

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

*Access the County Court Agenda and approved Minutes under Grant County Court at
<https://grantcountyoregon.net/AgendaCenter>*

May 4, 2022 – 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.

9:02 am -- Call to Order. Present were Judge Scott W. Myers, Commissioner Sam Palmer, Administrative Assistant Laurie Stinnett, Reporter Steven Mitchell, Emergency Management Coordinator Eric Bush, Airport Manager Haley Walker, Community Members Louis Provencher and John Rowell. Commissioner Hamsher participated by phone. A Pledge of Allegiance was given to the United States Flag. The invocation was given by Jim Boethin.

AGENDA. MSP: Myers/Palmer-- to approve the agenda as presented.

MINUTES. MSP: Myers/Palmer -- to approve the minutes of April 14th with the correction to read “county staff” on line 28.

ANNOUNCEMENTS. Judge Myers performed a wedding ceremony on the 22nd, attended the Eastern Oregon Counties Association (EOCA) meeting on the 25th, traveled to La Grande to chair the Northeast Oregon Housing Authority (NOHA) meeting on the 26th, met with Emergency Management Coordinator Eric Bush, Sheriff McKinley and Education Service District (ESD) Superintendent Robert Waltenburg to discuss internet capabilities at the airport on the 27th, will attend the Road Advisory meeting and chair the Mental Health Board meeting on the 5th, attend the Budget Meeting on Wednesday the 11th and the next County Court meeting on May 18th.

Commissioner Palmer attended the LCAC meeting on April 20th and met with the Roadmaster on May 5th.

Commissioner Hamsher had a discussion with Representative Cliff Bentz’ office, sat in on a National Associations of Counties (NACo) Veterans update call, a call from Executive Director Gina Nichols of the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC), a Blues Intergovernmental Council (BIC) steering committee meeting, a NACo Public lands steering committee call, a Western Interstate Region (WIR) Public Lands meeting, spoke with several community members about various concerns, sat in on a White House briefing call, and will attend the Budget Meeting on Wednesday, May 11th.

9:13 am Josh Walker entered

INTRAFUND TRANSFER. Judge Myers read Resolution 22-14 to the audience. This resolution seeks approval to transfer \$20,000 in the General Fund from Personnel to Materials and Services due to an increase in legal fees.

MSP: Myers/Palmer – to approve Resolution 22-14 Intrafund Transfer as presented and circulate for signatures.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT. Emergency Management Coordinator Eric Bush shared information about the status of the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds. These are federal dollars that come directly to the county for Covid relief and economic recovery. He noted that there are parameters within which the money can be used. Grant County received \$699,000 last spring and is scheduled to receive another \$699,000 this month. As Emergency Management Coordinator, Bush inherited a number of projects that had been proposed last year, and worked through many of those projects. Bringing broadband capabilities to County operations is one of the last “in the hopper” to be completed. Grant County Digital has been involved in a two-year application process to procure a grant for this purpose. The City of John Day is the fiduciary and out-going John Day City Manager Nick Green the executive director of the board. The Board is comprised of the County Commission and the cities of John Day and Seneca. The County’s proposed share of the project, originally estimated at \$67,000, currently stands at \$100,000 to \$120,000. This project is funded by an economic grant through ORS 190. The project also includes the cost of fiber broadband cable to the airport. There are some challenges in using federal dollars (ARPA funds) to match federal dollars (the grant). In April of 2022, the ARPA Final Rule was implemented, Bush noted; an act that loosened up the rules for the use of funds. Bush reiterated that we cannot, at this point, be sure that we can use ARPA funds for this match; he is in the process of obtaining documentation from the original grant in order to make that evaluation. He noted that another option for the County is Oregon Telephone Company’s (OTC) broadband fiber, currently available for hookup to the courthouse. This option has 1 gigabyte (GB) of fiber, as is recommended by the county’s Information Technology (IT) Department. The costs include a one-time hook-up fee of \$150 and a fee of \$250 per month thereafter. Bush explained that if one gigabyte (1GB) represents one-hundred percent (100%), the courthouse currently operates on three percent (3%), or thirty megabytes (30 MB), provided by the microwave dish on Eagle Peak. Bush spoke about the internet capacity at the airport, explaining that a microwave dish was installed in response to the increased demand during fire season, and operates at what would be ten to twenty percent (10-20% or 100-200 MB) of the one-hundred (100%) represented by the 1GB of fiber optic. Bush added that OTC does not have fiber going to the airport, so that is not an option at this time. Palmer asked Grant County Digital member Josh Walker if we could “up” the microwave capability to the airport. Walker did not believe the wireless capability could be increased. Judge Myers asked if there was conduit running from the fire hall or courthouse to the airport. To the best of his knowledge, Walker replied, there was some conduit installed but there is question as to its usability. In summary, Bush reviewed the options available to the County: 1) connecting to the fiber optic cable installed by the Grant County Digital Broadband Network with the use of matching ARPA funds, pending matching fund allowance/restrictions, 2) pursuing the option

