

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION AGENDA

4:00pm, CBAB, 601 State Street, Hood River, OR - 1st Floor Conference Room

MINUTES

Chair Oates, called the work session to order at 4:04pm. Present: Commissioner McBride, Commissioner Perkins, Commissioner Benton, Commissioner Joplin, Counsel Davies and Administrator Hecksel.

Review 2019 Ballot Measure – Mark Wiener, Winning Mark –

Winning Mark is a political affairs consulting firm founded by Mark Weiner. They have worked with local governments to raise money for the services they provide. He is not here in a paid professional capacity, this conversation started last year before items were on the ballot.

Mark asked if anything has been referred again yet. Confirmed that it has not. We will not be talking about a campaign that a PAC would conduct, but he has reviewed what was done previously by the PAC and he didn't see much that he would have changed. He is happy to answer questions and provide information as he can.

Oates – asked Mark his thoughts on when we should go out again? Should it be for the same thing and for how much? Mark stated voters are not fond of being asked the same question twice. A no doesn't have anything to do with the need which is obvious. Feels it is important to go back to the voters saying we heard you, we do feel a need to come back and point out that we are asking a different question. You will want to have something that looks a bit different.

{ Commissioner Joplin arrived at 4:08pm }

Mark said it seems like our ask was all over the place and we were asking for money to cover just about everything a county government provides. Voters wants specifics. What are you charging me, for what and how am I going to know I am going to get it? There needs to be accountability language in the measure information. Funds are tied to a specific set of services. If you don't have the money, something is going to be cut because you don't have the funding.

You need to communicate with the public (citizens businesses etc) what you are asking for and why you need it.

McBride – heard you say we need to identify the items that would go away if we don't get the additional funds. When talking about cutting, the Board doesn't make every decision about the budget, there is a budget committee that makes decisions for the cuts. Without having done that before the election how do we get around that without having had those discussions yet.

Mark said you should never talk about cutting staff. Say HRC will need to say that we will lose the ability to provide the following services without additional funding.

Perkins said the decision to provide which services is a policy decision not a budget committee decision. Mark said you could convene the budget committee early or have a special session to run things by the budget committee and see what cuts they would recommend if that would be helpful and in line with county needs.

The most important communication is the ballot language, the construction of that language is the most important.

How much
What For; and
What service will be cut if not approved.

Perkins –if we put a measure forward and it passes, we will most likely still have to cut services because one measure is not going to cover everything that needs funding.

Mark – identify the items that are slated to be cut, say at least X will have to be cut ask the public what their priority is for a service. Start now including the public in the conversation.

Mark stated another option is you can have a price sensitivity conversation about the cost level. You could do an online tool to get the information you are looking for from the public.

You need to communicate the information now – public meetings. You can do stuff on -line – suggest paid on-line advertisements, it is cost effective.

Mark said trying to make cuts invisible is not your friend – the voters need to see the reality of the situation.

Oates asked Mark his thoughts on going back for the property levy at the same level and since we are only looking at one measure is that appropriate? Mark said if you do that you will need to show that the amount asked for previously included two measures and the aggregate amount was X and now we heard no to that so we went back and are asking for this lower aggregate amount.

Mark clarified that when you are talking about the services to be provided focus on the services not on personnel.

McBride – how do we stimulate citizens to attend the informational meetings. Mark said you need to have events where you invite people to attend, but you also need to go to them. – attend the Rotary meetings, Elks, Senior Centers, he also encourages a robust digital marketing.

Hecksel asked Mark his opinion on what would make sense for when to put a measure on the ballot – May or November? Mark said the traditional answer for a larger county would be to wait until Nov. 2020 but doesn't feel that is necessarily true here for a few reasons. The turnout in the May election could be historically high, there is going to be a democratic presidential primary that could still be up in the air. That also may be helpful to the participation among the voters that have a stake. He would not be afraid of May. Most important factor is the work program you have between now and when you put something on the ballot. You need to be able to say we had a large public process and here is what we heard from you. There is a fair amount of work to be done but no question that it can be done. Losing the tax year by waiting until November it will have a large impact.

Mark suggests: Plan the work and then work the plan.

