

ORIGINAL

MID-COLUMBIA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, July 23, 2014 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Board Room, 1113 Kelly Avenue, The Dalles, Oregon

2013 Board of Directors:

- Gilliam County: *Mike Weimer, Steve Shaffer
 - Hood River County: *Maui Meyer, Les Perkins.
 - Sherman County: *Michael Smith, Cliff Jett, Tom McCoy
 - Wasco County: *Rod Runyon, Steve Kramer, Carolyn Wood
 - Wheeler County: *Chris Perry, Jack Lorts, Anne Mitchell
- (*denotes Executive Committee Members)

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Roll Call and Introductions

Michael Smith called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m.

Present: Michael Smith, Carolyn Wood, Mike Weimer, Maui Meyer, Cliff Jeff, Tom McCoy, Rod Runyon, Anne Mitchell (via telephone), and Ed Weathers.

Absent: Les Perkins, Steve Shaffer, Steve Kramer, and Jack Lorts.

Staff: John Arens, Executive Director; Sarah Braumbaugh, Fiscal Director; Bob Futter, Building Official; and Tine Meriwether, Executive Assistant.

Guests: Will Carey, MCCOG Legal Counsel; Bill Lennox, resident.

B. Approval of June 18, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Mike Weimar moved, seconded by Maui Meyer, to approve the minutes of June 18, 2013 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

II. OPEN AGENDA

There were no public comments.

III. EXECUTIVE SESSION ORS 192.660 (2) (E)

A. Real Estate

John Arens, Executive Director, addressed the Board regarding proposed real properties.

The Board came out of Executive Session and the consensus was to make the Power Point presentation by Arens, part of the public record. No Board action was taken.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

A. Building Codes Fee Discussion

Arens reviewed the hand-out for the Board that provided background information on Mid-Columbia Building Codes Services (MCBCS). He reviewed current staffing in the department including inspectors and their level of cross-training. He discussed the amount of time spent on inspections and reviewed their overtime, which, he stated, is well managed and not a high number.

Arens reviewed the population comparisons as provided to the Board in their packet. The MCBCS region is the second in population and the largest in area or square miles. It was noted that staff comparisons between agencies have not been determined.

A discussion about Morrow County Building Codes ensued. Cliff Jett stated that if their present windfall in permits were removed they might be in the same boat of operation as we are now. In response to a question posed about their staff size, Bob Futter said they have only one Building Codes Inspector and one office person. He stated Electrical Permits are issued from the Pendleton office.

In response to a question posed about the MCBCS Reserve Fund and whether or not the State had provided a Reserve, Arens reported that the Building Codes program did not come with a Reserve Fund when MCCOG took it over from State Building Codes.

Arens further reported that if a 30% fee increase were implemented, effective October 1, there would still be a short-fall of about \$50K for the nine month period.

Rod Runyon entered the meeting at 1:50 p.m.

Arens briefly reviewed his presentation for Runyon to bring him up to date.

Runyon stated one of the questions posed at the June public hearing was why a flat fee increase was proposed for all permits. Medical Gas permits, for example, are rarely used and the bulk of the fees come from Structural/Mechanical permits.

Jett stated he was on the MCCOG Board when MCCOG took over the Building Codes program from the State. He stated he believed we need to operate MCBCS as a business and not a charity. He went on to say that the wind projects were an anomaly and we should not run this program at a loss. Jett stated MCCOG is providing better service than what we had before. Arens stated if we were not operating at the current service level, we would receive complaints. Jett stated everyone complains when things go up but that should not mean we operate this at a loss.

Ed Weathers stated he understood the sentiment from the June public hearing was that because there is money in the bank why take such a large increase up front instead of incremental increases. Jett stated he was not in favor of spending down the reserve in order to support the MCBCS program because once the reserve "is gone, it's gone" and it will be difficult to rebuild.

Runyon stated the issue was the large loans from the Reserve. He questioned why the loss was not addressed 6 years ago. He stated he believed the sentiment from those who spoke at the June hearing was that they were in favor of gradual increases.

The issue of increases to building permits was further discussed. Maui Meyer stated he would be concerned that contractors will agree that because permits and construction are on the rise - how would a fee increase be justified? He stated he favored a gradual increase.

Carolyn Wood stated it was sticker shock for a 40% increase all at once. She advocated for a gradual increase.

The issue of a gradual percentage increase was further discussed. Jett and Weimar stated they were not in favor of a gradual increase.

Runyon stated he was in agreement with Meyer for a gradual increase. Meyer stated he would like to see 10% initial increase and then 10% increases in the next 3 years. Gradual increases of 10% annually over 4 years, or 20% initially followed by 10% annually over 2 years, or 30% initially followed by 10% the following year were discussed.

