

WASCO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
THURSDAY, October 5, 2017
9:30 am
Shaniko School House
93475 6th St.
Shaniko, OR

ATTENDANCE

COMMISSION MEMBERS: Kathy Ursprung, Matthew Klebes, Mary Kramer, Fred Justesen, Frank Kay, Stan Kelsay, Terry Moore (via phone for only a portion of the meeting)

GUESTS: Susan Paterson (City of Shaniko), Nate Stice (North Central Regional Solutions), Sue Knapp (City of Maupin), Don and Mary Trainer (Shaniko residents)

EDC STAFF: Carrie Pipinich (MCEDD), Jacque Schei (MCEDD)

CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:45 am.

LOCAL ORGANIZATION PRESENTATION

Susan Paterson, City Recorder for Shaniko, provided a welcome to Shaniko and a history of the City. There are 36 residents in Shaniko, 25 year round. The City has a budget of \$35,000 to 40,000 per year. There is no permanent tax collected for residents, but the City uses a local option tax when needed. They currently have a local option tax in place for fire prevention. This tax brings in about \$5,500 per year. Last year, there was a break in the City's water system that was built in 1986. The fire department has one structure truck, one brush truck, and a third truck that currently isn't running. The fire department only has the capacity to respond to issues in town. There is no EMT or ambulance service in the area.

The schoolhouse, old jail, and water tower serve as tourist points of interest in the summer. However, the water tower was damaged about six years ago. The School House was restored in 2001. The City has issues in trying to get grant funds for improvements because they do not have the personnel to work on grants. They are currently trying to get a recycling trailer set up in town. In addition, they received a grant to do juniper removal in the watershed. Susan mentioned they would be interested in improved broadband access, water system improvements, and workable fire trucks.

Susan gave the group an overview of Eclipse events. The City was told to expect about 5,000 people in town and about 40,000 within a 12-mile radius. The Sheriff set up a station at the rest area to address any challenges and assigned a squad car to patrol the Antelope-Shaniko loop. The City actually saw about 1,500 visitors during the weekend prior to the eclipse and the day of. This was not enough to overload their water system and no fires were started. The amount of garbage somewhat impacted the City, but because they asked people to pack trash out, impact was limited. They made about \$2,000 on camping so were able to cover expenses.

Susan gave the group a tour of the museum in the schoolhouse.

JUNE 2017 EDC MINUTES

Frank Kay moved to approve the June 1, 2017, meeting minutes. Mary Kramer seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS

Carrie Pipinich noted that it is time to start the prioritization process for the 2018 Community Enhance Project. She requested feedback from EDC Commissioners regarding the criteria for the process, any pieces that should be changed, and any items that the group should focus on.

Frank stated that the process and proposed changes made sense. He asked how we would justify to the County Commission or the public the focus on a project that is not ranked (referring to a change to take “technical assistance readiness” out of the ranking process). Kathy Ursprung commented that because the list is used for multi-purpose grant funding, political support and EDC purposes, we can provide technical assistance as needed, but not all project will require it. The group agreed that part of the EDC’s mission focuses on building community capacity, and that this could include working with projects to get them to a point where they would find value in being included in the ranked portion of the list.

Carrie noted that the group has expressed interest to making sure there is balance in terms of geography and large and small communities. In looking at how to build this equity into the criteria, the group agreed that the current process is suitable.

Frank asked if the requirement to have projects on the Agora Platform is a barrier to smaller communities. It was noted that there is a large value to MCEDD and County to have projects entered into Agora when talking to funders. There was discussion about Carrie’s time and how much should be devoted to supporting this task. It was noted that there was an Agora training/outreach session a few years ago, but there was little interest. Frank suggested planning another session, but target specific people/communities that need help. Susan Paterson mentioned that entering projects into Agora was definitely a barrier for the City of Shaniko. She suggested that prior to any seminar or training session, information be distributed about Agora – what it is, why it’s important, here is what is needed to get funding.

