
WORK SESSION MINUTES

4:00p.m., Hybrid: in person (601 State St., Hood River, OR) and via Zoom

Chair Euwer opened the work session. Present: Commissioner Les Perkins, Commissioner Arthur Babitz, Commissioner Leticia Moretti, County Counsel Lisa Davies and County Administrator Allison Williams. Excused absence: Commissioner Ed Weathers.

[Audited Financials for Hood River County for period ending June 30, 2023.](#)

Jessica Luther-Haynes, Auditor with Aldrich. Jessica reviewed the financial reports for the 911 Communications District, Hood River County and Windmaster Audits for FY ending June 30, 2023. See packet for full reports.

No questions of the audit but would like to have the following brought forward during the budget process for FY 24/25

Wind down COVID funding.

Update on how Windmaster Urban Renewal District is going.

Overview of how timber receipts work and discussion of increase in sales.

[USDA Wildlife Services in Hood River County Proposal](#)

Brian Thomas, ODFW, Matthew Alex, USDA and Mike Radcliff, USDA

Brian spoke to the material provided in the Commissioner packet and mentioned a new bill that is working through the legislators now that could positively impact Hood River County.

Crook County has used the services being offered in the past and they are in discussions with them now in hopes they restart the program.

Costs for this program is bore by the County. They are working with the State to provide additional funding for this program. There is some federal funding.

Chair Euwer asked how this program would coordinate with ODFW and do you charge for services. You provide technical support but at what point do you charge for services.

Brian responded in a traditional program for cougar and bears they work as ODFW as their agents. The expense that has been presented of \$40,000 to the county would not cover a full time response.

Land owners can be billed on certain activities – for instance if one project was going to take up most of the time allowed they would seek additional funds from the land owner.

Example: landowner has an issue with elk who does the landowner call? Brian stated ODFW first and then they would reach out to USDA if needed.

If the county funded the program, the county gets to direct where they want the funds spent.

Construction Excise Tax Funding Update

Kevin Liberty, City of Hood River Planning, Megan Saunders, City of HR council and Joel Madsen, Mid-Columbia Housing Authority Executive Director

Megan Saunders, HR City Councilor – 2015 housing needs analysis identified a great need for affordable housing. The City leveraged their CET funds to purchase 7 acres off Rand Road. The project will not solve the need but will make good progress.

Kevin Liburdy, Planner with the City of Hood River - shared a presentation that outlined the 7 acres the city owns off Rand Road and went over the planned build out.

The city hopes the project will qualify for CET funding outlined in the County's Ordinance.

Joel stated the target housing will be at or below 60% of the area median income. Household of 4, 60% is \$53k currently.

Kevin spoke to the timing of the city's housing project. They plan to close the project around February 2025 and the CET funds would need to be available around that time.

Estimate CET funding ask is anticipated to be between \$500-700,000.

Joel Madsen, Executive Director with Mid-Columbia Housing Authority/Columbia Cascade Housing Corporation

Reported a year ago CCHC requested and received \$250,000 in CET funds to purchase a historic low-income project in Cascade Locks. They continue to build their capital to make the purchase and needed renovations are estimated at over \$2M. There is USDA rent assistance, and we are looking to pull in the county CET funds and housing services moving forward.

Joel stated 15% of the CET funds that goes to Oregon housing community services but that is brought back to the community through Oregon Housing Community Services and recently that helped 3 households get into housing through the downpayment program.

There are other aspects of the CET funds that are working in Hood River County, but it doesn't come from the county's funds being held at this time.

BOC County Measure Referral Process & Timelines

Brian Beebe, Records & Assessment Director – gave history of when the existing operating levy was adopted reporting it will expire June 20, 2025. Brian shared election deadlines if the commission desires to put forward a ballot measure to extend the operating levy. Timeline information was included in the Commission packet.

Advises that November election is not always the best time to ask for tax funds because people have their tax bill in hand.

At this time, it is unknown if other asks will be on the ballot in November 2024 or May 2025. However, there are two asks anticipated on the May 2024 ballot.

