

JOINT MEETING  
of  
BENTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
and  
ALBANY CITY COUNCIL  
Municipal Court Room  
Monday, July 11, 2011  
4:00 p.m.

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Sharon Konopa called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Councilors present: Councilors Dick Olsen, Jeff Christman, Bill Coburn, and Bessie Johnson.  
Councilors absent: Councilor Floyd Collins.

Benton County Commissioners present: Chair Linda Modrell; Vice Chair Jay Dixon; and Annabelle Jaramillo  
Benton County Commissioners absent: None.

The Benton County Commissioners introduced themselves. The staff and audience introduced themselves.

Councilor Jeff Christman arrived at 4:02 p.m.  
Councilor Dick Olsen arrived at 4:03 p.m.

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was no business from the public.

Report from Benton County Sheriff regarding need for new jail

Benton County Sheriff Diana Simpson passed out a PowerPoint (see agenda file). Simpson said that the jail is "the tail that wags the dog." In other words, they have a great system but there is no "truth in sentencing." Sentencing is ineffective, because what happens in the courtroom depends on how much space the jail happens to have at that moment.

Simpson described how the two holding cells are used at the jail. This is choke point and creates the most problems. The jail purchases frozen meals from the Washington Department of Corrections and supplements those meals with local fruit, vegetables, and milk. Inmate workers prepare the meals. The kitchen is very small. By law, the Benton County Jail is obligated to make sure the inmates get a nutritionally sound meal. Laundry service is contracted out. The Day Room is used for eating and also for meetings in the afternoon.

Simpson said she is committed to work hard to educate the public about the need for a new jail. The Willamette Criminal Justice Council (WCJC) has a lay committee and they are focusing on this as well. She went to the recent North Albany Neighborhood Association (NANA) meeting and gave a small presentation. She is willing to visit other groups as well.

Konopa said that Simpson's presentation to the WCJC did not include the pictures of the inside of the jail. The pictures Simpson presented tonight have a strong visual impact and would be good to include in future presentations.

Konopa asked Simpson to speak to the design plans. Simpson said jails are being designed and built differently today than 10-20 years ago, and costs are coming down. For example, there is no need for low ceilings. Also,

to a certain point they need sturdy walls but they are not necessary for higher floors. There are different ways to build chase systems and run electrical and plumbing. Currently the jail's plumbing is underground so any blockage means going through cement to remove it.

Simpson's vision is an 80 bed jail, with 20 beds for work release. They are building a program room that could convert to work release, so it has a dual use. Simpson thinks a lot of folks end up in jail because they made a mistake; and about 80% are drug or alcohol related, so she would like treatment units. She would also like a medical unit so that the mentally ill can have a safe place that is confined, in order to calm down. She said, we are spending millions each year to rent beds outside of Benton County, and instead we could be using those dollars here. She would also like to have programs for children with incarcerated parents in order to try to stop that familial cycle.

Councilor Bessie Johnson asked, would 80 beds be enough for the future? Simpson said 80 beds plus 20 for work release would give them more truth in sentencing and would be a manageable number.

Johnson asked, when your inmates are housed at another jail and have court appearances, does your staff have to go pick them up? Simpson said yes, and it is expensive to do that. Johnson said it is too bad they can't do video arraignment.

Johnson said she does not envy having to choose who stays and goes when the jail is at full capacity. Simpson said at one point they had six inmates facing murder charges. Many times those living in Albany think folks go to the Linn County Jail, but that is not always the case; they sometimes go to Benton County. If someone has a 13 month sentence or more, they go to state facilities and for sentences less than that, they stay local.

Simpson said Benton County plans to go out for another public safety levy.

Benton County Commissioner Annabelle Jaramillo commended Simpson and the Sheriff's Office for the work they do. She said, the Commissioners are supportive of a new jail, but the citizens have to understand the need for it.

Simpson said that once a month the jail is open so that the public can take a tour. She thanked the Council for inviting her today.

Konopa said the Council is staying in the loop with the WCJC so that they are aware of what bonds will be forwarded to the voters.

#### Discuss East Thornton Lake Natural Area

Parks & Recreation Director Ed Hodney passed out the Update on East Thornton Lake Natural Area (ETLNA) (see agenda file). Hodney introduced Jeff Powers, Director, Benton County Parks and Natural Areas.

Hodney reviewed the document. The goal for this project is the protection of natural resources for endangered species along with meeting recreational goals in the City's Parks Master Plan. This site does both, and additionally pays attention to the cultural and historical resources.

