

County, health district still negotiating ASA plan

-Continued from PAGE ONE contracts hammered out.

"I know that there's some haggling going on," he added, "but that's got to be set aside. We're here to serve people."

Jensen said the county's intent is still to proceed with the award as announced on July 3.

Morrow County Commissioner Jeff Wenholz questioned whether the IGA aspect of the health district's contract would preclude any of the cities from working with other entities if they chose, as well as whether certain language about mental health services would negatively impact the county's relationship with Community Counseling Solutions (CCS).

"We do partner with Community Counseling Solutions. We have a long, successful relationship with them," Wenholz said.

Jensen said one of the municipalities had reached out with similar concerns about exclusivity, and that was one thing that still needed to be worked out.

"My approach on this is that it's not an exclusivity contract," he said. "You can't constrict on that, and we wouldn't want to go that way."

"This is to consolidate and solidify that we're going to be working together as partners. There's been a lot of going back and forth and strife over the last few years, and this is a bit of an olive branch," he added.

"However, I would be very willing as we work through with the municipalities and with the health district on finalizing this agreement, to make sure to avoid exclusivity and to make sure that it doesn't preclude or hamper any successful agreements that we have or could have to make sure Morrow County residents are doing well."

Wenholz also asked what Jensen thought the health district's response would be should Irrigon or any other community refuse to sign an IGA.

Jensen said three meetings already held with MCHD had been "very positive," and the health district had said they would be willing to meet with municipalities, give a presentation, and listen to concerns.

"There has been very direct conversation on a few items, but overall there's, I think, a strong desire to move forward on this," said Jensen.

"This is a starting point document," he said. "If there's resistance from the cities, we'll be asking them, 'What's a better way to get those assurances that you'd like?'"

The BOC voted to ap-

prove the contract with Boardman Fire Rescue District for the Northern Ambulance Service Area (Boardman area).

The commissioners also approved a draft intergovernmental agreement for the Morrow County Health District contract and authorized Jensen to take it to the county's five municipalities for consideration.

Both steps were approved 2-0 by Wenholz and Morrow County BOC Chair David Sykes. Morrow County Commissioner Roy Drago was not present due to a planned absence.

Other Business

In other business, Jensen reported that the geotechnical survey on the proposed circuit court site at the old Kinzua Mill site was complete and the county is waiting for that report. Jensen said he expected the report within a week.

The environmental survey on the same site is underway, he said, but the county is still gathering information in cooperation with the Port of Morrow. Jensen said he hopes to have both surveys wrapped up by the end of the month.

The board of commissioners also approved two road use and maintenance agreements for major projects in Morrow County. The first was with Idaho Power for its 290-mile, single-circuit transmission line, commonly known as Boardman to Hemingway, or B2H.

"The agreement will help maintain the safety of the motoring public and road integrity during their construction project," Morrow County Public Works Director Eric Imes told the commissioners.

The B2H line has been years in the making and has faced vocal opposition by Morrow County residents, most of which has fallen on deaf ears at the state level.

Both Imes and Morrow County Counsel Justin Nelson pointed out that the road use agreement was not a stamp of approval from the county, but only a recognition that county roads will be impacted when Idaho Power begins work on B2H.

"We don't have the ability to say, 'Heck, no, we don't want this,'" said Nelson, adding that it is up to the county to try to figure out how to work with the project now that it has been approved by state agencies.

At the same time, Imes said there is still much planning to do before B2H breaks ground.

The second agreement was with Tower Solar. The solar project will be near Boardman Airport and will use a small section of county road, only about half a

mile on Tower Road, Imes said.

Justice of the Peace Glen Diehl said high driving speeds are still a concern; the highest speed ticket since his last report was 118 mph, he said.

"We are seeing our speeds slowly coming down again," Diehl said, but added that he had just signed a suspension for a driver going more than 100 mph.

For good news, he said the county's efforts to help get unlicensed drivers licensed and insured is gaining ground, with 27 so far this year compared to 23 for all of 2023.

"The program seems to be working. We're putting more licensed, educated drivers that are able to have their insurance, therefore no further victimizing other people should they be involved in an accident," he said. "So I think it's a win-win for our citizens."

Sykes said he likes the way Diehl combines help with penalization.

"I don't know if most places do that, but I'm glad we do," said Sykes.

Morrow County Juvenile Department Director Christy Kenny reported that the department has been working with LEAP (Leveraging Evidence to Activate Parents), which uses an evidence-based approach and involves parents in their children's behavior.

She said what they're finding is that a lot of parents lack either the skills or the patience to deal with their children's behaviors.