Commissioner Joplin – stated that we recently went through an exercise to prioritize county services. One of the higher ranked services was public hearing – explained that public health is an all or nothing in regard to state funding help. Public health comes with a large list of items that must all be provided or we close public health. If that is the service, we decided to focus on how would be relay that information to the public. Mark stated you would need to list all the services but important to state before and again after the conversation/explanation is that the State requires us to provide all the services in health or we do not provide any of the services.

Joplin asked Mark if he would recommend lumping these two costly items (public safety and public health) into one measure or do we focus on one over the other. Mark said simple is better. Felt from the last campaign the card sent out from the sheriff office that said this is what we do and we cannot do it anymore without funding was good and to the point.

The voters are your partner in making this critical decision on what services that will be cut. If you identify the services to be cut and give the voters an opportunity to pass a levy and they do not do so they have partnered with you in deciding to make the needed cuts to services.

Benton interested in knowing how we engage him (Mark) for his services and how much do you generally engage in the county before taking something like this on, do you work with the PAC as well? Mark said he would be happy to come back and talk with the commission once you get further down the line. Without getting too much into his business model this is not a gig he would go after because there is not much bandwidth but said once you come up with a plan and do some homework he is happy to look at the plan and let you know what he thinks.

Forest Recreation Trails Plan Review – Doug Thiesies

Doug handed out talking points on this topic. (see packet for full information provided)

Goal is to make the tree farm recreation program self-supporting within 2 years. Went over the document he provided and outlined the need in the future in order to sustain/build the recreational trails program.

Doug went over opportunities for funding to assist the trail program service become self-sustaining such as special use permits, parking permits, staging area sponsors, bike license revenue, general trail system sponsors/donors.

The intent of bringing this forward now is to start the conversation with the Commission about the ideas.

Hecksel stated the items listed are a place to start but it doesn't mean that is where we end up. We will be looking to the Commission to see if this is something you want as a goal for the County.

Perkins feels this is smart to be thinking on these lines. We essentially bought ourselves 2years with the Zayo funding, feels it is smart to keep this outside of the funding measure (levy), we haven't looked at a lot of opportunities that are there and we need to be clear on what the general trail donors will be paying. Feels we need to use the trails committee that we have and leverage where we can, and we will have a better trail system.

Joplin supports learning more on how these ideas would work.

McBride likes the plan and encourages looking into parking permits.

Benton feels we should continue to pursue it. Curious how this would be structured in the budget? Hecksel said the revenue lines would be separate. Benton is interested in seeing more detail on how these expenditures would fall out. He wants to ensure that it would be self-supporting.

Review County Services – Jeff Hecksel

The Commission asked to talk about the results of the prioritization exercise on October 7, 2019. The purpose of this review is to allow for adjustments to the rankings and if you wanted to do that you take votes away from something else in order to move a service up. With that said this is not a static list the Commission can change it at any time.

Perkins stated he has a hard time separating where the funding comes from and the service – he just cannot, feels that is a driving factor in how he values what the county is funding. In some cases, services and funding are tangled.

Joplin agrees tangled is a good word to describe how she looked at the list as well. While going through the exercise she was trying to identify what she felt is good for the community vs how things are funded. Felt it was a worthy exercise. Curious how this will be used to determine funding measure options and how this will be used to remove items from the budget.

McBride enjoyed the process and appreciated more how difficult it is to have so few votes and so many categories. Agrees it will be interesting to see how this influences the budget process and looking back how it falls out.

Benton felt the list was pretty informative for him. Shows the issue with the health department as far as services you can see how if you do away with a low ranked service based on the list how it will affect a health service farther up the list.

Interested to see how when items are being pulled out from the list – when looking at a funding measure where things will fall out and feels that ultimately this will show a direction to where we have been going for some time.

Oates surprised to see the votes on the top 3-4. Also, difficult to separate out the economics but he did do that when voting, but he will be using this when it is time to start looking at the funding.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA
6:00pm, CBAB, 601 State Street, Hood River, OR - 1st Floor Conference Room

MINUTES

Chair Oates, called the work session to order at 6:00pm. Present: Commissioner McBride, Commissioner Perkins, Commissioner Benton, Commissioner Joplin, Counsel Davies and Administrator Hecksel.

