

Governance Steering Committee Association of Oregon Counties

October 10, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Members: Present: Washington County Chair Andy Duyck, Columbia County Commissioner Earl Fisher, Gilliam County Judge Pat Shaw, Linn County Administrator Ralph Wyatt (NACA-Administrators), Yamhill County Commissioner Leslie Lewis, Jefferson County Commissioner John Hatfield (Phone), Clackamas County Assessor and Tax Collector Bob Vroman, Lincoln County Clerk Dana Jenkins (Phone).

Guests: Multnomah County Assessor Randy Walruff, Alex Cuyler (Lane County), Jim McCauley (Washington County), Troy Rayburn (Clackamas County), House and Senate General Government Committee Administrator Jan Nordlund

AOC Staff: Mike Eliason

Co-Chair Duyck convened the meeting

Affiliate Updates

Mike Eliason, who lobbies on behalf of the county clerks, gave the OACC report. He reported on the continued negotiations with the two major political parties on changes to the elections of Precinct Committee Persons (PCP's). It is appearing increasingly likely that the concept will not move forward in the upcoming February 2012 session. He also commented on the ongoing discussions over conflicting statutes and administrative rules regarding the security of unused ballots.

Ralph Wyatt reported that administrators continue to follow with interest the state budget situation, including some of the seemingly overly optimistic savings the state is relying on to help balance the budget. One in particular is the hoped for savings in 2012 from the Health Transformation process, which is expected to be fleshed out in February.

Bob Vroman gave the report for both the Assessors and the Tax Collectors. The Assessors continue to finalize values and certify tax rolls for the upcoming year. Mr. Vroman noted that in some parts of the state, real market values are dipping below assessed values, causing a resultant lack of anticipated revenue for local governments. He also noted the continuing effects of compression. Other topics mentioned included the changes to the Senior Deferral program and the Department of Revenue's decision to appeal the Comcast case to the Court of Appeals.

Employment Relations Board (ERB) budget

Duke Shepard from the Governor's office was invited but could not make the meeting. Mike Eliason updated the committee on the status of the ERB workgroup, which was essentially the same report as delivered in September. State general fund was only provided for one year of the two year budget cycle and a workgroup is currently tasked with finding a long-term solution to the budget. The state continues to push for an assessment on local governments to fund work done by ERB that relates to local governments. The workgroup is made up of equal members from labor and management. John Lattimer is the county representative on the workgroup. Mike Eliason was the county representative during the legislative session and reported that counties, along with other local governments, were only willing to accept an assessment if a) organized labor also contributed and b) there were documentable improvements to the ERB process. The workgroup continues, with a resolution necessary by the February 2012 session.

Comcast

Multnomah County Assessor Randy Walruff and Clackamas County Assessor Bob Vroman updated the committee on implementation of HB 2569, which allows for an assessor to issue a deferred billing credit in lieu of taxing districts being subjected to potentially large accruals of interest in large-value appeals, such as the Comcast situation. Until the enactment of HB 2569, counties only option was to create reserve accounts in the event the property owner won their appeal and were owed back previously paid property taxes plus 12% interest. It appears oral arguments in Comcast will take place next spring. Assessors in many of the affected counties are choosing to cancel the reserve accounts for 2009 and instead issue deferred-billing credits with the reserve funds.

Public Contracting Code Update

Mike Eliason and Jon Oshel reported to the committee on several workgroups underway regarding Public Contracting. One workgroup is related to alternative bidding methods, specifically whether the Construction Manager/General Contractor (CMGC) method is being overused by some local governments. Any changes to public contracting law would not be proposed until 2013. The other workgroup is related to price agreements or "indefinite quantity contracts." A small group of small business owners are concerned they are spending time and resources on proposals for price agreements, being awarded the PA's, but then are not seeing any work orders under the PA's. The changes thus far proposed by the business owners are not satisfactory to either the state or local governments, including counties, and negotiations are ongoing.

Co-Chair Duyck adjourned the meeting at 11:48 a.m.

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