



***In the County Court of the State of Oregon for Harney County
Minutes of the County Court
April 6, 2016***

The Harney County Court convened in the Harney County Circuit Court Room at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, April 6, 2016. Members attending were Judge Steve Grasty, Commissioner Dan Nichols and Commissioner Pete Runnels. Also attending were Eric Drushella, Road Supervisor; Tim Colahan, District Attorney/County Counsel and Sharon Johnson, County Court Assistant.

Others in attendance included Mike Berry of Oregon Department of Transportation; Tara Thissell and Emily Erwin of the Bureau of Land Management. A list of public attendees is on file with these minutes.

Judge Grasty led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Runnels made a Motion to approve the minutes from the March 16, 2016 meeting, seconded by Commissioner Nichols, with no further discussion the motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

Herb Vloedman had a question about the budget; Judge Grasty suggested that the question be asked of the Budget Committee at their meeting being held on April 13.

Barbara Cannady asked when the Comprehensive Plan review would take place; Judge Grasty suggested she ask the Harney County Planner, Brandon McMullen.

Judge Grasty announced that someone had come to him with an idea for a business utilizing the Archive Center.

Old Business

In the matter of the Juntura Cut-off Road project Judge Grasty explained that it is a \$7 million project, with a \$250,000.00 local match required – Harney and Malheur Counties are sharing that expense. Commissioner Runnels made a motion to approve a \$125,000.00 cash match to the State of Oregon for the project; Commissioner Nichols seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Judge Grasty provided details about the visit of Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior. He stated that the visit and agenda was set by her staff, the County had no say in her schedule. She met with the BLM staff, Refuge staff, Burns Paiute Tribe, High Desert Partnership, Farm Bureau, the Oregonian and OPB, Commissioner Nichols and County Clerk Derrin Robinson at the Courthouse and finished up with a press conference in the Courthouse lobby for about 30 minutes. Judge Grasty and Commissioner Runnels then took her on a 30 minute tour around town. Mitzi Defenbaugh asked what kind of follow up would be happening; Judge Grasty explained that there would be a monthly call with Deputy Secretary Mike Conner. Commissioner Nichols commented saying he told Secretary Jewell, "Harney County has stepped up and that now we need to have a greater dialogue". He further explained the positive impact that has happened because of that dialogue. Commissioner Nichols also said the High Desert Partnership is looking for more local involvement in the community and then explained how the Partnership was formed and what it's all about.

New Business

Review of an Application by Paul Davis to install an irrigation main line across East Steens Road. Road Supervisor Eric Drushella explained the project. Commissioner Nichols made a motion to approve the application, Commissioner Runnels seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Runnels presented a list of members of the Harney County Local Community Advisory Council (LCAC) for the Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization. He then made a motion to approve the list as presented, Commissioner Nichols seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Judge Grasty reported on the Taylor Grazing Committee meeting that was held recently. The committee had approved all projects that were discussed. A list of those projects can be found in the County Court packet filed in the Clerk's Office. Tara Thissell, BLM, said the Federal projects are not hard to bid on; Judge Grasty suggested people could ask Randy Fulton for help with the process. Commissioner Runnels mentioned there is an opening on the Taylor Grazing Committee and it would be great to have somebody from the south end fill that spot.

Review and signing of the Local Agency Agreement Highway Safety Improvement Program for the re-signing of two locations that have been deemed dangerous – South Egan and Crane-Buchanan Roads. Mike Berry of ODOT explained the project. Commissioner Runnels made a motion to sign the Agreement Key #19509, Commissioner Nichols seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Judge Grasty asked Mr. Berry to provide an update on two bridge projects and the funding - Stinking Water Creek and Embry Bridge, which Mr. Berry did. He also asked Mr. Berry to come back at a later date and explain why the state is involved in County projects. Mr. Berry then provided an update on the Juntura Cut-off Road project and how it was funded.

