

AGENDA ITEM FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING ( ) Discussion only  
( X ) Action

FROM (DEPT/ DIVISION): County Counsel

SUBJECT: County Manager

<p>Background:</p> <p>In 2019, the Umatilla County Charter Review Committee made a number of recommendations. One of these was to have a county manager. At the time of the report at the August 7, 2019 meeting, the Board voted not to forward the question of adding the charter requirement of a county manager to the voters. As part of that discussion, the matter of appointment of a county manager was differed to the future. The matter was reviewed in September, 2019, with staff to provide additional information on the status of county managers in other counties. The information was compiled. The matter is now before the Board for further discussion.</p>	<p>Requested Action:</p> <p>Discuss next steps, if any, regarding the need for a county manger</p>
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ATTACHMENTS: Meeting minutes; Memorandum; Counties Information Chart

\*\*\*\*\*For Internal Use Only\*\*\*\*\*

Checkoffs:

- ( ) Dept. Heard (copy)
- ( ) Human Resources (copy)
- ( ) Fiscal
- ( X ) Legal (copy)
- ( ) (Other - List:)

To be notified of Meeting:

Needed at Meeting:

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Scheduled for meeting on: December 29, 2021

Action taken:

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Follow-up:

**MINUTES**  
**UMATILLA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
Meeting of August 7, 2019  
9:00 a.m., Room 113, Stafford Hansell Government Center  
Hermiston, Oregon

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**Commissioners Present:** Chair George Murdock, Vice-Chair John Shafer and Commissioner Bill Elfering

**County Counsel:** Doug Olsen

**Members and Guests Present:** Charter Review Committee: Michele Grable, Dan Dorran, Sally Anderson-Hansell, Genna Banica; County Planning Department: Bob Waldher (director), Gina Miller (SWAC and code enforcement coordinator); Mike Jewett, Sanitary Disposal, Inc.; George Anderson, attorney; Katie Saul, Hermiston School District, business services director; Cameron Bendixsen, Hermiston Irrigation District, attorney; County Assessment & Taxation, Paul Chalmers (director) and Rachael Reynolds; Kim Weissenfluh, Developmental Disabilities program manager; Dale Primmer, Community Justice director; Marlene McClintock; Bud Rupe; Suni Danforth; Eva Martin

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**CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Murdock called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. He reminded those present that the meeting is a public forum. It is being video and audio recorded and minutes will be taken. Comments will become part of the meeting record. If persons wish to speak before the Board, please stand or come to the table in order to be heard on the record, identify yourself and state where you live, and also note if you are speaking on behalf of others. He noted there is a point for public input before business items for other than agenda items.

**Pledge of Allegiance** was led by Commissioner Shafer.

**Awards/Correspondence/Recognition** – none.

**Minutes 7/24/19 and 7/26/19.** Motion to approve minutes of meetings of 7/24 and 7/26 was made by Commissioner Elfering. Seconded by Commissioner Shafer. Carried, 3-0.

**Additions to Agenda** – Discussion regarding UPRR extended blocking of tracks in Stanfield.

**Public Comments** – none.

**Business Items**

1. **Charter Review Recommendations.** Consideration of recommendations. Mr. Olsen presented. At the last Board meeting the report and recommendation were made by the committee for proposed changes to the County Charter. A number of members are present today. Under the terms of the Charter, the Board has 60 days to take action. Also, to be timely for the November ballot, measures must be submitted by 8/16. This action would be for referring to the ballot for voters. Recommended changes have now been made by committee and the Board has reviewed them and have had time to consider.

First, proposed is ballot #1 is regarding county management, which would put into the Charter the requirement the Board of Commissioners appoint a manager. It would also seek to add the required appointment of county counsel. This appointment has been done, but is not in the Charter as a requirement. This is so the county manager does not appoint counsel; it would be for more direct oversight by the Board vs. reporting to the manager.

It was agreed to address each item separately.

Commissioner Elfering expressed gratitude to the committee noting they are citizens who volunteered. There were 19 meetings in 15 months. He has read all the minutes, the report and put in a lot of thought. Regarding ballot item #1, he is concerned about the term required regarding a manager; he felt there is a high chance for failure at the ballot box. His position is that it not be placed before voters at this time; he felt there is need for more developing as to function, cost and benefit. The Board needs time to fully vet this. He is not in support of going to vote at this time.

