

**JOINT SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNTIES OF  
BAKER, GRANT, HARNEY, LAKE AND MALHEUR**

**JANUARY 25, 2018**

A Joint Special Meeting was held at Treasure Valley Community College (TVCC) in Ontario, Oregon on January 25, 2018, at 1:30 p.m. Mountain Time, for the specific purpose of filling the vacancy in the Legislative Assembly in State Representative District 60. Present for the joint meeting of the county governing bodies were: Baker County - Commissioner Bill Harvey, Commissioner Bruce Nichols, and Commissioner Mark Bennett; Grant County - Judge Scott Myers, Commissioner Jim Hamsher, and Commissioner Boyd Britton by phone; Harney County - Judge Pete Runnels, Commissioner Patty Dorroh, and Commissioner Mark Owens by phone; Lake County - Commissioner Bradley Winters by phone and Commissioner Dan Shoun by phone (Commissioner Ken Kestner was absent); and Malheur County - Judge Dan Joyce, Commissioner Larry Wilson, and Commissioner Don Hodge.

Nominees present were: Lynn Findley, Dennis Hall, and Thomas Van Diepen.

Also present were various members of the public and media.

Malheur County Judge Dan Joyce was selected by the Secretary of State to chair the joint meeting. Judge Joyce called the meeting to order and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

An oral roll call of the participating counties was conducted. Judge Joyce stated that an audio recording of the meeting was being made for record keeping purposes and that the purpose of the meeting was to appoint a person to fill the vacancy in the Oregon House of Representative District 60 due to the resignation of State Representative Cliff Bentz; the appointment was to be made from the list of nominees from the Republican Party Precinct Committee Persons as furnished by the Secretary of State; the nominees being: Lynn V. Findley, Dennis H. Hall, and Thomas J. Van Diepen.

Judge Joyce proposed that the manner of vote be an oral vote by each participant, which would then be followed by a written vote of each person to be submitted to Secretary of State as required by ORS. There were no objections noted. Judge Joyce briefly reviewed the proposed meeting procedure.

Each nominee was then offered the opportunity to introduce themselves and to speak for three (3) minutes.

**Lynn Findley:** My name is Lynn Findley; I'm a Malheur county lifelong resident, except for during my professional career. I grew up on a farm in Malheur county raising registered beef cattle and working my dad's bar and grill. After graduating high school I went to Treasure Valley Community College; started fighting fire because the beef cattle business wasn't that great in the 1970's; made a career out of fighting fire with the BLM, spent 10 years in Vale, I moved to Lakeview for 7 years, I moved to Boise for 7 years, I moved back to Vale and then I transferred back to Boise, retiring from the BLM after 32 years. I retired from the BLM as a Senior Program

Manager as the Aviation Manager for the Bureau. I have extensive budgeting programming and management experience in large scales. I have provided a lot of testimony, expert testimony at Congress. I went through some administration changes. The only thing I didn't seem to do well was retire, because after three or four years after I retired I went back to work, did construction management for an engineering firm on public improvement projects for five years, retired, went back to work again as the City Manager for the City of Vale where I've been for the last six years, because I seen a need that needed to be dealt with. When my daughter graduated from high school in Vale, she was voted most likely to leave town, because there were no career opportunities for her. And she did, it kind of bummed me out. So, I looked in Vale when the city manager retired and we had zero industrial land available, so we had zero opportunities for new growth. So I took the job, we went through a comprehensive land use plan change; we added industrial land making opportunities for development much better. We collaboratively did that with the cities of Nyssa, Ontario and the County, because it was a huge effort. And we worked together until we added ground in all the areas. I'm happy to say that that was a fruitful project because one of those parcels have sold, there's currently a business in the process of seeking financing to come to one of those parcels and add 220 jobs, which is really a great thing for the county. So, after that I thought well then I've met my goal and then I decided well there is one thing in Vale - we have to mail out letters every four months to the residents, say your water's not safe to drink, because we have 4-parts per billionth too much arsenic. We went through the planning process and the funding process and we're 80% through the construction process of a water system improvement project that will fix the source that will treat the quality and the amount of water that the citizens have, improving the life of all. (The time limit was called.) Have a nice day.

**Dennis Hall:** Hello, my name's Dennis Hall. And if you want to see something that will make you nervous - stand up there next to the flag knowing everybody's looking at the flag and saying the Pledge of Allegiance and tell me not a one of you looked at me, the old guy standing next to the flag. That makes me nervous. I live in Malheur County out on the other side, about five or six miles on the other side of Vale. My wife and I have lived there for 20 years, lived in Malheur County for 25, we came over from Idaho; I came over from Idaho. We have three children and two grandchildren and of course our kids left the area a long time ago after they moved out to go to college somewhere else and then stayed gone. My entire working life has been at, when I was a kid I joined the Air Force, I spent a couple of years there, went to Vietnam, came home and tried to get a job and couldn't, so I went to school. I have, finally ended up getting a Masters from the University of Idaho, Go Vandals, always have to say that and they never go but I always say go, anyway, then I retired from the Idaho Power Company 16 years ago; I'm a private consultant and I train electricians and engineers mainly in safety and compliance issues, the National Electrical Code and those things that every electrician has to have every so often to maintain a professional license. And, that's who I am. Thank you.

