

**OREGON CASCADES WEST COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA  
July 19, 2018**

**MEMBERS:** Mayor Sharon Konopa, Albany; Commissioner Claire Hall, Lincoln County; Commissioner Anne Schuster, Benton County; Councilor Bob Elliott, Lebanon; Councilor Dann Cutter, Waldport; Mayor Marjean Cline, Halsey; Mayor Jim Lepin, Millersburg; Councilor Dean Sawyer, Newport; Councilor Debbie Nuber, Scio; Mayor Don Ware, Brownsville; Councilor Max Glenn, Yachats; and Councilor Diane Gerson, Sweet Home.

**STAFF:** Executive Director Fred Abousleman; Deputy Director Rachael Maddock-Hughes; Finance Director Sue Forty; Community and Economic Development (CED) Director Phil Warnock; Senior and Disability Services (SDS) Director Randi Moore; Community Services Program (CSP) Director Jennifer Moore; Technology Services Manager Brian Chytka; and Executive Assistant Jennifer Kelley.

**VIDEO:** Councilor Susan Wahlke, Lincoln City; and Mayor Billie Jo Smith, Toledo.

**GUESTS:** Suzette Boydston

The Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments' (OCWCOG) Board of Directors' Meeting was called to order by Chair Sharon Konopa at the Cascades West Center in Albany.

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Introductions were made.

**2. Public Comment**

Executive Director Fred Abousleman stated that Community Services Program Manager Jennifer Moore's title has been changed to Community Services Program Director effective July 1, 2018.

No public comment.

**3. Consent Calendar**

Councilor Dann Cutter motioned to approve Consent Calendar items as presented, Councilor Debbie Nuber seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Consent Calendar items, as presented, were:

- a. Approval of previous Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes.
- b. Resolution #18-07-07, *Authorizing Signing and Endorsing Checks and Other Instruments*.
- c. Senior Services Advisory Council (SSAC) and Disability Services Advisory Council (DSAC) Membership Renewals.
- d. Senior and Disability Services Contract Renewal for Agencies Funded by the Older Americans Act (OAA).
- e. Cascades West Economic Development District (CWEDD) Articles of Agreement, Bylaws, and Membership Approval.
- f. Financial Update for the period of July 1, 2017 through May 31, 2018.

**4. Presentation of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018-2019 Supplemental Budget**

Executive Director Abousleman stated that the Budget Committee recommends to the Board of Directors adoption of the supplemental budget, which includes the new *Senior Companion Program* and evidence based *Foster Grandparent Program*. He stated that we now have all three Senior Corps programs, which makes OCWCOG one of a limited number of organizations across the United States to do so. Previously (since 2002), Suzette Boydston was running the Senior Corps program at Samaritan Health. The Community Services Program was also awarded a \$4,700 grant to the Benton County Veteran's Services Office for suicide prevention. Both Lincoln and Linn Counties Veteran Services Offices received this same grant.

Ms. Boydston, formerly the Director of the Senior Corps Program at Samaritan Health, stated that it was a dream come true that OCWCOG holds all three programs. The Program serves low-income seniors, it makes sense to house it within OCWCOG. She stated she is very happy and that the community will see results of this program move. Ms. Boydston recommended that the Board have Alicia Lucke at a future meeting to explain the new program in detail.

Mayor Don Ware motioned to adopt the *FY 2018-2019 OCWCOG Supplemental Budget*. Mayor Marjean Cline seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **5. OCWCOG Events Update**

Executive Director Abousleman stated that August 9th would be the first of two OCWCOG events this summer, *Tapas and Treasures*. It is co-hosted by the Senior Services Foundation and the Rotary of Greater Corvallis. All proceeds to go *Meals on Wheels*. He stated that he hopes to see everyone at Garland's Nursery on the 9th of August. He would appreciate it if other Rotary members could mention it.

