

State of the County Address – January 2017

Thomas Huxley – Curry County Commissioner Chair

Everyone has heard the doom and gloom that revenues are falling off a cliff. I would like to present a somewhat different perspective in these opening comments.

Economic Indicators:

Community Development Department & County Surveyor: Monthly activity reports are created by these departments identifying their work completed in the prior month. In addition to providing a good deal of transparency for the public, these informative reports give a snapshot in time of how County dollars are being spent.

The Community Development Department's Planning and Building Divisions are revenue neutral in that their current budgets do not include the use of General Fund dollars. This Department also handles a large share of the County's economic development work. Funds for Economic Development efforts are derived from State lottery money. Each division in the Department has specific functions under the direction of the Community Development Director. These include:

Building Division: In calendar year 2016, there were eighty (80) building permits issued for single family homes and manufactured dwellings, and six (6) commercial building permits, remaining fairly consistent with 2015 building permit levels.

Economic Development Division: The South Coast Development Council (SCDC) came on board with the County as a partner for county economic development. SCDC worked extensively with BC Fisheries in Brookings for funding to expand their seafood plant in 2016.

Planning Division – Long Range Planning. An update to the Zoning Code procedures to streamline the County's permitting process was completed. The update also introduces new land uses that can enhance expanded housing and business opportunities. Additionally, the land uses in the forest grazing, timber, Agricultural and Exclusive Farm Use have been drafted and reviewed by the Planning Commission for Board action in 2017.

County Surveyor Annual Report for 2016: This past week the County Surveyor published his Annual Report for 2016. The report begins on page 100 of the January 18, 2017 Board of Commissioner Meeting Packet which is available online.

The report highlighted the department's progress in digitizing archived records and placing them online with the goal of making it easier and more economical for the public to access. The Surveyor noted being unable to update some of the larger files on the current website because of file size limitations but noted with the new county website now being developed this will soon cease to be a factor.

Also included in the report was a ten-year budget trend beginning in 2007/2008. The data includes three primary revenue sources. Great service remains with the budget reduction.

2007/2008 Fiscal Year Budget: \$113,189

2016/2017 Fiscal Year Budget: \$ 73,178 (includes \$14,678 from the General Fund)

All staff, including the Surveyor is part time irregular employees. This section of the report ended with:

“With the anticipated budget crunch, we will strive to maintain the current level of services without receiving any general revenue funds.”

The Surveyor had one comment in his October 2016 Report that should be an inspiration to all county elected officials and employees.

“With the information now available on line, our map sales revenue has dropped significantly, but service to the public has certainly benefited.”

Improving Public Service:

New County Website Underway – Kick-Off Meeting January 12, 2017: Outsourcing of the county website was first attempted in 2013. It was not until late 2016 that this became a reality. The total cost for the new website was \$13,500 payable over four years with no interest. The cost includes five years of unlimited technical support, unlimited storage capacity and a website redesign in year five at no additional charge.

The county’s current website ‘locked up’ numerous times over the past year because of storage capacity issues on the existing county system. Each time this occurred various departments would have to remove data on their respective department web pages until the system capacity fell below a certain threshold. The county Elections Department was affected on more than one occasion. Fortunately there were no website issues affecting the reporting of election results November 8, 2016.

This limitation will no longer exist once the new website goes live as data storage capacity is unlimited and the web developer hosts the data on their server(s) offsite. This in turn frees up computer server space on the county’s system.

Government Channel is Back Online: After more than one year of non-compliance, Curry County Government Channel 182 is back on line. A new audio/video system has been installed so all Board of Commissioner (BOC) meetings are now televised and audible. Written minutes of all future BOC meetings will be easily and economically completed in a timely manner.

The funds used to purchase the system come from monthly fees charged to Charter Cable subscribers. These funds are **restricted** and may **only** be used for Public Education Government installations.

For those interested in watching a specific County meeting, we now offer an improved Video on Demand service. Links to each video can be found on the Board of Commissioners’ Meeting Schedule here: <http://www.co.curry.or.us/Board-of-Commissioners>

Rethinking Government Services to Save \$\$\$:

Geographic Information system (GIS) Mapping Application: After nearly four years and more than **\$100,000** expended on hardware, software and third party services to develop a GIS mapping application, we were left with a product that was unsatisfactory to the intended end users. In October 2016 Curry County went in a completely different direction and on November 30, 2016 entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with Lane County to stand up a working Enterprise GIS system for Curry County. The entire project was outsourced including Lane County hosting the mapping application. This eliminated future software, maintenance and licensing costs which over the last twelve years **had alone exceeded \$50,000** in addition to the costs referred to above.

Estimated time to stand up the application was two weeks and an additional four to five weeks for testing and input from Curry County and other users.

Total Cost: \$4,800

Hosting: \$150 per month - includes hardware replacement and software licensing

The mapping application was up and running in less than two weeks. All reviews have been extremely positive along with comments about quick responses from Lane County GIS staff to questions and suggested changes.

IT Technical Support Services contracted out July 2016: July 2016 was the first full month Curry County on a temporary basis contracted with a local company to provide IT services. A formal agreement to continue this arrangement was effective January 1, 2017. The county IT budget approved for Fiscal Year 2016/2017 included **\$175,000 for Personnel Services.**

Monthly reports from the vendor include:

- Requests by department compared to other departments
- Billing breakdown by day
- Invoice charge by day and a total monthly charge

Charges for six months July – December 2016: \$49,885

Charges (annualized) based on first six months: \$99,770

To date the savings have resulted in being under budget by over **40 percent.**

Board of Commissioner (BOC) Office Administrative Support Services IGA: Just last week the BOC amended an existing Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the City of Gold Beach (GB) to provide administrative support services for the BOC office.

2016/2017 Budget - BOC office personnel costs: **\$9,500/month** (two employees)

- Administrative Support 20 hours/ week (GB) **\$1,850/month**
- Part time irregular support: **\$ 700/month**
- Transcription services – meeting minutes: **\$2,200/month** (Feb. thru June)

Projected savings of approximately **\$4,750/month**

The tentative schedule is for the BOC office to be open to the public twenty hours per week which is similar to what has been the case many times during the past several months.

Board minutes required by Oregon Administrative Rules not completed timely have been addressed by outside auditors for a number of years; there are approximately 150 meetings without written minutes over the last five years. To complete these minutes and continue preparation of minutes in the future, the County has engaged a transcription service.

Begin Budget Process - Compile Anticipated Revenue FY 2017/2018:

Not including property taxes, when comparing anticipated revenues to last year's budget our thinking is that we will experience a revenue shortfall in excess of the approximate \$1.5 million in lost timber payments.

Each County elected official, department Director and the public will be participating in finding alternative ways to continue the County's services. Tracking work, evaluating efficient ways to provide services using technology, contracting out work and other cost saving measures as described in this report are among the tools our County can use to weather our financial storm.