

HARNEY COUNTY COURT MEETING

April 15, 2009

The Harney County Court convened on Wednesday, April 15, 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 Patty McNeil, Herb Vloedman, Burns Mayor Len Vohs, Raider Heck, County Weed Control Coordinator Jesse Barnes, Lyle & Tina Stratton, Wayne Baron, Rodd Dinsmore 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 April 1, 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 Lyle Stratton was present to convey his feelings regarding the recent newspaper articles and TV interviews and the negative comments that were expressed in those stories. He pointed out several positive things happening in the County. Raider Heck mirrored Mr. Stratton's comments as did Herb Vloedman. Patty McNeil asked the Court to comment on what is happening with the buildings in Hines – specifically LP and Monaco. Judge Grasty answered Ms. McNeil's request by explaining what the County Court has been working on for the last year to bring jobs to the County that would be associated with the LP and/or Monaco buildings. Discussion followed. Judge Grasty thanked those present for the reality check they provided by expressing their thoughts. He also invited everyone who would like to help with the County's image to attend the Community Response Team meetings held on the first Wednesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Commissioner Nichols also thanked the group for their thoughts and said that the Court has issue after issue with environmental groups and suggested that people write to their Senators and Representatives. More discussion followed. Burns City Mayor Len Vohs explained what he and City Manager Don Munkers have been doing to help the economic situation in the County. Judge Grasty suggested a meeting between the County Court and Chamber of Commerce Board members to come up with a strategy to bring business to Harney County and to create a positive image.

Due to the length of Public Comment the Court started with item number 6 on the agenda, a discussion regarding recycling, as there were people present for that discussion. Wayne Baron explained that 4R is filing for non-profit status. He also stated that the building situation is the biggest problem for him – that he has outgrown the building he is currently renting. Discussion followed with no action being necessary.

Rena Cusma and Sean Maloney of the Oregon Department of Transportation were in attendance to make a presentation on highway construction projects. Mr. Maloney handed out a list of projects and then explained each one. The discussion turned briefly to the intersection of Hwy 395 North and Hwy 20 and what could be done to make that intersection more easily maneuvered by non-local drivers.

Judge Grasty noted that it is possible that Harney County could get stimulus dollars from the Oregon Department of Energy for energy projects. For that reason Tony Dickman of R&W Engineering presented a draft of the Courthouse and Sheriff's Office Heating and Cooling Load Analysis and Recommendations report. The details of the report were discussed.

The Court recessed for lunch at 12:15 and reconvened at 1:15 p.m.

An application by Jim Cook for an approach off of Lava Bed Road was reviewed. Commissioner Drinkwater made a motion to approve the application, Commissioner Nichols seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Judge Grasty asked for a discussion regarding the need for setting a policy for the possibility of a road beginning as an approach and then over time several more homes being placed along that approach and the homeowners want to make it a public road. After a short discussion it was decided that it was a non issue and that there is already a policy in place for public roads.

Commissioner Nichols made a motion to reappoint Wayne Evans to the Fair Board, Commissioner Drinkwater seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Judge Grasty began a discussion regarding Penland Road and whether to continue it on to the next section line, where there is an existing two-track, or not. It was decided that the Court would have the road surveyed and proceed with the continuation.

Commissioner Drinkwater made a motion to follow the process and write a letter and get after clean up at the old greenhouses on the highway to Crane, Commissioner Nichols seconded. Discussion followed. Motion carried unanimously.

The next item of business was a discussion regarding electrical transmission lines by Idaho Power possibly going through Harney County. It was agreed that Harney County should participate in the discussions with Idaho Power.

Judge Grasty told the Commissioners that there is a short time for them to meet with the Hospital Board and determine the distribution of the Strategic Investment Program money to be collected from the Echanis Wind Project. He also noted

that the schools are not a participant in this process and that he would contact the School Boards to explain why they are not included.

Title II projects were discussed and prioritized.

Bids were opened at 2:00 p.m. for the Poison Creek Slough Bridge and the Embry Slough Bridge combined projects. Bids were as follows: Oregon State Bridge Construction, Inc., \$406,120.00; Mowat Construction Company, \$443,930.00; DL Edmundson, Inc., \$384,020.00; and Waldron & Sons, Inc., \$279,202.96. The engineer's estimate was \$440,000.00. The bids will be reviewed by Allen Rieke of Anderson Perry who will make a recommendation to County Road Supervisor Eric Drushella. The bid will then be awarded at a special meeting to be held on April 22, 2009.

Commissioner Drinkwater made a motion to appoint Howard Weathers to the Harney Malheur Housing Authority Board, Commissioner Nichols seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Water Use Requests were reviewed and no comments were made.

Jesse Barnes, County Weed Control Coordinator, updated the Court on the African Rue issue and the Weed Department's hope to keep it from spreading in Harney County. She asked if the Court was willing to utilize the enforcement policy if people don't comply with guidelines to stop the spread. She said that it takes a very small amount to do damage to cattle. The enforcement policy was discussed. The Court agreed that the enforcement policy should be followed.

Further discussion was held regarding recycling.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Johnson
Secretary, Harney County Court