

Hood River County Board of Commissioners  
Annual Goal Session – January 23, 2016  
Hood River Hotel Ballroom

MINUTES

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & MILESTONES

NORCOR funding continues to be an issue. The NORCOR Board elected to go back to the funding formula of 50-40-5-5. That raised HRC contribution by \$175,000. Sherman County came out ahead in that formula and has agreed to give \$60,000 of their savings by going with this formula to HRC because we are the only county that is seeing an increase in contribution.

Law Enforcement Funding Levy

This has not moved forward because it was decided to not go forward with it until 2018. We will need to look at this prior to 2018 in order to do the education of the public showing the need for it. We did discuss doing a survey or poll of the community to see what they feel like is needed. Meriwether feels like that is still needed but should be done closer to the election.

Courthouse Replacement

We hired DLR architects to talk about the needs for the departments. They worked with an employee committee and came up with a plan. More details will be shared later in the meeting.

Vacation rental policy

We held a work session on this topic and shared the analysis report done to determine what the use is in the county and the number came back very low. The study stated that 1-2% of housing in the county is used for vacation rentals. Planning will be working on this issue this calendar year to determine what if anything should be done.

Affordable housing

We want to continue to help in this regard by buying and holding property as available and able to do so. We do not want to be in the housing management business. There are some projects in the works, one that is being discussed with ODOT to relocate their shop off of Cascade. We are in discussion with the city and housing authority for another project that he is not able to speak on at this time. Another effort is the TGM grant that was awarded and we are partnering with the City of HR and housing authority to look at the entire Westside of HR to look for housing opportunities of different uses i.e. multi family, single family but then coordinate that in with the transportation needs for that area. The work will start this summer and it should take about a year. There are some property owners that want to get going on their projects now and we are discussing with them to hold them down for another year to allow this process to play out.

## Building Department

This topic was reported on by the department at the meeting in January. We have hired a building official FT and a FT inspector and we are close to getting e permitting on line. In April we will be taking over the plumbing and electrical inspection from MCCOG for the county and two cities.

## Cell Tower Ordinance

It is on the books - the hearing is scheduled for the Feb meeting.

## Fees

A good look was done by staff and fees were adopted in December by the BOC.

## Forestry

Several things in the works which were updated at the commission meeting in Jan.

We are looking for an anchor tenant for the bio mass campus and we have someone in play right now that might be able to take that on. That person is looking into details.

Other items that were not on the goals but done include:

Farm and Forest update

Formed the Region 1 ACT (Area Commission on Transportation)

## Punchbowl Grant

Was received from State Parks. We are working out details with western rivers - part of the deal is to transfer county owned Dimmick Park to Western Rivers but we need to get state parks to release a reversionary clause.

Declared a Drought this past year and the coordination amongst the water users and agencies was really good and was able to avoid a terrible situation that could have been much, much worse.

## THINGS TO STILL PURSUE

Taking on the structural inspections for the City of HR.

## PUBLIC SAFETY TOPICS

### NORCOR 2016

We have gone back to our original funding formula that puts a bit more pressure on the HRC budget, but we felt it was necessary at this point in order to move forward. Along with the funding formula change a change of the matrix was made as well. Chair Rivers asked Brian Brandenburg to give an update on how the committees established to help look at alternative funding options for NORCOR is going and what they are trying to accomplish.

Bryan Brandenburg - was hired this past July and jumped right in to the process that is still going on today. Feels the idea to get AOC involved to help the NORCOR Board work through issues they are facing was a good idea. He can see the passion from the commissioners and others participating in the review committees. Looking at 4 areas of NORCOR operation and reports by all the groups are due to be shared with the NORCOR board on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

*Property piece* - NORCOR owns a large piece of land adjacent to the jail. A committee was put together to come up with options for that property, keep it, lease it, sell it or something else.

*Efficiency Group* - looking at ways to make efficiencies happen within NORCOR. Looking at OT reduction in Adult and Juvenile facilities and putting some things in place to reduce recidivism.

*Revenue* - what are the options? We are looking at a transition and crisis respite facility for a 60 bed work release and a physic unit in the NORCOR from the state, the state would pay to house those folks.

Looking at pre trial diversion, risk tools that could be instituted before folks even get to jail and try to reduce the number of bodies coming in that can be overwhelming at times.

