



***In the County Court of the State of Oregon for Harney County  
Minutes of the County Court Session***

***May 8, 2019***

The Harney County Court convened in County Court Chamber at 9:15 a.m. on Wednesday, May 08, 2019. Members attending were Judge Pete Runnels, Commissioner Patty Dorroh, and Commissioner Mark Owens. Also in attendance were Kerry Opie, Assistant Deputy Clerk; & Eric Drushella, Road Department

Public attending was Samantha White, Burns Times-Herald; Mark Creighton, Cheryl Smith, Dennis Davis, Rick Paul, Barbara Canady, Matt Obradovich, BLM, Herb Vloedman, Dr. Sarah Laoisa

**Work Session 9:25 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.**

**Voucher Approval**

The Court reviewed accounts payables and approved the vouchers by Court signature.

Judge Runnels led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes**

Commissioner Dorroh made a Motion to approve the Minutes from the April 23, 2019 County Court session. Commissioner Owens seconded the Motion, with no further discussion the Motion carried unanimously.

**Public Comment**

Herb Vloedman, referencing last night's County Court Public Forum meeting, had several comments and observations about the county budget deficit. He commented that the Commissioners and County Judge need to be able to agree on one number as the deficit – a number they can all can agree on. Herb mentioned that the County Court needs to fix all of the following problems, as he understands it: operating in a deficit for the past three years, spending more than funds than we actually have continually throughout the years (for example, purchasing additional real property and adding more

staff to payroll), and holding supervisors accountable to operating within the budget. That's it!

Mark Creighton had questions about the 911 dollars that went down drastically over the years. Judge Runnels commented that seven or eight years ago, when the 911 fund had carryover ending fund balances, decisions were not to collect annual fees from the cities, tribe, and other participants, for several years. Those poor management decisions contributed to the situation.

Cheryl Smith, from the Crane Rangeland Fire Protection Association (CRFPA), stated that she appreciates all three of the County Court members. She then suggested that county owned properties in Drewsey, Riley and throughout Harney County be put up for sale. Offering the properties at reduced market value at auction, or selling them to buyers at full value, per county policies, would enable those properties to be put back on the property tax rolls. Cheryl discussed that the \$500.00 RFPFA annual 911 fee was not affordable and Judge Runnels clarified that there are no longer any membership fees for RFPAs.

Dr. Laiosa, expressed support for all of Budget Board's efforts to address the errors and fix the county budget, and to Judge Runnels for finding the budget errors. County Court efforts to get the communication out in the communities is appreciated. She commented that the Court is listening to the concerns, and that there are many hard decisions to be made.

### **Old Business**

Commissioner Owens, as a follow up to Mtizi Defenbaugh's request from the last meeting, presented information from the Harney County 2017 Census that agriculture is still Harney County's leading industry, although gross figures show a modest decline since the 2015 data. Data sheets were provided to those interested.

According to Judge Runnels, County Counsel Tim Colahan advised that creating a county transient lodging tax in Harney County would require a vote of the people, rather than simply being created or imposed via County Court action.

### **New Business**

Delisting the grey wolf from the Federal Endangered List. Oregon Cattlemen Association (OCA) comments were used to create a letter from the Harney County Court, requesting full federal delisting. Commissioner Owens read aloud the support letter and statistics. At this time, in half of the state of Oregon, the gray wolf is federally listed as an endangered species, and in the remaining half of Oregon, it has been federally delisted. That boundary is within Harney County. Commissioner Owens commented that in his personal opinion, that at the federal level, it likely will not go through.

Commissioner Dorroh made a Motion to approve signing the letter of support from the County Court in favor of delisting the grey wolf from the Federal Endangered List.

Commissioner Owens seconded the Motion, with no further discussion the Motion carried unanimously.

### **Resolution #2019-15 In the Matter of Unexpected Occurrence or Condition; General Fund Operating Reserve Fund**

Commissioner Dorroh made a Motion to approve, with regret, Resolution #2019-15 In the Matter of Unexpected Occurrence or Condition; General Fund Operating Reserve Fund. Commissioner Owens seconded the Motion, with no further discussion, the Motion carried unanimously.

### **Ordinance No. 2019-85 In the Matter of implementing authority to enforce the subsurface program delegated to Harney County by the State of Oregon for onsite septic systems**

Commissioner Owens made motion to implement authority to enforce the subsurface program delegated to Harney County by the State of Oregon for onsite septic systems. Commissioner Dorroh seconded the motion, with no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously. (Side note is other counties want to utilize Harney County's program that will help strengthen the program and make it pay for itself.)

### **Review of Water Use Requests**

Requests include applications submitted after the state moratorium that started in 2015, indicating likely reason for denials. One permit is just now being granted 72 years original application.

### **Correspondence**

Judge Runnels presented a letter received from Dr. Jack Bauer detailing his concerns and challenges about effects during weather times of the public's use of a County road that crosses his property. Even though it is a County road he wants the Court to support him locking it with instructions for calling for the combination if callers need to go through it. General consensus from the Court is to stay with policy, which prohibits locked gates on isolated county right of ways. Discussion may continue during the next County Court meeting.

### **Scheduling**

County Court Meeting Schedule: May 22, 2019

Budget Meeting Schedule: May 9, 2019, 10am - 4pm; May 10, 2019, 9am – 3pm; May 15, 2019, 8am – Noon; May 21, 2019 (if necessary). The County Court agreed to allow live stream of the budget meetings through Harney County Website, Facebook and possibly on YouTube.

Rural Community Visits: Fields area, School gym; May 8, 2019, 5:30-6:30p

### **Late Items**

Service Recognition Award: Cheryl Runnels, District Attorney's Office – 5 years' service

For the Budget Board meeting tomorrow, May 9, 2019: Judge Runnels said he has updated and verified the accuracy of individual employee payroll costs. General fund changes and 911, parole and probation numbers will be addressed. George Wilber, Kari Ott, & Cara Wilber of Oster Professional Group will be present at 10am. Exploratory conversation meeting with community and county health care leaders is scheduled for 2:30pm.

Mark Creighton requested a list of departments scheduled to appear at May 9<sup>th</sup> Budget Board meeting.

**Deliberation by the Court (no decisions will be made)**

**For the Record**

**Adjournment**

There being no further discussion, County Court adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Kerry Opie*

Assistant Deputy Clerk