Executive Director Abousleman also discussed *CelebrateLBL*, which will be held on September 13th at the Oregon Coast Aquarium in Newport. He mentioned that the Board of Directors will pick the regional award winners at this meeting. He asked Board Members if they could send information about *CelebrateLBL* to businesses and community partners in their communities to see if they could sponsor. He thanked Newport and Lincoln County members for hosting us. He mentioned that OCWCOG may host a Regional Mayors' meeting right before *CelebrateLBL*. He also thanked Benton County, who decided to sponsor the event as a County. He challenged other jurisdictions to sponsor as well.

#### **6. Regional Awards Nominations**

Executive Director Fred Abousleman mentioned the Chair's Award for *CelebrateLBL*. Mayor Konopa asked that people send suggestions for this award to her. Commissioner Anne Schuster asked if Board members could nominate a project or a person. Executive Director Abousleman stated that either could be nominated.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that *CelebrateLBL* will not have a plated dinner or presentations. Attendees will convene at end, awards will be presented, and sponsors will be acknowledged.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that last year, the Board started the Regional Awards discussion with the Citizen of the Region award.

Mayor Konopa stated that Commissioner Schuster had nominated an individual.

Commissioner Schuster said it was the professor from Oregon State University (OSU) who discovered the new blue pigment, which is now an official Crayola color. That the discovery was a surprise and he wasn't looking for it. The new pigment has practical applications and it would be nice to have an award for a scientist to reinforce the value of science. She

suggested that the Board read Professor Mas Subramanian's bio available at OSU's website. His wife is an artist, and he has a great appreciate of art because of her influence.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that Crayola retired marigold yellow to make room for the new blue pigment.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that it is an official color, the first to be discovered in 200-300 years and is now in Harvard color palette.

Mayor Konopa suggested Mike Volpe for the award.

Mayor Ware proposed that the Board select the professor for the Citizen of the Region and choose Mike Volpe for Volunteer of the Year.

Mayor Konopa stated that we should walk through all of them and then decide.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that Mr. Volpe. has been a tireless advocate for seniors and people with disabilities. He is a leader in the State, he is constantly meeting with legislators and leading committees.

Ms. Boydston asked if OCWCOG remembered that they were testifying once in Lebanon regarding reducing Medicaid assistance. Mr. Volpe's comment to legislators was, "it took two people, two hours to get me to look this good." He was able to explain that not everyone was able to get up and get out to advocate. It would be so much easier to sit at home, but he continues to advocate.

Mayor Konopa said Mr. Volpe was on OCWCOG's Disability Services Advisory Council (DSAC) before she was on the OCWCOG Board, so at least since 1994.

Mayor Konopa asked for a recommendation for a Community Partner of the Year Nominee.

Commissioner Schuster suggested Gerding Construction. Mayor Konopa said they built the Albany Carousel and Fire Station. Ms. Boydston stated they also built the Hospice house.

Commissioner Schuster stated that Gerding also build the new ABC House, Benton County Museum, etc. She stated that Tom Gerding, President of company, sold the company back to his employees. Tom Gerding is of the mindset that he has earned enough that he wants to give back to his employees. She commented that this a quality of a good business and good business man. Gerding also takes on community-based projects and typically donates parts his staff time or supplies to complete projects. His company touches all three Counties in the Region. Commissioner Schuster stated – when you think of the word integrity, you think of Tom Gerding and those he works with.

Mayor Konopa said Gerding Corporation has been around a long time; Commissioner Schuster noted that it has been at least 50 years. Ms. Boydston stated they she thought they built Samaritan Health's Education Center.

Commissioner Schuster asked if the Coastal members were familiar with Gerding. Commissioner Claire Hall stated that she was not familiar with it. Mayor Billie Jo Smith said no, but that she was impressed with what they do, and that the company works regionally.

Mayor Konopa asked about the *Newport News-Times* as a possible awardee.

