

INFORMAL SESSION MINUTES

July 9, 2012

2:00 p.m.

Commissioners' Office Conference Room

PRESENT: Commissioners Leslie Lewis, Kathy George, and Mary P. Stern.

Staff: Laura Tschabold, Rick Sanai, Chuck Vesper, Pat Anderson, and Brad Berry.

Guests: Ossie Bladine and Jessica Prokop, News-Register; Celeste Walsen, veterinarian; Ellen O'Neill-Stephens, retired King County prosecutor; and Kevin Martinez, Carlton Police Chief.

* indicates item forwarded to formal agenda

Leslie called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

* Personnel - Pat Anderson presented personnel requests from Health & Human Services. See formal session agenda for details.

* Contracts/Grants - See agenda for details.

* Roads - Designate a new road connecting Highway 99W to Old Station Road as Squires Way.

* Authorize the placement of a yield sign on Parrett Mountain Road at its intersection with Kramien Road.

* Refunds - Authorize a \$681 refund from Community Corrections to John Jones.

* Surplus - Authorize the transfer of title for a surplus Zodiac boat from Yamhill County to the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

* Committees - Approve the appointment of Marla Robison to the Planning Commission for a four-year term to expire July 1, 2016.

* Courthouse Dog - Consideration of authorizing the District Attorney to apply for a courthouse dog from Canine Companions for Independence (CCI).

Brad Berry stated that everybody in the criminal justice system is there because of their own choices or conduct, with the exception of victims and witnesses. He said that facing unfamiliar people and sharing difficult things can create a stressful situation, and these dogs can bring comfort and calmness. He said that courthouse dogs are currently used in 16 states and are going international, although this would be the first one in Oregon. He submitted letters of support from his law enforcement counterparts and from Juliette's House.

Ellen O'Neill-Stephens provided an overview of the courthouse dog program and

discussed the legal aspects of integrating dogs into the criminal justice system, then showed a three-minute video. She stated that the dogs can help witnesses overcome physiological responses to stress, such as the inability to speak, which helps get to the truth and to justice. She noted that a few cases have been appealed based on the claim that the use of a dog at trial is prejudicial, and an opinion should be coming out in a few weeks to give some guidance.

Celeste Walsen described how courthouse dogs are raised and trained, and stated that the dogs provide psychological support that others in the room cannot provide. She said that dogs haven't been used in courtrooms long enough to gather scientific evidence, but that research is starting, and there is anecdotal evidence as well as research from the use of dogs in health procedures. She said that if the county makes it through the application process and handler approval, it will go onto the waiting list and it takes three months to a year to get a dog. She explained that CCI provides the dog free of charge, and it comes with a \$1 million liability insurance policy and ongoing support throughout the life of the dog.

Brad stated that the only costs to the county would be about \$5000 during the first year for training and transportation, and about \$100 per month to care for the dog, so there is minimal intrusion and cost for a tremendous benefit. He said that there is strong support from all four judges to allow the dog in the courtroom to aid in everything but trial. He said that his intent is not to start out using the dog for trials. He explained that the dog could also be helpful in other situations such as drug courts and mental health courts, but he would have to prioritize the use, with domestic violence and child abuse victims being the highest priority.

Mary stated that it would be nice to get written support from the judges, the deputy district attorneys, and the sheriff. Leslie added that she would also like to see an opinion from the National District Attorneys Association. Brad stated that the sheriff has said that he won't oppose the request, but feels that it would be a distraction. He said that he would get written support from the others.

* Mass Gathering Permit - Schedule a public hearing for August 2, 2012, at 10:00 a.m. to consider a request for a mass gathering permit for the Food, Wine & Art Festival on September 8, 2012, applicant Chehalem Valley Chamber of Commerce.

The meeting adjourned at 3:28 p.m.

Anne Britt
Secretary