



WASCO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 8, 2018

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

STAFF: Tyler Stone, Administrative Officer
Tawny Kramer, Office Manager

Chair Kramer opened the Work Session at 11:30 a.m.

Planning

Vice-Chair Hege stated that under the current rules, you can build an accessory building that is no larger than 75% of your residence. The rules also allow you to build as many accessory buildings as you want, as long as they are not connected. Unfortunately, this means that if someone with a 1,000 square foot home needs a 2,000 square foot accessory building, they either have to build three smaller permitted buildings or one large building for which they do not obtain a permit. He commented that he thinks the rule is unreasonable and it encourages owners to be dishonest. He said he has spoken to Planning Director Angie Brewer and learned that the Planning Department is aware of the issue and they are working on revisions to the plan and ordinance that will address this issue. However, it is a long process and he would like to see a solution sooner rather than later.

Vice-Chair Hege went on to say that he asked how we might address the issue now and was advised by Ms. Brewer that it is within the Board's authority to make that change now. He stated that with Ms. Brewer's assistance, he plans to bring something forward to make that change.

Ms. Brewer said the Board can make that decision right now. She stated that Chapter 2 of the Ordinance allows the Board to direct staff to initiate a rule-making process to create or change rules.

Commissioner Runyon asked if our rules are more restrictive than the state rules. Ms. Brewer replied that regarding the size of accessory buildings, Wasco County's ordinance is more restrictive than the State, outside the scenic area.

Commissioner Runyon stated that he would like to direct the planning Department to explore Vice-Chair Hege's concerns regarding the size of accessory buildings outside the scenic area in Wasco County. Chair Kramer concurred.

*****The Board was in consensus to direct the planning Department to explore Vice-Chair Hege's concerns regarding the size of accessory buildings outside the scenic area in Wasco County.*****

Ms. Brewer asked that the Board be patient regarding a timeline.

Further discussion ensued regarding the process. Ms. Brewer stated that she anticipates the change to be something that would trigger deeper review to ensure that structures going up are appropriate to the zone so as not to have a negative impact on the neighborhood.

Jail Space Renovation

Vice-Chair Hege noted that we originally planned to accomplish the renovation in steps. The first step was to tear out all the jail cells; the next step would be design work; the third step would be the actual build. As Facilities Manager Fred Davis began the first step, he found that contractors were not interested in doing just the demolition and the first step alone would be relatively expensive. He said that it seems more efficient and less costly to do the project as a whole – demo/design/build. He stated that Mr. Davis suggested that instead of just addressing the jail space, we really need to look at the entire first floor as a whole. Vice-Chair Hege said that he agrees – we need to evaluate how that floor can be put to its best use for the County.

Mr. Stone concurred that we need to look at the whole floor. Further discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of the two approaches. Commissioner Runyon commented that he would like the design to include a different entrance to the Sheriff's Office rather than people coming in off of the alley.

Vice-Chair Hege said that he just wanted to bring this to the Board for discussion;

it will fall to Mr. Stone to direct staff on moving the project forward.

QLife

Discussion ensued regarding the authority to appoint members to the QLife Budget Committee. Historically those appointments have been made by the Board of Commissioners and The Dalles City Council. However, a review of the bylaws indicates that the QLife Board has the authority to make those appointments. Mr. Stone stated that with budget in process, he would like to move forward with an appointment through the QLife Board.

Vice-Chair Hege stated that it creates the potential for QLife to be less connected to their governing bodies. In addition, it fosters a situation where the QLife Board members would appoint a budget committee that thinks just as they do which makes those appointees less objective when reviewing the budget. He stated he is not necessarily opposed to QLife making the appointment, but wants to be cautious.

Ms. Cramer noted that the QLife Board is composed of two County and two City appointees along with a member at large. Mr. Stone said the question should be put to the City and County regarding direction for the appointment process.

*****The Board was in consensus to have the QLife Board appoint to fill the current vacancy on their Budget Committee for this budget cycle and to revisit this issue at a later date for a definitive solution.*****

Investment Committee Member Appointment

Finance Director Mike Middleton said he needs to fill the Investment Committee public member position to move forward. Commissioner Runyon suggested John Hutchison would be a good choice. Chair Kramer agreed. He said he has reached out to others but found no interest.

Compensation

Mr. Stone said that he is looking for input from the Board on the following items:

- The Management Team's request for in-house County Counsel.
- Compensation levels for Senior Management – all Directors are being actively recruited. We are evaluating the market, but he believes we will come in well below the market rate.