Councilor Dean Sawyer commented that they do a lot locally and that they are one of the few newspapers still printing. He noted that the paper is a family-run business that provides a lot support for the tourism industry, producing several advertisement videos for Newport

and for Destinations Newport. The paper also supports the community through social media and an active community page. They report on anything special going on and do special inserts for events. Everyone who is employed by the paper lives in the area.

Mayor Billie Jo Smith said Toledo has not found the *Newport News-Times* to be a very fair paper, not very cooperative, and they would not want to give them an award.

Councilor Max Glenn stated they cannot vote for them. Councilor Susan Wahlke stated that she feels the same way. The paper does not accurately report about Lincoln City.

Mayor Konopa mentioned that the Oregon State Credit Union has been nominated for the Community Partner of the Year Award. Executive Director Fred Abousleman stated that they nominated themselves and have been long-time OCWCOG partners. They are also a *CelebrateLBL* sponsor; Executive Director Abousleman wants to make that clear.

Councilor Wahlke stated that Lincoln City has the newest branch, and that the Credit Union has been a big community supporter. She believes they have been in Newport for a while.

Mayor Smith stated that she has been impressed with Gerding but realizes what the Credit Union has done, and that they have contributed to communities a tremendous amount.

Councilor Glenn stated would like to vote in favor of the Credit Union. He was responsible for trying to get a bank or credit union into Yachats. He worked with several organizations, and Oregon State Credit Union was the most responsive and tried the hardest times to make it work. Ultimately, it didn't work out but he appreciates the efforts of the Cred Union. Councilor Glenn is supportive of the Credit Union for this award.

Councilor Bob Elliott stated that Oregon State Credit Union has been a good partner with the City of Lebanon and he would be in favor of them receiving the award as well.

Mayor Konopa moved on to the *Meals on Wheels* Volunteer of the Year award.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that except for Catherine Skeins, he does not know any of the nominees personally. Catherine Skeins is a *Meal on Wheels* Advisory Committee member.

Ms. Boydston stated that Ms. Skiens advocacy has helped throughout all three Counties. She said OCWCOG is a regional organization and she'd like to think of this award in a regional way. But that all nominees are deserving.

Mayor Konopa asked if it should be a volunteer with the *Meals on Wheels* program. Executive Director Abousleman replied that there are a lot of volunteers through that program, including meal site volunteers, drivers, advisory committee, etc. He recommended that the award should go to someone with the *Meals on Wheels* program.

Ms. Boydston stated that Ms. Skiens has been the Chair of the *Meals on Wheels* Advisory Committee (MOWAC) off and on for many years. She attends the meal sites and is on the Committee that selects the organization that cooks the food. It's not a fun Committee, but she does it on a volunteer basis.

Commissioner Hall asked about all four nominees for *Meals on Wheels*. Councilor Wahlke stated that Wilma Shepherd has volunteered over 40 years for the program and Councilor Wahlke is impressed by this. Mayor Smith responded that she too was impressed. Ms. Shepherd is from Mill City, which is not represented in these awards very often, as per Councilor Wahlke.

Mayor Konopa moved the discussion on to the Project of the Year award.

Commissioner Schuster said she was on the Committee that planned for the Eclipse. Everyone worked very hard, very collaboratively with all agencies – fire, school, Oregon State University, and local hospitals. It was a huge group working together to make a positive, safe event. It was run by the City of Corvallis and Benton County's Public Information Officers', who worked together to make a wonderful event for the Eclipse.

Councilor Wahlke recommended the Bijou Theater – a business that's been in Lincoln City for over 20 years ago. Betsy and Keith Altomore have been making improvements to the building for many years. When movies stopped being released on film, they did a Kickstarter campaign to convert to digital. With the City's help, they replaced all seating so that the chairs would be more comfortable. They also replaced the ceiling and marquee. She stated that it is now a tourist attraction for the City and County. Improvements continue to the lobby and front of the building. The theatre is open and available for benefits, community events, etc. The City has done some promotional videos and have held viewings there.