There was general consensus from the group that the Community Enhancement Project prioritization process as proposed looks good. Commissioners should let Carrie know if they have suggestions for changes. January 18, 2018, is the meeting date where organizations who submitted projects will make presentations to the EDC – staff will look for meeting space in Dufur or Maupin for this meeting.

Carrie Pipinich noted that the 2017 Community Enhancement Project progress report could be found in her memo and that there had been a lot of movement on projects in this past year.

EDC POSITION OPENING

Carrie Pipinich thanked Fred Justesen for several years of service on the Commission. She noted Fred requested to step down from his position early. Carrie asked the Commissioners to think about replacements that would be focused on agriculture, specifically wheat/cattle. Fred suggested the group look for candidates at the Wasco/Sherman County Cattleman’s Association. Mary suggested the group notify the City Councils so they can announce the opening at meetings or put it in their newsletters. Other suggestions included looking to the Wheat Association or Mid-Columbia Grain Growers for candidates.

Carrie will put notice of the vacancy on the MCEDD website and distribute application forms.

EDC COMMITTEE UPDATES

Mosier: Terry Moore provided an update for the City of Mosier. Team Mosier (school, City, and fire district) received a Letter of Offer from Union Pacific and have formally accepted it. There is currently a draft of the final agreement (looking similar to the Letter of Offer) that could be finalized sometime in the next three months. Terry noted that Union Pacific has spent \$7 million in cleanup and restoration efforts that are not included in the draft agreement. The offer includes \$500,000 for the joint Fire/City Hall building, \$350,000 will go to the Mosier School; the fire district will receive additional funds to install a

new pump system that will bring water from the Columbia River; and there will be an additional \$400,00 provided to divide between the entities how they see fit.

Terry also noted that Mosier is moving along with efforts to develop a joint use facility for the fire station and City Hall. They received a grant from the TGM program to conduct a feasibility study. They also presented to the Legislature and received \$500,000 for the project. They are continuing to look for additional funds needed and may implement a bond to fill the gap.

Terry noted the City is making progress on the Mosier Strategic Plan that is building on the various planning processes they have conducted over the last several years.

Stan Kelsay asked about progress on the Mosier Well project. Carrie noted that Mosier took part in a one stop meeting last fall to learn about funding opportunities for a project to combine the east side distribution system and well project. The engineer for the project is currently working to submit grant applications for USDA funding.

Dufur: Carrie noted that the City of Dufur received \$400,000 to support safe routes to school and sidewalk improvement through the Transportation Package. The EDC is assisting Dufur in creating a plan for spending the funds. Carrie and Kathy will be meeting with the Dufur Chamber to discuss the plan for the \$10,000 grant awarded from Travel Oregon for developing a community brand as well.

Wamic: The EDC and Business Oregon worked with Wamic to have a one stop meeting in late June. The City likely won't receive as much grant funds as they need for the project. They will work with circuit writers to see if they can meet the criteria for a higher level of funding.

Broadband Committee: The Committee is working closely with Q-Life and the City of Maupin to move the Maupin Fiber Project forward and to address the funding shortfall resulting from higher than anticipated construction bids. She will have a call in the coming week to discuss the project with the EDA area representative. It was noted that The Dalles Community Outreach team was in Washington D.C. last week and voiced support there for the EDA funding.

Open for Business Committee: This group looking for persons interested in helping with interviews with businesses outside of The Dalles area to complement the Port and Main Street Business Retention and Expansion activities. The Committee will be updating the major employers list for Wasco County and looking into a grant to support a writing workshop in the future.