Commissioner Shafer has looked at other counties. Often, the Board chair serves as administrator, depending on population. He also gave thanks to the committee and respects the process. He is concerned about another layer of bureaucracy from employees to commissioners. He's heard a lot of comments that the Board is running well at this time. They currently have the option to hire a manager outside the charter – not as a requirement. He also feels it best not to put this item on the ballot at this time.

Commissioner Murdock advised his intent all along is to honor the committee's work. He strongly believes governing of the county should go to the voters. He supports on this matter to take the Charter Committee's recommended action.

Chair Murdock then asked for public comments.

Suni Danforth, Milton-Freewater. She expressed appreciation to the committee. She attended three meetings. She likes the option of hiring a manager, but does not feel it should be on the ballot. She also agrees with having county counsel – it is a must. She feels the day to day management by department heads/managers with Board oversight works.

Michele Grable, Pendleton, pointed out she was the first county counsel in the early '80s. She noted the committee did not intend to make another layer of bureaucracy – it is the opposite – intent is to free the commissioners to “chase the money” and be advocates for the county. Administrative responsibilities of day to day are department managers, who are under the three commissioners' control. She feels the public should make the decision – give them the option at the ballot box. A manager is needed. She feels the committee is committed and would campaign to make it work, if needed.

Sally Anderson-Hansell, Hermiston, felt a county manager would save more than the cost and would allow the commissioners time to advocate, obtain funds, grants, etc.

**Commissioner Elfering moved to oppose the 1st measure to the ballot (Ordinance No. 2019-05. Seconded by Shafer. 2 yes; Chair Murdock voted no. [not adopted]**

Mr. Olsen presented resolution Ordinance No. 2019-06, which is to refer ballot measure #2 regarding the method of election. Proposal is if there are two or less candidates, they would only run in the general election in November. If more than two, they would run in May, then a run-off would be held in November.

Commissioner Elfering noted the Charter clearly states it is in November. The proposal clarifies the process and gives voters the choice of the top two candidates. He pointed out disadvantages – if there were two or less in the May primary there wouldn't be a primary and would go to the general election in November. The disadvantage to candidates is they must campaign longer. He is in support of this measure #2.

Commissioner Shafer talked about the comparison of county language as to state language -- the top two would go to vote based on percentage of primary election, rather than the candidate with majority being elected in primary. He likes the state language and feels it clarifies better. He is in opposition to this ballot measure as presented.

Chair Murdock noted spring elections are generally small. He likes representation from all parts of the county. He wants voters to have an option for balance.

**Commissioner Elfering moved #2 measure be advanced to ballot to the ballot and adoption of Ordinance No. 2019-06. Seconded by Chair Murdock. 2 yes; Commissioner Shafer voted no. Motion carried 2-1.**

Mr. Olsen presented Ordinance No. 2019-07, which primarily changes the wording in the Charter regarding law enforcement department to “Sheriff’s Office”. It was originally thought the Sheriff would manage more than one department. The proposed change would also make clear the Sheriff has all functions provided as set out in Oregon law.

Commissioner Elfering agreed this would make it consistent with other counties and is in support.

Commissioner Shafer pointed out the Sheriff is elected to office. He worked 17 years at Sheriff’s Office and understands its functions. He is definitely in favor of this reference.

**Commissioner Elfering moved to advance measure #3 to the ballot and adoption of Ordinance No. 2019-07. Seconded by Commissioner Shafer. Motion carried 3-0.**

Ms. Grable followed up to Commissioner Elfering’s comments on measure #1. She suggested putting on the next agenda (or the following) to form a committee to study the appointment of a county manager and all that goes with it -- function, money. Secondly, put to the voters or to just move forward and hire one.

Ms. Danforth suggested it would be cheaper to hire a grant manager.

Chair Murdock promised it would be on a Board agenda – maybe not the next one, but it will in a timely manner be put on a near future agenda.

Marlene McClintock asked who would have time to run out and chase money? Chair Murdock responded the concept is broader than that. Having a manager would permit commissioners to focus on broader issues – strategic planning would be part of that.

Chair Murdock called a brief recess at 9:38 a.m. Back to order at 9:42 a.m.