Looked at community outreach and development of resources and getting groups from the 4 counties involved in the re entry program that will help with recidivism etc. Groups such as - substance abuse, parenting, criminal attitudes, re entry group talking about life skills, resume writing etc. Hired two folks to lead those groups and work with the inmates to help with transition back to their home life.

*Juvenile Group* - this has been the most difficult one to walk through to get to a place where the committee was comfortable bringing forward a proposal. Which is to keep juvenile facility open. They are looking at staff reductions, and consolidation was looked at to try and reduce the cost but none of that panned out. Answer was to raise the rate that everyone pays to bring their kids to NORCOR - Resolution will be to adopt that and have a yearly COLA review of that rate. With the new funding formula it will save some money but not as much as he hoped but it is going in the right direction. The committee is also recommending asking the Legislature to look at funding for small eastern counties to kick in funding for juvenile detention expenses. They looked at other ways that kids could be housed and the cost was a little bit less but there are a lot of other things involved such as transportation etc. that would bring that up.

Chair Rivers gave kudos to Commissioner Joplin for starting this process and asked her to share her vision for what she feels should come next.

NORCOR BOD - should discuss and determine what the goal budget is. Feels it will give the folks looking at options an idea of what they need to work towards. It would help the groups know what each county will be expecting.

Sheriff English said he doesn't feel we will ever get there with just reductions, they are good and will help but we need to really focus on additional revenues, how to bring in more funding to help offset the expenses. There needs to be a combination.

Joplin stated currently the budget is \$4.3 million is the 4 counties contribution per year. David says the number needs to be a total of \$3 million in his mind. Karen said that is what they need to know, what the overall total is.

Perkins said you need to implement cost savings measures and over time you continue to chip away at that expense you won't be able to do it all at once.

Bryan said that the biggest expense is personnel and that will go up a bit each year but his goal is to keep that pretty flat. They are implementing cost saving measures that will save a bit of money, not \$1m dollars as Meriwether suggested but it will chip away at the expenses. It takes time to implement changes and you don't see savings overnight but it can take a year or two depending on what you want to implement.

Karen's point is it would be helpful for the NORCOR Board to have a realistic expectation and goal for the funding shortage the four counties will need to come up with.

2nd hope by Karen - implementing good tools for the facility on releasing folks and assessing risk when they are booked in and not focusing or basing the release on how many people we have in the jail. Hope is to reduce The Dalles using the jail and filling it with non person misdemeanors. Sheriff English says that will change if the NORCOR Board sets a policy to charge cities for placement of folks in NORCOR. There needs to be a NORCOR front door policy that the municipalities will be charged for placing folks in NORCOR.

3rd - involves the judicial staff, and judges. Start a communication path with the judges and NORCOR staff and allow the judges have better information of what happened with the folks placed in jail when they were booked in, like the assessment tool. Give them a better idea of what is recommended. As she understands it there is no information that gets from NORCOR to the judge when they are seen. Rich asked what she thinks or hopes will happen. Karen said it will provide the judge with the risk assessment and other information that happened at booking it would be ideal if we had a person to walk the information from the Jail to the judge to help them make a decision. She is meeting with Judge Olsen this Friday and he seems receptive to the stuff that Bryan is starting to implement. It might help divert placing folks in jail that might not really need to be there.

Re - entry issue - they are focusing in on a transition center that might be located at NORCOR - it would be voluntary. Those released would be able to stay there while they work with a support systems to help these folk get back into society. They would be paired with counselors, primary care homes, linking them with resources in the community, help with housing, rental repair, and general help with stabilization. The program being voluntary you can access funding from OHP and there would be bed rentals so it would be a revenue generator to NORCOR as well. Jackson and Washington county have similar facilities, and it provides a revenue for the jail and it provides an alternative for those that really do not need to be in jail but shouldn't be left alone without some skills to help them re enter the community.

Benton asked about community outreach that is being done to get the word out in the communities. Joplin said there has been some discussion but it is narrow and really trying to develop a better system for mental health assistance for folks that are in jail. The Alcohol and Drug rehab is a bit disjointed so they have been trying to focus on that.

