



WASCO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL SESSION
SEPTEMBER 1, 2017

PRESENT: Scott Hege, County Commissioner
Steve Kramer, Commission Vice-Chair (by phone)
Rod Runyon, Commission Chair

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

At 3:00 p.m. Chair Runyon opened the Regular Session of the Board of Commissioners with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Hege reported that after the work session with the South Wasco Park and Recreation District Board he had contacted the director of the Oregon State Marine Board. He categorized the Director's response as tacit; the OSMB feels that since SWPRD has no assets or tax base, OSMB wants another, more stable entity to stand behind the grant project. He went on to say that the Director was not overly excited about the idea but said that we could consider coming back to them with an offer to back the project for 10 years. Commissioner Hege offered a letter (attached) to the OSMB for the Board of Commissioners to consider. He said that the question is whether or not the County wants to act as guarantor for the project and if so, in what way.

Mr. Stone stated that he has spoken with staff at OSMB and tried to determine if there is any wiggle room to keep the County from having to get back in to the business of maintaining and overseeing the boat ramp. He reported that OSMB staff is firm on the 20 year requirement, pointing out that the problem is if the SWPRD ceases to exist, OSMB is left with an unmaintained \$300,000 investment. He went on to say that there was discussion of risk – community vs. county; he sees the County as a greater risk as we do not have the capacity for maintenance. He reported that OSMB staff was still unwilling to consider an alternative.

Mr. Stone continued by saying that it is one thing if all they are looking for is a

maintenance guarantee as the County could use MAP funding for that; the problem is the expectation that the County would repay the \$300,000 grant. He stated that he suggested that it be a depreciating value that would have to be paid back so that if the SWPRD dissolved in year 15, the County would be responsible for only a fraction of that amount, but OSMB staff was not receptive to that idea.

Mr. Stone reported that OSMB staff had visited the ramp site and also looked at the south ramp which is in need of repair; they proposed that between the OSMB and Fish and Wildlife, both ramps could be replaced but they would still want the 20-year guarantee. He stated that he would prefer to focus on one ramp at a time as we can take on the repair of the south ramp locally without incurring the liability. He said it is now up to the Board to determine what level of responsibility the County wants to take on.

Chair Runyon stated that should SWPRD fail, the County could continue maintenance – OSMB would not necessarily come to the County for repayment of the grant. Mr. Stone said that this is what happened previously; the onus for maintenance fell back to the County. Commissioner Hege asked if we had been the grantee for that project. Mr. Stone replied that the previous group had not been a government entity and the County had to act as the fiscal agent.

Chair Runyon said that the guarantee is to maintain the ramp. Mr. Stone observed that the agreement says that if SWPRD fails, the County owes the money. He said that while he can support guaranteeing the maintenance, he does not support the idea of the County paying back the full grant amount.

Commissioner Hege pointed out that a lot of work went into forming the District and the County should do what it can to make sure it continues to exist. He said that his proposed letter states that the County is willing to maintain the ramp. He stated that what the OSMB wants is for the facility to be there and be used; they are not going to call the note. He noted that one problem is that powerboats pay for the ramps; OSMB does not want to see the paddle boat industry take over the use of the reservoir since they do not pay into its upkeep. He said that he is not willing to commit to the 20 years; after 10 years, the SWPRD should be considered viable. He said that he thinks there is a slight possibility that OSMB will accept that premise. He added that he understands their concern and it seems reasonable to have that shared risk, but if after 10 years of SWPRD maintaining the ramp they will have demonstrated their stability.

Vice-Chair Kramer noted that there is someone harping on the south ramp saying that it is at the end of its life cycle. He asked if a ramp is good for only 20 years. Commissioner Hege replied that the grant period is 20 years. He stated that the south ramp needs repair but it is a fairly easy repair and does not need to be wrapped into a 20 year grant. He said that after 20 years the grant agreement expires but that does not mean that the ramp will be at the end of its life. He said that if OSMB agrees to the 10 year guarantee, the County would have no responsibility beyond that 10 year period.

Chair Runyon observed that if at the end of the 20 year grant period the ramp is in need of some repair, the SWPRD could go out for another grant to affect those repairs.

Mr. Stone said that we can say thank you but no thank you to OSMB and the SWPRD can look at other avenues to perhaps repair rather than replace the ramp which would be 10-25% the cost of a new ramp. Commissioner Hege commented that he believes it will eventually cost more and will not be of the same quality. He said that he thinks the County can offer the 10 year guarantee; if they do not accept, we can fall back to other ideas.

Mr. Stone said that if we go forward, there will need to be some modification of the agreement language. Commissioner Hege responded that all they are looking for now is a commitment letter; the County will not be a signer to the grant agreement.

Further discussion ensued regarding the language in the proposed letter; Chair Runyon stated that it needs to be strengthened. County Counsel Kristen Campbell said that she could tighten it up to make clear that while the County will guarantee the administration and operation of the ramp, we are not taking on any financial responsibility. Chair Runyon added that we helped create the District and the County wants to support them.

Vice-Chair Kramer expressed some hesitation saying that the SWPRD is an elected body and should be able to be the responsible entity – otherwise, the Board of County Commissioners should just be the Board for the District. He said that he is willing to give SWPRD a hand-up but this is their responsibility as the elected Board. He said that he can support the letter for a 10-year commitment to guarantee the maintenance of the ramp. Commissioner Hege agreed, saying that he does not want to baby them along but does want to help them be successful. Vice-Chair Kramer noted that the SWPRD has a vacancy that

they do not seem to be actively recruiting to fill. He also reported that one other member of the Board has threatened to resign.

Chair Runyon suggested that the OSMB should also be made aware that the County has already demonstrated a commitment to the SWPRD by staffing them. Commissioner Hege said that what the letter offers is a 10 year commitment to guarantee maintenance of the ramp. While details will still need to be ironed out, it says a lot to the south part of the County.

*****The Board was in consensus to sign the proposed letter offering a 10-year County commitment for maintenance of the North Pine Hollow boat ramp with modifications to the letter to be made by County Counsel and approved by the Administrative Officer.*****

Vice-Chair Kramer said that there will be a letter in next week's packet regarding a recommendation for Waste Connections as they move forward to acquire another landfill in Washington State. He said the letter just outlines our experience with them as good partners and community members.

Chair Runyon adjourned the session at 3:40 p.m.

Summary of Actions

Consensus

- **To sign the proposed letter offering a 10-year County commitment for maintenance of the North Pine Hollow boat ramp with modifications to the letter to be made by County Counsel and approved by the Administrative Officer**

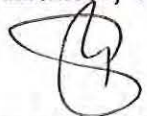
Wasco County
Board of Commissioners



Rod L. Runyon, Board Chair



Steven D. Kramer, Vice Chair



Scott C. Hege, County Commissioner