

Harney County Court Meeting

April 21, 2010

The Harney County Court convened on Wednesday, April 21 at 10:00 a.m. in Judge Steven E. Grasty's office. Members attending were Judge Steve Grasty, Commissioner Dan Nichols and Commissioner Jack Drinkwater. Also attending were Road Supervisor Eric Drushella and County Court Secretary Sharon Johnson. Public attending were Hobe Tiller, Linda Johnson and Debbie Raney of the Burns Times Herald. Also present for portions of the meeting were County Treasurer Nellie Franklin, Burns Mayor Len Vohs, Burns City Manager Don Munkers, Burns Public Works Director Dave Cullins, Mary Ausmus and Hilda Allison.

Judge Grasty led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Drinkwater made a motion to approve the April 7, 2010 minutes as mailed, Commissioner Nichols seconded, motion carried unanimously.

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

Judge Grasty mentioned that two items needed to be added to the agenda: one being a letter that the Court signed before the meeting and an update on a phone conversation he had with DEQ also just before the meeting.

During Public Comment Burns City Manager Don Munkers explained what the City has planned for the money contributed to them by the County. He explained the street projects they have in mind and said that the money would be stretched as far as it possibly could be. Discussion followed.

Judge Grasty mentioned the wind event of last evening (April 20) saying that Harney Electric lost 30 poles in row, a couple of wheel lines were destroyed and a few sheds collapsed. He said that the County would do a press release asking residents who have damage on private ground and are uninsured to take pictures and bring them in and the County will make a FEMA request to the State.

Judge Grasty also noted that the County Court signed a letter to Bob Caine, owner of the former greenhouse property near Crane, beginning the abatement process on the mess left by the dismantling of the greenhouses.

Maria Iturriaga was present to explain the County Clerk's office revenue distribution to the State of Oregon and fee increases instigated by the State. She noted that the increases create hardships for the public needing to have documents filed/recorded in the Clerk's Office. Discussion followed.

Judge Grasty explained a situation with DEQ and mobile home disposal. He said that the County has been working with DEQ for several months trying to come up with an acceptable idea to dispose of old mobile homes. Discussion followed.

Judge Grasty updated the Court on the Blue Mountain Forest Plan. He suggested pulling some money out of the Title III fund to keep a consultant on the issue in order to keep Harney County's place in the process. A lengthy discussion followed.

The discussion turned to the upcoming meeting of the Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) in The Dalles. Judge Grasty noted that the Court has requested that the meeting be held in Harney County as the Council will be discussing the rules for the siting of wind turbines at the request of the Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA). Several ideas were discussed as to how the community could be involved in the meeting whether it is held in Harney County or in The Dalles. Judge Grasty said the important thing is that our community has the opportunity to be heard. It was decided to hold a work session after the County Court meeting to strategize.

Commissioner Nichols informed the Court that the Refuge will be holding a Comprehensive Conservation Plan meeting on May 18 and 19.

County Planning Director Brandon McMullen was in attendance to discuss the final review and approval of Ordinance #2010-67, the Harney County Zoning Ordinance. Commissioner Drinkwater made a motion to approve Ordinance #2010-67 including two corrections and read by title only, Commissioner Nichols seconded, motion carried unanimously. Pursuant to Oregon Statute an Ordinance must be approved at two separate meetings unless declared an emergency.

Regarding Resolution #2010-03 in the Matter of Adopting a Fee Schedule for the Harney County Planning Department, Commissioner Nichols made a motion to adopt the Resolution, Commissioner Drinkwater seconded, motion carried unanimously.

The Court skipped to the review of a letter from Mike Simpson of the Training and Employment Consortium, asking for a contribution from the County due to a budget shortfall of about \$6,000.00. The Court discussed the request. Commissioner Drinkwater made a motion to contribute the money, Commissioner Nichols seconded, motion carried unanimously. The money will be taken from the Title III Fund.

Melanie Thomas of the County Health Department made a presentation about her trip to Haiti after the 7.0 earthquake that devastated the country. She is a volunteer with Northwest Medical Teams Disaster Team.

The meeting recessed for lunch at 12:10 p.m. and resumed at 1:10 p.m.

Gerard La Brecque was present to explain a training he attended in New Mexico regarding the use of small diameter logs. The presentation was followed by a discussion about what the Court could do to help Mr. La Brecque start such a business. Mr. La Brecque said that he would need help in developing a business plan.

At 2:00 p.m. asphalt bids were opened and read aloud. Bids were as follows: (all prices per ton) Albina Asphalt: Diamond \$550.70, Riley \$535.90, Princeton no bid; Western States Asphalt: Diamond \$515.00, Riley \$507.00, Princeton \$515.00; Idaho Asphalt: Diamond \$543.50, Riley \$543.50, Princeton \$572.50. After a short deliberation Road Supervisor Eric Drushella recommended accepting the bid from Western States Asphalt. He noted that in the past Western States asphalt quality was not the best but that the bid letter stipulates that if the quality is not there the delivery can be stopped. Commissioner Drinkwater made a motion to accept the bid from Western States Asphalt, Commissioner Nichols seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Water Use Requests were reviewed and no issues were noted.

Judge Grasty addressed the Court about the receipt of the Preliminary Draft EIS (PDEIS) for the North Steens 340 KV Project. He also noted the receipt of an Allotment Management Plan for Trout Creek from BLM.

Charlie Otley stopped by to discuss the issue of ONDA petitioning the EFSC to put additional protection on the Steens Cooperative Management and Protection Area. Judge Grasty explained that he found out during the lunch hour that the EFSC has decided to open the hearing in The Dalles, hear the petition, request members do research and close the hearing; then the continued hearing could be held in Burns. A lengthy discussion followed.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Sharon Johnson
County Court Secretary