Benton said that he really meant discussion and awareness made to the general public what is being done. He understands it is not an easy conversation and might not really sink in or want to sink in. Bryan Brandenburg said that perhaps when we get some of these programs and changes in place would be a good time to share that with the general public.

Goal for the transition center - going to ask for funding from the legislature. Benton asked where the funding will come from - will it be a separate entity? Bryan said it is a revenue generating opportunity. Bryan said it could be a crisis respite transitional center etc. Karen said that it hasn't been ferreted out completely but it could be a nonprofit that runs it, it could be managed by the current NORCOR staff. There are options.

Goal - use the NORCOR facility to its fullest. Juvenile side has been in the red for a number of years and that needs to be addressed.

## PUBLIC SAFETY –

Sheriff English stated they have spent a large amount of time in 2015 looking at staff, services, ability to provide those services and it is clear we are not able to keep up and we are aware of what the Countys ability is to help. It is clear we need to find some alternative revenue sources. Since 1990 we have added 2 positions to patrol and the county has grown 43.4 percent and that does not include tourism and approximately 12,000 migrant workers that come into our community.

Mission changed a bit and they provide a large amount of service to the visitors by necessity and we are pulling away deputies from daily duties to help with that. He has been visiting the public entities to find alternative revenue sources to SAR. We have to pull away from patrol. Even when we are full staff we are not able to have adequate coverage. The Sheriff's department operates 7 days a week. For 115 during the summer months we had full staffing on 5 of those 115 days because of vacation, education, sick etc., during 4th of July and Fair week we had to

deny all time off. We certainly need to add staff but it comes back to where are we going to get the funding. We need an alternative revenue source.

Rich asked what Matt is hearing on those presentations he is making the other entities asking for help with the services he provides. - Matt said he is basically hearing it is not our issue, we understand what you are saying but it is not our problem to solve. He is currently working with the USFS on patrol of land that is designated USFS that is part of the County jurisdiction. He hopes in the next month or so we will be able to have a real discussion with those folks and he is asking for \$50,000 to help with patrol coverage's. He has talked with the city of HR for a portion of their TRT to be given because that is a direct tax from visitors and they are providing all of the services for those visitors. We are mandated to provide SAR, Marine patrol is a Sheriff function and we are seeing a huge amount of folks visitoring that are impacting the services they can provide.

At some point we will need to go out to the citizens and ask for help. Not sure what that needs to look like. Levies scare him because it has to be renewed every 4 to 6 years. He would like to see a service district because that provides stable long term funding. Issues - you cannot tax the City of HR the same amount. Our projections for the need are a large number to the citizens outside of the city of HR. So what makes sense? Based on what we feel is a palatable number to the citizens as tax would not even cover the patrol cost needs.

Rich asked what is Matt's hope for a goal the commission should set - Matt said a having a clear direction for where we are heading would be good. He does not have a specific answer. There are several different ways to go about it but none of them gets everything covered. If we could find a way to generate a half million dollars it would help but still not get us there.

What kinds of conversations, who need to be included, how do we make 2016 the year that we really move forward to set it up for the opportunity?

Maui is not sure that we can have that conversation yet feels there needs to be something very specific happen or to pinpoint to show what will happen or not happen without funding.

Benton said that is a very specific question. You get a library or you don't. With this question it is more ambiguous because it is hard to tie the funds to a particular service that will be provided.

Benton said the lack of success for other counties that cannot pass law enforcement levies it is discouraging at best and you tend to be gun shy.

English said they have a model drafted, and the funding would be for patrol staff. The other thing is to look at other options for paying for tourism related expenses for law enforcement, the citizens should not be paying for that.

Take away - education is needed to ensure the community knows the need of the sheriff's office.

David stated when you go out and ask for money a lot of time there is a citizen group or supporters that help you with that message and then when you do go out and ask for support on a measure those are the folks that take the message forward. Matt is that reasonable to put together a citizen group to help in the education and ultimate push for a measure pass. Matt feels it is and will gather names.

Benton said he has softened to the idea from when this was brought up 4-5 years ago, but he is concerned with timing. The economy is doing well, and from the business perspective we have the unknown of the minimum wage, sick leave etc., feels that timing is key and if it is put on the table right now then he feels the business community farmers would not been receptive.

