

8-28-17

Judge Shaffer called a special meeting of the Gilliam County Court to order at 10:30 a.m. The meeting was held at Gilliam County Courthouse, Condon, Oregon. The purpose of the meeting was to consider approval of a Strategic Communications Proposal by Elizabeth Farrar.

Present were Judge Steve Shaffer, Commissioner Michael Weimar, Court Administrator Leanne Durfey, Recorder Mary Dyer, and Elizabeth Farrar. Commissioner Leslie Wetherell attended via speaker phone.

### **IN THE MATTER OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PROPOSAL**

Judge Shaffer explained that the intent of the special meeting was to consider a strategic communications proposal designed to influence the Metro Council to award its landfill disposal contract to Columbia Ridge Landfill when the current contract expires on Dec. 31, 2019.

Elizabeth Farrar provided a brief background on the 30-year history of the landfill contract. She explained that this fall, Metro will issue a Request for Proposals for a new contract with a term of 10 years and the possibility of two five-year extensions. Metro is currently seeking public comment on the draft Request for Proposals, with the comment period closing at 5 p.m. on Sept. 12. At that time, Metro staff will consider comments for inclusion in a final RFP to be issued before the end of 2017. Metro anticipates awarding the new contract before the end of 2018, with the contract taking effect on January 1, 2020.

Farrar proposed a two-phase process. Phase 1 would shape the final Request for Proposals, beginning immediately and concluding at the end of the public comment period on Sept. 12. Farrar said that efforts should encourage Metro councilors to give greater scoring weight to community impact, which she thinks has been overlooked in the current draft. She noted that negative impacts should be considered, i.e. what happens to a County when a contract that has been in place for 30 years suddenly evaporates. Farrar also said that benefits of established relationships should be considered in regards to reduction of risk. Currently, the criterion established by Metro includes no points for past positive relationships.

Phase 2, which would begin on Sept. 13, immediately following the end of the public comment period, would shift to support Columbia Ridge Landfill's proposal to Metro. Letters of support from the County Court as well as individuals, schools and community organizations will be submitted for Metro's consideration. Farrar will provide assistance for drafting letters if requested, and will also help Court members prepare for public testimony to Metro. She discussed the "ripple effect," such as the ongoing community benefits of Waste Management's support of Condon Chamber of Commerce.

Additionally, she plans to approach Portland-area publications that might be interested in stories about the 30-year partnership and how the entities are intertwined.

Farrar proposed to offer services at a rate of \$100 per hour, plus travel time at \$50 per hour and traveling expenses at the federally-approved rate. She estimates that both phases will require no more than 40 hours.

Commissioner Weimar commented that the proposal seems straightforward and efficient, although it involves more than he expected. However, he is confident that Farrar is experienced and understands how government agencies work. Judge Shaffer noted that it's important to carry the same message throughout the process, and that Farrar has a vested interest in Gilliam County. At this point, he said it would be foolish to waste more time looking for other PR firms.

**MOTION** by Commissioner Weimar, second by Commissioner Wetherell, to enter into a Contract for Strategic Communications with Elizabeth Farrar at a rate of \$100 per hour and \$50 per hour travel, plus travel expenses at the federal rate, to be completed within 40 hours.

Judge Shaffer noted that personal services contracts are limited to \$10,000 per year, and that Farrar is already contracted to provide website maintenance services. Court Administrator Leanne Durfey explained that the website contract is capped not to exceed \$3,600, and that the Communications contract will be capped at 40 hours; thus the two contracts together should not exceed the allowable limit.

Shaffer – Yes; Weimar – Yes; Wetherell – Yes; **Motion Carried.**

The Court agreed with Farrar's suggestion to look at dates for the Court to meet with Metro, and to clarify details regarding public testimony.

## **IN THE MATTER OF COMMENTS BY LES RUARK**

Judge Shaffer acknowledged correspondence from Rock Creek resident Les Ruark, in which Ruark suggested that the notice and agenda for future special meetings of the County Court, including emergency meetings, should include a brief explanation of the need for considering a matter via a special meeting. He also said that whenever possible, notice and agenda should include an electronic link to principle support material for matters to be considered.

Ruark also said that Court meetings held via conference call should identify how the public can listen to the call, with information regarding dial-in access.

Court Administrator Leanne Durfey said that the agenda could have been worded more clearly to state Commissioner Wetherell will participate via speaker phone, noting the meeting wasn't conducted via conference call, but was held in the Courtroom with Judge Shaffer and Commissioner Weimar present and accessible to public

Judge Shaffer agreed that in the near future, it's time for the Court to discuss how to approach public meeting laws in regards to technology, and agreed with Commissioner Weimar's comment that the matter should be discussed at a regular meeting.

**IN THE MATTER OF THE NEXT COURT MEETING**

The next regular Gilliam County Court meeting will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 6, 2017, beginning at 10:00 a.m. at Gilliam County Courthouse in Condon, Oregon.

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 Shaffer adjourned the meeting at 10:50 a.m.

GILLIAM COUNTY COURT

By \_\_\_\_\_

Steve Shaffer, Judge

By \_\_\_\_\_

Michael Weimar, Commissioner

By \_\_\_\_\_

Leslie Wetherell, Commissioner

*Mary H. Dyer/Recorder* \_\_\_\_\_