

COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
BOARD MEETING

MINUTES

January 7, 2009

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners met for a special session with Commissioner Rita Bernhard, Commissioner Anthony Hyde and Commissioner Earl Fisher. The meeting was held at the Best Western Oak Meadows in St. Helens, Oregon.

Due to weather related issues, the meeting was immediately moved to the Columbia County Emergency Services Department. The meeting was called to order at 9:10.

The weather service reported a strong front approaching with heavy rain in Southwest Washington with rivers at flood stage. The storm is migrating south towards NW Oregon this afternoon through the overnight hours. Thursday should be dry. Vernonia should expect possible 2-3 inches. Columbia County in general could see 2-4 inches. The upper Nehalem should crest at 12-13 feet by mid-day. In 1996 and 2007 events, the Nehalem crested at 19 feet. A stall over Columbia County is unlikely. The front will continue to slide towards the east. This is a different meteorological situation than in December, 07. Rains will cause snow melt in the coast range. Snow is currently melting but we are not getting good numbers from the Saddle Mountain gauge. But, snow melt was considered in the 12-13 foot crest forecast. The snow melt now is a good thing. It is working in our favor.

Vicki Harguth reported that the Clatskanie River is high. The Weather Service reported that there are no gauges in the Clatskanie river but to expect rapid raises during the rain to cause some problems. Weather spotters are in the area. Tides are running high but tidal information was considered in the forecast. They can't give specifics for back water effects in a small river tributary, but they would likely raise and the City should advise accordingly.

Ken Cox from the Vernonia School District reported that the wood shop would be effected in a 12-13 foot crest event. They are currently emptying out the wood shop with the help of inmates.

The Weather Service reported that historical data shows 13 foot crest causing minor flooding in low lying areas in central and east Vernonia. The crest would be at Clear Creek 2-3 hours before Vernonia so there is time to act if the crest is higher.

Vicki Harguth suggested another conference call at 7:00 a.m. on 1.8.09 for an update on conditions using the same phone codes. The Board of Commissioners discussed recessing their meeting at the Best Western to 7:00 am on 1.8.09 for another meeting in EOC.

Steve Coats with the Clatskanie FD is concerned with debris and slides and asked if anyone was monitoring. Vicki Harguth reported contact with ODF and 9-11 CAN to set p a list of persons in the area. The list is ready. ODF has jurisdiction over landslides. She is sure they are monitoring closely but she will call them again this a.m.

Diane Pohl asked if the County would trigger a recon flight because people in Clatskanie are nervous. No. Not at this time.

Vicki H. Reported that any news overnight should be reported to her and to 9-11 at 503-397-151 as backup. Can notification went out in Vernonia but not in other areas. Vicki will confirm with Mike Simek.

Sally Jones reported that the PIC will open at 9-11 at noon today. The numbers are activated and Janet Wright will be at the PIC.

Tony Hyde reported that all information will be on the Web EOC. People should check that before calling in and clogging up the lines.

At this time, there was no need for a new emergency declaration. With that, the Board recessed this meeting and reconvened at the Best Western Oak Meadows. The purpose of this meeting was for the Board to meet with a facilitator to discuss the operations of the county for FY 2009.

Commissioner Hyde expressed his areas of interest while serving as Commissioner: Gas and Oil; Economic Development; AOC and NACo; State Economic Commission; Forestry, O&C Board; CFTLAC; Crown Zellerbach Trail; Emergency Management; RAC for FEMA oversight; OEMA and REMG.

Commissioner Bernhard expressed her areas of interest while serving as Commissioner: Human Services: Mental Health, Public Health, Senior Services, Veterans; AOC Committee; GOBHI Board; CAT Board; Mental Health Advisory Committee, Local Drug & Alcohol Committee; NOHA Board; Transportation; Cornelius Pass Rd. Committee; Rail Corridor Study; providing oversight to Transportation Director; Oregon TOC/OWA Workforce Management; Fair Board; Parks; United Way Board of Directors; Kiwanis; Strategic Planning Committee for St. Helens School District.

Commissioner Fisher expressed his areas of interest while serving as Commissioner: Law Enforcement; Traffic Safety; ROCN; Court House Security; Parks; Cultural Arts; Forest Trust along with Commissioner Hyde; Human Services; Commission on Children and Families, Seniors, along with Commissioner Bernhard; Economic Development; Education; PCC; ESD; sharing in Emergency Services; CEPA; County Forest Trust Lands; O&C and provide oversight to the Economic Development Director on RAC.