Hodney gave an update on the fundraising, as described in the handout. The City owns the ETLNA property but still owes \$1 million to the Trust for Public Land and has until March 2012 to pay the bill. Fundraising is under way. Staff has applied for a state parks grant and Hodney will know more on July 20. The Oregon Water and Electric Board (OWEB) has a \$250,000 grant for acquisition; the City applied for it, but ETLNA is not normally the type of project they fund. Also, there is \$100,000 pledged in private funds. Citizens have raised \$26,000 so far. There are several other fundraising events planned.

Hodney provided a colored map (see agenda file) that shows tentative use and habitat zones. This gives a rough idea of what goes where. The cultural resource assessment will tell them what areas to avoid based on Indian artifact sites.

Hodney said at the July 13, 2011, Regular Session, staff will make a formal request for a turtle populations study and management plan.

Hodney would like to discuss a partnership between the City of Albany and Benton County on the ETLNA site and perhaps other sites in North Albany, so that both agencies can work more effectively together than if they were working separately. Albany Parks & Recreation staff know how to take care of urban parks but are not experienced in habitat management, whereas Benton County Parks' employees have that expertise. Hodney envisions a reciprocal role in ETLNA and possibly North Albany Park, which is a Benton County facility.

Powers said that ten years ago Benton County put a much larger emphasis on the management of natural areas and parks. They have moved towards doing a comprehensive plan update over the last year and a half by going out to the public. They have spoken to residents in North Albany to present the balance they are trying to strike. Residents said they appreciate that balance. Powers said they did a habitat conservation plan to speak to their goal of managing parks and promoting natural resource values. They also tell citizens how to promote habitat on their own properties. ETLNA has values that are complimentary to Benton County's values. The North Albany Park is an older park and it will be looked at as part of the next Master Plan update. Powers agreed with Hodney that it is good to take this opportunity to consider shared capital development and operation and maintenance costs, to see if there are better efficiencies. For example, they could trade mowing for habitat expertise.

Johnson pointed out that Albany is not just North Albany; there are many more citizens in this city. The comments and interests of all the citizens should be considered. Hodney affirmed that his role is to address the needs for all the citizens of Albany.

Councilor Bill Coburn said that the Grande Ronde Indians and Oregon State University (OSU) were at one time interested in ETLNA. He asked, have you asked them to donate? Hodney said OSU does not have a funding mechanism to donate, but they will be involved in research. The Spirit Mountain Community Fund, the funding arm of the Confederated Tribes of the Grande Ronde, typically doesn't fund acquisitions but do cultural resource surveys, natural resource surveys, and educational programs. Additionally, they may want to help build the Kalapuya Interpretive Center.

Benton County Commissioner Jay Dixon asked, what about the development costs? Hodney said they don't have that yet, but at some point they will need to come up with a funding strategy. Hodney thinks they will get more interest from funders once the property is purchased.

Konopa described the pavers that the North Albany Neighborhood Association (NANA) is selling to raise money. NANA member Bill Root said the pavers range from 6" x 6" to 12" x 12". They were displayed at the recent ETLNA barbecue fundraiser and will also be available for sale at the Saturday Market. Konopa said they are also on the City's website and it would be nice if Benton County added it to their website as well.

Hodney said staff from both agencies will work up a draft intergovernmental agreement (IGA) and bring it forward to both bodies, if that is the consensus of the Board and Council.

Jaramillo likes the concept of providing habitat corridors. It creates connectivity for wildlife and as development pressures occur, those will be cut off. It is important to get those in place now.

Dixon is supportive of working together. He said, our constituents appreciate governments that work together, especially when it saves money.

Konopa pointed out that Thornton Lake is the last natural lake in North Albany; all the others are manmade.

Benton County Commissioner Linda Modrell said that in Benton County there have been projects that have taken more than a decade to open, so it is important to have a plan ready to enact when the financial opportunities do become available. She said she does recognize what Johnson said about considering all of Albany and she would like to get some feedback about what the rest of the citizens might like to see.

Konopa said ETLNA is complementary to Talking Water Gardens. Albany would have a second natural area in the city.

The council and the board directed the staff to construct a draft IGA for review by both bodies at future meetings.

#### Report on meeting Goal 5 requirements in Albany and the county

Community Development Director Greg Byrne gave an update about Goal 5, the state's goal for natural resources. Albany staff has been coordinating with Benton County staff to receive their comments. Goal 5 is part of Albany's periodic review program and the work has been ongoing for some time.