2024 County Economic Development Strategy List

Jessica Metta, Executive Director, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District – speaking to the CEDS list that is staffed by the Economic Development Group.

The list is developed annually with weight given to projects ready to move forward in the next 12 months as well as other criteria. The top 10 CEDS list get rolled into the MCEDD priority list and may then end up on an Oregon priority list.

Jessica went over updates to the list. The request is to adopt the top 10 projects, if modifications are desired the projects that didn't make the top 10 are also listed for consideration.

Commissioner Babitz – expressed concern about the CEDS list last year and particularly the Lot 1 project and since then he is supportive of the Port's project for Lot 1 that is on the CEDS list.

[Budget Committee Interview - District 4 Representative](#)

OraLee Branch – been in the community for over five years and has enjoyed becoming more involved in the community. Serves on the Columbia Gorge Community College Board representing Hood River area and has been

She has worked a lot with budgets and planning, difficult decision making and feels she has a lot to contribute and would be honored to serve on the budget committee.

OraLee stated she has the time to give to the committee. She recently retired so she can focus on a home business.

[City of Hood River Urban Renewal Agency](#)

Moved up from the work session.

Will Norris, representing the city of Hood River urban renewal agency and Megan Saunders, Hood River City Councilor

Note that the URA is looking at modifying their bylaws and board structure. The URA will be moving focus to the heights and the Westside URA. They are looking for input from the governing bodies if they want a formal decision-making rule built in the bylaws – in the way of a permanent seat on the Board or an annual joint meeting or down to regular presentations on the URA.

Chair Euwer asked if the County had a rep on the URA Board, would it be a County Commissioner or a staff member, or is there a specific rule on who could be appointed. Will replied to it can be anyone.

Commissioner Babitz shared that he was involved in the original URA Board seats and gave an overview of why those decisions were made. Discussion on how well that process worked to this point.

General discussion on what is felt to be the best option, having a designated board member, annual/quarterly joint meetings or other.

Commissioner Moretti feels having a voting member on the URA Board would be good.

Commissioner Babitz has some concern about having a commissioner add an additional monthly meeting, perhaps the idea of an ex-officio member that would be part of the conversation but not necessarily be needed as part of the quorum.

Will noted that meeting at the 2nd Monday of each month at 6pm. Chair Euwer also stated that the County Administrator could serve.

Commissioner Perkins feels that it would be helpful to have a voting member. However, another monthly meeting could be overwhelming but perhaps the ex officio member would be a good answer.

Will is asking all other local governments in HRC other than the CGCC and ESD.

Commissioner Moretti can see how the Ex Officio member would make sense.

Chair Euwer sees that having a representative on the URA Board would be good. Discussion that we are then determine if the person is a commissioner or a staff member.

Overall, the county would like to have some sort of representation on the URA Board.

[Budget Committee Interview - District 4 Representative](#)

Matt Fullerton - Resident of Hood River County for about 5 years. Interested in getting involved in the community. Works as a fire fighter and wants to get involved in his community.

Commissioner Perkins asked why he picked the budget committee, what is his interest. Matt shared he is interested in serving on the budget committee because he enjoys numbers but more importantly he likes the end game. He likes to be innovative with how to get out of the hole and he doesn't see property tax as the only solution.

Commissioner Babitz asked about his availability for budget committee meetings with his work schedule. Matt responded that he is very flexible and can trade days or get a day off to attend a meeting if needed.

Commissioner Babitz then asked what he noticed in the budget that piqued his interest. Matt shared that he sees continual cuts if not more work to find alternative revenue and he is interested in looking at additional technology opportunities for efficiencies.

BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

6:00p.m. Hybrid: in person (601 State St., Hood River, OR) and via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Euwer called the business meeting to order at 6:08pm. Present: Commissioner Les Perkins, Commissioner Arthur Babitz, Commissioner Leticia Moretti, County Counsel Lisa Davies and County Administrator Allison Williams. Excused absence: Commissioner Ed Weathers.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS

Staff requested the following items be added to the consent agenda:

- OLCC Temporary Sales Liquor License – event at the county fair grounds
- Letter of support for the Port's pursuit of federal funding relating to development of Lot 1
- Letter of support for One Community Health's pursuit of federal funding for clinic programs

CONFLICT OR POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts or potential conflicts of interest to declare.

***PUBLIC COMMENT** (Registration required. Limit 3 minutes per person)

Tracey Tomashpol – Board member on the HR County Christmas Project and speaking on their behalf. Reported out on the December project. Over 300 were served with food and gifts in Hood River County. Thanked the community for their support. She hopes to share the 2023 outcomes with the commission before the next meeting.

REPORTS (Administrator and Commissioners)

Administrators Report – Allison Williams. A written report was included in the packet. Touched on the Parkdale Unincorporated Community Project listed in the report.

Chair Euwer asked if a formal commission support is needed or can the planning department go ahead and implement that. Eric Walker, Director Community Development – no action needed unless the Commission has concern about that moving forward.

Touched on the annexation process with the city of Hood River and we should be seeing a request from the City for a joint meeting. Allison has asked for a session with the city's consultant before a joint meeting with the city happens. No objections to the commission meeting with the city's consultant.

Courthouse planning project – she has requested the city take part in the possibilities of a City and County facility however the city council has not yet weighed in on that.

Powerdale property clean up – this topic will be brought to the Commission in March.

Reported there are three candidates for the public works director position and interviews will take place this Friday.

Save the date for next Monday, a town hall related to suicides in the community at the Best Western Hood River Inn.

Commissioner Moretti – travelled to Washington DC last week advocating for health center funding and Medicare/Medicaid funding.

Commissioner Babitz – is working with Allison on the courthouse planning project, it is a multi-step process.

Hood River White Salmon bridge replacement project – they were awarded a large federal grant and feel we have a 90-10% chance of getting this project to move forward with the needed funding. The Bridge Authority meets two times a month – a very active and committed Board. Briefed the Bridge Authority appointment item on the consent agenda.

Spoke about MCCAC.

Commissioner Perkins – Wildfire funding working group he has participated on – legislation has been put forward which would reduce the county fees that were originally anticipated. That would have seen a 35% increase in costs close to a quarter of a million. The bill that is still alive there is a reduction but only at \$40,000. Hope is this bill passes as the first step and the funding grows over time. This bill takes what we would be paying goes towards fire protection and not to ODF admin costs.

There is another bill that would create a statewide fire district. Feels the bill we have in place has a good chance of passing. This will require attention and he mentioned that our County Forester may be able to step into the seat that he (Les) was appointed to.

We are looking at \$210k if the bill passes and if it doesn't then add \$40k.

Commissioner Perkins submitted his letter of resignation effective at the end of tonight's meeting, February 20, 2024.

Chair Euwer – attended the Parkdale Sanitary Sewer District board along with Commission Babitz, Administrator Williams and Community Development Director Eric Walker. They talked about the decisions that have been made and why. Expressed the county is here to partner with them and work through issues as needed, if there is interest.

CONSENT

A. Surplus Vehicle - Forestry

RECOMMENDATION: Authorize the following vehicle numbers as surplus, #166 and #5451, and approve the forestry department to sell them at auction.

B. Budget Adjustment FY 23/24 Gen Fund Sheriff Forest Patrol

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the budget adjustment as presented.

C. Cancellation of property taxes

RECOMMENDATION: Approve cancellation of \$3,684.98 in property tax on 4 accounts (1731, 17150, 17152 & 17153) as shown on addendum per Department of Revenue.

D. Surplus Paper folder

RECOMMENDATION: Declare CE002499, paper folder, as surplus and authorize staff to dispose of items allowed in administrative code.

E. Budget Adjustment for Forestry Timber Projects

RECOMMENDATION: Approve and sign a budget adjustment Resolution to recognize additional revenues and related expenditures in the Forest Recreation budget, FY 23/24.