with OTC to connect to the fiber optic cable currently available to the courthouse for a monthly fee. Walker offered a couple pieces of information to the court, explaining that costs have gone up during the two year process of obtaining the grant. He noted that the grant has been reviewed at the national level with the understanding of GCDs funding intentions; he would be surprised if there are any problems with the use of ARPA funding. Walker added that the Broadband Coalition's fiber optic cable installation is not an apples to apples comparison with the OTC option. An advantage in the fiber optic cable running throughout the County would be the ability to continue to network (intranet) in the face of a natural disaster or other similar situations, which the OTC option would not support. Myers commented that the County's decision is dependent on the ability to use ARPA funds, without which it would not be affordable to the County. Bush expanded on that, asking if this is how the County wishes to use the available funds. Walker said the coalition would be moving forward with plans throughout the county. He described the Coalition's position as being shovel-ready, and noted that they would need the County's decision as soon as possible.

9:39 am Adjourn for a three-minute break
9:40 am Deputy Clerk Brooke Griffith and Planning Department Assistant Shana Joslin entered
9:42 am Meeting resumed
10:00 am Treasurer Julie Ellison entered
10:05 am Justice of the Peace Kathy Stinnett entered
10:07 am Charlene Morris entered

COUNTY OFFICE HOURS. Judge Myers opened the discussion to review office hours throughout the building. Myers stated that he was not there to demand change from departments who have been operating on a schedule that is working well for them; neither does he expect the court to make a decision today. However, he is aware that the inconsistency in hours can be difficult for the public to track, leaving them disappointed; especially when coming from longer distances to take care of business in town and finding public offices closed. Commissioner Palmer asked if there were state requirements for any of the offices; the Clerk's Office is required to be open 30 hours a week. Myers thanked the Assessor's Office for the extended hours during tax season. The general consensus was that it would be beneficial to have consistent hours throughout the building. How to accomplish that is still uncertain. Employees' comments included these observations:

- Consistent hours for the entire courthouse would benefit the public
- It is important to keep the public well-informed by advertising department hours.
- The traditional 8-5, closed-at-lunch schedule may not be the best way to accommodate the public; opening earlier or staying open at lunch could be effective.
- The website allows public access to resources without an in-person visit.
- A ten-hour work day must include a one-hour lunch, as required by the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI).

- A ten-hour work day may create less productivity in the last hour.
- Departments that operate differently may not be best served by one schedule.
- The Court should make the decision and all offices adopt the same schedule.

Judge Myers concluded by reminding staff that the question is not what is optimal for employees, but what best serves the public. He stated that the change of the fiscal year would be good timing for a decision to be made.

COMPENSATION BOARD. The Court took steps to form a Compensation Board, according to ORS 204.112 to ORS 204.126. Term endings will be staggered to avoid multiple vacancy/appointments in the same year. The board will consist of three members, knowledgeable in personnel and compensation management, serve a three year term and meet annually to review and consider a compensation schedule for county elective officers. The board will submit recommendations to the county governing body and the budget committee. Airport Manager Haley Walker asked if compensation refers to full compensation (wages and benefits) or wages only. Palmer asked that the board job description be submitted to County Counsel for review. Charlene Morris challenged the necessity of that step when the information is based on state ORS (statutes).

MSP: Hamsher/Palmer—to approve the County Compensation Board description as presented and move forward to advertise for volunteers.

10:22 am 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 ******