The Memorandum of Understanding between BLM and Harney County regarding the Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Sagebrush Focal Areas Withdrawal and Cooperating Agency Status was discussed. Judge Grasty suggested the Court authorize him to sign the document after receiving some input from Ron Yockim, County

Natural Resource Attorney, and then explained the MOU. After some discussion it was decided to review the document again at the April 20 County Court Meeting after receiving input from Mr. Yockim.

Judge Grasty explained a support letter addressed to Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley and Congressman Greg Walden for Agricultural Research Services on Great Basin Sagebrush Systems at the ARS Burns Station. Commissioner Nichols made a motion to send the letter to the congressional delegation in support of the ARS, Commissioner Runnels seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Judge Grasty explained the opportunity for \$200,000.00 for a revolving loan fund that could be used for very small loans or large loans for local business. He suggested setting up a committee to manage the fund and choosing a third party to hold the money and disperse funds. It is a loan, so at some point the County will have to pay it back – but will also have the opportunity to turn it back if it doesn't work out. He noted there are no federal restrictions on this money. A decision will be made at the next County Court meeting, April 20. Commissioner Runnels said he could follow up with GEODC on managing the fund and Judge Grasty said he would get more information at the meeting with USDA to discuss the fund in more detail. Commissioner Nichols asked about the status of the Beautification Revolving Loan Fund, Judge Grasty said it is being used a few times per year, if there is money available.

The Wildlife Services (APHIS) budget was discussed briefly.

The contract with Bend Heating for the HVAC upgrade in the Courthouse was discussed, Judge Grasty noted the contract is standard and has been reviewed by County Counsel, Tim Colahan. The work will not start until mid-June. It was the consensus of the Court to sign the Agreement later in the day after the Commissioners have had time to review it.

Judge Grasty talked about the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision team. A complete update can be found in the County Court packet filed in the Clerk's Office.

The following correspondence was reviewed:

- 1) HydroCon, LLC – Former Tim's Time Savor, Notice of Well Abandonment. Judge Grasty has requested DEQ to provide a letter stating that it is all done/cleaned up, for future reference. He suggested putting a flag on the property's deed stating such.
- 2) BLM, Malheur & Owyhee Field Offices – Soda Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation.
- 3) BLM – Meeting of the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board in Redmond, Oregon on April 13 and 14. Commissioner Runnels said this is the first time they have ever had a meeting in the West – usually they happen in the mid-west. It will be a rare opportunity to witness this meeting and a live feed will be available for those who can't make it in person.
- 4) Review of Categorical Exclusion Environmental Review and Approval documents for: Grazing Permit Numbers: 3601908, 3602580, 3601960 and 3602576.

- 5) Mary Wilson, Mann Lake Ranch – East Steens Road paving project, advocating that the paving project be finished.
- 6) Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative – costs associated with the takeover of the Refuge that were billed to the FBI.

Judge Grasty noted that a couple of local people had come to him recently asking for money to improve some of the county cemeteries. He said there is an \$8,000.00 grant available that can be applied for each year and that the money could be divided up among several cemeteries. Discussion followed.

Judge Grasty suggested that one of the Court members be appointed to negotiate the lease on the Archive Center; Commissioner Nichols then made a motion to appoint Judge Grasty to handle the negotiations, Commissioner Runnels seconded, motion carried unanimously. Judge Grasty announced that an executive session would be held, with the parties interested in the Archive Center, when the meeting reconvened after lunch.

The Court recessed for lunch at 12:00 p.m.

The Court reconvened at 1:15 p.m. with Commissioner Nichols reporting on the Early Learning Hub and the need for a Memorandum of Understanding between Harney and Grant Counties; he said the process was started in 2014 and has not yet been finished.

Judge Grasty reported on a Transportation Plan hearing he attended recently.

The Agreement between Bend Heating and Harney County was reviewed and signed.

The Court went into Executive Session at 1:30 p.m., as authorized by ORS 192.660(e) to conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted



Sharon Johnson
Assistant, Harney County Court