**Thomas Van Diepen:** Good morning, my name is Tom Van Diepen. I'm not a lifelong resident of Malheur County, I live in Baker County. I'm a Farmers Insurance Agent. I didn't come up here to give a presentation. I came here to just be one of the candidates to make sure that somebody from the West side doesn't appoint a representative from the East side. And so if the commissioners could please take that heed; I'm not looking for votes, I'm just here to be a stand in. Thank you.

The question and answer session was then started. Written questions from the participants were submitted to the Chair. Each nominee was allotted two minutes to answer each question.

**Question 1.** If you are the successful candidate, what will be your top two priorities as District 60 Representative?

**Mr. Findley:** You know, I thought a lot about that, probably my first thing I'd try to figure out is what the hell is the whole story with Cap and Trade. As I read lately, that's a major issue coming for the short session that starts in two weeks. I believe that's an issue that will affect us all significantly, and I believe that's an issue that I have yet to fully embrace. I mean, I've read it and sometimes to me it looks like a tax and spend process that I'm not fired up about, but I think it's coming at us very fast and it's an issue that we need to look at. Second is revenue. We have a 26 billion dollar contractual obligation as a state that we've kicked down the road for several years and it's the PERS responsibility; we need to deal with that, we need to look at our revenue and figure out how we can start addressing our contractual obligations and be ready for the future. I guess those would be the first two things that I would look at coming up in 10 days.

**Mr. Hall:** I would think that the first priority that I would be concerned about and interested in is - what do the 65 thousand people in District 60, what do they think about what's going on in government, in their government, and to find out what their needs are. If I'm going to represent District 60 I need to know what the issues are with District 60; and of course I have some of my own concerns and one of those very quick concerns is the budget that our state finds itself with or without or what's going on with this thing. How are we gaining, getting all of these debt, all this debt, how are we doing that, and where is the revenue coming from without taxing us more and more. And that would, I think would be my two big issues.

**Mr. Van Diepen:** I'm not sure that my input is going to be very valuable to you guys. My biggest problems with government in general, is regulations that reduce our ability to produce product and service. And so that would be a big one; and utilization of resources. My two biggest concerns is PERS and that proposed Cap and Trade thing. PERS is an existing problem because we haven't dealt with it quickly and at some point we have to change our PERS system from a payout defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan, and the sooner we do that the better off we are. And I'm really concerned about Cap and Trade because that's just a way of, I don't know what you call it, taking money from one outfit and giving it to another, and it's our money that they want but it's not us that's going to get it. Thank you.

**Question 2.** Would you support an increase in the current 911 tax of \$0.75 on phones to assist local jurisdictions in providing Emergency Services? This tax was set at \$0.75 per line in 1995 and has not been increased.

**Mr. Findley:** My general philosophy is that we should not tax ourselves out of a problem. If we have a funding and a revenue and a resource problem we need to figure out a better way to fix it, than tax it and increase taxation. So, without a lot more data, I realize that 911 fee has been stable for a long time, however, two years ago they influxed that with the burner phone money so that was a big boost to it. I at this time do not support an increase in 911 or any other taxes until there's more vetting and the balance of the budget.

Mr. Van Diepen: I don't agree with any tax increases that can be fixed in a different way and I think using technology is probably a lot smarter system to do that, systems and technology.

Mr. Hall: Well, and I certainly agree with both the gentlemen here; I do not agree with raising taxes until we see what are they doing with the taxes we've got now. And I don't think that they're being spent as wisely as they could be should be. And so, I don't propose, and I don't support any increase in taxes until the budget is looked at.

**Question 3.** What level of support do you bring to this issue on mining and timber production? Do you support the Oregon Forestry Department doing US Forest projects to increase the level of timber sales?

Mr. Hall: Yes. I'm not very well versed on that so yes would have to be my answer.

Mr. Van Diepen: Yes is my answer too and I think that anything that they can do to increase timber production, mineral production, ag production, needs to be addressed.

Mr. Findley: I have testified every time there's a Calico Grassy Mountain Mine public hearing in Malheur County in support of that effort, and I firmly believe that anything we can do to increase our natural resources is the right way to go about it. When you drive down into Prairie City off Dixie and you look across the hill and the valley and you see where the Strawberry's, where they burned a couple of years ago, it was a terrible tragedy, a worse tragedy is the fact that we didn't salvage any of that timber. I mean that should have been dealt with. So I believe that anything we can do to bring more productive resources of our use of our natural resources we need to do.

**Question 4.** I believe most of the counties in our district have problems with little or no growth in residential areas as well as industry growth that creates jobs. Would you describe yourself as pro-growth and be willing to work with our district changing land use rules that would allow us to have more flexibility and say in the zoning regulations in our district?