Mayor Smith, who lives in Toledo, stated that the Bijou Theatre is a community theater and goes to the Bijou because they have the kinds of entertainment and films you can't see other places. She stated that there is a film series that came to Newport, when they left the area, the Bijou took it over. The Bijou brings independent films to the Coast. Theatre Staff reach out to the community for film events, which are well-attended. They do special days and showings for kids, like \$2 Saturday morning movies. They also have special days for old movies. The Bijou has done a lot not just for Lincoln City, but for the whole community.

Mayor Konopa moved the conversation onto the Volunteer of the Year Award.

Mayor Konopa recommended Connie Erickson, who does a lot for the Albany Police Department like coordinating and setting up monthly breakfasts with local kids, events and tours of the police station. She's a great full-time volunteer.

Mayor Konopa asked if anyone knows Dorothy Stark. There was a lot of effort put into her nomination. Mayor Konopa noted that Mr. Volpe is on the list was nominated for Volunteer of the Year as well.

Mayor Smith noted that Mr. Volpe is nominated for two different awards. She assumed that the Board all agreed that he should get at least one award. She suggested it would be good to consider which award to give to Mr. Volpe and then move onto the other awards.

Mayor Ware motioned to make Mr. Volpe the Volunteer of the Year. Councilor Nuber seconded and asked if there was any discussion.

Mayor Jim Lepin stated that Mr. Volpe has contributed the most to our society in the recent years. He said he was not in favor of Mike Volpe being Volunteer of the Year, but Citizen of the Region. Mayor Lepin thinks Mr. Volpe is worth Citizen of the Region award, so he is opposing the motion.

Mayor Konopa called for a vote. All those in favor included: Councilor Sawyer, Mayor Ware, Commissioner Shuster, Councilor Elliott, Commissioner Hall, and Councilor Max Glenn.

All those opposed included: Councilor Nuber, Councilor Diane Gerson, Mayor Cline, Mayor Lepin, Mayor Smith, Councilor Wahlke.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that the Board could pick Professor Subramanian for the Chair's Award. Mayor Konopa replied that she had some other ideas.

Mayor Lepin asked to withdraw the motion.

Mayor Konopa asked Executive Director Abousleman what his thoughts were. He replied that Mr. Volpe needs to be honored and thinks that he could get multiple awards.

Mayor Konopa suggested that maybe Professor Subramanian could be a good awardee for Project of the Year. Executive Director Abousleman replied that it could be what you want. He wouldn't necessarily move him, you may have a good discussion on Project of the Year.

Mayor Ware suggested that Mr. Volpe be the Citizen of the Region. Mayor Cline seconded. Major Konopa asked if there was any discussion and then called for a vote.

Commissioner Schuster voted nay, otherwise it was a unanimous vote in favor of Mr. Volpe for Citizen of the Region.

Major Konopa moved the discussion onto the Community/Business Partner of the Year.

Mayor Smith motioned for Oregon State Credit Union. Councilor Elliott seconded. The vote was unanimous, except for Commissioner Anne Schuster who voted nay.

Mayor Konopa moved the discussion onto the *Meals on Wheels* Volunteer of the Year.

Councilor Sawyer motioned to nominate Carol Dorning. Mayor Ware seconded.

Commissioner Schuster stated that she liked the idea of Mill City being recognized. Councilor Nuber stated she was in favor of that as well, but brought up that Ms. Shepherd has been a volunteer for 40 years.

Mayor Konopa brought a motion for Carol Dorning to be nominated. All were in favor except Councilor Nuber and Commissioner Schuster. The motion was carried.

Mayor Konopa moved the discussion onto the Project of the Year.

Commissioner Hall motioned to nominate the Bijou Theater. Mayor Smith seconded.

There was a discussion about the representation of all Counties in the awards.

