

Board of Commissioners discuss ASA plan schedule

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gency medical care.^{2nd} The provider must show case sufficient call volume and financial stability to ensure the long-term sustainability of the service. ^{3rd} The chosen provider must guarantee quality care for all individuals living in or passing through the service area. ^{4th} The potential service provider must adhere to all regulations set forth by the Oregon Health Authority, Oregon Medical Board, and Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles. ^{5th} The proposal submitted by the ambulance service provider must include specific details such as the number and type of ambulances, along with the medical equipment they will carry. Additionally, the proposal should outline the vehicle storage arrangements, communication capabilities, dispatching abilities, and the number of personnel. ^{6th} Any selected provider must diligently adhere to all policies, procedures, and guidelines outlined in the Morrow County ASA Plan and the enacting ordinance.

Next was the Specific guidelines, Matt Jensen mentions that since there are three service areas, we need a provider that can service all those areas; ^{1st} Prospective Providers must submit a proposal for individual ambulance service areas (ASA). ^{2nd} Prospective Providers may submit individual proposal for multiple ASAs. ^{3rd} The Selection Committee and Board of Commissioners may communicate with Perspective Providers for clarification and to discuss service options. The date of issuance is set for May 6th. Jensen also mentioned that notices will be published in newspapers across not only this county but also adjoining counties.

One significant date to note is May 20th, which is when written questions will be allowed. After that, the proposal deadline has been set for two weeks later on June 3rd at 2pm. Following the submission deadline, the board will review the proposals and determine which ones will move forward. The selection committee, consisting of representatives from all five cities within the county, will meet from June 5th and June 12th to discuss the proposals. Jensen, who initially suggested the formation of this committee, informed the board that four out of the five cities have already appointed their representatives.

Brenda Proffit, a council member from Boardman, will represent that city, while Mayor Michelle Patton will represent Irrigon. Heppner will be represented by local medical professional Emily Jack, and Jerry Reitmann, a local business owner, will represent Ione. Jensen stated that they are still awaiting Lexington's decision, as they are expected to select their representative after the Lexington May Council meeting. Additionally, the county representatives on the committee will be Matt Jensen himself as County Administrator and Bob Blackmore as legal counsel. Two EMS professionals from adjoining counties are also being considered for the committee, pending confirmation.

Commissioner Sykes inquired about the structure of the committee meetings and whether they would be held publicly or privately. In response, Jensen expressed a preference for private meetings, without live streaming on platforms such as Zoom. The Commissioners motioned to approve the ASA plan scheduling.

Commissioner Sykes kickstarted the Circuit court building project conversation by turning to Jensen and requested a brief summary of how the board arrived at the present state of affairs regarding the Circuit Court building.

Jensen began by explaining that over the past year, the prevailing assumption was that the county courthouse needed to be situated within the city boundaries of Heppner, in accordance with the Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) and other state standards. Thus, the team had narrowed down several potential sites to ultimately select the fairgrounds as the preferred choice. The fairgrounds offered advantages such as cost availability, size of the area, ready-to-build infrastructure, proximity to utilities, and county ownership.

However, unforeseen circumstances arose as the potential impact on fairgrounds parking during the county fair was brought to light. Specifically, the two-acre lot that hosted horse races and accommodated participants' vehicles became compromised. Taking this into account, the board started exploring alternative options for parking. This turn of events also generated discord among neighboring residents.

Nevertheless, a significant development occurred when the state's chief justice sent out a notice clarifying her interpretation of the location requirements. According to her, the Circuit Court could be established beyond the city limits as long as it remained within the county boundaries.

Armed with this newfound understanding, the board expanded their scope and assessed five different sites across the county. They considered proposals from Irrigon, Boardman, Lexington, and the Mill site offered by the Port of Morrow. After carefully weighing the pros and cons of each location, some were dismissed due to issues such as the need for building demolition, environmental concerns, or inconsistent political and geographical proximity to the current courthouse. The historical connection to Heppner, which the courthouse actively serves, was also taken into account.

Addressing concerns about the future of the current courthouse in Heppner, Jensen assured that its symbolic significance and historical relevance would endure. However, the impact of having the courthouse physically located in the Heppner area, both perceptually and practically, was acknowledged by the board.

In a recent executive session, the commission had requested Jensen and the design team to undertake a narrowed-down selection process and provide cost estimates for several potential sites. This decision aimed to streamline the decision-making process and ensure the efficient use of funds, as there is a grant with a deadline of 2026 that must be utilized.