F. IT Surplus Items

RECOMMENDATION: Declare miscellaneous electronic equipment surplus and authorize staff to dispose of as allowed in the Administrative Code.

G. Budget Adjustment - Donations, Sheriff's Budget FY 23.24.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the budget adjustment to recognize \$2000 in donations and related expenditures in the Sheriff's budget FY 23.24.

H. Intergovernmental Agreement Amendment with Wasco County for Building Services

RECOMMENDATION: Approve and sign the amended Intergovernmental Agreement with Wasco County as presented.

I. Out of State Travel - Public Works

RECOMMENDATION: Approve out of state travel for two public works employees to attend training on the distributor and chip spreader at the Etnyre plant in Illinois, April 8 - 11, 2024.

J. [Letter of Support - The Columbia Gorge Crisis Resolution Center Advisory Council.](#)

RECOMMENDATION: Approve signing a letter of support for the Columbia Gorge Crisis Resolution Center's pursuit of future funding.

K. [Surplus - Courthouse breakroom refrigerator](#)

RECOMMENDATION: Declare the main courthouse breakroom refrigerator surplus and authorize staff to donate it to the Re Use It Center or another non-profit organization or follow the administrative code for disposal.

L. [ODOT Indenture of Access relocation for access to County property.](#)

RECOMMENDATION: Approve and sign the Indenture of Access for ingress/egress onto county property.

M. [Hood River White Salmon Bridge Authority Appointments](#)

RECOMMENDATION: Make the following appointments on the Hood River White Salmon Bridge Authority - Appoint Arthur Babitz and Mike Fox to a 2-year term as a commissioner, terms expire Dec. 31, 2025. Appoint Grant Polson to a 4-year term as a commissioner on the Bridge Authority Board, term expires Dec 31, 2027. Appoint Kathryn Thomas to the 1st alternate seat term expires Dec 31, 2027, Nathan DeVol to the 2nd alternate seat, term expires Dec 31, 2025, and Jake Edwards to the 3rd alternate seat, term expires Dec 31, 2025.

N. [Resolution - Hood River County Reads program](#)

RECOMMENDATION: Approve and sign a Resolution establishing March 2, 2024 - April 14, 2024, as Hood River County Reads.

O. [Board of Commissioner Meeting Minutes](#)

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the February 5, 2024, County Commissioner meeting minutes.

Commissioner Perkins moved to approve the consent agenda as presented including the additional items. Commissioner Babitz seconded the motion.

Vote on the motion was as follows:

Commissioner Perkins - yes
Commissioner Babitz -yes
Commissioner Moretti -yes
Chair Euwer -yes

Motion carried.

WORK SESSION ACTION ITEMS

Added the additional items: LOS: Port of HR, One Community Health, and the liquor license.

Commissioner Perkins made a motion to approve the additional items and Commissioner Babitz seconded the motion.

Vote on the motion was as follows:

Commissioner Perkins - yes
Commissioner Babitz -yes
Commissioner Moretti -yes

Chair Euwer -yes

Motion carried.

A. [Audited Financials for Hood River County for period ending June 30, 2023.](#)

RECOMMENDATION: Hear from the Auditors and accept the FY 22.23 audit report as presented.

Commissioner Babitz made a motion to accept the FY 22/23 Audit report as presented. Commissioner Moretti seconded the motion.

Vote on the motion was as follows:

Commissioner Perkins - yes
Commissioner Babitz -yes
Commissioner Moretti -yes
Chair Euwer -yes

Motion carried.

B. [2024 County Economic Development Strategy List](#)

RECOMMENDATION: Review and approve the 2024 CEDS list as presented or modified.

Commissioner Perkins made a motion to approve the 2024 CEDS list as presented. Commissioner Moretti seconded the motion.

Vote on the motion was as follows:

Commissioner Perkins - yes
Commissioner Babitz -yes
Commissioner Moretti -yes
Chair Euwer -yes

Motion carried.