The vote was brought to the floor. All were in favor except Councilor Bob Elliott and Mayor Sharon Konopa. The motion was carried.

Major Konopa moved the discussion onto Volunteer of the Year

Mayor Konopa asked if the Board could shift Catherine Skeins, noting that Catherine has participated enormously and devoted years of her time. She was the only female Commissioner in over 20 years across the Region.

Commissioner Schuster moved to nominate Catherine Skeins for Volunteer of the Year. Mayor Lepin seconded. It was a unanimous vote in favor of Catherine Skeins.

Executive Director Abousleman recommended that the Board take an action reflecting that she was being moved to another category so that it was formally recognized.

Ms. Boydston stated that she was ok with changing the category for Ms. Skiens.

Commissioner Schuster made a motion to change Ms. Skeins from *Meals on Wheels* Volunteer of the Year to Volunteer of the Year, with Ms. Boydston approval. Mayor Cline seconded. It was a unanimous vote in favor.

Summary of 2018 Regional Awards are:

- Business Partner of the Year – Oregon State Credit Union
- Citizen of the Region – Mike Volpe
- Meals on Wheels Volunteer of the Year – Carol Dorning
- Project of the Year – City of Lincoln City and the Bijou Theatre
- Volunteer of the Year – Catherine Skiens

Commissioner Hall motioned to approve the Board-selected winners for the 2018 Regional Awards. Mayor Marjean Cline seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

## 7. **Legislative Advocacy Update**

Executive Director Abousleman said there are two main discussions: wetlands and housing. He discussed the 404 assumption whereby a state can assume a portion of wetlands permitting as long as they are no less restrictive than the Federal government. Oregon has tried and failed previously.

Some of our Region's leaders have proposed that this State process would promote more certainty in wetlands mitigation. It would hold the State to a timeline that the Federal government is not held to. The Regional Wetlands Consortium, that OCWCOG staffs, has expressed this is their #1 priority.

The process started with the League of Oregon Cities and will go to the Association of Oregon Counties. There is a Statewide initiative that would have to pass; this will not happen in next year, but rather over the next few years.

If League of Oregon Cities or Association of Oregon Counties is not willing to adopt as priority, OCWCOG will revisit how we get it in front of everyone. Mayor Lepin has convened a group around it, which has been significant. OCWCOG has a list of other actions on wetland mitigation. Executive Director Abousleman knows it's difficult and that there is no easy fix. But the 404 assumption would be a big piece.

Mayor Lepin stated that it is right for us to be doing this. OCWCOG is leading this for the State, it's nice. Major step, but one of many over time. One of two major issues impacting economic development.

Executive Director Abousleman brought up housing. He stated that it has been communicated to us three times, that OCWCOG should be convening housing discussions, to discuss housing in its totality. He stated there is a lack of housing of all levels, wetlands, community's data and support needs, and it's not just a housing authority issue. OCWCOG needs support of the Board to enter with a convening role. He stated that Staff would then spend some time to analyze what OCWCOG's value-add would be. He stated OCWCOG is not interested in stepping on toes, but will present special project related to housing.

CED Director Phil Warnock has been focused on wetlands.

SDS Director Randi Moore achieved some of goals in the legislative session. She shared priorities with other COGs, everyone agrees.

On the Oregon Department of Transportation piece, everyone agrees, can hopefully change their contracting mechanism.

## **8. OCWCOG Program Updates**

SDS Director Randi Moore mentioned that there is a section about Able-Bodied Without Dependents (ABAWD) for *Supplemental Assistance Nutrition Program (SNAP)* in her report. Lincoln County will lose its waiver in January 2019. The waiver was allowed based on unemployment rates. She was surprised it kicked in for Lincoln County. OCWCOG is impacted because the organizations hold SNAP cases for people in households with non-ABAWDs. The bigger issue is the younger populations receiving SNAP benefits from self-sufficiency offices – these consumers will be impacted more. If there are questions, people can be referred to OCWCOG or the self-sufficiency offices.

