulation, which meets Oregon's energy codes. He said he hopes to bring proposals to the court by the second meeting in July, and to have the work completed by September if contractors are available.

IN THE MATTER OF APPOINTMENT OF ROAD COMMITTEE MEMBER

Motion by Commissioner Wilkins, second by Commissioner Wetherell, to appoint Paul Barnett to the Gilliam County Road Committee, Zone 1, Northwest Quadrant. Farrar – Yes; Wetherell – Yes; Wilkins – Yes; **Motion Carried.**

IN THE MATTER OF CHIEF OF STAFF HIRING PROCEDURES

Judge Farrar reported that she asked new legal counsel if there is a way to interview candidates for the new chief of staff position in executive session so candidates don't have to interview during a public meeting, and so all three court members can participate. She presented a packet containing chief of staff profile and hiring procedures, which must be approved in a public meeting as recommended by legal counsel. Commissioners Wetherell and Wilkins indicated approval of the documents. The court agreed to schedule an initial applicant review on August 7 and interview of finalists on August 21.

Regarding the formation of a hiring committee, Judge Farrar recommended that both staff and elected officials be included. The court agreed with her suggestions to appoint Ellen Wagenaar and Nathan Hammer, elected officials; and Amy Nation, staff.

Final approval of the chief of staff hiring procedures, position profile, and job description will be conducted at the Court's June 19 meeting.

IN THE MATTER OF CITIZEN COMMENTS

Larry Snyder of Condon told the Court of his concerns regarding the possibility of transferring juvenile court jurisdiction to Circuit Court. He said that citizens should have an opportunity to vote on the issue before local control is lost, and commented that citizens were unaware that Judge Farrar intended to "change the system." He also asked if the county is "headed to a five-member commission," and inquired why the advertisement for the new position of chief of staff was removed.

Judge Farrar told Snyder that she was clear about her intentions during her campaign, and also on a candidate profile published in the Times-Journal. Regarding a change to a five-member commission, Judge Farrar said that's a separate issue that isn't currently being discussed or pursued. She explained that the job advertisement was dropped because new county counsel advised the county to go through more steps before moving forward with the hiring process.

Commissioner Wilkins urged Snyder and other citizens to call her with any concerns and noted that her number is listed on the county's website.

IN THE MATTER OF COURTHOUSE ADA UPGRADES

The court discussed a situation in which Oregon DMV has indicated they will provide service in the courthouse only until the end of the calendar year if certain ADA improvements aren't made. Jeff Schott pointed out that the building has built-in accessibility challenges (split-level, etc.). Judge Farrar suggested that the matter is worth pursuing since DMV has indicated they will provide up to \$75,000 of the costs of improvements. She also noted the county has a legal obligation to provide upgrades if the building is out of compliance, although the first step is to determine what deficiencies actually exist.

Potential installation of a new elevator was discussed, and Jeff Schott estimated the cost to be well over \$100,000, but hopefully less than \$500,000.

Judge Farrar will discuss the matter with legal counsel, and Schott will go through steps necessary to determine if the building is out of compliance.

IN THE MATTER OF VOLUNTEER INSURANCE RESOLUTION

John Anderson of Wheatland Insurance was present to discuss the county's workers compensation insurance policy. Anderson advised that the court should not adopt Resolution 2019-05, Volunteer Resolution, which extends workers' compensation insurance to volunteers of Gilliam County. He explained that CIS has made changes that have resulted in an increase from \$87,000 to \$127,000, and noted that comparable insurance from SAIF Corp. would save the county approximately \$37,000. Ellen Wagenaar, County Clerk, was present for the

discussion and noted that while CIS has been great to work with, she has confidence that things will go as well with SAIF.

MOTION by Judge Farrar, second by Commissioner Wetherell, to approve a proposal from SAIF for Workers Compensation insurance, effective July 1, 2019. Farrar – Yes; Wetherell – Yes; Wilkins – Yes; **Motion Carried.**

IN THE MATTER OF SOUTH GILLIAM SPECIAL PROJECTS GRANTS

The Court reviewed recommendations submitted by the review committee, ranked as follows:

No. 1: Condon High School Basketball Programs, for annual Tumbleweed Tournament. The review team's recommendation is to fund in full (\$3,803).

No. 2: Columbia Basin High School Rodeo Club, for High School Rodeo to be held over Labor Day Weekend. The review team's recommendation is to fund in full (\$5,000).

No. 3: Condon Child Care, for creation of a raised-bed vegetable garden and new bike rack. The review team's recommendation is to fund in full (\$2,750).

No. 4: Condon Scholarship Foundation, to offset costs of annual fundraiser dinner and auction for college scholarships. The review team's recommendation is to fund in full (\$2,150).

No 5: Condon Chamber of Commerce, to support a number of events throughout the year. The review team's recommendation is to fund in full (\$10,600).

No. 6: Gilliam County Historical Society, for construction of a metal building to house additional museum exhibits. The review team's recommendation is to fund in full (\$5,000), with the condition that the applicant demonstrates significant progress towards attaining other grant funding necessary to complete the project.

