

Harney County Court Meeting

August 17, 2011

The Harney County Court convened on Wednesday, August 17, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. in Judge Steven E. Grasty's office. Members attending were Judge Steve Grasty and Commissioner Dan Nichols. Commissioner Runnels was excused due to a family emergency. Also attending were County Road Supervisor Eric Drushella and County Court Secretary Sharon Johnson. Public attending were Debbie Raney of the Burns Times Herald, Barbara Cannady and Pauline Braymen. Pete Merritt was present for a portion of the meeting.

Judge Grasty led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Judge Grasty made a motion to approve the August 3, 2011 minutes, Commissioner Nichols seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Statistical and Financial reports were reviewed and vouchers approved by Court's signature.

Judge Grasty explained the NACo/Harney County Prescription Drug Discount Card Program. He noted that from November 2010 to July 2011 discount cards have been used 194 times with an average savings of \$24 per prescription, a savings average of 32.40%.

During the Public Comment time Pauline Braymen was present suggesting that there needs to be public support of the programs/events that happen annually in Harney County. She said that by support she means volunteering, not necessarily participating in the event; set up, registrations, clean up, dollars for advertising, etc. are things that can be done to support local events which in turn help the local economy. Discussion followed.

The Court considered two Quitclaim Deeds to be signed relinquishing road rights-of-way reservations on two parcels owned by Silver Creek Ranches. Judge Grasty said that he and Road Supervisor Eric Drushella had looked at the area. Maps were reviewed and discussion followed. Judge Grasty made a motion to sign the Quitclaim Deeds and to remove the reservation of rights-of-way on both parcels, Commissioner Nichols seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Guy McKay, County Veterans Service Officer, was present to update the Court on the services his office has provided during the last fiscal quarter, April – June 2011.

Fred Flippence appeared to update the Court on the Library Foundation and their activities. He presented a financial statement showing a Fund Balance of \$1,891,167.90 and said the Foundation is doing well. Discussion followed.

The next item on the Agenda was a bid opening for a new Road Department pickup. Burns Ford was the only bidder with a bid of \$32,805.00, minus a discount of \$11,305.00, and an allowance of \$3,000.00 on a trade-in for a total bid price of \$18,500.00. Mr. Drushella recommended accepting the bid from Burns Ford. Commissioner Nichols made a motion to accept the bid, Judge Grasty seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Economic Development Coordinator Randy Fulton reported on projects and leads he has been working on. He noted that the bill approving Scott Campbell's project at Silvie's Valley Ranch has been signed by the Governor. Commissioner Nichols suggested that Mr. Fulton try to organize a public meeting with Mr. Campbell where he could explain his Silvie's Valley Ranch project and his ideas to the community. It is expected that the project will create over 100 jobs and many opportunities for new and/or existing businesses. Mr. Fulton also said that one of the things that many businesses who are interested in Harney County ask is if we have issues with environmentalist groups. He suggested that "it may be time to dedicate ourselves to a campaign to soften the current environmental regulations". The discussion turned to environmental issues and the economy in Harney County.

Planning Director Brandon McMullen and Building Program Coordinator Rachael Reynolds were present to update the Court on the development of the new Building Program. Mr. McMullen presented a Comparison of Permits Sold, Revenues and Expenditures for 2010 under the jurisdiction of Inspections, Inc. and for 2011 under the County's jurisdiction. Judge Grasty explained that the Lake County Inspector Tony West, who has been doing inspections in Harney County since the departure of Inspections, Inc., is not going to be able to provide inspection services for both counties indefinitely and that moves are being made to resolve that issue. He noted that Ms. Reynolds is working towards being certified to do inspections and that inspectors from Deschutes County are being utilized as well. Commissioner Nichols commended Ms. Reynolds for stepping up and working towards gaining the certifications required to do inspections.

The Court recessed for lunch at 12:00 p.m. and reconvened at 1:02 p.m.

Public Attending the afternoon portion of the meeting were Barbara Cannady, Tyler Smith, Pauline Braymen and Pete Merritt.

The next item on the agenda was the initiation of proceedings to vacate property in response to the petition of Barbara Cannady. Judge Grasty suggested that the process be started at a later date as Commissioner Runnels was not present at this meeting. Judge Grasty commented that he would update Commissioner Runnels on the situation upon his return. A short discussion was held. Judge Grasty said that he would have an Order ready at the September 6th County Court meeting directing the Road Supervisor to begin his research on the proposed road vacation. Ms. Cannady stated that there is an ordinance that allows a road vacation to take place without holding a public hearing if

all parties are in agreement and asked for that possibility to be considered. Judge Grasty stated that he is not sure all parties are in agreement.

Judge Grasty reported on the Association of Counties Summer Conference.

The process for choosing a new Director for the Harney County Commission on Children and Families was discussed. Commissioner Nichols stated that a committee should be selected to interview applicants for the position, which closes on August 26th.

Commissioner Nichols initiated a discussion regarding fire protocols in the County. Several possible procedures were discussed.

Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) were discussed. Judge Grasty said that Harney County has over 900,000 acres of WSA out of 4.5 million total acres. The Court reviewed a letter from Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar asking if there are any "crown jewels in your county that need to be designated Wilderness?" Discussion followed. The County will send a letter opposing any further wilderness in Harney County.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon Johnson".

Sharon Johnson
Administrative Assistant,
Harney County Court