

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 7, 2014

1. At 9:02 a.m., Commissioner Pope declared the Tuesday meeting of the Polk County Board of Commissioners in session. Commissioner Wheeler and Commissioner Ainsworth were present.
2. **MINUTES** **COMMISSIONER AINSWORTH MOVED, COMMISSIONER WHEELER SECONDED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2014.**

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY
3. **HOME COMFORT RECAP** – Chelsea Pope, Dallas Chamber Director thanked the Board for allowing the use of the Courthouse lawn for the Home Comfort 60th Anniversary Celebration. The event was very successful, with over 1,000 attending over the course of the afternoon.
4. **WINTERFEST** – Chelsea Pope requested permission to hold Winterfest on Friday, December 5. Lights and decorations will be going up around town November 22-23. Last year the event was snowed out, so Chelsea is hoping for dry weather this year.
5. **OPERATING LEVY** – Greg Hansen, Administrative Officer presented a proposed timetable for going out for an operating levy in May 2015. The timeline includes public forums, however, Greg explained that the timetable is dependent on whether the Board use the public forums to gather testimony before actually filing a levy to be on the ballot, or use the public forums to inform the public of the levy impact after filing a levy to be on the ballot. Commissioner Wheeler explained that she feels that as an elected official, it is the Commissioners' job to make these decisions. The need for the levy is apparent, there is no other funding that the County will be receiving to pay for public safety services, and so the county needs to move forward.

Sheriff Wolfe and District Attorney Aaron Felton both expressed support for the Board to move forward with the proposed levy. The Sheriff recently met with all of the local police chiefs to explain all the services the cities receive from County law enforcement, and what issues the cities are currently facing that would be addressed with the levy. The Sheriff also explained that even if the levy passes, it would take up to two years after receiving the funding before his office will be fully functioning due to the time it takes to train a new recruit.

District Attorney Felton explained that the DA's processes all the felonies, misdemeanors, and juvenile delinquency cases for every law enforcement agency in the County. Polk County has the smallest DA's office based on population than any other county in the state, and each prosecutor has a workload of up to 200 active cases, in addition to the juvenile dependency cases. Aaron explained that this backlog of cases creates frustration and soon, if no additional funding is found, the DA's office will not be able to pursue prosecuting gateway crimes.

Marty Silbernagel, Community Corrections Director informed the Board that 1145 funding for his department is based on felony convictions. Less Sheriff's Deputies lead to less arrests, which leads to less prosecutions by the District Attorney's office. It is a system that currently cannot function as it needs to due to lack of funding. Marty also explained that the County won't know how much funding his department will receive for the 2015-2017 biennium until after the May election, so the anticipated funding need in his department may be larger than Greg budgets for in his proposed levy amount.

The Board agreed that public education is the biggest challenge, there are many misconceptions about the levy and County funding that will need to be addressed. However the Board anticipated that it will be a struggle to get members of the public to attend. Jean Sherbeck, who was on the PAC during the last levy attempt, encouraged the Board to send

out mailers to every registered voter, because many do not read the newspaper. Commissioner Pope agreed that it was a good idea, but countywide mailers are a high cost. In order to collect monies for the campaign efforts, the County would first need to form a PAC, which cannot be done until the County goes through the process to put a levy on the ballot.

Norbert Hartman, Chairman of the Polk County Budget Committee stressed that it is important to have the leaders of the urban communities to publicly show support for the levy, and even utilizing the urban communities to assist with hosting and organizing these public forums. The first step in this process would be the Board reaching out to these city leaders personally.

BY CONSENSUS, THE BOARD AGREED TO DRAFT A LETTER TO THE MAYORS AND CITY COUNCIL CHAIRPERSONS TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSED OPERATING LEVY.

6. **PERS** – Greg Hansen informed the Board that the County just received notification that PERS rates will be increasing 3% as of July 1, 2015. This equates to an increased cost of approximately \$350,000, with \$125,000-\$150,000 of that cost in the General Fund.
7. **NON-LISTED ITEMS** (Pursuant to ORS 192.640, the Board of Commissioners considered the below identified non-listed items.)
 - a. **BOPTA APPOINTMENTS** – Greg Hansen presented a memo from Ann Captain regarding Board of Property Tax Appeals appointments. Commissioner Wheeler is the member of the Chairpersons pool, with Commissioner Pope serving as the alternate. The non-office holding residents recommended for appointment are Yolanda Zuger and David Lawson.

MOTION: COMMISSIONER AINSWORTH MOVED, COMMISSIONER WHEELER SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENTS FOR THE BOARD OF PROPERTY TAX APPEALS.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Commissioner Pope adjourned the meeting at 10:20 am.

Minutes: Heather Merrill
Approved: October 14, 2014