

PUBLIC NOTICE

Protection District. The purpose of this meeting is to receive information, discuss topics pertinent to both entities, and to share issues and concerns relating to the contractual relationship between the two parties. The public is invited to attend.

Published January 31, February 7, 2024 affid 2c

Agency: USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service Meeting: Morrow County Local Work Group Meeting Date: February 21st, 2024 Time: 10:00 am Meeting will be held at USDA Service Center in Heppner Purpose: NRCS is holding a Local Work Group Meeting to gather input from farmers, ranchers, state and federal agencies, agriculture and conservation organizations regarding natural resource conservation priorities and opportunities to invest collaboratively in Morrow County. The USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. Published February 7, 2024 Affid 1c

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON FOR THE COUNTY OF MORROW Probate Department In the Matter of the Estate of: THOMAS L. MOORE, Deceased. Date of Death: October 15, 2023. No. 23PR10173 NOTICE TO INTERESTED PERSONS. Notice is given that the undersigned has been appointed and has qualified as the personal representative of the estate. All persons having claims against the estate are required to present it, with proper vouchers, within four months after the date of first publication of this notice, as stated below, to the personal representative at Kuhn Law Offices. 267 N. Main Street, P.O. Box 428, Heppner, Oregon 97836, or they may be barred. All persons whose rights may be affected by the proceedings in this estate may obtain additional information from the records of the court, the personal representative or the attorney for the personal representative. PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE: Dated and first published February 7th, 2024

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DEADLINE: MONDAYS AT 5PM

Statement from Morrow County about the contract submitted by MCHD

-Continued from PAGE ONE

posals for providing ambulance services". With MCHD submitting a proposed contract, the County has invited other interested parties to present their proposals while we await OHA review of the Ambulance Service Area Plan. MCHD current intent is an "all or nothing" approach that may not be at the best interest of County residents. The County believes that it must comply with the law, follow the legally required process, give all interested parties an opportunity to submit proposals, and then consider all proposals.

MCHD's primary argument and claim thus far is that their 30 plus years as the ambulance provider should be enough of a consideration. This is not legal. ORS 682.063 (2) states that "a county shall not grant preference under the plan to any person or governmental unit solely because that person or governmental unit is providing ambulance services at the time of adoption or review of the plan". MCHD must be judged on its merits and not its history.

MCHD's contract also proposes shifting the costs of ambulance services to the County with no use of the local option tax levy that was passed in November 2023, and with the County having no control

over accounting for costs or revenue. In other words, MCHD not only receives money from the local option levy that was intended for ambulance services, but MCHD also demands additional funds from the County to cover the same costs, is free to shift costs to the County, and can shift revenue so that the County pays more. That levy's ballot measure expressly stated that "The levy is essential to maintain services in Morrow County including the critical access hospital, four clinics, home health and hospice, and ambulance services" (emphasis added). It is disingenuous for MCHD to propose having Morrow County use other tax monies when MCHD's tax levy is already a dedicated source of revenue for ambulance services. Under its proposal, MCHD should use the local option levy monies as they have advised the citizens of Morrow County they would be used or reduce the levy before it becomes effective in November. MCHD should also be able to justify its claimed losses, and why MCHD would not benefit if an area of service that they claim loses money is removed from their service area.

There are other legal, factual, and contractual issues that would need to be worked out before any

consideration of MCHD's proposed contract could be made, e.g., the County cannot give MCHD a contract which the county has no authority to terminate under any circumstance. The County is open to further discussions with all interested parties to identify the best option for continued ambulance services in the County. Such discussions must include consideration of the points above along with other issues and will be based on the Ordinance and ASA Plan that will be adopted by the County. The County is open to discussions between the executive staff or through a joint meeting with the MCHD Board to allow the public to hear the issues and reasonings why MCHD has taken this hardline stance. The County asserts that MCHD can still be a valuable partner in ambulance services as they are with other services. Removing the MCHD 90-day deadline would assist in finding those solutions that will meet the needs of all Morrow County residents. In the interim, because MCHD has taken a hardline approach and is using its termination of ambulance services as a negotiation weapon, County staff is working to finalize their plan to provide ambulance coverage throughout the County, if necessary, to cover the period between

MCHD's notice of termination and the selection and appointment of Providers under the ASA Ordinance and ASA Plan. When the Ordinance and ASA Plan is approved by OHA and implemented by the County, the County invites MCHD to apply to provide ambu-

lance services. In the interim, the County hopes that MCHD will participate in a constructive manner. Please direct inquiries to: David Sykes Chair, Board of Commissioners (541) 256-0379 and Matthew Jensen County Administrator (541) 676-2529

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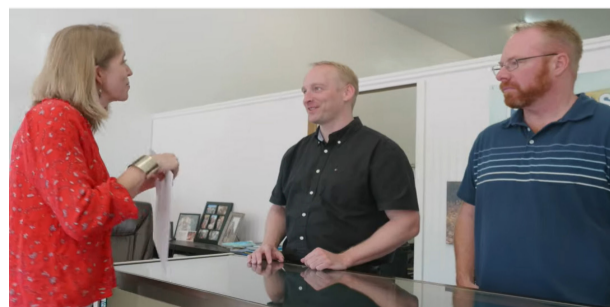


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