Mayor Konopa asked if this was a State or Federal mandate. SDS Director Moore stated that it was a Federal mandate. That the revoking of the waiver started in some states in 2016. Because of the diversity of Oregon's communities and unemployment rates, Oregon has done this County by County, versus some other States which have done it all at the same time.

Commissioner Schuster stated that this is outrageous. SDS Director Moore said it is a hardship for many people.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that SDS Director Moore is now the Vice-Chair of Oregon Associations of Area Agencies on Aging and Disabilities.

Mayor Konopa asked if SDS Director Moore had any info on changing of criteria. Executive Director Abousleman stated that talking points will be circulated to the Board.

Commissioner Schuster stated that the Board and OCWOG need to speak up on these issues. Executive Director Abousleman urged the Board to contact their Federal Legislative delegation. There would need to be a change in Medicaid rules to change this.

CED Director Phil Warnock stated that the inclusive transportation planning grant is direct engagement in transportation planning reaching atypical planning populations through community outreach. It has a short timeframe. They will focus on Lincoln County and engaging tribal members, seniors, and those with disabilities.

*Safe Routes to School* applications are due in October. CED is providing technical assistance to communities.

Executive Director Abousleman would like to thank the Federal delegation for support of Senior Corps program.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that OCWCOG's IT team has contracts with member communities to help with IT issues. We can provide support if you need it in a cost-effective manner.

## **9. Topics of Regional Interest**

Executive Director Abousleman stated that he has had conversations about what communities know and do not know about housing. He stated that some issues are different in different communities. He mentioned that as market-based housing trends drive out employees, the economy could be hurt. He has heard there is a lack of data for communities on this issue. OCWCOG wants to tackle this issue but there isn't always reliable data. OCWCOG has now hosted two conversations on housing and have been told the organization should enter housing conversation.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that OCWCOG's role of coordination and conversation is important for the organization. That he doesn't know of other organizations looking at impacts of transportation, costs, etc.



The OCWCOG Board has a Special Projects Fund. He proposes they release \$25,000 to seed the housing project. OCWCOG staff will look for other resources to staff it up over the long run. There is a possibility that this might create a new program. This project would help with housing assessments, plans, and technical assistance. COIC, our sister council of government in Bend, runs a regional housing program. There are opportunities for agencies like ours to become housing funding agencies, to incentivize housing. He stated OCWCOG is meeting with Oregon Housing and Community Services, and other agencies to see what's possible. He stated that he doesn't think \$25,000 is enough to do a lot, and staff would need to find other resources.

Mayor Ware stated he would like to have information. He stated he has anecdotes that people are being priced out. If a study can be done that would give basic information, it would be helpful.

Mayor Konopa stated that OCWCOG has never had a land-use or housing role. All members have different visions for their communities and different views when it comes to housing. She stated that Commissioner Will Tucker convened individual from Linn County to see about housing needs. Some of what he was wanting was allowing development in Urban Growth Boundary. Commissioner Tucker was looking for confirmation that as growth develops, it fits in with urban planning. Linn County approved one application, and the City of Albany prevailed with LUBA and denied Linn County's application. There does need to be more of a regional housing needs analysis, assessment throughout the County. Everyone should have a 20-year plan, Linn County's last plan was complete almost ten years ago, Mayor Konopa confirmed. She noted that if such a plan was looked at regionally, it would benefit all communities.

Mayor Smith stated that several communities on the Coast have applied for State grants that will provide funding for housing needs assessment. She could see linking this with an OCWCOG plan or work.

Mayor Smith also noted that Community Services Consortium (CSC) has dollars from old U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development loans, designated for our cities. CSC no longer has way to distribute the money. This money is specifically designated for rehab loans, but CSC couldn't afford to have a person to do it, so the State changed regulation. This might be something to look into, as OCWCOG does economic development loans. Mayor Smith recently attended a meeting at CSC and they are looking for a way to get the money out to the people that need it.