STAFF REPORT

Carrie presented the staff report. She highlighted several items:

- Staff met with partners to discuss next steps regarding challenges in Tygh Valley with their current septic systems.
- Staff has been working with RCAC and the South Wasco Alliance to explore opportunities to host a training for the small, rural water systems in Wasco County. A survey is underway to gather information from the systems about their needs and identify the best approach to delivering this service. The training will be hosted in spring/summer 2018.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Matthew Klebes – Matthew reported that there is a change in the vertical housing tax zone administration moving the program from State administration to the local communities, so he is now the contact for the

zone. He noted that the development of nine apartments in the Honald Building is moving forward. Matthew noted that the Enterprise Zone is scheduled to sunset at the end of June in 2018, with extended abatements required to be in place before June 30, 2017. They are currently in conversations with PowderPure, who has been purchased by International Flavors and Fragrance, about an enterprise zone agreement. Matthew noted that they are in conversations about renewing or potentially redesignating the zone. There will be a discussion in October or November with the City Council to see if there is interest. After their input, he will work with Carrie to bring the topic back to the EDC for discussion. If the City Council is not interested, they will pass questions along to County. There was a question whether or not small cities (i.e., Maupin) can be included. Matthew mentioned that they can have a non-contiguous zone and can expand the zone to incorporate other areas of the County Matthew is going to look into the process more and will have additional details as the next EDC meeting.

Mary Kramer – Mary reported that business in Dufur are stable after the impacts of the Eagle Creek Fire. She noted that Dr. Toda retired from Columbia Gorge Community College at the end of September. The Board is establishing a committee to find a new president and is looking for six community members to participate. Contact the college if you are interested. Mary also reported that the college's Renewable Energy Technology Program is morphing into an electro-mechanical program.

Jacque Schei – Jacque presented an update from the City of Antelope. The City received a grant in 2016 from the Community Development Block Grant program to support construction of its transmission mains, addition of a water storage reservoir, and upsizing the water mains in the distribution network. The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs requested that a cultural resources survey be conducted as part of the environmental review. During the survey, a significant number of tools and other stone artifacts were found at the site planned for the reservoir. The reservoir site will have to be relocated and the project team is currently discussing potential sources of additional funding for the redesign and additional archaeological work for the project.

Kathy Ursprung – Kathy reported that the Port of The Dalles is working on regional information gathering in conjunction with the college and large employers as they begin to develop their Gorge Works program. This is an effort to help build the pipeline to entry level employment, as many businesses are in need of filling those positions. There will be a pilot season in the summer of 2018 and they are currently recruiting host businesses. Internships will be awarded in April. Kathy mentioned that the Manufacturing Day event had to be postponed due to scheduling conflicts. The schools are moving along with a plan to replace school facilities with a bond election tentatively planned for November 2018. The current plan is to replace schools over the course of 20-25 years.

Fred Justesen – Fred reported that wheat farmers are currently seeding. An industrial hemp processing business is getting started in Sherman County in Grass Valley and it would support South County growers interested in participating in the industry.

Stan Kelsay – Stan noted the previously mentioned broadband project for the City of Maupin. He was optimistic it will be done in 2018.

Frank Kay – Frank noted that the Library/City Hall project, the fiber deployment, and the proposed new health clinic continue to move through their processes. They have contracted with a grant writer to help with the expansion of the health clinic's We Care campaign and have hired the same firm to support the Library/City Hall project as well.

Nate Stice – Nate reported that there are opportunities for funding from the Regional Infrastructure Fund. The process will be a Request for Information followed by a Request for Proposals. They are trying to use

the Request for Information to better understand the need for this funding source. You can send ideas to Nate or MCEDD. Additionally, applications for the DLCD Technical Assistance grants are due Friday. Solutions is putting a lot of focus on broadband and housing as their two priorities locally. Housing has been identified statewide as a challenge to economic development. There is currently a Request for Proposal for three to four pilot communities across the state. Nate thanked the EDC for helping mobilize resources during the Eagle Creek Fire. He mentioned that the Governor has announced a regional recovery council for the Gorge and will be convening groups in the next few weeks.

Meeting Adjourn at 11:30 am for tour of the Washington Family Ranch.

Submitted by Carrie Pipinich, EDC Staff