Any item or issue not on the agenda you have a question, comment or statement about please bring up under Items from the Public

CONFLICTS OR POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None to declare

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO/FROM THE AGENDA

None

ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

REPORTS – Commissioners, Legal Counsel, County Administrator, Departments (in packet)

Hecksel – VSO update: He previously indicated we would be looking for a contractor in this transition period and in talking with the State and other leads we were unsuccessful in doing that. However, we had another option in taking a contractor and making him full time temporary employee until June 2020. We have Eric Akin on board serving as the County's Veterans Service Officer.

Perkins – has been having lots of conversations with trail users and conversations with Jeff and Doug on forestry happenings and the energy plan conversations continue. MCEDD - requires a lot of time and it has been fun getting back up to speed.

Joplin – MCCFL director search, down to 3 finals and will start interviews in the next few weeks.

CCO – hired a new director when Dr. Dillon left for the east coast.

Columbia Gorge Health Council– restructuring to create a exec director position which will be posted in the next quarter.

McBride – Visit HR group interviewed 3 media/press for media services to the visitor center to help move into a new phase of development.

Attended several meetings: Parks Master Plan (2 meetings), MCHA and Regional Solutions.

Benton – will be attending a NORCOR meeting this week and will be talking about the structure of the NORCOR leadership moving forward. Experiment Station hired a new horticulturist from Michigan State.

Oates – met with our Columbia River Gorge Commission representative and went over the NSA boundary and our outlook on that. Hopefully she was able to get what he was sharing.

Participated in a phone conversation with the ODVA Director along with Administrator Hecksel – on October 8th.

Met with a City Senior Planner to get up to speed with the West Side Plan – found out they are looking at going back to existing zones and what can and cannot be done.

Attended a Region 1 ACT meeting

Oates asked about the Oregon Leadership Summit – Perkins said it has been good in the past and a good opportunity if you have the time to go. The issue is that this year the meeting is on a Commission meeting day.

Joplin said she would be open to moving the BOC meeting and agreed it is a good event.

The Oregon Leadership Summit is slated for Dec. 16th – the Commissioners will move their December meeting to December 17th.

CONSENT

- ✓ Approve the following Commissioner meeting minutes: 3/18/19, 5/2/19, 5/30/19 and 9/16/19.
- ✓ Approve a budget adjustment & Resolution to recognize \$35,156 into the Forestry personnel budget FY 19/20 and \$64,844 into the FY 20/21 Forestry budget for the trails program.
- ✓ Approve a budget adjustment & Resolution to recognize additional funds into the FY 19/20 Forestry Dept Timber Projects Fund 406.
- ✓ Approve a budget adjustment & resolution to recognize an additional \$6,400 in grant revenue and related expenses into the Health department budget fund 420-2104 FY 19/20.
- ✓ Approve a budget adjustment & Resolution to recognize \$75,000 grant revenue and related expenditures into the SRCH fund of the Health budget FY 19/20.
- ✓ Approve a budget adjustment & Resolution to reduce revenue and expenditures by \$9,810 in the Veterans Service budget FY 19/20 and authorize the County Administrator to sign off on a grant application to the ODVA for a \$70,000 for FY 19/20.
- ✓ Confirm e-mail poll approvals from September 24, 2019 that authorized Chair Oates to sign an Order approving the Reciprocal Easement between Gray, Zeman and Hood River County as well as the Order approving the Utility Easement with Zayo, LLC.
- ✓ Confirm e-mail poll approval from September 24, 2019 that authorized Chair Oates to sign a letter of support for Middle Fork Irrigation Districts grant application for funding on their Coe Creek Conduit project.
- ✓ Confirm e-mail poll approval from September 26, 2019 that designated Chair Oates as Hood River County's voting member at the upcoming AOC Federal Land Management Subcommittee meeting October 14, 2019.
- ✓ Confirm e-mail poll approval from October 3, 2019 that authorized the County Administrator to sign a letter of support for Columbia Area Transit's Federal Lands Access Programs application.

