

**MINUTES**  
**UMATILLA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
Administrative Meeting of June 30, 2021  
8:00 a.m. (Google Meet/Room 114)  
Umatilla County Courthouse, Pendleton, Oregon

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**Commissioners participating:** Chair George Murdock, Vice-Chair John Shafer (appearing remotely), and Commissioner Dan Dorran

**County Counsel:** Doug Olsen

**Guests:** Jennifer Blake, HR Director; Bryce Dole, EO (appearing remotely)

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Chair Murdock called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**Business Item:**

1. **Temporary Ban on Fireworks.** The discussion before the board is to consider a possible ban on fireworks due to the weather and temperature. Doug Olsen noted the Board has authority under ORS 401.309 to declare emergency and to establish and carry out any activity to prevent, minimize, respond to or recover from an emergency – in this case, due to drought and the burn bans, plus a Governor-declared emergency, he read, the order -- 1) to provide public safety and water resources to minimize the state of emergency, use of any and all fireworks as defined by ORS within unincorporated areas of the county (outside of the Umatilla Indian Reservation) is prohibited; violation of the order will be subject to civil infraction enforceable by county ordinance and other penalties allowed by law; fireworks displays approved by the county sheriff and Oregon state fire marshal are exempt from restrictions; and the order will remain in effect until such time as the emergency is over or by 9/30/21, or the earlier of the two. **Commissioner Dorran moved to adopt Order No. BCC2021-064. Commissioner Shafer seconded,** along with comment about not banning people having fun, this is not banning the purchase, but no lighting of fireworks at this time. Commissioner Dorran added he had received many calls about this; fireworks are a danger with such high heat. And, Chair Murdock noted it is for most vulnerable areas – forest, rangeland, pastures. He has also heard farmers will be devastated due to the heat with limited wheat crop as well as cattle producers. We don't need another disaster. Commissioner Dorran added the importance of partnership with federal partners – USFS, BLM and the like. Chair Murdock also noted calls from municipalities who are interested in what the county is doing and they may follow suit. Commissioner Shafer advised he has also heard from fire chiefs requesting this action, which is not taken lightly. **Carried, 3-0.**
  
2. **COVID Emergency Declaration.** Mr. Olsen presented. Before the board is a proposal to lift the local state of emergency implemented as a result of the COVID pandemic. It is set to expire July 7 (prior declaration), but due to the Governor's action to remove restrictions effective July 1, this order lifts the local emergency declaration the same day. **Commissioner Dorran moved to adopt Order BCC2021-063. Commissioner Shafer seconded.** Discussion: Commissioner Dorran asked for clarification about lifting the emergency declaration, but we still have to follow OSHA guidelines? Mr. Olsen noted that is the next action item on agenda. **Carried, 3-0.**

3. OSHA – COVID restrictions. Mr. Olsen presented. Before the Board is how the county wants to deal with OSHA restrictions. The Governor’s lifts restrictions July 1; however, OSHA rules are still in place (including limits of distancing and facemasks). We do have word that OSHA plans to lift restrictions, but there is no written confirmation yet. Any action today would be conditioned on OSHA concurrence. In addition, county imposed restrictions include travel restrictions and courthouse closure. Commissioner Dorran asked about public meetings in addition to those mentioned – would they be virtual? Or hybrid (some in person and some virtual or call-in)? He also feels the county should take down no public access signs – the courthouse is the public’s building for legitimate business. Regarding travel, he would like to see all county employees travel for training – getting back to the norm of in-person attendance.

Chair Murdock added he is now in favor of single point of access to the courthouse and keeping security in place after it moved to the first floor as a permanent installment (vs. temporary). In addition, he noted the need for more funding to continue remodeling. However, he wants to encourage the general public to continue to make appointments for business to be handled expeditiously and to be sure the correct person is available. Commissioner Shafer agreed with the hybrid process for meetings in Room 130, as long as audio is better. He also agreed with Chair Murdock’s point of scheduling appointments -- for example, county records. Commissioner Dorran preferred the general public have access without hurdles to coming to the courthouse.

Jennifer Blake, HR Director, added -- regarding encouraging appointments, maybe add language for staff to continue to provide great customer service and work with folks coming in and encourage working together when there is business in more than one department.

Commissioner Dorran added, one thing at Stafford Hansell in Hermiston that is fairly effective is a lobby area for waiting purpose, which is not the case at the courthouse. He would like to set up a place for the public to wait -- maybe something to consider in remodeling. Discussion turned to the courthouse lobby arrangement, previous issues with loitering, biohazard issues on the first floor, etc. However, a lot of issues have now been handled with security being at the front door entrance. Chair Murdock agreed the courthouse lobby could be somewhat more accommodating.

**Commissioner Dorran moved to eliminate restrictions for distancing and masks (based on OSHA guidelines) in county owned facilities, travel restrictions, public access to the courthouse and other county facilities, with recommendation/strong encouragement for appointments, and public meetings will continue on a hybrid basis, effective 7/1/21. Commissioner Shafer seconded. Carried, 3-0.**

Chair Murdock, as a matter of record regarding closing roads, while it may be a good idea, it is impractical to close roads because it could block access to forest service and others. Commissioner Dorran agreed. He suggested follow-up with other partners (USFS, BLM and other federal landowners) noting the majority of roads have a lot of connection to US property that won’t be closed. This reconfirms that ATVs aren’t allowed on county roads. He has spoken with the Sheriff’s office to reiterate the fact that ATVs aren’t allowed on those roads. Chair Murdock desired to reaffirm regulations regarding ATVs are not allowed on county roads -- nor on private property without access permission -- and encouraged the Sheriff to expand patrols and give citations, if necessary, for law breakers, based on current conditions. Commissioner Dorran agreed, and with emphasis on current conditions. Commissioner Shafer asked if it should be in the form of a motion? Chair Murdock advised this is mainly for public notice and reaffirmation.

The meeting adjourned at 9:27 a.m.

*Melinda Slatt, Executive Secretary, Umatilla County Board of Commissioners*