



WASCO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION
APRIL 12, 2018

PRESENT: Steve Kramer, Chair
Scott Hege, Vice-Chair
Rod Runyon, County Commissioner

STAFF: Tyler Stone, Administrative Officer
Kathy White, Executive Assistant

At 12:00 p.m. Chair Kramer opened a Work Session.

Local Access Road – Dell Road

Public Works Director Arthur Smith stated that Allison Smith had contacted him some time ago regarding the unsafe condition of Dell Road and the residents' inability to provide proper maintenance. He explained that Dell Road is not in the County Road system and the county not only has no obligation to maintain the road, but are by statute not permitted to spend dedicated road funding to do so. He said that he understands the circumstances and felt it should be brought to the Board of Commissioners. He reported that in 1908 a portion of the road was dedicated as a County Road. In 1920 the Columbia River Highway was built and Dell Road fell into disuse. In 1976 adjacent landowners successfully petitioned to have it removed from the County Road system and designated as a public local access road. In 1990, a request for rededication as a public local access road was approved at which time it was named Dell Road. In 2001 Dan Boldt and Marty Matherly worked with residents to do maintenance; the County Road Department worked from April 2-5, 2001 to grade, rock and ditch the road at a total cost of \$6,244. Local residents contributed cash to support work on the 1.42 miles of gravel surface road.

Discussion ensued regarding the numbers of other local access roads in the county which total 105 miles. Area residents insisted that Dell Road is different due to its position connecting major thoroughfares and public lands. They pointed out that the road is used significantly by the public rather than just

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locals. Ms. Smith conjectured that 98% of the County's local access roads are used almost exclusively by locals.

Ms. Smith went on to say that she just started out asking for some help but after being educated, she feels that the County should accept Dell Road into the County road system. Other local residents agreed that they need a long-term solution.

Some of the ideas discussed included:

- Asking the Forest Service to designate a trail head at the end of Dell Road which would make it eligible for funding.
- Accepting Dell Road into the County Road system.
- Exploring the possibility of removing little used roads from the County system to balance adding Dell Road.
- Short-term maintenance in partnership between local residents and the County as a short-term solution until a more permanent solution can be identified.
- Conducting a traffic study to determine actual usage.
- Setting up a 10-year schedule for maintenance in partnership with local residents.
- Reinstating the grading petition program.

County Counsel Kristen Campbell advised that to spend funds on a local access road, the County will have to follow a specific process that is required under statute. County Planning Director Angie Brewer added that to designate a new road, there are density thresholds that must be met. Commissioner Hege commented that when purchasing property in rural areas there is documentation signed by the purchasers acknowledging their responsibility to maintain local access. He commended the local residents for coming together to find a solution.

Ms. Campbell pointed out that currently the County has no obligation to maintain the road and therefore no liability risk; should the County perform maintenance on the road, we would then assume some liability for that road. She added that when resources are going to this road, they are not going to a road that we are responsible to maintain. Mr. Smith added that he does not have the resources to assess all 105 miles of local access road.

Commissioner Hege pointed out that the grading petition would act as a filter – not all local residents would apply which would eliminate the need to assess those roads. In addition, not all that apply will meet minimum criteria which will

reduce eligibility.

Mikel Diwan, Public Works Director for Hood River County, said that all Oregon counties face these same issues with local access roads which have no determination for maintenance responsibility. He stated that he consistently recommends not accepting these roads into the County system because if one is accepted, you have to be prepared to accept all. He said that one exception was a road in the industrial area that had significant garbage truck usage. He explained that while the counties have no responsibility for maintaining these roads, they do have jurisdiction for signage and lights, etc. He said that a study of both county and local access roads would be useful to determine if some county roads should be surrendered and some local access roads accepted. He acknowledged that such a study would be time-consuming and expensive.

Conclusion:

- The Board will pursue discussions with Senator Merkley's office and Forest Service Officials.
- Mr. Smith will install counters on Dell Road to gather data.
- Local residents will assess willingness to contribute to offset the cost of one-time maintenance.

The issue will come back to the Board at a future date.

Oregon Records Management Solution

At 1:30 the Board participated in a ORMS webinar.

Management Team Meetings

The Board discussed the pros and cons of their attendance at Management Team meetings. While the Board finds value in hearing Management Team discussions and plans, they recognized the impact of a publicly noticed meeting on frank discussions among the Management Team. In addition, they acknowledged that their presence may in some way undermine the Administrative Officer's authority and may also influence discussion among the team.

Mr. Stone noted that this was recently discussed at a Management Team meeting. The team took into account the downside of having the Board attend meetings and still supported having them attend. He said he would be happy to bring it back to them.

Commissioner Runyon suggested do it once to try it out. Mr. Stone agreed to

have the next Management Team meeting without public notice which would preclude more than one Commissioner being in attendance.

Work Session Scheduling

The Board discussed moving Work Sessions to the afternoon of a regular Board Session.

*****The Board was in consensus to hold the afternoon of Regular Session days open to hold Work Sessions. Work sessions would be regularly scheduled for the first Wednesday of the month, with the third Wednesday held as fallback if needed. The Sessions will follow a lunch break and would commence at 1:30 p.m. in the Deschutes Room.*****

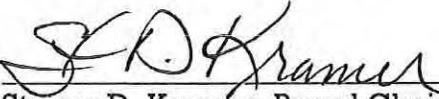
Chair Kramer adjourned the session at 2:45 p.m.

Summary of Actions

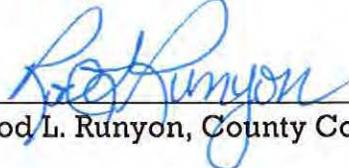
CONSENSUS

- **To hold the afternoon of Regular Session days open to hold Work Sessions. Work sessions would be regularly scheduled for the first Wednesday of the month, with the third Wednesday held as fallback if needed. The Sessions will follow a lunch break and would commence at 1:30 p.m. in the Deschutes Room.**

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Board of Commissioners


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