"It's a great program to hopefully get these parents more involved," she said. "Hopefully this will produce some evidence-based proof that this is something that is working. It's an interesting study, but we're going to be utilizing that as part of our tools in our toolbox when we work with these kids and families moving forward."

Kenny also reported that they had received 12 youth referrals for the quarter—one violation, 10 misdemeanors and one felony.

Sykes asked if the department is seeing any concerning changes or spikes in youth behavior. Kenny replied that bad behavior always increases toward the end of the school year. This year, they saw an increase in youth misdemeanors toward the end of May and beginning of June. She said there had been an influx of sex cases about a year ago, but that was unusual.

"It's still staying fairly consistent with, I would say, our trends," she said.

Morrow County Fair Secretary Sues Gibbs told the commissioners that fair planning is nearly com-

plete. She said the fair will have two professional artists coming in to teach and present thanks to art coalition funding. There will also be a wellness room with a cooling station, first aid and a decompression area for children or adults.

She also said Avian Flu is a small concern this year, and the county has met with the state vet and is taking steps to keep fairgoers and animals safe.

Gibbs also reported that she is working with the SAGE Center to have an exhibit drop-off point so residents at the north end can enter items without having to drive to Heppner. The Loop is also working on transportation between the north end and fair during that week.

There were no emergency management or sheriff's reports due to activity on the Lone Rock Fire. Jensen said he has been in close communication with Morrow County Emergency Manager Steve Freeland, who has been in contact with the Oregon State Fire Marshal and other resources. He said they were working on a system to provide regular updates to the public.

At the time of the meeting, both the Morrow County OHV Park and Anson Wright Park were closed due to evacuation levels. Meanwhile, the county is opening the fairgrounds as a staging ground for firefighters.

Wenholz reported that he visited Finley Buttes landfill and learned that the life expectancy of the landfill is around 200 years, with a finished height of 1,310 feet.

The landfill is still generating power from methane gas, but Wenholz said the company is looking to convert to a system of scrubbers and filters for the methane gas so it can be used as renewable natural gas in the pipeline.

At the end of the meeting, the board of commissioners held two back-to-back executive sessions. One was to conduct deliberations to negotiate real property transactions. The other was to consult with counsel concerning the legal rights and duties of a public body with regard to current litigation or litigation likely to be filed.

At the end of executive session, the board of commissioners voted to authorize Jensen and the Morrow County Weed Department to continue negotiations to find a short-term lease for Morrow County Weed Department and equipment based on space and environmental leads for the Morrow County Weed Department.

Fatal crash in Morrow County

Morrow County, Ore. 19 July 24- On Friday, July 19, 2024, at 3:10 p.m., Oregon State Police responded to a two-vehicle crash on Hwy-730, near milepost 173, in Morrow County,

The preliminary investigation indicated a westbound Jeep Wrangler, operated by Anthony Daulton (41) of Las Vegas (NV), crossed into the eastbound lane for unknown reasons and struck an eastbound Nissan King Cab pickup, operated by Abraham Figuerou-Ayala (51) of Umatilla, head-on.

The operator of the

Nissan (Figuerou-Ayala) and passenger, a male juvenile, were declared deceased at the scene.

The operator of the Jeep (Daulton) and passenger, Clarissa Ann Daulton (41) of Las Vegas (NV), suffered reported serious injuries and were transported to a local hospital.

The highway was impacted for approximately five hours during the on-scene investigation. The cause of the crash is under investigation.

OSP was assisted by Boardman Fire, Irrigon Fire, Morrow County Sheriff's Office, and ODOT.

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Dr. Jon to perform at the MC Fair



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Dr. Jon Taylor is a national and international feature entertainer who performs hilarious and FUN Comedy Stage Hypnosis for major hotels and casinos, cruise lines, univer-

sities, festivals and fairs. Dr. Jon's volunteers are the show's True STARS and both audience and volunteers laugh so hard their bones hurt!

Dr. Jon passionately believes laughter is the world's best medicine and you'll remember the 'hypno-larity' for months and years to come. A few clients include The Rio Hotel - Las Vegas, UCLA, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, Six Flags Inc. and The 2024 Houston Police and Fireman's Ball and Gayla. For high energy, interactive and 'crazy fun' videos, please checkout www.drjoncomedy.com.

Prayer vigil on the 25th

A prayer vigil for the fires in Heppner, Oregon will be held at the Catholic Church Parish Hall on Thursday, 25th at 6:30 pm. Organized by Stuart Dick, there will be updates from fire officials and information on how to support firefighters. Contact Stuart Dick at (541) 377-5451 for questions.

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