Mr. Van Diepen: Yes, I do. It's the LCDC (Land Conservation & Development Commission), the land use people in the state has had way to much input on what we're allowed to do. I'm on the planning commission and see that on at least a monthly basis and I would like to be able to have most of the decisions brought back to the county level.

Mr. Hall: I'm not sure what can be done but I think something needs to be done, needs to be looked at, what can we do in Eastern Oregon to help keep some of our young people here and maybe to reinvent Eastern Oregon. And one of the things too that I think is important that we're all one Oregon, or we should be, and so the other side, instead of that, and this side, at least in my circle that's all \_\_\_\_\_ talking about; always the other side is doing this and that and deciding for us what we should do; but I think that we need to do, we need to do a lot of looking, what do we have here that we can utilize to better increase our, everything from industry to ag to whatever it is. Thank you.

Mr. Findley: I think the DLCD (Department of Land Conservation and Development) is a great organization in the urban metropolitan areas; I do not believe they have a very good definition of what it's like to be in rural or Eastern Oregon. We're not a one size fits all state and we should not be a one size fits all state. The land use planning process is cumbersome, obtrusive and not very much pro anything. You can work the system and make your inventories available but it's almost counterproductive and it's such an expensive long drawn out process that people just get tired and throw up their hands and quit. There's a model going on currently in Malheur county from House Bill 2012 from last year who will have an opportunity to look at some of that and perhaps relax some of those or make some regional input. There's been some suggestions in the past from a Senate bill that would allow polygons in Eastern Oregon of land use planning to put more decisions down; I support that effort. I support the ability to have some local input and control. We did our comprehensive plan update in Vale a couple of years ago; I spent three hours on the phone with 1000 Friends of Oregon trying to figure out why we needed to do what we did. They had no idea that we have vast amounts of land in Eastern Oregon that this is, if you take out a few hundred acres into a subdivision or for development it's not a big impact because all we have is land. I believe that one size fits all is not the best model.

**Question 5.** Is there a third issue in this District that you think should be addressed?

Mr. Findley: Management of natural resources. I mean, Malheur County has seven million acres of public land; Harney County has six million acres of public land; Grant County has both public land and national forest land. We need to have more input in how that land is managed. We as a County, as Counties and cities and state, need to be at the decision and collaboration with those pre-decisional operations so we can direct how that land better serves us. There's a huge loss to us and we don't have anything to say and we just keep getting locked out of it and that's not right. That's a federal issue in some regards but it's our backdoor and we need to figure out how to become more engaged.

Mr. Hall: One of the things that I think we should look at here, especially in Malheur County, is our youth. Do we have a lot of things here for our youth, including an education system that enables them to get where they need to go and where the county needs them to go? In Malheur County we have one swimming pool for the whole county, in Vale. And we don't, how about parks and things like that. So anyway, I think we need to look at our youth and what are we doing for them other than just helping them make up their minds to leave when they get the opportunity.

Mr. Van Diepen: I think the utilization of natural resources is really important for rural counties, especially the ones in Eastern Oregon. We have so much minerals and timber that we could be turning into wealth that we're not doing. And Lynn mentioned collaboration, I'm not sure that's ever done any good, I think if would force the Federal government to do the requirements, which is coordinating, not just collaborating, and I actually go a step further and think that we probably should take over the management of Federal lands, both BLM and Forest Service, and determine our own rules and our own regulations; this isn't their land, this is our land. I think we probably know how to do that a lot better than they do. Thank you.

Consensus of the meeting participants and the nominees was to waive closing statements by the nominees.

Judge Joyce asked for an oral vote:

Judge Joyce - Lynn Findley

Commissioner Hodge - Lynn Findley

Commissioner Wilson - Lynn Findley

Judge Runnels - Lynn Findley

Commissioner Dorroh - Lynn Findley

Judge Myers - Lynn Findley

Commissioner Hamsher - Lynn Findley

Commissioner Bennett - Lynn Findley

Commissioner Nichols - Lynn Findley (Commissioner Nichols also thanked Mr. Van Diepen for his participation and support.)

Commissioner Harvey - Lynn Findley

Commissioner Shoun - Lynn Findley

Commissioner Winters - Lynn Findley

Commissioner Owens - Lynn Findley

Commissioner Britton - Lynn Findley

Commissioner Bennett thanked all the candidates, noted that some of the Malheur PCP members had indicated that any of the candidates would be great position holders, thanked Mr. Van Diepen for his involvement and effort in the process, and wished the new representative well.

Commissioner Dorroh thanked the candidates and expressed her willingness to partner for the good with Mr. Findley in the future.

Commissioner Wilson thanked the candidates.

Commissioner Hodge also extended his thanks to the candidates.

Judge Joyce congratulated Mr. Findley and thanked the candidates. Judge Joyce also thanked the college for providing the venue for the meeting, thanked the staff, and thanked the media.

The Statement of appointment and Vote Tabulation was signed by the members of the governing bodies and later forwarded to the Secretary of State. See instrument #[2018-0300](#) and [2018-0301](#)

The meeting was adjourned.