With careful consideration of numerous factors, the Board of Commissions embarked on a focused search for potential Circuit Court locations. Their aim was to strike a balance between meeting the necessary requirements and considering the concerns and history of the county.

Commissioner Sykes raised the question, why can't the Bartholomew building (the current courthouse in Heppner) be updated and used?

Jensen acknowledged that while revitalizing the courthouse was a possibility, the entire burden of

funding would fall on the counties shoulders. He noted that the current funding being allocated by the state was specifically earmarked for new construction projects. Sykes interjected, emphasizing that this funding accounted for 50% of the total amount required.

Confirming Sykes' statement, Jensen revealed that the 50% funding equated to a significant sum of \$12.7 million. While some may argue that this substantial amount could be used to construct an entirely new and impressive building, Jensen explained that the court system imposes specific standards for the construction of courtrooms. These standards cover everything from structural requirements to the size of windows and the offices allocated to judges. Jensen says a study had been conducted regarding the necessary updates and additions to the Bartholomew Building and when the Circuit court building is finished, he will look into updating the Bartholomew Building.

Kelly Stewart, an architect from DLR Group, presented the findings of their collaboration with Alliance to analyze potential locations for the county courthouse. Stewart revealed that they had identified four promising spots: the Kinzua Mill Site North end, the Kinzua Mill Site South end, the fairgrounds in Heppner, and a site in Boardman. Stewart highlighted the expansive size of the Kinzua Mill site, spanning over 100 acres, and noted that it had been divided into two distinct sections for analysis purposes. However, she emphasized that the extent of environmental geotechnical bindings needed to be confirmed through detailed surveys.

According to Stewart, before any final decisions could be made, these surveys needed to be conducted and findings evaluated. The time required for the surveys was estimated to be a minimum of three months. However, depending on the results, the process could potentially take longer, affecting the overall timeline of the project. It was noted that the surveys were initially planned to commence sooner; however, the necessity to prioritize the installation of water and sewage infrastructure led to a delay.

The commission members were presented with the estimated costs associated with installing water and sewer facilities at the chosen sites. For the North end, considering the distance, the projected cost ranged between \$2.2 million and \$2.9 million. On the other hand, for the South end, the estimated cost was reported to be between \$1.9 million and \$2.8 million.

Turning their attention to the last two sites, Stewart reassured that although the Boardman site still needs to undergo a survey, she remains confident that no major obstacles would be uncovered during this process. While the Fairgrounds site has already been surveyed, so, moving into development will be swift.

Jensen chimed in and elaborated on the specifics of the two potential sites. He mentioned that the North site option is located just west of the Ag extensions office and the DMV, near Kinzua Mill. In contrast, the South site sits on the south side of the road, adjacent to silver creek storage. Jensen further highlighted that the South option would not be impacted by the 500-year flood plain, thereby making it a more viable choice for development. Jensen also disclosed that the port has recently offered to demol-

ish some storage facilities in the vicinity. However, he expressed his concerns about potential environmental implications that such actions might entail.

Sykes raised concerns about the potential impact of surveys on the project timeline and cost. Commissioner Sykes sought confirmation on whether the surveys required for the Kinzua Mill site options would add an additional four months to the project. Doug from Alliance, confirming Sykes' doubts, stated that the surveys were indeed necessary and would affect both the project timeline and cost.

Sykes inquired about the state's power to veto the project based on the results of the survey studies. Doug explained that anything that can be fixed can still be built upon, but he also highlighted that some of the additional costs would solely fall on the county.

Seeking clarity, Sykes pressed further and asked at what point they would know the exact cost to the county. Sykes wondered if they should first select a site and then allow the state to decide if they would provide 50% of the funding. In response, Doug suggested that the exploration cost would likely be borne solely by the county but emphasized that the exact details were still unknown.

Eurl, last name unknown, another Alliance rep, took to the floor to shed some light on the matter saying that it would be impossible to determine the full extent of any remediation required until a site was chosen and the building's schematics were presented to the state. Sykes then requested asked for an example of what can be found that will require remediation. Responding to Sykes' query, Doug explained that if contaminated soil were to be discovered at the selected site, the only solution would be to dig down until reaching uncontaminated soil and replace it. However, he emphasized that this remediation process would come with a hefty price tag, making it a financially burdensome endeavor.