Rich agreed you do not want to start the public education piece to the public to soon, but perhaps 2016 is the year to start the committee and allow time for them to think about a solution, options etc., get it planned out what the education is going to be and then when you are ready you have things ready to roll out.

Another thing to look at the .46 cents per \$1000 that is currently going to NORCOR, that will soon be retiring. Is it the possible to roll that into the law enforcement/public safety funding needs. That would generate \$400,000 approximately.

Joplin supports putting together a local committee to look at options. She also feels we need to support the \$2 minimum per \$1000 property tax rate that is floating around the Legislature. We are currently under \$2 per \$1000. (HRC \$1.41 per \$1000 assessed). Commissioner Joplin said that Rep Mark Johnson says that HRC funding is fine and is not supportive of the \$2.00 per \$1000 – she does not agree.

Perkins - we need talking points that can be hammered to our legislative representatives any time we sit down with them, so we are all saying the same thing.

Discussion about assessing the statute allowed amount of \$500 per SAR to the person you are rescuing. No way to enforce it, collection wise, unsure of who would assess it how it would be assessed etc.

## COURTHOUSE -

David reported the County contracted with DLR architects to help work through court and county space needs. They have completed everything expect bringing their findings to the commissioners. The numbers for construction of a building are high.

Two options were identified after interviews with affected departments and a few rounds of space request reductions happened.

Option 1 - Rebuild on the existing courthouse site in two phases, and the second option is to build on a hypothetical site. The acquisition of the hypothetical site is not included in the cost this is just construction.

Courthouse land - \$45M for courts and county. Courts and law enforcement only comes in at \$33M

Hypothetical site - 3 story for courts and county \$36.2M or a 2 story building for everything \$35.7M OR just public safety and Courts is \$25.4M

Ballpark net to county is about \$20M. We would have to go out for a levy and would be looking at .58 to .70 per \$1000 for a 30 yr note.

Where do we go from here? If we pursue this and seek legislation support to pursue this what happens if we cannot pass a levy? Timing is also a question.

Joplin stated for the 15-17 biennium we can make a request of Chief Ballmer for state court funding. We have been in the top list because our courthouse is listed as the worst courthouse in the state. AOC task force is willing to put us in for a recommendation if we are willing to move forward. AOC is prioritizing the list to the Chief justice and then he makes his own lists as priority for funding for courthouse facilities. We are now looking forward to the 17/19 biennium. We could ask for continued assessment and planning. Currently Multnomah County is taking up the funds available from the state for their project and they are effectively getting all the funds this go around. Another issue is you get must meet a formula - you cannot get full funding, you get a portion of the cost for the state portion of the building. You can make an argument that common space is part of the court space as well. Karen feels we could request funding to continue forward with planning assessment, to see if we want to move this forward.

Perkins says it seems like the next logical step to continue down the path to look into the possibility, see if the numbers can be brought down some.

Benton said perhaps acquiring the CGCC in HR could be an option.

Meriwether said one thing that we did not ask them to look at was looking at the design of an existing structure - there are some limitations with that based on the structure you are considering, but that is something that could be done. Also perhaps funding could be used to identify potential sites that a new courthouse would work on.

Joplin suggests asking for a few hundred thousand to get preliminary design and property identification analysis of location etc. This would be for the 2017-2019 biennium. It will be easy to tweak the background information we have to modify it for the new ask. We would be in a hold for a few months and put our new ask in this summer for additional scoping, discussions for locating other agencies.

**ACTION:** Staff develop work plan around options. - This needs to be done in the next few months to prepare.

## PLANNING

John Roberts – stated an update was given at the January Commission meeting. Restated the staffing changes over the last year and things are working well. They will be coming to the Commissioner next month to talk about time place and manner language regarding marijuana for the county. They will be working on the short term rental analysis data and deciding what to do with Odell unincorporated community.

John asked if there are other things the Commission wants to pursue.

Benton stated he would like to have another joint work session with the planning commission (PC). They will have a few new folks on board. He would also like to see the makeup of the PC and would like at some point to see a developer sit on that commission. He feels we need to have that perspective on that commission.

Meyer said the issue with that is that you can run afoul of your own PC at times. Benton said he gets that but feels there needs to be that perspective in some way. He would like to see more diversity on the PC and more often than not we end of taking whomever applies - not sure that we should just appoint an applicant because they were the only ones that applied.

