



WASCO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MAUPIN TOWN HALL

APRIL 27, 2023

This meeting was held in person and on Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84802522147?pwd=SlZHSndod2RhY09NRE8xNOJ0djRWZz09>

PRESENT: Steve Kramer, Chair
Scott Hege, Vice-Chair
Phil Brady, County Commissioner

STAFF: Kathy Clark, Executive Assistant
Tyler Stone, Administrative Officer
Matthew Ellis, District Attorney
Ali Postlewait, Administrative Services Director
Elijah Preston, Treasurer
Lane Magill, Sheriff
Kelly Howsley-Glover, Planning Director
Lisa Gambée, County Clerk
Jill Amery, County Assessor/Tax Collector (via Zoom)

Chair Kramer opened the Town Hall at 5:30 p.m. with introductions to the Board and County Staff. Each Commissioner made a brief opening statement.

District Attorney Matthew Ellis announced that through the budgeting process they will be able to provide a system in Maupin to allow access to a law library. It should be up and running sometime this summer. He also offered copies of his mid-term report for the DA's office.

County Clerk Lisa Gambée reminded everyone that there is a special district election in May. Contact her office if you do not get a ballot by Monday, May 1st.

A citizen asked about all the ranchers and farmers being asked to put solar panels on their property. He said that some have said yes, others have said no. Promoters are telling them that they can make more money with solar than raising cattle. He asked if any of the Commissioners have a perspective.

Chair Kramer stated that he does not have personal experience but there are more subsidies on the way for solar power.

WASCO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MAUPIN TOWN HALL

APRIL 27, 2023

PAGE 2

Vice-Chair Hege said that we have rules and regulations administered by our Planning Department. If you have an opportunity and it falls within the rules, it is the property owner's decision. There can be benefits and challenges. Avangrid is a big project and is the only renewable energy project in Wasco County. We have others that have been permitted but not built. It has brought some economic activity to the area and will bring in some tax revenue to local districts.

Ms. Howsley-Glover said that there are two projects that have reached out to the Oregon Department of Energy and the Energy Facility Siting Council; one starts in The Dalles and goes through to Portland and the other is near the Avangrid project. The process takes years and is costly. The County's role is to guide ODE regarding our rules for siting. The first ever project approved was a wind project that started in 2009 and has recently gone back to propose another iteration – there have been several.

A citizen asked what the life span is for the energy projects. Ms. Howsley-Glover said that 20-30 years is the approximate life span of both solar and wind projects. She noted that they build an exit plan into the projects so that aged infrastructure is not left behind at the end of the project's useful life.

Mayor Carol Beatty noted that the overhead wires are unsightly; she asked if there is anything the County can do about that. Ms. Howsley-Glover answered that it is approved by the state; the County has very little influence. She said that Wasco County has been in contact with ODE to educate Avangrid about our fire season. Last year we began the conversation about where to house the workers; one thing we did was to open the fairgrounds for RV placement and look at other places that may be able to provide housing.

Maupin City Council President Susan Wright asked what the plans are for the next year regarding a resident deputy for policing. Sheriff Magill replied that the Sheriff's Office is budgeted for 18 deputies and currently has only 13. They are actively recruiting and have some candidates moving through the process. There are currently 4 deputies who live in the southern part of the County and there is discussion about a resident deputy; however there is not a commitment as yet for a full-time resident deputy. The goal is to be fully staffed with one deputy committed to south county. There are other law enforcement agencies that help to cover the southern part of the county such as State Police and Forest Service Units.

Mary Beechler added a question to the chat regarding the Road Department guidelines for gravel roads and residential streets. Chair Kramer pointed out that

WASCO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MAUPIN TOWN HALL

APRIL 27, 2023

PAGE 3

our Public Works Director is not here this evening. He said that public access roads are not maintained by the County and added that he would try to connect Ms. Beechler to the Public Works Director to get her questions answered.

A citizen asked what new projects are in the budget that will benefit the southern part of the County. Mr. Stone said that all of the infrastructure at the fairgrounds is being updated such as electrical systems, water and waste water. Muddy Road is being paved by Young Life. Public Works will be doing 30 miles of road improvement.