The Board as a whole will work with all County Department Heads and on the County Budget.

The Board then recessed the regular session to go into Executive Session as allowed under ORS 192.660(2)(h). Upon coming out of Executive Session, no action was taken by the Board.

The following items were discussed and consensus reached:

**Performance evaluations of department heads:** Agreement to get input from Directors on what they would like and commitment to follow-through.

**Budget philosophy:** Agreement that budget needs to be tied in to the strategic plan goals/objectives and reflect priorities for the County.

**Filming Board meetings:** All Board Meetings to be visually recorded and made available on the web.

**Operating Guidelines: How the Board will interact:** The Board discussed how to be most effective Commission.

The Board recessed the meeting at 4:00 pm and reconvened the meeting on Thursday, January 8, 2009 at 7:30 a.m. in the Emergency Management Office.

The following update on weather was given.

Cities of Clatskanie and Rainier are predicted to get heavy rains and strong winds starting today. Warm Frontal System moving South into Oregon later today. 2-4" rain likely. Upper Nehalem gauge expected to crest 12'-14' late morning on the 8th. New Year's high mark was 10.25 so this will be higher.

Wind stream is westerly flow which is different than the 2007 Winter storm and flood in Vernonia. The 2007 had winds flowing from the south and southeast. South and Southeast wind flow more likely to stale over Vernonia (east side of coastal range).

High Tides are a concern for the Clatskanie area over the next few days.

Vernonia School District prepared to remove items from the school if necessary. Have a prison work crew assisting them through mutual aid. Do not want to remove the basketball court. If necessary it will be the last thing to move. The School has no insurance after last year's claim. Vicki will talk to ODF, Mike Simek, regarding forest conditions related to debris flow. Possible flight over to recon situation.

Heavy precipitation predicted over night. Columbia Alert System (CAN) messages being prepared to release if needed.

Volunteer's will be coordinated from the EOC and CCSO Volunteer Coordinator Richard Egano. Sarah looking at County and Non-County volunteer forms for use.

The Board of Commissioners recessed the meeting and reconvened again at 4:07 p.m. on January 8, 2009 in the EOC Department to discuss whether or not the County should make a new emergency declaration resulting from the rain/flooding events of January 7 and 8, 2009.

Present were Commissioner Hyde and Commissioner Bernhard. Commissioner Fisher participated by phone. Also present were Vicki Harguth, Derek White, Janet Wright and Sarah Hanson.

Vicki gave a status update of the flood events. The Nehalem crested at 11.06 ft. at 8 or 9 a.m.. Rain wasn't as heavy as they expected. Vernonia is keeping informed about the status of Rock Creek which possibly has 2 log jams. The Clatskanie River crested at noon today very close to flood state. Some people were evacuated in Clatskanie from a couple of mobile home parks. Several businesses were notified. ODF is going up in an airplane on 1.9 to look for landslide danger. But, generally, the landslide risk this year is much different than last year.

Commissioner Hyde asked whether we asked the governor to declare an emergency, and whether we have been tracking costs or asking anyone else to do so. Vicki responded that we have not needed any outside resources. The DOC went to Vernonia under mutual aid and OEM assured no billings would be made.

We discussed whether we should add these costs to the past declaration at the end of December. The consensus was yes. Because of that, no new declaration is necessary

Clatskanie issued a declaration of emergency on January 8, 2009 for events of Jan 7 and 8. The declaration states they will request assistance from the County as needed by separate letter. Sarah did not read that as a request for the County to ask the Governor to proclaim an emergency in Clatskanie. Commissioner Fisher agreed to ask the City whether they intend to ask the County to send a request to the Governor. Commissioner Bernhard moved and Commissioner Hyde seconded to authorize the Emergency Manager Director to sign a letter to Governor Kulongowski to declare a disaster in the City of Clatskanie, upon receipt of a letter requesting that action from the City of Clatskanie. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned on Thursday, January 8, 2008 at 5:05 p.m.

With nothing further coming before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

Dated at St. Helens, Oregon this 7<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2009.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Rita Bernhard, Hyde, Chair

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Anthony Hyde, Commissioner

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Earl Fisher, Commissioner