- Shifting the Human Resources position from Manager to Director.

Commissioner Runyon stated that he does not want to be in competition with the metropolitan areas. Mr. Stone stated that we are being recruited by Hood River, Mid-Columbia Medical Center, etc.

Vice-Chair Hege observed that we already have a compensation philosophy that should apply in all situations including this one. He said that it sounds like the compensation tables are not inline; we should not be singling out a group for special consideration.

Mr. Stone pointed out that our policy is based on paying at the 50th percentile of the market . . . that attracts the 50th percentile person. Our current management team is functioning at a much higher level and can command a higher rate of pay.

Vice-Chair Hege stated that he finds it troubling to suggest that we pay management at a higher percentage of the market than the rest of the employees. If we need to retain good people, we need to do that at every level. Mr. Stone agreed.

Vice-Chair Hege went on to say that people need to choose to be here without money being their highest priority; we are never going to be the highest paying employer. He added that he does not want to pay poorly but there needs to be a balance. If there is a vast disparity between what we are paying and what others are paying locally, then we are not paying at the appropriate percentile or we are getting bad data for our tables. We shouldn't pay different groups within the County at different rates – if we raise for one, we raise for all - but we have to make those decisions with consideration to what we can afford. He said he wants to retain good people and pay them fairly but there is other value we can offer outside of money.

Commissioner Runyon suggested that we need to revisit the plan. Chair Kramer agreed that we need to review the current plan. Vice-Chair Hege stated that staff needs to come to the Board with a recommendation that includes a financial impact statement. Mr. Middleton noted that we are at the bottom of the scale for vacation and could offer more. He said there are other things we can do – flexible work schedules, vesting, etc.

Mr. Stone suggested that a four-day work week would be a great benefit to a great number of people without a lot of cost to the County.

Vice-Chair Hege said that he does not have the data needed to weigh-in on the idea of in-house counsel and would prefer that the Administrative Officer come to the Board with data and a recommendation.

Vice-Chair Hege said he is not sure what level of Human Resource services we have or want that would justify that position rising to the level of Director. He noted that there is no staffing for that office other than the current manager. Mr. Stone responded that Human Resources is viewed in ways other than staffing levels, i.e., are they participating in labor negotiations, policy decisions, disciplinary processes, etc.?

Commissioner Runyon asked Mr. Middleton for his opinion. Mr. Middleton said that the initial conversation was that the position should be a Director but was left at the manager level to allow Ms. Biechler to grow into the position. He said the fact is that Ms. Biechler has excelled in her position and is ready now.

Annex Space

Vice-Chair Hege said that Public Health is hiring three people for a grant project and needs work space for them. He reported that Public Health Director Teri Thalhofer has been talking to Community Corrections Manager Fritz Bachman about using some space in Annex B; they have money in the grant to pay rent. He stated that the proposal is to improve the space and use it for the duration of the grant. He said that it will be of benefit to the County.

Commissioner Runyon asked if Mr. Stone is aware of this. Vice-Chair Hege replied that he did consult with Mr. Stone but has tried to keep the work off of his desk.

Administrative Officer's (AO) Annual Review

Chair Kramer suggested that the AO's review could be formal and informal, alternating every other year – the informal review would be just the Board; the formal review to include feedback from the Management Team and community partners. Commissioner Runyon stated he would support an informal review this year. Vice-Chair Hege concurred, adding that he sees it as an opportunity to ensure good communication between the AO and the Board. He said that even when it is a less formal review, the Commissioners should put their thoughts in

writing.

Mr. Stone said the Board has the last AO review and suggested that they use that to put their thoughts together as a basis for the discussion and review. Commissioner Runyon said that he thinks the Directors should have an opportunity to weigh in. Chair Kramer said that will delay the review which is already late. Vice-Chair Hege said that when polling directors, it should be a blind survey to get honest feedback.

Chair Kramer stated that the Board will address the review at the March 7th session.

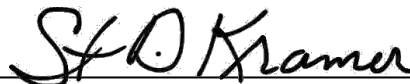
The session was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Summary of Actions

CONSENSUS

- **To direct the planning Department to explore Vice-Chair Hege's concerns regarding the size of accessory buildings outside the scenic area in Wasco County.**
- **To have the QLife Board appoint to fill the current vacancy on their Budget Committee for this budget cycle and to revisit this issue at a later date for a definitive solution.**

Wasco County
Board of Commissioners



Steven D. Kramer, Board Chair



Scott C. Hege, Vice-Chair



Rod L. Runyon, County Commissioner