

**IN THE COUNTY COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON
IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF GRANT**

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January 18, 2023 – Regular Meeting of the County Court

Pursuant to notice made to the newspaper of general circulation throughout Grant County, the radio station, county website, and e-mail distribution list, a regular meeting of the County Court was held at the County Courthouse in Canyon City, OR.

9:04 am -- Call to Order. Present were Judge Scott W. Myers, Commissioners Jim Hamsher and John Rowell, Administrative Assistant Laurie Stinnett, Sam Palmer, Billie Jo George, Reporter Bennett Hall, Human Resources Manager Laurie Cates and Treasurer Julie Ellison. Seven participants joined the meeting via live stream. A Pledge of Allegiance was given to the United States Flag. The invocation was given by Sam Palmer.

CLAIMS. The court had approved claims & extension warrants #s 80-88.

HAND CHECKS. The Court approved outside of normal claims day, checks 65407, 65411, 65414, 65438 and 65537-65539.

AGENDA. MSP: Myers/Hamsher -- to approve the agenda with the following amendments to include 1) discussion about the COLA for the budget year 2023-2024 and 2) committee appointments.

MINUTES. MSP: Myers/Hamsher -- To approve the minutes of the January 4th, 2023 Regular Meeting of the County Court. To approve the minutes of December 21st with the following amendment: Page 3, Under "RIVER DEMOCRACY ACT UPDATE", revisions to lines 17-21 and Page 4, Under "FAIRGROUNDS CONTRACTS AND PROJECTS" with the addition of "Approval Unanimous" to each motion.

PUBLIC SAFETY MEETINGS. Information provided by County Counsel lays out in sequence the process for creating a Public Safety Taxing District. The process would include work sessions and public meetings. The Court considered setting a date for a work session to discuss the County's public safety issues. The session would include information from Sheriff McKinley and deputies reporting on the current patrol officer and public safety conditions, presenting possible solutions and options for financing. Also under discussion would be the topic of adding new patrol officers, a potential county-wide law enforcement service district and contract officer options for the individual cities within the county. It was noted that it would take several months to put things together before a vote. MSP: Myers/Hamsher -- to postpone the proposed meeting date of February 22nd due to Commissioner Hamsher's previous engagement; to convene with Sheriff McKinley and reschedule. Discussion: Commissioner

Rowell noted an urgency to get the meeting scheduled as he estimated a two year process to see it through. Commissioner Hamsher expressed his view that it is the responsibility of a city to provide for its public safety. Questions included whether the hospital and extension districts and Monument and Long Creek and incorporated areas would be included. Approval to postpone the meeting was unanimous.

COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT (COLA) FOR 2023-24. Myers attended a NEOHA meeting yesterday and discussed COLA rates for the organization. He stated that the nationwide recommendation was 8.7%. In the past 4 or 5 years the COLA has been 2.5 to 3.5%. NEOHA decided to settle at 6% this year. The cost to the county for an 8% COLA would be a total of \$235,000.00 a year in increased wages; a 6% increase would cost \$176,000.00; difference of \$58,764.00. Treasurer Julie Ellison noted recent COLAs as follows: 2019-20/ 2.55%, 2020-21/1.66%, 2021-22/1.21% and 2022-23/3.5%. Commissioner Rowell pointed out that last year's 3.5% COLA increase was overshadowed by 8% inflation by the time the budget was enacted. He expressed his support of an 8% COLA, and noted that a 3.5% interest rate on the recent LATCF monies would help to offset that. He expressed his concern that a continued low COLA for county employees would precipitate a high turnover rate and costs to replace and retrain personnel. Judge Myers agreed, but added that for the record he would declare a conflict of interest since the decision includes his and the commissioner's wages. Commissioner Rowell noted that it is a real problem and recommended that they hold off on the decision until the budget process is underway. Hamsher explained that the figures are included in the budgeting process and have to be decided upon in advance. Those figures can be adjusted during budget decisions. MSP: Myers/Hamsher-- to recommend the starting COLA to be set at 8% and recommend that the commissioners declare a conflict of interest. Hamsher and Rowell both declared a conflict of interest. Approval unanimous.

AIRPORT WEATHER OBSERVATION SYSTEM (AWOS) MAINTENANCE SERVICE CONTRACT. The airport is required to have a FAA certified AWOS technician on record providing three yearly inspections; the basic requirement to operate the AWOS which is vital for flights in and out of the airport. Repair and outage visits would be billed in addition to the cost of maintenance. The cost of the service is \$6180.00 per year with the accompanying NADIN data reporting service cost of \$700.00. The fees are paid from budget line 124100-5200007. MSP: Myers/Rowell -- to approve the contract for \$6,880.00 and circulate for signature. Approval unanimous.

SENIOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE. The court signed a letter of appreciation to Lucie Imoos, founder of the Carrie Young Memorial Auction whose proceeds are used to provide for seniors during the holidays. The letter was part of the committee's first annual Service to Seniors Award, which was presented during the January 26th luncheon at the Senior Center. MSP: Myers/Hamsher - to circulate the letter for signature and presentation at the award ceremony. Approval unanimous.