Councilor Wahlke stated that the buildable lands analysis in Lincoln City was done with Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development dollars, so that's another option for funding.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that OCWCOG has no interest in telling cities what to build. He stated that the organization does have an interest in collecting data to tell members what there is. Would tell you whether housing is more or less expensive than neighbors. There is also a transportation problem with that, and with more data and analysis, OCWCOG could assist in fixing.

Mayor Lepin asked how long it would take to get results? Executive Director Abousleman responded that it was not clear yet as to what OCWCOG would achieve; the first step would be to set the priorities. What does the Board want OCWCOG to do? Executive Director Abousleman asked the Board to give Staff some time to determine what the exact next steps are, other than finding funding, in addition to data and analysis, project time, and a cohesive package rollout.

Mayor Lepin stated that his city saw a need, applied for the same grant, and didn't get it. He and the City of Millersburg sees the need.

Executive Director Abousleman responded that what we could do wouldn't be that in depth as what the Mayor was talking about.

Mayor Lepin stated that the Board needed to choose the top priorities.

Commissioner Hall brought a motion that the Board would be interested in further considering, developing concept further, and seeing a more comprehensive proposal. Mayor Ware seconded; motion was carried.

Mayor Ware asked if housing costs were the same across the Region. Executive Director Abousleman replied that they are, if fixed for wages and per capita.

Executive Director Abousleman moved the discussion onto waste water. He said that the OCWCOG had tried to gather info, asked multiple times, but they didn't receive much back from our members. We don't have enough data to understand what is being produced. He asked the Board if they wanted us to continue, we could do one more request. If not, let's retire the study and spend time doing something else. Feedback was received from: Scio; One or two from Lincoln County; and Tangent.

Mayor Lepin believes that one of his staff members was in contact with OCWCOG about this as well. Executive Director Abousleman agreed.

Mayor Cline asked if we were looking at liquid waste water. Executive Director Abousleman replied that we were looking at everything - where it goes, how much it costs, and biosolids. OCWCOG does not have the costs at this point.

Mayor Lepin stated that Albany, Millersburg, and Lebanon have issues; each City has work going on on this issue.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that OCWCOG asked if communities wanted to work regionally. Some said no, because they don't have issues.

Mayor Konopa stated that the conversation was going a different direction, but regional could be an option as well. Executive Director Abousleman stated that OCWCOG are happy to help, if communities needed assistance.

Mayor Smith stated that it is a hot issue on the Coast, very critical. She noted that small towns don't have the funding to be able to take on projects like this and they need answers. She encouraged OCWCOG not to drop this project and emphasized that regional solutions are needed.

Mayor Lepin commented that the wastewater issue could just be a Coastal issue.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that maybe it was, but he wanted to make it clear that OCWCOG was trying to find answers on a regional level.

Commissioner Schuster asked for a list of who hadn't replied and who has, and if the Regional Solutions Office could help. Executive Director Abousleman stated that he would ask Jackie Mikalonis.

Mayor Lepin stated he would like the group to discuss the need to continue economic development discussions. He did not see any tangible or measurable results being discussed. Mayor Lepin commented that in the middle of a major economic boom, doing

without the support of OCWCOG, proves the need to keep the discussion of economic development at the local level. If wetlands, labor issues, and housing is fixed, is there a purpose to continue the discussion of regional economic development? He noted that Counties are different, so opportunities there may be different. He would like to see tangible results from a regional economic development discussion going forward.

Executive Director Abousleman asked Mayor Lepin what thought was bogged down the discussions. Mayor Lepin asked OCWCOG to give him the accomplishments. Executive Director Abousleman replied that the regional conversations never got to the point of to have results.