Byrne said that under Goal 5 they must address riparian areas, wetlands and significant wildlife. The process started some years ago with a Natural Resource Committee (NRC). The NRC made recommendations which were tabled for awhile. More recently those recommendations were revisited and presented to the public, but there was not much support. Next, staff considered using the state's "safe harbor" option, but through the public process found that they were very inflexible and difficult to apply in an urban setting. The third option was Environmental, Social, Economic, Energy (ESSE) analysis, which focused on significant wetlands around Oak Creek, the Calapooia River, and the Willamette River. There are public hearings in August and September for the ESSE regulations.

Modrell asked, what is the ESSE analysis? Byrne described that it allows for the analysis and the balancing of many factors to decide if the area should be fully, or less, protected.

Jaramillo asked what Linn County is doing about riparian areas. Byrne said Linn County has a stronger program than the City is proposing; their setback is 50 feet over all riparian and wetlands. Byrne said he thinks that that is appropriate given the rural nature of Linn County; and moving into the city, he thinks Albany's proposed setbacks are appropriate.

Modrell asked how the transitions work from one side of the street to the other, from urban to rural. Byrne will work with Linn County to see how they are doing that. Discussion followed.

Jaramillo said they also need to discuss qualitative factors for water quality and quantity, and what the communities want.

#### Report on managing personnel benefit costs

City Manager Wes Hare said that Modrell asked him to speak to how the City has managed personnel costs. Hare referred to an e-mail he received from Human Resources Director David Shaw. It said that the "average salary report" for October 2010 showed that for regular employees the total was \$1,943,999. For June 2011, the City's total was \$1,900,321, which is a difference of \$43,678 per month. In other words, the City has reduced its payroll by \$524, 136.

Hare explained how Albany reduced the number of employees through attritions and some layoffs, but mostly through the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP). The City also changed health care plans and savings that way. Hare said the City is bound by PERS and union contracts and is unable to find savings in those areas. The two main tools that have been successful were to reduce the number of employees and health care savings.

Hare explained the VSIP detail. VSIP is also beneficial for providing for succession planning. While the program is voluntary, it is not necessarily open to all employees; staff used spreadsheets to make decisions about where to offer it and the savings particular vacancies would create. Hare said they made a heavy investment in evidence-based management, by doing things differently to get a better outcome and to still provide effective services.

Jaramillo said the big challenge is to communicate with the public about how agencies are cutting back on employees and still providing service. She doesn't think local agencies do a good job explaining that. Hare said that the risk of appearing that you are doing more with less staff, is that the public assumes you started out with too many employees. But there are real impacts to having fewer employees. For example the rating that is used by the insurance industry to set rates for Albany citizens dropped, because fire staffing levels are low. This impacts some homeowner insurance rates and is a direct result of a reduced staffing level.

Johnson pointed out that for the employees left behind, the work doesn't go away; they just have more of it. The public has to feel the difference, otherwise they tend to think there were too many employees before.

Konopa commended City staff for coming up with VSIP. It is a creative way to reduce the costs. She agrees that we may still be providing the service but it definitely creates more demand on the staff that remains.

Councilor Jeff Christman said the challenge is to make it clear to the community about what our priorities are. We need to communicate that better. Hare said, we did spend effort doing so but it is a tough message to get across. Our Strategic Plan and the Budget process shows where the money goes: 80% of the General Fund goes to Police and Fire, for example. Unfortunately, it is the more unusual issues that get the press' attention.

**BUSINESS FROM THE COUNCIL AND THE BOARD**

Johnson thanked the Benton County Board of Commissioners for meeting with them. Jaramillo thanked Albany for the invitation, as it is important to get together.

Modrell asked for a timeline for the IGA. Hodney will provide a structure.

Councilor Dick Olsen said that Albany is Benton County's second largest city, so he is pleased to hear that they are excited about ETLNA.

Konopa appreciates that Benton County is supportive of other city projects, not just those in North Albany.

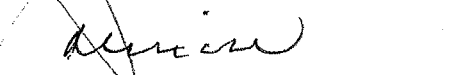
Jaramillo noted that the Benton County Fair will be the first week in August.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the Work Session adjourned at 5:39 p.m.

  
Linda Modrell, Chair

09-27-11 (date)

  
Jay Dixon, Commissioner

10-3-11 (date)

  
Annabelle Jaramillo, Commissioner

9/29/11 (date)