

Port of Morrow replaces commissioner on CDA board

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Everyone," she added.

Peterson said he didn't think Doherty's anger was helping the situation.

"You really go after people," he said.

"Everything on the CDA board is nothing but tension," Taylor said. "Just the way that meeting went..."

Doherty said that tension would not go away with her removal.

"I mean, we're in litigation with our partners," she said, referring to a lawsuit Umatilla County and CTUIR had filed against the other three entities.

"You bring up some issues that need to be corrected but, my gosh, this way of doing it...this attack," said Peterson. "I'm sorry, it's self-righteous."

"That's because I'm right," said Doherty.

Doherty also said that when she had indicated that they should tell the grantor that the grant was not approved, she was "taken to the woodshed" by the Port of Morrow board.

"I was threatened with removal from the CDA from this board," she said.

POM secretary/treasurer Rick Stokoe said he had commented that removing POM Executive Director Lisa Mittelsdorf as the Port's CDA representative had been a mistake. Mittelsdorf had served on the CDA board for more than 30 years.

"I did not call for your removal," he said.

Doherty said she didn't see it that way. She also said that she had recently sought legal counsel.

"I had to, because I knew this retaliation was coming," she said. "I'm being removed from my position. That's retaliation." "If we don't stand up for someone that does something right and speaks out, who do we stand up for?" she asked.

Commissioner vice-president John Murray echoed that sentiment, saying the Port was on record as saying it would do a better job of monitoring whether the CDA followed its own rules but that it hadn't. He said he felt uncomfortable silencing somebody who spoke up now.

"Maybe I would have spoke up differently, in a different way. Maybe not," Murray said. "I have a hard time with it."

"I think there's a right way to speak out," said Stokoe. "As an elected official who represents the Port of Morrow on that board, I would expect a little more profession."

Doherty accused the POM board of not wanting her to expose corruption, but Stokoe said it was the fact that she acted without input from the rest of the Port board that did not sit well.

"You represent the Port of Morrow on a CDA board," he said. "That means you speak for me and everybody sitting here."

Doherty responded that she didn't see the need for approval from the rest of the Port board, and that she felt she did what was best for the CDA board.

"The only authority you have on the CDA board is granted to you by this board," Stokoe said.

"No," said Doherty.

Peterson said he didn't disagree with her stance on Smith, but he disagreed with her tone and the implication that it was some kind of "conspiracy."

"They've done wrong," he said, holding up the

minutes from the June 25 CDA meeting, "but if they were trying to be secret... my gosh, here it is."

"I feel that the CDA board would at least go along a little better without all the tension on it and without you there," said Taylor. "You bring a lot of it."

Taylor also brought up Smith's upcoming evaluation by the CDA board, hinting that Doherty should not be involved in the process.

"It just looks like you have an ax to grind," he said.

"I don't have any ax to grind with anybody except for someone who didn't do things properly," Doherty replied.

"The tone might have not been well. I admit it," she added. "When you ask questions, and the answers are so snide."

The board voted 3-2 to remove Doherty from the CDA board, with Taylor, Stokoe and Peterson approving and Doherty and Murray dissenting.

The board asked Mittelsdorf if she would be willing to take the CDA position, but she declined. In another 3-2 split vote, the board selected Taylor as the Port's representative to the CDA, with Peterson as the alternate.

"So, let's put on the agenda for next week the new litigation that's coming for retaliation," said Doherty.

The Question of Approval

Part of the conflict, both at the CDA meeting and within the Port, seemed to stem from the fact that the CDA board had approved the OLDCC grant application but that the compensation package within the application had not been approved by the CDA board prior to submission.

In fact, Doherty said the raise had been denied at the CDA's Dec. 11 meeting. However, several Port commissioners pointed out at the POM meeting last week that the CDA had approved the grant, which did include the compensation package. Peterson also questioned the idea that the CDA denied the salary outright, since no action was taken.

"You keep saying 'denied.'" That's quite different from 'never approved,'" said Peterson. "I'm saying it was an oversight and they didn't get that done."

Peterson told Doherty

she was "really overblowing this."

"Am I? This is a federal offense. Am I overblowing it?" Doherty shot back, saying that the FBI was already investigating.

Taylor also pointed out that she was talking as if Smith had purposefully deceived the CDA board, while all he heard Smith say was that he "owned" the error and should have looked at it more carefully.

"Greg knew exactly what was in it. It wasn't an error. He negotiated it," Doherty said.

According to Doherty, Eileen Hendricks, Port of Morrow Chief Financial Officer, signed the application May 2 and the federal government approved it May 16. The CDA board didn't meet in May, and Doherty said she didn't see the grant until the day of the June 25 meeting at which the grant was approved.

Doherty said she thought the grant was "a done deal" by the time they saw it and couldn't be changed. She added that left the five CDA partners "on the hook" for the cost.

Peterson and Taylor countered that it could have been changed at any time, although it might have been more complicated.

Meanwhile, Hendricks said she had received a call from Tim Robert, the CDA's federal representative regarding the grant, after the Sept. 20 CDA meeting. Robert asked if there had been a pay reduction and told her that, if that was the case, the grant amount would be adjusted lower.

According to Hen-

dricks, Robert said the federal government had planned to ratchet down federal participation after the land transfer. However, because the CDA was proposing an increase in costs—including the pay raise in question—they had decided to keep the grant at previous levels.

Either way, Hendricks said, she understood that the amount paid by the CDA partners would be the same.

Port of Morrow attorney Sam Tucker was also present at the Port's Oct. 11

meeting and clarified that, while there were rumors of the wages being rescinded retroactively, he had not received orders to do that at that time and didn't know if he would. The wage increase had been rescinded going forward, he said.

"There's a lot of indication that there was a motion that said it should be retroactively done," he said. "We don't know for sure. We don't have the minutes."

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