Ms. Howsley-Glover added that the county has been awarded a grant to inventory local roads of public access over the next 18 months. We will be driving those roads and working with emergency responders to identify roads that are essential to fire access and evacuation.

Mr. Stone went on to say that they are writing grants to extend Wi-Fi services from here through Tygh Valley and Wamic.

Commissioner Brady pointed out that the work being done for housing the homeless throughout the county will benefit everyone. The Oregon Motel is now being used for temporary housing. We are starting work on a Navigation Center and Resolution Center; when someone has been violent or experienced a mental health crisis, there is somewhere for them to go other than jail.

Chair Kramer said that we were fortunate enough to have Governor Kotek visit The Dalles. While she was here, we talked to her about the houseless situation in regard to funding and legislation for those looking for a hand up rather than a hand out. She assured us that our region would not be left behind.

Mayor Beatty stated that Maupin is struggling with child care provider shortages. She explained that they have a facility but the child care service provider is discontinuing services. The district cannot help with funding and some residents are considering moving away because of the lack of services. She said that they need \$20,000 for the summer and have asked the South Wasco Alliance for a grant. She asked if the County has any funding available.

Chair Kramer asked if the City has talked to the League of Oregon Cities, State representatives and senators, CGCC or the Educational Service District's Child Care Partners. Mayor Beatty said she has spoken to the LOC but not the others. Chair Kramer said that is where they need to start as they are the experts. He pointed out that the County is not a granting agency; we have specific

WASCO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MAUPIN TOWN HALL

APRIL 27, 2023

PAGE 4

responsibilities and child care is not one of them. This isn't just happening in Maupin but throughout the state and across the country. We need to have conversations with legislators to relax some of the restrictions and requirements. That will require a unified voice. He said he would be happy to help the City make those connections.

A citizen asked what kind of restrictions stand in the way. Chair Kramer said that the number of children per adult, fire suppression and provider requirements are examples of what could be modified. The citizen said that she thinks those are requirements that she thinks are important to parents.

Commissioner Brady agreed that child care is not a core function of the County. He said Gilliam County helped set up an outside agency to run child care but Gilliam County has a lot of wind power revenue. He said that the County is using a grant writing company that might be helpful. He suggested that they might also talk to Head Start. He said in the northern part of the county, it is an economic issue where parents have to choose between work and child care. Businesses are banding together to find a way to make it work.

Maupin American Legion Commander Denny Wright talked about the need for a welcoming space for members to meet. He said membership is dwindling and those that are left are trying to raise the funds. A welcoming space will help increase membership to the organization which offers veterans a place to come together as a community to support one another. Mr. Preston said that he works with the Veterans Service Office and would be happy to talk with Mr. Wright after the Town Hall to see if there is anything he can do to help. Mr. Stone asked how much money they are looking for. Mr. Wright said that \$1,000 would go a long way. He added that if the County has any surplussed furniture, that could be helpful as well.

A citizen commented that Sheriff's Deputies, fire and ambulance responders should get their pay doubled – be sure to say thank you when you see them.

Ben Gates, owner of Maupin Works, said that through the Board they were able to get connected with Business Oregon to support local businesses. Maupin Works is an entrepreneurial hub that offers co-working and production space, providing direct resources and services to grow small businesses. He said this Town Hall reminds him of the importance of partnerships and working county-wide. He asked if there are any emerging projects they should be aware of. Chair Kramer said that MCEDD's Carrie Pipinich is the person to talk to; MCEDD does an excellent job. He said he would be happy to work with him to build that

WASCO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MAUPIN TOWN HALL

APRIL 27, 2023

PAGE 5

relationship. He said he is excited about the work being done in Maupin. Mr. Gates said that Ms. Pipinich has been a great partner. Chair Kramer said the MCEDD Loan Advisory Board is very active in the Maupin area.

Chair Kramer closed the Town Hall at 6:30 p.m. saying that all of the Commissioners phones are on and they will talk to citizens anytime.

Wasco County
Board of Commissioners



Steven D. Kramer, Commission Chair



Scott C. Hege, Vice-Chair



Philip L. Brady, County Commissioner