2. Plan Map Amendment – City of Hermiston - Public Hearing. Chair Murdock called the hearing to order at 9:43 a.m. A summary was presented by Mr. Olsen. This is for a Hermiston Plan map amendment co-adoption to change from urban to urbanizeable. The Planning Commission reviewed and recommends co-adoption. Bob Waldher, Planning Director, gave the staff report. This is somewhat unique in Hermiston. One item of note, during the process a letter came from the Fair Housing Council (he referred to exhibit A in the report). Staff tried to follow up with council as the letter was received after the Planning Commission meeting. It had to do with goal 10 (statewide housing). However, the proposal will actually increase housing in Hermiston (developable lots), which should satisfy their concern.

This amendment would change the area to R3 designation, multi-family for more density and thus more developable lots within the City.

Chair Murdock called for testimony in favor:

George Anderson, 625 W Division, Hermiston. He represents Hermiston School District. He introduced Katie Saul (School District) and also Hermiston Irrigation District’s attorney, Cameron Bendixsen. The purpose of the application is to co-adopt the amendment with Hermiston. He noted the City’s companion resolution. If approved, the area would become R3 residential. He added the Fair Housing Council did not come to any City Council meetings nor the Planning Commission; it only sent a letter after the fact.

# Charter Review – Next Steps

## Introduction

After eighteen months of study, the Charter Review Committee appointed by Umatilla County recommended the retention of three full-time commissioners and the engagement of a professional manager. They further recommended this matter be placed on the November, 2019 ballot.

Following considerable discussion by the commissioners and others, the BOC voted 2-1 not to place this issue on the ballot, but to continue discussion of the matter.

Based upon input received from Commission members and others, the decision was more about whether or not to place the matter on the ballot – not whether or not the County should begin exploring options regarding the need for a professional manager. It was also pointed out the County currently has the authority to engage a manager.

In general, those on both sides of the issue indicated they felt going to the ballot would be premature and that the issue needed further exploration and vetting.

It was noted during the discussion that 27 of 36 counties in Oregon currently have a manager including both Union and Morrow Counties. It was also pointed out that while things are currently going well at the County, this has not always been the case and there is no guarantee this is a certainty in the future.

The Charter Review Committee indicated they felt strongly that past history and potential changes in Commission membership should be considered rather than just the status quo in order to make an informed decision about the potential stability and professional management skills that would be incumbent in hiring a manager.

It was noted the Commissioners have had a management position in the past handling day-to-day operations.

The meeting ended with what appeared to be a strong message about the value of continuing the conversation and that the issue should be addressed at the Board meeting on August 21.

The proposed recommendation for action on August 21 is that the County should gather some basic information about the subject of a manager before deciding whether or not to consider appointing a committee to participate in further discussion.

## Basic Information to be Gathered

A chart should be prepared listing all 36 Oregon counties including:

- a. Population
- b. Number of commissioners
- c. Whether commissioners are full-time or part-time
- d. Whether or not there is a manager
- e. General authority and duties of the manager
- f. Salary of the manager
- g. Length of time county has had a manager

- Information would be gathered about other innovative organizational county structures that exist not just in Oregon but across the country.
- A review of the current county administrative structure would be conducted in order to determine strengths and needs
- Input would be solicited about the characteristics and practices of the current organizational structure most appreciated by county residents
- City officials would be contacted for their input and thoughts regarding potential county administrative models