RESOLUTION 23-02; PLAN OF ACTION IN RESPONSE TO ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT. Judge Myers read Resolution 23-02 in which the county resolves to review grant agreements and compliance requirements applicable to the Corona-virus Relief Program to ensure compliance; to ensure

that all expenditures are fully supported by adequate appropriations and that this corrective plan of action shall take effect upon adoption of this Resolution. MSP: Myers/Rowell -- to sign and record the resolution as presented. Approval unanimous.

FAIR ENTERTAINMENT CONTRACTS. TRENT BEAVER, ENTERTAINER. Center stage entertainment of music with a full band to be provided by Trent Beaver during the week of Fair, 2023. MSP: Myers/Hamsher -- to approve the contract and provide Court signature. Approval unanimous. OLIVIA HARMS, ENTERTAINER. Center stage entertainment of music with a full band to be provided by Olivia Harms during the week of Fair, 2023. MSP: Myers/Rowell -- to approve the contract and provide Court signature. Approval unanimous. ANTONIO SOMBRERO BALLOONS. To provide professional services of balloon artistry during the week of Fair, 2023. MSP: Myers/Hamsher -- to approve the contract and provide Court signature. Approval unanimous.

MILEAGE RATE REIMBURSEMENT. A review of the county mileage policy was requested by Commissioner Rowell with revisions proposed to follow the current federal mileage rate. MSP: Myers/Rowell/Hamsher -- to approve the revision of the county mileage policy to reflect the current federal mileage rate. Approval unanimous.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY CONFERENCE REQUEST. The requested approval to the Karpel annual training conference in St. Louis, MO during April 4-6, 2023 was presented by the DA's office for the attendance of a prosecutor and paralegal. The cost to attend the conference is available in the DA's existing budget. The conference comes highly recommended by fellow prosecutors as being beneficial and worth the expense. MSP: Myers/Hamsher -- to approve the conference attendance for the cost of \$3,628.00 total for a prosecutor and paralegal. Approval unanimous.

COMMUNITY COUNSELING SERVICES. County Health Administrator Kimberly Lindsay presented an update to the court. She shared results from a survey that measured client response to the services offered in Morrow, Grant, Wheeler and Umatilla Counties. Also shared was data from the Student-Based Health Center at Grant Union High School.

Lindsay said they have struggled to fill positions as tele-health has become more prevalent. Patients coming to the clinic, if not in crisis, are a month out of receiving an appointment; she said that every call is triaged. Lindsay noted that it is important to try to protect staff. If their work is not valued, they will not be able to keep their staff. If overworked, they will leave. She stated that money is not the biggest need, stating that "you can give us money, but if we don't have staff, it doesn't help." Lindsay shared troubling information about the synthetic opioid market: "it is killing us." Unfortunately, the treatment for this addiction comes in the form of more drugs. It is controversial, but the only thing that has been working. She stated that if the Fentanyl C3 is banned today in the United States, tomorrow they will be manufacturing Fentanyl C4. As an example, where the US might take nine months to develop a product, China's same development would take place overnight. Lindsay recommended the book "Fentanyl, Inc" as being very insightful. Again, Lindsay described the effects of Measure 110 as being horrible. She stated that, statistically, only 85 of 3000 offenders cited for possession

under the measure have responded to the intended rehabilitation.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS. The following applicants were appointed or re-appointed to positions on the court volunteer committees and advisory boards.

AIRPORT: Robert Watt, Robert Bagett, Frank Stinnett and Scott Myers. MSP: Myers/Rowell -- to approve and appoint.

BUDGET: Amy Kreger. MSP: Myers/Rowell -- to approve and approve.

EXTENSION: Yaohui Huang, Tracy Mund. MSP: Myers/Hamsher --to approve and appoint. Irene Jerome. MSP: Myers/Rowell -- to approve and appoint.

FAIR: Denise Palmer, Mark McKay, Darren Kimble. MSP: Myers/Hamsher -- to approve and appoint.

MENTAL HEALTH: Mike McManus, Scott Myers, Cathy Currey. MSP: Myers/Hamsher -- to approve and appoint.

NRAC: Billie Jo George, Brett Morris. MSP: Myers/Hamsher -- to approve and appoint.

PLANNING: Kelly McGirr, Pat Holliday, Haley Olson. MSP: Myers/Hamsher -- to approve and appoint.

SEACT: Jim Hamsher. MSP: Myers/Rowell -- to approve and appoint.

All appointments were approved unanimously.

11:09 Adjourned

Respectfully Submitted,

Laurie Stinnett
Administrative Assistant

****** Please note the court minutes are a summary of the court proceedings. An audio recording of each court session is available, after approval of the minutes, by contacting the County Court at 541-575-0059 or GCCourtAdmin@grantcounty-or.gov ******