



In The County Court of the State of Oregon for Harney County
Minutes of the County Court
January 8, 2014

The Harney County Court convened in Judge Steven E. Grasty's office at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, January 8, 2014. Members attending were Judge Steve Grasty, Commissioner Dan Nichols and Commissioner Pete Runnels. Also attending were Eric Drushella, Road Master; Nellie Franklin, County Treasurer, and Derrin (Dag) Robinson, County Clerk.

Public in attendance were Samantha White, Herb Vloedman, Ron Copeland, Susan Christensen, Becky Cunningham, Richard Duke, and Don and Lucida McDermond.

Judge Grasty led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Commissioner Runnels made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 18, 2013 meeting, Commissioner Nichols seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment:

Herb Vloedman asked from the Court each of their opinion of the Sage Grouse EIS meeting last night.

Judge Grasty expressed thanks to Holly Orr, for being the sole BLM employee to offer up time to help folks with questions. He stated the project team "...is unwilling, or unable to listen to comments, and must take only written comments. They are not willing, or will not value community input from turnout." They ran out of CD's of the document of the plan and had no hard copies. He was very proud of the community, and felt the presence was well done from the community side, less well done as a presentation by BLM.

Commissioner Runnels concurred, stating "we could have had thousands there and it wouldn't matter, they want written comment."

Commissioner Nichols stated “overall, once again we as citizens are being led whether we want it or not.” He too was very pleased with the turnout and the conduct of the folks there. “The turnout shows there is a huge concern by the community and the affect it will have on the lives of those that live here.” Commissioner Nichols noted the county has provided some copies of the document, but strongly feels it is the BLM responsibility to provide the document so folks can see it. The county has provided some copies, and will again, but it is a BLM document.

Nellie Franklin, County Treasurer asked about the time frame, mentioning that the comment period ends February 20th, “how long do they have to read and incorporate any submitted comments?” Judge Grasty stated late in 2014. Mrs. Franklin asked how it is guaranteed that those comments are going to be read. There is no answer to that concern.

A further discussion ensued. Commissioner Nichols reiterated this is driving folks away from trying to do conservation projects, as they feel they can’t afford to try any more.

Judge Grasty explained once the comment period ends, the Governor’s office has 60 days to review and comment. He has requested to be a part of that team. After that review and decision, it just becomes litigation.

Mr. Vloedman stated “the presentation was incredibly scripted, and the questions were not answered, and the project team intentionally tiptoed from the questions.” He also believes the “decision maker” should have to be at these meetings to hear from people not just getting what is filtered.

The Court will meet again tomorrow afternoon for a strategy work session, however, they will call BLM today and request that hard copies are made available, and CDs be made available immediately.

The court did state on record, this is not about local BLM staff in anyway, stating the local District staff is doing a good job, just doing their job.

Susan Christensen from Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality, discussed the landfill at Riley, and recommended digging new trench, closing the current one, and suggested working with the community for signage related to computers and televisions in the landfill. She said they may need to look at re-keying, and care for litter (plastic sacks). She will provide a written report.

Judge Grasty commended Rod Dinsmore, of C&B Sanitary, for the clean up behind Rim Rock recycling of the molds. Becky Cunningham will return next court meeting to discuss several other matters at the site including building management, snow removal, heating, etc.

Court agreed by consensus to let Rim Rock use the other building for storage, in return for oversight, until the building becomes necessary for business or industry.

Ron Copeland discussed the American Legion Veterans Assistance Program. This fund has been set up to accept the funding of the insurance dollars remaining from the settlement of the wrecked van. Donors have agreed to this concept and fund. Commissioner Runnels moved to sign the agreement with American Legion, and release the funds held to them. Commissioner Nichols second, and the motion carried unanimously.

The court reviewed Ordinance # 2014-73, Authorizing the County to Enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement Under ORS Chapter 190 Creating an Association to Promote, Foster and Advance Community Based Renewable Energy, to be known as Community Renewable Energy Association (CREA). Commissioner Nichols moved to adopt Ordinance 2014-73 Commissioner Runnels second, the motion carried unanimously.

In the matter of the request from Tom Davis Livestock, Inc., to vacate easements at the north end of Alvord Ranch, Eric Drushella, Roadmaster, has reviewed the Alvord Road and reported Mr. Davis wishes to withdraw #1 (“old dump road”) and would like to continue with #2 (“where county road was formerly between Willow Creek and Mosquito Creek”) and #3 (“toward Mickey Basin”). Mr. Drushella has no objections with moving forward with the vacation of #2 and #3. Mr. Drushella looked at the obvious- is it land locking or denying access? A general discussion ensued and no action was taken. The Court wished to research and deliberate further.

The Court reviewed an application by Ron Schirm for an approach off of Loan Pine Road. The court discussed that it is on BLM land. Commissioner Nichols moved to approve it dependent upon; 1) Road Master’s review from county perspective, 2) BLM provides written approval, and 3) the approval be signed by Judge Grasty only in order to expedite the process. Commissioner Runnels second, the motion carried unanimously.

The Court reviewed a draft letter to Emigrant Creek District Ranger Christy Cheyne regarding possible road closures in the Wolf Creek project area. Judge Grasty asked for review and approval to send the letter. The court agreed by consensus to send the letter.

The Court took a brief recess at 11:20 a.m. Judge Grasty was excused.

The Court reviewed a draft letter regarding the Oregon Desert Trail to BLM, US Fish and Wildlife, and Oregon Natural Desert Association. Commissioner Runnels moved to

sign and send the letter, once gathering required signatures from adjoining counties. Commissioner Nichols second, and the motion carried.

The Court reviewed a letter from Harney ESD for assistance in funding Healthy Start. Commissioner Nichols provided a brief background explanation, that under the former Commission on Children and Families structure, Harney County didn't retain administrative funds for this because of complexity. Now, under the ELC Hub structure, the county has agreed to the administrative fee of 4%. The Healthy Start budget contained it. This requests that funding. Commissioner Nichols moved that the County honor this request. Commissioner Runnels second, and motion carried.

The Court reviewed an Order Appointing Justices of the Peace Pro-tempore, for 2014. Commissioner Runnels moved to appoint Sandra L. Richards, Vicky J. Clemens, and Matthew R. Fine, Justices of the Peace Pro-tempore, for 2014. Commissioner Nichols second, and the motion carried.

The Court reviewed an Order Appointing Budget Officer for 2014-2015. Commissioner Runnels moved to appoint Judge Steven E. Grasty, Budget Officer. Commissioner Nichols second, and the motion carried.

The Court reviewed an Order Designating an Official County Newspaper for 2014. Commissioner Runnels moved designate the Burns Times-Herald. Commissioner Nichols second, the motion carried.

The Court reviewed notices of water use request. There were no objections to any requests.

Commissioner Nichols provided a brief update regarding the ELC and the Pioneer Hub. He stated it is coming together and the court will need to start thinking about a joint meeting with Grant County Court to discuss details further.

There being no further business, the court adjourned at 11:41 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Derrin Robinson".

Derrin (Dag) Robinson, C.R.A.; C.E.A
Harney County Clerk