

**WORK SESSION MINUTES**

August 15, 2017

1:00 p.m.

Commissioners’ Office Conference Room

PRESENT: Commissioners Stan Primozich, Mary Starrett and Richard L. “Rick” Olson.

STAFF: Laura Tschabold, Ken Huffer, Christian Boenisch, Mikalie Frei, and Carrie Martin.

TOPIC: Tourism

Commissioner Primozich called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Commissioner Starrett invited Commissioner Baertlein via telephone conference to share his perspective on the Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) that was effective January 1, 2014 in Tillamook County. Commissioner Baertlein stated the tax is generating about 3 million a year with their rate set at 10% and the revenue divided 30/70 with 30% going to the road fund and 70% to tourism infrastructure. He discussed the process he and his fellow commissioners went through cautioning Yamhill County commissioners to take their time structuring adequate spending authority and to focus heavily on infrastructure. Commissioner Baertlin discussed the additional workload to law enforcement, fire and rescue response and even the jail. There was discussion regarding Tillamook County residents’ responses to the increase of tourism. Commissioner Baertlin received feedback that they were no longer able to enjoy their usual family spots because everything was always full. He said the TLT ballot fared well with their voters because of the rough condition of their roads. However, in hindsight the added tourism has only furthered the damage to their roads. Commissioner Baertlein discussed the positive outcome for local merchants with restaurants and hotels being full but stated that they have not seen an increase in off season tourism as they had hoped. Infrastructure improvements that they have been able to complete due to the funds from the TLT include over \$300,000 in Kiawanda Community Center expansions, additional ADA accommodations at the performing arts theatre, additional seating at the North Coast Recreational Center and improvements to the county’s boat docks. Commissioner Baertlein offered to provide Yamhill County Counsel with Tillamook County’s draft ordinances for information and to review.

The commissioner’s discussed the current tourism efforts in Yamhill County. Commissioner Primozich stated he believes the county needs to have a significant presence and direct tourist activities in a meaningful manner. He said the county has an opportunity through a transient lodging tax to have the dollars to improve infrastructure, pay for additional support staff within the Sheriff’s office, the jail, and public works. Commissioner Starrett stated she takes pride in the fact that Yamhill County is not like other counties and does not want to add additional taxes on to citizens or tourists. She discussed her disappointment with the report from Travel Yamhill Valley that stated they county would not be able to sustain tourism without a transient lodging tax. Commissioner Olson said Yamhill County is already destination oriented and he feels tourists should be paying for some of the infrastructure and law enforcement costs incurred due to the increased tourism instead of passing the costs onto the citizens.

Commissioner Primozich discussed the outlying communities that do not have the larger tax base to work with, adding they all have their own attractions that with a small investment into infrastructure could really put them on the map and benefit the county with the additional revenue. Commissioner Olson discussed the importance of advertising the county, building a solid infrastructure and the potential of going out for a request for proposal for tourism management that would report back to the board in the same way they are addressing the RFP for economic development. Commissioner Starrett stated she does not believe it is the government's job to advertise for private businesses and she is not in favor of moving forward with a transient lodging tax (TLT). Commissioner Primozich stated he feels it is the government's job to develop the infrastructure, and a TLT would create the needed revenue source to do just that.

Laura discussed the request from McMinnville Wayfinding. She briefed the board on their funding gap and the other entities Jeff is approaching; Linfield College, McMinnville Downtown Association, and the McMinnville Chamber of Commerce. The consensus of the board was conveyed to staff to have Jeff update them on what contributions are received so the board can discuss how they may be able to help fill any remaining financial gap.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Crystal Cox  
Secretary