

MINUTES FOR THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
STATE OF OREGON, COUNTY OF JACKSON
STAFF MEETING HELD ON
OCTOBER 7, 2021

The Board of Commissioners' Staff Meeting was opened by Commissioner Rick Dyer on Thursday, October 7, 2021, at 9:01 a.m. by videoconference. Those participating were:

Rick Dyer, Chair
Dave Dotterer, Commissioner
Colleen Roberts, Commissioner
Danny Jordan, County Administrator
Joel Benton, County Counsel
Alycia Hartley, Recording Secretary
Members of the Public and Press

1. *Input From County Counsel*
Mr. Benton had nothing to report.

2. *Input From County Administrator*
 - a. *Review Agenda Items for the October 13, 2021, BoC Regular Meeting*
Mr. Jordan reviewed the agenda (*Submission No. 1*) and there were no changes.

Mr. Jordan provided an update regarding the preliminary tax rate being 3.35 percent and the tax rolls being certified at 1.8 percent. He explained that, by comparing last year's Summary of Assessment and Levies (SAL) to this year's, he discovered that the Medford Urban Renewal Agency (MURA) chose to take the full increment of tax available to them from the frozen rate on urban renewal, when in prior years they have not been doing that. This, in turn, affected the overall tax among all of the taxing districts. He explained that, when an urban renewal district is created, it freezes the value of anything in the district for distribution to the tax rate and, as tax value goes up, the distribution of taxes stays frozen; the increments get invested. From taxes that would have come to the County, last year MURA pulled \$37,371, this year it was \$587,995 due to them taking the full rate. The effect of MURA making this change caused the tax coming to the County, as well as all other taxing districts, to drop significantly. Mr. Jordan noted that this was outside of Assessment's expectation. He provided examples of the different impacts to the taxing districts, with a total of \$3,300,000 in countywide impacts. It is a legitimate reason for the change, and there are no concerns of a certification error at this time. Commissioner Dyer asked if an urban renewal agency gives notice when it decides to make a change in what they take. Mr. Jordan answered that no, there is no requirement to do so. His understanding, from talking with Assessment, is that MURA intends to take the full amount moving forward, and to extend its term. He also noted that, while the City of Medford loses tax revenue from this as well, they gain it under MURA. It is an appropriate function of urban renewal to take those taxes to invest; although it is still a big hit to the County's budget that was not anticipated. There was a brief discussion on the effects of this decision by MURA, and Mr. Jordan noted that the County Assessment staff did a good job with the certification.

3. *Discussion of a Letter of Support for a Connect Oregon Grant Application for the Prospect State Airport*

Mr. Jordan explained that he sent individual emails to the Commissioners regarding a request from Mr. John Rachor, former County Commissioner, for the Board to send this letter (*Submission No. 2*) supporting the Connect Oregon Grant Application. He explained that, typically, the County would not write letters of support that would compete with grant applications that the County is submitting; however, Mr. Jerry Brienza, Airport Director, believes this one will only minimally compete. They are applying for different things, although it is the same pot of money. Mr. Jordan explained the many ways in which the Prospect State Airport (Airport) benefits the community and, currently, the runway is closed due to bad surface conditions. This letter would state the Board's support of the Grant Application which would improve the Airport.

Commissioner Roberts made a motion to approve the letter supporting the Grant Application by the Prospect State Airport. Commissioner Dotterer seconded the motion. Those who voted aye: Commissioner Roberts, Commissioner Dotterer, and Commissioner Dyer. Motion passed.

Following the motion and roll call vote, Commissioner Roberts, Commissioner Dotterer, and Commissioner Dyer each authorized the use of his/her electronic signature on the letter presented, pursuant to Order No. 1-21.

4. *Discussion Regarding COVID-19*

Mr. Jordan provided an update on positive COVID-19 case numbers, deaths, and hospitalizations. Commissioner Dyer stated that he spoke with Mr. Brent Barry, Superintendent, Phoenix-Talent School District, who confirmed that there are only three staff members that are either not vaccinated or have not submitted an exemption or exception. He also explained that those who have exceptions or exemptions will remain employed in their current fashion; the District is not seeing a big hit due to the vaccination mandate. Commissioner Dyer clarified however, that all industries seem to be experiencing shortages and any impacts are consequential.

Mr. Jordan reported on attending a recent hospital surge meeting. He explained that, with regard to all current contracts for staffing in this region, the State reported that any extensions will be put on hold. He said that it is because there is a difference between responding to the surge versus continuity of care due to staffing, which does not qualify for Federal government funding. The current contracts will be honored up to their expiration date, which is in December. Mr. Jordan noted that the surge is also subjective and, although the hospitals are no longer full of COVID-19 patients, they are still full due to a backup of people who needed medical care, but waited until the hospitals were no longer inundated with COVID-19 patients. Commissioner Dyer noted that, regardless of what type of patients are in the hospitals, it depletes the level of care if they continue to lose current staff while being unable to recruit new staff due to the vaccination mandate. Mr. Jordan clarified that, although there may be impacts in other areas of healthcare, the hospitals have not voiced that concern, even without the contract staff extension. Commissioner Dotterer reported on the ways that the Logos Public Charter School is addressing the vaccination mandate, and noted that they have not lost any personnel. Commissioner Roberts stated that it is important to know that these schools are accepting and accommodating exceptions and exemptions. Mr. Jordan and Mr. Benton gave a brief update on impacts to the County due to the mandate, which are minimal.

