



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

***January 6, 2021***

The Harney County Court convened at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, January 6, 2021. Members attending were Judge Pete Runnels, Commissioner Patty Dorroh and Commissioner Kristen Shelman. Also attending was Eric Drushella, Roadmaster and Brandon McMullen, Planning Director.

Public in attendance included Patty Hodge, Louie Smith, Cheryl Smith, Chris Wiseman, Melodi Molt and Barbara Cannady.

The telephone conference line was opened by Judge Runnels. BLM District Manager Jeff Rose joined by phone.

**Voucher Approval**

The Court signed approval documents and checks for the regular accounts payable individually in the County Clerk's Office.

Judge Runnels led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes**

Commissioner Dorroh made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 16th, 2020 County Court session. Commissioner Shelman seconded. The motion carried unanimously. The court discussed concerns that unapproved minutes are distributed and utilized by the media prior to formal approval. The consensus of the Court was to not distribute unapproved minutes, as there are often amendments made to them prior to approval at the next session.

**Public Comment**

Melodi Molt questioned some of the decisions of the Committee for distribution of the Cares Act business grants. Judge Runnels explained the process the committee used.

## **Old Business**

Judge Runnels explained a situation with the proposed RV Park expansion at the Fair Grounds. The currently proposed location is zoned Agriculture. RV parks are not allowed in that zone. Leaving the proposed location in the Agriculture zone would require a zone change delaying the development for months. Brandon McMullen presented several alternatives for conditional use permits or exceptions. Jordan Bennett provided some basic cost analysis, including new costs for electricity/water/sewer/booking. He explained booking would be around 99.00 per month for online booking system, and Monthly sewer/power would be around 760.00 per winter month. He said in order to break even, the park would require 22 single overnight stays per month in winter months. The Court thanked Mr. Bennett for doing the study and providing the information.

## **New Business**

Melodi Molt, Patty Hodge, Cheryl Smith, Chris Wiseman, and Louis Smith and expressed concerns with COVID-19, and the detrimental adverse effects it has had on the business community, the emotional well-being of the citizens, education of the children and questioned how the stimulus dollars will be recovered. Judge Runnels agreed with the concerns expressed, and explained the County Courts and Commissioners in Eastern Oregon have worked hard to get back to what we have, working with the Governor to provide back some local control, county-by-county. Commissioner Dorroh stated she understands, and she “hears you”. She expressed her displeasure with the volume and quality of proposed legislation being drafted by our legislature, and wished they would stop passing additional bills and mandates. Commissioner Shelman expressed similar concerns and agreed with the group, reiterating how difficult it is when our citizens continue to be in the minority in regards to political philosophy in the capitol. The court thanked them for coming and sharing concerns.

Eric Drushella, Roadmaster, discussed some issues with various bridges on our County Road System. He explained the long-term goal for the County Road System initially was to replace or repair 2 bridges a year. In doing so we could keep up with the maintenance requirements on our bridges. We currently have 20 bridges that need weight restrictions and 5 of those are in a state of disrepair. 2 of those are in immediate need of replacement and the Roadmaster has determined they need to be replaced immediately. He explained the weight restrictions have changed because of the design of the trucks. There are now as many as eight axels on a dump truck. The full weight of the newer designed trucks on the market are now full loads on the bridges. This is not a crisis situation but it is a reality. He will move forward

on these projects quickly. He said he wants to do this when there is low water flow so time is of the essence. One will be on Foley Road and one on Diamond Grain Camp Road. Residents in those areas can call the Court or the Road Dept. with questions or concerns.

Commissioner Dorroh moved to sign an Order Designating Burns Times-Herald as Official Newspaper for the Year 2021. Commissioner Shelman seconded and the motion carried. *(CJ2021-8)*

Commissioner Dorroh moved to sign an Order In the Matter of Appointing Sarah Laiosa, DO, as Medical Examiner for the year 2021. Commissioner Shelman seconded. Judge Runnels explained Deputy Examiners are appointed as well, to review accidents or unattended death. The motion carried unanimously. *(CJ2021-10)*

Commissioner Shelman moved to sign an Order In the Matter of Appointing Sarah Laiosa, DO, as County Health Officer for the year 2021. Commissioner Dorroh seconded. Judge Runnels explained statute requires a Health Officer to oversee the Public Health Department. The motion carried unanimously. *(CJ2021-9)*

Commissioner Shelman moved to sign an Order In the Matter of Appointing Kathy Stinnett and John Lamborn as Justices of the Peace Pro-Tempore for 2021. Commissioner Dorroh seconded and the motion carried unanimously. *(CJ2021-7)*

Commissioner Dorroh moved to sign an Order In the Matter of Appointing Judge Pete Runnels Budget Officer for Fiscal Year 2021-2022, Commissioner Shelman seconded and the motion carried unanimously. *(CJ2021-6)*

Commissioner Dorroh expressed the County is moving closer to closing the over-expenditure gap that occurred in our budget two years ago, and is grateful for that. She said when the gap finally closes, she would like to see the county make investments in the community and join in litigation the court deems necessary for the benefit of the county. She sees a light at the end of the tunnel and we will soon be able to address other financial needs.

The Court reviewed a Resolution In the Matter of Appropriations Within Categories for LCAC Fund #350. Commissioner Dorroh stated she had visited with the County Treasurer Bobbi Jo Heany regarding this resolution and believes it is in order. Commissioner Dorroh moved to Approve Resolution 2021-01 In the Matter of Appropriations Within Categories for LCAC Fund #350, Commissioner Shelman seconded and the motion carried unanimously. *(CJ2021-5)*

The Court reviewed Correspondence, including a letter from Interim Burns City Manager regarding financial assistance for Burns Fire Department Equipment. Judge Runnels explained Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) is for safety but it is basically already earmarked for public safety, including 911-

County wide. He stated there are issues with communications towers that need to be dealt with, or we will be in a situation with little to no communications in critical areas in the county. A general discussion ensued. Judge Runnels will set up a meeting with the City Manager.

The Court signed Bargain and Sale Deeds for the recent land sales to Pueblo Mtn. Land and Roaring Springs Ranch.

The Court shared upcoming schedules.

There being no further business, the Court adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

*/s/ Derrin Robinson*

Harney County Clerk