According to Jensen, the fairgrounds necessitate some excavation work, as indicated by a recent survey highlighting areas that require soil removal. However, Jensen assures that such sites, with a history spanning hundreds of years, are bound to have sections that need to be redone. Inquisitive about the potential contamination of old mill sites, Sykes asks Jensen for an example and what they could anticipate. Doug provides a response, suggesting that there could be several possibilities, including chemicals used to treat logs that may have seeped into the soil. He also highlights that during the mill's operation, due to the prevailing practices of the time, oil and equipment were changed right on site without proper recycling, leading to oil seepage into the soil. However, Doug emphasizes that definitive knowledge about the contaminants present will only be attainable through site testing.

Delving further into the matter, Jensen emphasized that obtaining water from the city would be a more cost-effective option for the south site, as opposed to creating a well specifically for a building of that size.

Jensen then raised concerns regarding the expense of connecting waste water to the city. It brought into question whether the county would be willing to cover the full cost of approximately \$235,000 associated

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Proudfoot & Cutsforth awarded BEO \$500 scholarships

Heppner, Oregon, (May 2, 2024) Bank of Eastern Oregon has selected its 2024 high school senior scholarship recipients. This scholarship is awarded to students planning to enroll in agriculture or business in college and judging is based on scholarship, leadership and citizenship. Applica-

tions are accepted from graduating seniors in the areas where Bank of Eastern Oregon and Bank of Eastern Washington branches and loan offices are located. Cameron Proudfoot and Morgan Cutsforth were the students from Heppner awarded \$500 scholarships.

April Morrow County Marriage licenses issued

Issued on April 15th- Donna Marisa Sherman from Heppner and Richard Bedolla Hernandez from Boardman. Issued on April 24th- Nyellie Felipe Carrilo from Boardman and Nathaniel Anthony Hernandez

from Boardman. Issued on April 25th- Vanessa Monique Olvera from Boardman and Ismaiel Diaz from Boardman. Issued on April 26th- Michael Louis Bogart from Heppner and Alice Mae Ragan from Heppner.

EHA to host open house May 18th

Echo Heritage Association will be hosting an open house in the historic St Peters Church at 33208 Marble Street, Echo, beginning at 10:30 on Saturday May 18, 2024. Doris Pitzer, locally renown organist, will treat us to selections on the 120-year-old pump organ at 11:00. Doris has played and led music for church, school events, weddings, and funerals in this region for decades and she still plays with a warm style and genuine capacity every chance she gets.

An interpretive tour will be led by local Pastor Fr. Daniel Maxwell at 11:45. There is always beautiful symbolism adorning a Catholic church and

the early inhabitants of this area included fine statuary and an altar in this church from the beginning, in 1913. Pastor Maxwell is very well versed in the intended significance of the items in St Peters and will be giving us insight into these uniquely historical symbols during the OPEN HOUSE.

The Annual ACE Car Show will be going on downtown that day and, of course, the café' and two wineries in Echo are not far away. All in all, a vacation close to home awaits on Saturday, May 18th in Echo and includes free tours for all ages at the historic St Peters Church.

Judicial Department wants to hear from court users

If you have interacted with Oregon's circuit courts recently, the Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) wants to hear from you.

OJD is asking court users to take an anonymous Access and Fairness Survey. The survey results will help OJD identify ways to improve and ensure that everyone has equal access to the courts.

Questions on the survey include: Did the court treat you with respect? Did the court make things easy to understand? Did the court make you feel safe?

OJD invites anyone

who has interacted with the state circuit courts to participate. This includes people involved in lawsuits or other court cases and their family members. This also includes witnesses, jurors and potential jurors, victims, attorneys, and law enforcement.

The survey is available online at www.courts.oregon.gov/survey in English, Spanish, Russian, Traditional Chinese, and Vietnamese. People who prefer a paper survey can ask for a copy at their local court.

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:

MONDAY AT 5:00 P.M.

Senior Boys & Fathers Free Lunch

May 14th 11:30-1pm



Tuesday May 14th from 11:30-1pm Heppner and Ione Graduating Senior boys and their fathers or male mentors are invited to the Heppner Masonic Lodge, 138 W Willow st, for a free lunch sponsored by Bucknums Tavern with Guest Speaker Brett Koss.

Heppner Lodge #69 wants to honor the hardwork these local men have put in and wish them well on their future endeavors.

Please RSVP to Cody High at 541-256-0847 to ensure we have enough for everyone. We hope to have all local senior boys attend this event.