- ✓ Confirm e-mail poll approval from October 4, 2019 that authorized the County Administrator to sign a Memorandum of Agreement with the HRC Law Enforcement Union related to Hours of Work.
- ✓ Approve and sign a contract amendment to the Hood River County Federation of Oregon Parole and Probation Officers Union Agreement to provide a 2.5% COLA effective July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020.
- ✓ Award the Line Horse Timber Sale #20-9 to the highest bidder: High Cascade, Inc.
- ✓ Approve declaring public works equipment #501 1989 Atlas Copco air compressor, Model GA 11 as surplus and authorize it to be traded in towards the purchase of a new one.
- ✓ Declare the following public works equipment as surplus and authorize it to be sold at auction: Cannon C5250 Copy machine, FA#000734
- ✓ Approve setting a supplemental budget hearing for November 18, 2019 at 6:00pm, or soon thereafter to consider a budget adjustment affecting the Forestry – Timber Projects Fund 406.
- ✓ Approve a tax refund over \$5,000 to account # 1520 for tax years 2015-2018 in the amount of \$9404.80.

Commissioner Perkins made a motion approve the consent agenda as presented. Commissioner McBride seconded the motion.

Vote on the motion was as follows:

Commissioner Perkins -yea
Commissioner Joplin -yea
Commissioner Benton – yea
Commissioner McBride – yea
Chair Oates – yea

Motion carried.

ITEMS FROM THE WORK SESSION

Further Discuss Service Priorities - no other discussion for this item.

Discuss Future Funding Measure(s)- Chair Oates stated that Hecksel handed out an option for a potential levy moving forward. Hecksel noted the information handed out is what the BOC has seen in the past with updated numbers.

Hecksel said he is not looking for specifics tonight but maybe just identify a time to discuss this further and identify the for what and how much. Feels it would be best to decide on what the BOC wants to do.

Perkins would like to have a meeting to plan a road map – are we doing polling, what sort of outreach. We need to know the ask we are going to make before moving forward.

Benton – feels we learned a bit and he is leaning towards a public safety levy and that is just from the information we have gotten in the past. The prioritization work we did supports that as well.

Joplin asked if we would include the jail in that ask? Benton said good question and from a NORCOR chair position it could make it problematic if we coupled the jail as part of our ask if NORCOR goes out for a funding ask.

Perkins said we need to identify a comfortable level. He is of the mindset to asking at or below what we asked for the levy before – he doesn't feel good about coupling the two asks and going down from there.

Joplin said the additional conversation is what cuts will be made even if the measure passes at the level suggested (\$0.67) because that will not cover all the services.

McBride – if we were successful at \$0.67 how would that still require services to be cut.

Oates asked Hecksel to talk about the \$0.67 and what it covers/fills. Hecksel stated that level keeps in place what we have today. He says we are not doing what we should be doing but this would keep us from going further backwards. Absent the \$0.67 he will be before of the budget committee asking what else will be cut. The \$0.67 also allows the county to address the capital problem.

Benton if we are going to add levels of service beyond the \$0.67 conversations need to be around what is being added, even if it really is not adding – we need to be able to articulate the services we want to provide, do you agree.

Oates – feels we should leave NORCOR out of the ask – feels it is too big of a negative. Joplin asked what he means by that. Oates said there are many people in the community that are not happy with what NORCOR is doing.

Benton – the NORCOR board is aware of the community's situation about certain things happening there namely the ICE contract.

Oates feels we need to aim to get this set by the end of the November 2019. Proposed a meeting next Monday with Hecksel to show options for service levels between \$0.67 - \$0.89 with public safety and health in mind.

Joplin feels we need more information to make that information productive. Surrounding Public Safety – what it would cost and what it would do.

Oates said the Sheriff has a detailed sheet we have seen in the past – the additional information is from line 19-29 on the spreadsheet Hecksel handed out.

Chair Oates set a special meeting for October 28th at 3:30-5:30.

Note if Sheriff English is not available on Oct 28th we should reschedule.

Chair Closed the regular meeting and went into exec. Per ORS 192.660(2)(d)- Labor Negotiations, 192.660(2)(a)(b) – Personnel and 192.660(2)(e) - Property

Chair Oates called the business meeting back to order.

ADJOURNMENT – Chair Oates adjourned the meeting at 7:31pm.