Salary Rates for Oregon County Commissioners and County Managers

County	Population*	# of Commissioners (# includes Co. Judge where applicable)	Commissioner Full or Part time	Salary of County Commissioner/ Annually	Statutory or Constitutional Home Rule	Judge	Judge as Administrator	Judge Salary / Annually	Administrator	County Administrator under Other Title	Salary of Manager (Administrator)	Administrator Salary Range/ Annually	# of Years Structure has been in Effect	YR Structure in Effect*	Comments
BAKER	16,765	3	Part	\$80,712.00	S				Chair				22	1997	
BENTON	93,590	3	Full	\$87,809 - \$98,351.00	C				Appointed		\$192,886.00		47	1972	
CLACKAMAS	419,425	5	Full	\$104,474 & Chair \$106,564	S				Appointed		\$203,541.00		69	1950	
CLATSOP	39,200	5	Volunteer	\$13,332 / \$15,852 C	C				Appointed	County Manager	\$160,000.00		31	1988	Commissioners earn a stipend not salary
COLUMBIA	51,900	3	Full	\$93,601.11	S				None				48	1971	
COOS	63,275	3	Full	\$64,488.00	S				None				58	1961	
CROOK	22,710	3	Part	\$52,646.05	S	Yes- FTE	Yes	\$105,292.10					137	1882	
CURRY	22,915	3	Full	\$68,463.00	S				None				50	1969	
DESCHUTES	188,980	3	Full	\$102,205.08	S				Appointed		\$186,572.04		48	1971	
DOUGLAS	111,735	3	Full	\$83,740.80	S				None				54	1965	
GILLIAM	1,985	3	Part	\$20,101.65 - \$21,118.80	S	Yes	Yes	\$74,450.57					134	1885	Currently hiring a Chief of Staff to asst. Judge in County Admin \$ 58,071.45
GRANT	7,400	3	Part	\$27,756.00	S	Yes	Yes	\$83,352.00					155	1864	
HARNEY	7,380	3	Part	\$37,764.00	S	Yes	Yes	\$75,516.00					130	1889	
HOOD RIVER	25,310	5	Part	15904.46 / 19892.65 C	C				Appointed		\$155,539.77		55	1964	1st Admin 1991 or 1992 per HR
JACKSON	219,200	3	Full	\$104,499.20 - \$115,232.00	C				Appointed		\$276,057.60		41	1978	
JEFFERSON	23,560	3	Part	\$34,228.80 (2) - \$36,607.68	S				Appointed	Admin. Officer	\$130,040.64		23	1996	
JOSEPHINE	86,395	3	Full	\$82,283.64 - \$88,997.99	C				None				39	1980	
KLAMATH	67,960	3	Full	\$77,339.24	S				None				54	1965	
LAKE	8,115	3	Full	\$61,588.00	S				None				48	1971	*Business Services Director is more like HR Director
LANE	375,120	5	Full	\$86,146.26	C				Appointed		\$210,142.40	\$140,067.20 - \$210,142.40	57	1962	Source could find Board Orders for Admin Manager as far back as 1977
LINCOLN	48,210	3	Full	\$87,708 / \$93,264 / \$85,068	S				None				52	1967	

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LINN	125,575	3	Full	\$95,940 - \$103,140	S				Appointed	Admin. Officer		\$129,096 - \$164,400	49	1970	
MALHEUR	31,925	3	Part	\$30,303.00	S	Yes		\$75,757.56	Appointed		\$77,902.56		30	1989	
MARION	344,035	3	Full	\$101,212.80	S				Appointed	Chief Admin Officer	\$196,580.80		56	1963	
MORROW	11,885	3	Full	\$52,540.80	S				Appointed	Yes	\$105,080.00		2	2017	
MULTNOMAH	813,300	5	Full	\$117,094.47	C				Chair		\$186,765.90		53	1966	
POLK	82,100	3	Full	\$75,192.00	S				Appointed			\$140,000 - \$150,000	52	1967	
SHERMAN	1,785	3	Part	\$32,388 & \$41,328	S	Yes	Yes	\$74,976.00					130	1889	Judge Full Time/ Commissioners Part Time
TILLAMOOK	26,395	3	Full	\$84,780.00	S				None	Chief of BOCC Staff		\$76,152.00 - \$96,372.00	51	1968	
UMATILLA	80,765	3	Full	\$95,448.00	C				None				26	1993	
UNION	26,885	3	Full	\$73,116.00	S				Appointed	Admin. Officer	\$88,908.00	\$73,140 - \$88,908/ yr	28	1991	
WALLOWA	7,175	3	Part	\$44,855.04	S					Admin. Services Director	\$56,755.00	\$51,138 - \$58,470	20	1999	
WASCO	27,200	3	Full	\$47,680.08	S				Appointed		\$147,018.24	\$120,062.76 - \$150,787.80	9	2010	
WASHINGTON	606,280	5	Part	\$45,483.00/ (\$113,708.00 Chair)	C				Appointed		\$211,583.00		57	1962	County Charter specifies salary for BCC. BCC make salary decision for Admin
WHEELER	1,450	3	Part	\$18,803.20	S	Yes	Yes	\$39,855.20					120	1899	Judge 3/4 time and (2) Commissioners 1/2 time
YAMHILL	107,415	3	Full	\$78,265.62	S				Appointed		\$134,236.00		50	1969	Salary for BOC is max. Commissioners may elect to receive less.
*Guide to Oregon Counties, 2019-2020, AOC Association of Oregon Counties															