Mayor Lepin commented that the report is a regurgitation of the plan. Executive Director Abousleman asked if he meant the *CEDS*. Mayor Jim Lepin stated the whole process - the study and the *2015-2020 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)*.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that the *CEDS* is a study about the economy and where the Region – Benton, Lane, Lincoln, and Linn Counties – are going. The study includes action items about how the Region will get there. If members adopt the strategies within the *CEDS*, it can be a help. OCWCOG through *CEDS* doesn't recruit, grow, or retain businesses. OCWCOG does what we're required to do to access Federal dollars. OCWCOG wants to add on Regional Economic Development to do other things.

Mayor Lepin replied that he thought they were the same; Executive Director Abousleman replied no.

Commissioner Schuster stated that Executive Director Abousleman and Community and Economic Development Director Phil Warnock have been trying to get individuals to sign on to a Consortium with OSU and Linn-Benton Community College, and can't get any traction. OCWCOG needs people to agree that it's important to work together; it's a big hold up.

Mayor Lepin stated that it's hard to get a handle on what OCWCOG is trying to accomplish.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that first you have to agree to work together; not everyone has agreed. The next parts are: what's the framework, then what are you going to achieve. We're still at the first part.

Mayor Lepin asked how long has it been? Executive Director Abousleman replied that it is your decision and our communities, whether to give us authority. We're nowhere near an outcome change, only at the stage of whether we can all work together.

Mayor Lepin stated that we're in the middle of an economic boom, working on wetlands, housing, workforce. He commented that there is a good pipeline in the Albany region.

Mayor Konopa stated that Commissioner Jay Dixon and she are both saying why don't our economic development partners work together. Everyone is separate, protecting their own turf. No one has had guts to work together.

Commissioner Schuster stated that Commissioner Roger Nyquist requested the survey. Survey was done. Commissioner Nyquist is now on board.

Mayor Lepin stated that he'll then support it.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that OCWCOG doesn't have anything to support right now and that he understands the frustration.

Mayor Lepin challenged the value of such a large scale. Suggested a County level approach might be appropriate.

Executive Director Abousleman replied that everyone has a County approach or something similar. OCWCOG wants to see how it could add on a regional level.

Commissioner Schuster asked how could OCWCOG add value? Perhaps a person in charge who links it all together.

Mayor Lepin asked what the value add is. Need to address that first.

Executive Director Abousleman replied that OCWCOG did that, but still couldn't achieve consensus. We proposed a robust program. Took what's already there, then coordination on a regional level. Took examples from Oregon and across the country. Staff has contributed roughly \$27,000 in staff time. We don't have the funds, or time, to continue unless directed to move forward.

Commissioner Schuster asked what do OCWCOG want the Board to do.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that he had conversation with Benton County Commissioners. OCWCOG doesn't control the Special Projects Funds resources, you do. So, the Board needs to decide how you want to invest public money. The total sum is \$45,000.

Mayor Lepin stated that he thought OCWCOG was doing more than it was; this was his concern.

Commissioner Schuster stated she would like some resolution, we've been talking about so long. Maybe we need to have one more meeting? Need to figure out as a Board.

Mayor Konopa stated that until we get players to come onboard, too many people wanting to stay on their own.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that we have talked about project-based, housing, wetlands, etc. that would show trust of Region working together.

## **10. Other Business**

Councilor Sawyer stated that Newport just became a bee city, pledging to become friendly to bees. He noted that this was similar to tree cities. Only four cities in Oregon are bee cities. He suggested Bee City USA as a resource for your community.

Commissioner Schuster asked the criteria. Councilor Sawyer stated that there are policies to embrace, but they are relatively simple; a lot of looking at spray policies. It is a simple process. There is a lot of awareness of what we can do and should be doing.

Deputy Director Rachael Maddock-Hughes stated that the Oregon Bee Project, part of the Oregon Department of Agriculture is also involved in this area.

## **11. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:09 pm.

*Minutes recorded by Jennifer Kelley.*