No. 7: Gilliam County SWCD, to help convert the vacant lot on Main Street in Condon into a park. The review team's recommendation is to fund in full (\$20,000), with the condition that the SWCD provide written confirmation from the City of Condon that the project has approval from the City Planning Commission and Historical District Committee prior to the release of funds.

No. 8: City of Condon, requested \$5,000 for purchase of portable stage system that can be used for events throughout the community. The court discussed the review team's recommendation to provide partial funding in the amount of \$2,500. The review team felt it wasn't appropriate for the county to pay the majority of the costs for the project,

and that a grant of \$2,500 is a significant contribution and reflects a more reasonable cost share percentage.

No. 9: Gilliam County Public Library, to help offset costs of bringing the Missoula Children's Theatre to Condon. The review team's recommendation is not to fund because the library is an arm of the county government and therefore not an appropriate applicant for county grant funding. The court agreed that the event should be funded via a different avenue and directed Judge Farrar to bring back suggestions for a decision at the next meeting.

Applications and recommendations for special project grants in both the south and north end of the county will be discussed at the next meeting.

IN THE MATTER OF BUILDING CODE UPDATES

Judge Farrar told the court that Boardman City Manager Karen Pettigrew has indicated that Boardman is interested in discussing assuming responsibility for Gilliam County's building code program. However, because their building inspector is new on the job, Pettigrew suggested that the matter be postponed until late July or early August. The court agreed that the county shouldn't rush into a partnership with Wasco County, primarily due to uncertainty about services and costs. Judge Farrar said she is still working on setting up a meeting to reach a resolution on distribution of the building codes reserves remaining following the dissolution of MCCOG.

IN THE MATTER OF RADIOS FOR COUNTY VEHICLES

Chris Fitzsimmons, Emergency Services Coordinator, was present to discuss a proposal and invoice submitted by Day Wireless for installation of digital radios in the road department vehicles. Judge Farrar explained that the previous court approved the quote last fall, but the invoice is \$500 higher due to the need for additional upgrades in road department equipment. She said a new motion is needed to authorize the additional amount.

MOTION by Commissioner Wetherell, second by Commissioner Wilkins, to approve payment of the Day Wireless invoice in the amount of \$4401.55 for radio installation from economic enhancement fund.

Farrar – Yes; Wetherell – Yes; Wilkins – Yes; **Motion Carried.**

IN THE MATTER OF COURT MEMBER REPORTS

Commissioner Wetherell:

- asked if the court would be willing to try meeting in the mornings. Judge Farrar and Commissioner Wilkins agreed that meetings will be scheduled at 10 a.m. beginning in July.
- pointed out an item in the East-Oregonian's "Days Gone By" column -- 50 years ago, the Gilliam County Court agreed to forbid the drinking of coffee by employees during working hours, to remove the soda machine in the courthouse, and orders storage of the civil defense radio.

Commissioner Wilkins:

- noted that she has received calls in support of transferring juvenile court jurisdiction to circuit court, with no calls in opposition.
- said that she toured the Ardent Mills facility, along with Jeff Schott.
- reported that she attended a recent session at county college. The focus was public safety.
- said she attended the most recent meetings of Frontier Telenet Budget Committee and Board of Directors.
- noted that the NORCOR budget has been finalized.
- attended Senator Wyden's Town Hall in Arlington.

Judge Farrar:

- said the administrative assistant position is currently being advertised, and that applications and inquiries are coming in. In response to a question posed by Commissioner Wilkins, Judge Farrar suggested a hiring committee consisting of one court member, one or two elected officials and maybe one or two others. The hiring committee would appoint a chairperson who isn't a court member.
- said she received a memorandum from legal counsel regarding several questions associated with the potential transfer of juvenile court jurisdiction, including whether Judge Farrar can continue to sign court orders to circuit court one by one. Judge Farrar intends to put the issue back on the agenda to determine if the court is interested in transferring jurisdiction.

IN THE MATTER OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sandy McKay noted the following announcements:

- June 6, Frontier Regional 911 Board Meeting, Courthouse, Condon.
- June 8, 9 a.m., Veterans' Benefit and Resource Fair, Earl Snell Park, Arlington.
- June 12, 1 p.m., Frontier Telenet Budget Hearing, Jeanne Burch Building, Fossil.
- June 19, 1 p.m., Regular court meeting, Gronquist Building, Arlington.
- June 27, Metro Council tour of Waste Management, 11 a.m., followed by lunch and discussion at the Gronquist Building, Arlington.
- July 3 regular court meeting: Cancelled.

Regarding the Metro tour, the court agreed to send invitations to all elected officials, Arlington and Condon City Councils, Arlington and Condon Chambers of Commerce and Arlington Port Commission.

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 2:30 p.m.

GILLIAM COUNTY COURT

By _____

Elizabeth Farrar, Judge

By _____

Leslie Wetherell, Commissioner

By _____

Sherrie Wilkins, Commissioner

Mary H. Dyer/Recorder _____