Also, the Board suggested a comparison study be provided showing a \$150K Residential Remodel/Addition instead of the \$50K as shown in the staff report.

Meyer questioned why we need the Reserve Fund. Arens responded that if we didn't have the Reserve we couldn't supplement the building program.

Bill Lennox (local resident), cautioned that if the Board comes back with anything less than the 40% increase as originally proposed, the sentiment of the public will be that it was not justified and they were right to call for a lesser amount.

Wood stated MCCOG needs to sell this and inform the public through articles in the paper, on the radio, etc., telling why it's important. She stated MCCOG needs to tell what MCCOG does and inform. Arens stated contractors were informed last April of the need to increase fees and few have come forward to object. Weimar stated it did not make sense to set another hearing until the Board knows what they want to do.

Following discussion, the consensus of the Board was to meet again on August 20, 2013 at 1:00 p.m. and for staff to prepare scenarios of percentage increases of 10% each year over a 4 year period; 20% initially, then 10% in year 2 and 3; or 30% initially and 10% the following year.

B. Cost Allocation Plan (CAP) Discussion.

Sarah Brumbaugh, Fiscal Director, reviewed the Cost Allocation Plan as provided in the Board packets.

Runyon asked if the Community Development Director (CDD) was approved as part of administration. Brumbaugh stated CDD it is not an allocation. Arens clarified the CDD position, saying it has oversight over and been managing the Students Recycling Used Technology (StRUT) program for the past nine months. Runyon asked if the position has a job description and is it posted on the MCCOG website. Staff responded that there is a CDD job description, but MCCOG job descriptions are not posted on the website.

Brumbaugh further reviewed the CAP report and the percentages of the allocation amounts for each program. Meyer asked about the concern expressed at the May BOD meeting by Marti Dane, Mediation Program Director, regarding a \$70K allocation for the Six Rivers program. Brumbaugh responded Dane's concern was based on misinformation and staff has since clarified this with Dane.

The automobile pool was discussed. Brumbaugh discussed the vehicles leased and stated the federal lease value is employed at the end of each year for Bob Futter's and John Arens' vehicles because they must be taxed on their personal use.

Brumbaugh concluded her presentation. Arens commented that the CAP report outlines that the total allocation for each program is based on the total percentage of their budget.

C. Six Rivers Community Mediation Services.

Arens gave a brief report on the Six Rivers Mediation Program with an overview of the Six Rivers primary funding streams of state and federal grants. Arens stated the challenge faced by the Six Rivers program is that it has a small budget but provides services to a large area. There would be some cost savings if the program were moved to the Dalles offices, approximately \$3,500 annually. Currently, the Six Rivers program does not participate in the CAP because it cannot afford it. Arens stated staff would continue to look for cost savings and increased revenues for the program.

Carolyn Wood stated she believed Six Rivers is an extremely valuable service that is not measurable and "we need to give it every effort" to make it work. Chair Smith stated he also felt the program was valuable.

Meyer questioned if the program could it be moved outside of MCCOG. Staff explained that in 2010, the program was transferred from under the umbrella of Four Rivers Corporation due to increased insurance requirements from grantors. The cost of insurance was more than Four Rivers could afford, therefore, Six Rivers was brought in under the umbrella of MCCOG¹.

Tom McCoy commented that the Six Rivers Program Director had made a presentation to the Sherman County Court asking for an increase in her allocation by \$5,000. When questioned, the Director stated only one mediation had been done in Sherman County during the past year. McCoy stated he did not believe that translates into an increase.

¹ Resolution No. 09-04, 4/27/2010

Wood commented that it would be hard to capture who she (Dane) works with and hard to give a personal picture because of confidentiality reasons.

Meyer stated the Judges in Hood River County think highly of the Six Rivers service and he would hate to take that away.


Lennox, a member of the Six Rivers Advisory Committee, spoke regarding the program. He stated Marti Dane has developed the program on her own and tried to make the program successful. She trains volunteers and chases down revenue. The Advisory Committee constantly talks about being in the community. The program is supported but maybe this Board needs to look at where it should be housed. Lennox went on to say that Dane has worked on her own to make the program a success and just last year formed the Advisory Committee to gain assistance and support. He stated that for what the program has had in terms of resources, he believes it has done a good job. He stated he believed it is a positive program. Lennox stated "people need to sit down with her (Dane)" and understand what she knows before this Board allows it to go away. He concluded that the Board also has to look at the bottom line and act appropriately.

V. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the MCCOG Board of Directors, Jett moved, seconded by Wood, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:



Tine Meriwether, Executive Assistant

ATTEST:



Michael Smith, Board Chair