

MALHEUR COUNTY COURT MINUTES

February 21, 2024

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Court was called to order by Commissioner Ron Jacobs at 9:00 a.m. in the County Court Office of the Malheur County Courthouse with Commissioner Jim Mendiola present. Judge Dan Joyce was absent. Members of the media, public and staff had the opportunity to join the meeting electronically or in-person. Present in the meeting room was Administrative Officer Lorinda DuBois and Economic and Community Development Director Taylor Rembowski. Notice of the meeting was posted on the County website, Courthouse bulletin board and emailed to the Argus Observer, Malheur Enterprise and those persons who have requested notice. The meeting was audio recorded. The agenda is recorded as instrument # 2024-453

OWYHEE WATERSHED COUNCIL - ANNUAL REPORT

Owyhee Watershed Council Coordinator Nicole Sullivan and Project Manager Ami Wall met with the Court and provided an annual update on the Owyhee Watershed Council (OWC) and answered questions from the Court members. Ms. Sullivan explained that over the past year Owyhee Watershed Council has been working with partners, landowners and other stakeholders to address three main watershed issues: water quality improvement, riparian habitat restoration, and Sage-steppe rangeland habitat restoration. These watershed issues are a Council Action Plan priority and a continual process through both stakeholder engagement and restoration activities.

OWC is holding regular executive and full council meetings the second Wednesday of each month. OWC is the lead organization for the Owyhee Small Grants Team 23; OWC processes the applications and manages the local review team. Owyhee 5th Grade Field Day is scheduled for April 24-25, 2024. The Jordan Valley CWMA (Cooperative Weed Management Area) website is live: <https://jvcwma.com>. The Council website is under design.

The third Malheur Rangeland Strategy Partnership meeting was held in January; topics discussed during the meeting included: Mission/Vision; Prioritization Tools; and Funding Opportunities. The next full partnership meeting is March 19th.

In 2023, OWC had three restoration grants landowners implemented totaling 49.4 acres of flood to sprinkler conversions. Funded grants during the 2023 Spring open solicitation are currently underway. Open/Monitoring/Pending/Contract projects total \$1,743,077; 15 open grants; 13 grants in monitoring status; one open contract to complete Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances Site Specific Plans with Malheur Soil and Water Conservation District; and five pending grants (awaiting funding status).

JVCWMA (Jordan Valley Cooperative Weed Management Area)

Open/Monitoring/Pending/Contract Projects total \$366,725; three open grants and one pending grant.

OWC was able to finish up work on its Oregon projects database for both the Council and CWMA. The database consists of project information as well as a GIS (Geographical Information System) product with project location and information.

The Jordan Valley Cooperative Weed Management Area assisted in treating 2096.5 acres in conjunction with private landowners and Oregon State Lands. Puncturevine is a newer addition to the noxious weeds treated in the Jordan Valley CWMA; there is very little puncturevine in the area. The Jordan Valley Whitetop Give-A-Way distributed 260 plus gallons of mixed chemical for whitetop to 20 individuals. Fifty-two individuals attended the 2024 Winter Weed Seminar and 106 recertification credits were awarded in two states.

Commissioner Jacobs expressed appreciation for the work of the watershed council.

See instrument # 2024-465 for the OWC written report and the CWMA written report.

COUNTY LAND SALE

Treasurer/Tax Collector Jennifer Forsyth and Management Assistant Angie Micheli met with the Court and presented the list of properties for the 2024 County Land Sale. After review of the properties, Commissioner Mendiola moved to approve Order GO-03-24: Order for the Sale of County Properties. Commissioner Jacobs seconded and the motion passed. The County Land Sale will be held April 23, 2024. See instrument # 2024-459

CROSSING PERMIT

Commissioner Mendiola moved to approve Crossing Permit #28-24 to Interwest Supply for replacement of a pipe along Douglas Road #938. Commissioner Jacobs seconded and the motion passed. The original permit will be kept on file at the Road Department.

VALLEY FAMILY HEALTH CARE

Valley Family Health Care CFO (Chief Financial Officer) Cheri Hung met with the Court and presented information on the Valley Family Health Care - Nyssa Clinic Integration Project. Valley Family is a private not-for-profit based in Idaho with clinic locations in Oregon and Idaho (13 clinics in 6 communities with 260 employees). Valley Family provides medical, dental, behavioral health and nutrition services and served 21,978 patients in 2023. Valley Family is a federally qualified health center; a sliding fee scale is available; additional support services are available such as community health workers who assist with medicare/medicaid enrollment and access to outside resources; nurse case managers to assist patients with connecting to other needed medical services; medication assistance; and behavioral health navigators. Valley Family opened its first clinic in Nyssa in 1987 in the current dental location and opened the medical clinic in 1991. Approximately 1350 patients are served at the Nyssa medical clinic; the dental clinic is small and inadequate and Valley Family would like to have a clinic to house medical, dental, and behavioral services as well as the capacity for other community partners to offer services in the facility (such as DHS (Department of Human Services), Lifeways). Preliminary estimate cost to build a 13,000 square foot clinic is \$5,400,000. Valley Family is asking for feedback from decision makers in the