C. [Budget Committee Interview - District 4 Representative](#)

RECOMMENDATION: Conduct interviews and appoint one citizen to the district 4 seat on the county budget committee.

Commissioner Perkins made a motion to appoint Matt Fullerton to district 4 position on the budget committee. Commissioner Moretti seconded the motion.

Vote on the motion was as follows:

Commissioner Perkins - yes
Commissioner Babitz -yes
Commissioner Moretti -yes
Chair Euwer -yes

Motion carried.

D. [USDA Wildlife Services in Hood River County Proposal](#)

RECOMMENDATION: Review proposal and determine if this should be budgeted for in FY 24/25.

Commissioner Perkins questioned the need for this type of service in the community. They did have an interaction last year with the sheep but that being the first time he is not sure this type of expense is justified.

Chair Euwer spoke with ODFW reps, and they felt it was a good idea and they could use the help. Also, the landowner doesn't generally get charged. Feels we should consider this more and investigate a bit more about how the funding works.

Commissioner Babitz understands the funding to be charged only if it is used and there is a ceiling on the budget.

Commissioner Moretti wondering if this funding would take away from our strategic goals. Commissioner Perkins said he is not convinced we should put \$40k into it but it is worth a continued discussion. Commissioner Babitz would like to see if this continues to come up for constituency.

Also, clarification of the financial implications. The funding will be included but during the process.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. [City of Hood River Urban Renewal Agency](#)

RECOMMENDATION: Appoint a commissioner or staff person to represent Hood River County on the Hood River Urban Renewal Agency

MOVED TO THE WORK SESSION PORTION.

No action needed at this time. Consensus

B. [Fee Waiver Request - Big River Community Land Trust](#)

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the fee waiver request submitted by Big River Community Land Trust for \$615 related to their minor variance application in Community Development as described by staff.

Previous discussion was this fee could be covered by the CET funds. We wouldn't waive the fee but pay it with the CET funds.

Babitz moved to pay the fee with CET funds. Commissioner Perkins seconded the motion.

Vote on the motion was as follows:

Commissioner Perkins - yes
Commissioner Babitz -yes
Commissioner Moretti -yes
Chair Euwer -yes

Motion carried.

C. [Fee Waiver Request - Bryant](#)

RECOMMENDATION: Deny the fee waiver request from Clarke and Annie Bryant

Eric Walker, Community Development Director gave an overview of the issue and why the recommendation is to deny the waiver request.

The applicants are requesting another partial waiver of the 2-year renewal. Due to no changes, staff is recommending denial of the request.

Commissioner Perkins made a motion to deny the fee waiver request. Commissioner Moretti seconded the motion.

Commissioner Babitz feels the staff's recommendation is compelling and it is a legitimate case of misunderstanding, and he agrees with the recommendation to deny the waiver.

Vote on the motion was as follows:

Commissioner Perkins - yes
Commissioner Babitz -yes
Commissioner Moretti -yes
Chair Euwer -yes

Motion carried.

D. [Commissioner 2024 Committee Assignments](#)

RECOMMENDATION: Review committee assignments, adjust as needed, and adopt the list for 2024.

This will be held over until the March 2024 Commission meeting. This will allow time for Commissioners to review the committee lists and we will have a better understanding of who has applied for the Commissioner District 4 seat.

Commissioner Babitz asked if anything is happening in the next month that needs to be managed now. Commissioner Perkins said CREA does want representation, but it is not urgent. The MCEDD Loan committee struggles for a commissioner.

Commissioner Babitz said he is willing to cover Commissioner Perkins on MCEDD for the next month. Commissioner Perkins suggests checking in with Jessica Metta at MCEDD to see if that is needed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (Commissioners, Legal Counsel, news media and select staff only) ORS 192.660(2)(d) - Labor Negotiations

Chair Euwer moved the commission into executive session at 7:12pm and stated the commission will not come back into session after the executive session.

ADJOURNMENT – Chair Euwer brought the Commission out of executive session and adjourned the meeting at 7:40pm.