## WORKFORCE / ATTAINABLE HOUSING

Meyer - this is not about short term rentals it is about finding real work force housing for the workers in the community. The City seems to be stuck in their review of their regulations and doesn't want that to happen to our review. The short term rentals are not the problem, they contribute but that is not the real problem. If we get to Odell again DLCD cannot ignore our needs and desires.

Benton indicated that Kate Sinner indicated she can get DLCD in the room with us to have this conversation. Maui says he is supportive of that if it is on the record. We have had 3 conversations with them and they don't have a true conversation, they use the meeting to say they met with us and that is all. We don't want this to fall off the table. We need to continue to push DLCD to get on board with what we want to do. They are making us go through the unincorporated community's process and we have come up with what we feel works best for the community and they deny everything we have put forward.

John is not convinced that every option has been explored - he feels there are one or two more things he wants to try and if we get nowhere then we need a legislative fix.

Odell is the economic agricultural hub in HRC – housing is an issue in that community and needs to be address.

## WATER QUANTITY POLICIES AND DIRECTIONS

Perkins stated that continuing to support the long term monitoring of wells in the county is important. Stated ground water availability/access is a huge stake, we need to be able to determine where surface water is and how it is being affected. The water planning group is now shifting from identification of water to policies surrounding water in the county. How should we handle drought, county needs etc. The leadership of the group has transitioned from the County to the Watershed group this past year. We need to continue to be supportive of their efforts - what we have done so far has put ourselves ahead of the rest of the state by completing a basin study and we remain competitive. Funds will be coming available for water infrastructure and since we have completed the basin study we are in a good position to leverage those funds when the opportunities arise.

2016 - Maintain, continue what we are doing, stay engaged, and when it makes sense for the county to make a move we can discuss it.

East Fork Irrigation storage needs are big. Perhaps look at some adjacent forest land that could be used in a trade for this purpose.

### REVENUE - Opportunities and alternatives

Benton would like to have an insurance quote for recreational liability if the county were to charge for the use of trails on county lands. If the county were to decide to go this route what would we be looking at for liability costs.

Several different funding/revenue generating ideas were kicked around.

Option: Trail pass. Engage the trail groups to enforce a trail pass.

Carbon tax credits - can we take pieces of county forest trails to do this and get some carbon credits for it. Feels like there is an opportunity there.

Riparian buffers. Perkins said there are very little data and information on this. We could quantify the benefit of increasing buffers and then use that increase as carbon credits.

**ACTION:** Continue to explore the potential of carbon credits

Option - County sales tax.

Discussion of growing marijuana or having a hand in some part of it would possibly be a revenue generator. Roberts said the real money is in the facility that is required by the state to test the pot. There is not one yet licensed in the state. Perkins feels that it is funny to talk about but there are real ramifications of truly considering this path. It is a direct conflict with departments we have such as law enforcement, corrections, prevention. Doesn't feel it is the direction the county should go.

Legal asked about pursuing the 3% tax on retail marijuana sales. Roberts doesn't really see opportunity for retail in the county, so not sure how that would translate to funds.

Local Sales/Tourist tax - what could it be applied to. Food and beverage, recreation options, rentals, railroad, fishing tours, kayaking trips things that are typically used/purchased by tourists. A sales tax can be applied as a county wide sales tax including incorporated cities.

2016 - Ques. What is our biggest target market directed toward tourists.

Meyer would like to know who the likely recipients are. It should be narrowed down. Roberts said maybe weave this into the survey that travel Oregon is doing right now to see what the temperature of folks are.

ACTION - research feasibility and models for a county sales tax. Vetting and come to some decision if it will be moved forward by the end of 2016.

Opportunity - timber sale modifications that would maximize the revenue to the county - extending the window to remove the timber but the purchasers buys that option.

#### COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR SEARCH

Prothman is on board and they will manage the recruitment process.

How many of the projects for this upcoming year can feasibly get done with the Administrator leaving? David stated there is many competent staff on board and they will be able to move the items forward.

Chair Rivers doesn't feel a need to prioritize the projects talked about tonight feels they are fairly straight forward and feels we know where we are going and what is expected.

Idea - late summer have a half day to update the new administrator on the goal sessions that was discussed today.