community as to whether they think the community partners aspect of the proposal is a worthwhile endeavor. Commissioner Jacobs and Commissioner Mendiola expressed support for the proposal. Commissioner Mendiola moved to sign a letter of support for Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) for Valley Family Health Care's Nyssa Clinic Integration Project. Commissioner Jacobs seconded and the motion passed. Ms. Hung had previously visited with Judge Joyce about the proposal and he also expressed support for the project. See instrument # 2024-471 for the letter of support and instrument # 2024-454 for the written presentation.

COURT MINUTES

Commissioner Mendiola moved to approve Court Minutes of February 14, 2024 as written. Commissioner Jacobs seconded and the motion passed.

RESOLUTION - USDA GRANT

Mr. Rembowski presented a resolution authorizing Malheur County to apply for a USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) grant to hire a consultant to assist the County to gather data and build a marketing plan, if it is determined that there is enough feed stock in the County for biofuels and obtain a Bioeconomy Development Opportunity (BDO) Zone rating. The resolution is a requirement of the grant application. Commissioner Mendiola moved to approve Resolution No. R24-06 - In the Matter of: Resolution to Obtain for and on Behalf of County of Malheur a Grant through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Commissioner Jacobs seconded and the motion passed. See instrument # 2024-455

WILDLIFE SERVICES - UPDATE

Scott Phillips, Wildlife Specialist with USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services) Wildlife Services met with the Court and provided a general update; and answered questions from the Court members.

- Starling work has been busy
- Approximately 200 coyotes have been taken in the past six months (these are complaint driven); and 25 beavers
- Snow geese, vulture, raven, and badger work has also taken place as has ground squirrel work for the airport
- Badgers are problematic for the prison
- Expect wolf population to increase in the County
- The cost for the program to the County for next fiscal year will be \$101,500

OREGON FOOD BANK - ONTARIO COMMUNITY FOOD CENTER

Lindsay Grosvenor with Oregon Food Bank met with the Court and requested a letter of support for congressional funding for the Oregon Food Bank Ontario Community Food Center's specialty equipment project. The Ontario Community Food Center project previously received funding and this request is for additional funding to build on the investments already made for the project. The equipment needs include a freezer, cooler and other specialty equipment. Commissioner Mendiola

moved to sign the letter of support. Commissioner Jacobs seconded and the motion passed. See instrument # 2024-456

Ms. Grosvenor noted that on March 13th at Four Rivers Cultural Center there will be a community reception to brief the community on the project.

OREGON EASTERN RAILROAD

Bruce Carswell met with the Court and requested a letter of support for Oregon Eastern Railroad's Connect Oregon grant application. The grant application is for the next phase of funding to upgrade the railroads antiquated infrastructure. The railroad provides service between Vale and Ontario and keeps these communities connected to the national rail network. Commissioner Mendiola moved to sign the letter of support. Commissioner Jacobs seconded and the motion passed. See instrument # 2024-457

TRAINING OPPORTUNITY - BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Building Official Adele Schaffeld met with the Court and provided information on a training opportunity. The Building Department invites all interested parties to participate - the training is to review the 2023 Oregon Residential Code Update; free Oregon Contractor Board Continuing Education Credits are available for attending the training. The training event is February 27, 2024.

FARMERS MUTUAL TELEPHONE COMPANY

Farmers Mutual Telephone Company (FMTC) General Manager Ron Rembelski and outside Plant Manager Blake Seamons met with the Court regarding the Broadband Technical Assistance Program (BTAP). Mr. Rembelski explained that feedback from the Oregon Broadband Office is that partnerships have a better position within the BTAP application process; the partnership shows the intent between the two organizations to work together in an effort to provide broadband to the unserved and underserved in Malheur county. Mr. Rembelski requested the Court sign a letter that more specific outlines the partnership effort between the County and FMTC; and that that the Court assign a County representative to meet with FMTC on a regular basis to keep apprised of the broadband expansion efforts and that ways to streamline processes and approvals for future projects are considered. FMTC is the grant applicant; and will be the grant recipient if funding is received. After discussion, Commissioner Jacobs moved to sign the letter to Oregon Broadband Office further supporting the BTAP application; and assign Economic and Community Development Director Taylor Rembowski to be the County representative to work with FMTC on broadband expansion efforts. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed. See instrument # 2024-458

COURT ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Jacobs adjourned the meeting.