

HARNEY COUNTY COURT MEETING

March 18, 2009

The Harney County Court convened on Wednesday, March 18, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. in Judge Steven E. Grasty's office. Members attending were Judge Steve Grasty and Commissioners Dan Nichols and Jack Drinkwater. Also attending were Road Supervisor Eric Drushella and County Court Secretary Sharon Johnson. Public attending were Mary Ausmus and Debbie Raney of the Burns Times Herald.

Judge Grasty led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Drinkwater made a motion to approve the March 4, 2009 minutes as mailed, Commissioner Nichols seconded, motion carried unanimously.

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

During the Public Comment period Patty Dorroh, was present on a personal level rather than in her professional capacity as the Director of the Harney County Commission on Children and Families. She expressed her appreciation for the leadership that the County Court provides. She stated that it has been very instructive to attend County Court sessions to learn about some of the many issues that are dealt with. She commended the Court for always being accessible to the community and thanked them for their extremely hard work on the community's behalf.

Also during Public Comment Mary Ausmus asked the Court to consider offering financial aid to 4R Recycling as recycling is important to the community.

Judge Grasty noted that a refund for \$19,792.30 was received from City County Insurance on Worker's Compensation insurance.

Judge Grasty also mentioned that the DEQ was in town on Tuesday, March 17 and had visited the Sodhouse dump site, which has been closed for about a year, and found that trash was still being dumped there. The gate has since been locked.

The first item of Old Business was the signing of the Penland Road Legalization Order. It was decided to sign the Order after lunch due to the necessity of reprinting the document because of a missing date.

Judge Grasty updated the Court on the recycling meeting that was held on Tuesday with Susan Christensen and Lissa Druback of DEQ, Hines Mayor Ruth Schultz, Hines City Administrator Pam Mather, Burns Mayor Len Vohs, Burns City Manager Don Munkers, Wayne Baron of 4R Recycling, Rodd and Karen

Dinsmore of C&B Sanitary, George Wynn and Dave Vickstrom who ran Rimrock Recycling for almost 20 years and a few concerned citizens. He noted that 4R Recycling reported that the market is the biggest challenge and that only scrap metal and electronics recycling is making any money. He said that several ideas had been discussed but no commitments have been made. A lengthy discussion followed. Commissioner Nichols commented that at present it is a zero revenue industry. He also remarked that Mr. Baron had done an excellent job in marketing.

Jerry Hensley, Rick Vetter, Sam Selby and Howard Richburg of the Forest Service were present to explain 2009/2010 Title II projects.

County Court recessed at 12:20 p.m. for lunch and reconvened at 1:25 p.m.

The Court briefly discussed Emigrant Creek Ranger District 2009/1010 Title II projects noting that they need to make a decision by April 1.

Several legislative issues were discussed including: OYA, the Strategic Investment Program, filing/recording fee increases, the appointing of Assessors and Surveyors rather than electing and ESD consolidation.

Harney Behavioral Health's policy regarding staff development was discussed next. Judge Grasty stated that the policy in place was adopted eight or nine years ago. He also noted, for the record, that an email had been received in opposition to the policy. Commissioner Nichols remembered that the policy was unpopular with the people when it was adopted but that the issues with attracting and keeping qualified people have always been a problem. Chris Siegner, HBH Director, said that HBH benefits financially from the higher education of its employees and that it has always been a business decision to help with the education of its employees. Commissioner Drinkwater suggested utilizing a payback plan. Mr. Siegner said that there is a payback clause included in the policy and that completion of a degree doesn't mean a raise in salary unless there is a change in job. A lengthy discussion ensued. Judge Grasty requested that Mr. Siegner not obligate any more funds for at least 60 days so that the research can be done to see what other counties/organizations are doing. Mr. Siegner was asked to come back with a proposal at a later date.

A letter from Peggy Asmussen, requesting action to permit a work release program for the OYA youth that qualify, was reviewed. Judge Grasty commented that public meetings should be held on the subject before any decision is made. It was decided to discuss the idea during the July 15 County Court meeting.

Judge Grasty informed everyone that a wind developer is working to place a wind energy facility on federal land and has asked for a Memorandum of Understanding with the BLM. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Drinkwater made a motion to approve the Penland Road Legalization Order, Commissioner Nichols seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Water Use Requests were reviewed and no comments made.

Economic Stimulus was the next item of discussion. Judge Grasty informed the Court that \$438,000.00 for chip seal will be coming to Harney County; that Workforce Investment will receive a substantial increase and that Forest Service 1st round money is largely going to the Youth Conservation Corp.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Johnson