



# Harney County Economic Development

Minutes  
Community Response Team  
Tuesday September 5, 2019

**Attendees:**

Patty Dorroh- Harney County Commissioner	Fred Flippence-Harney Electric Cooperative
Mark Owens-Harney County Commissioner	Lea Gettle-Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative
Pete Runnels-Harney County Judge	Melissa Gonzalez-DHS, Community in Action
Steve Quick-Harney County School Dist. #3	Jen Hoke-Harney District Hospital
Judy Erwin- Burns City Council	Greg Smith- HC Economic Development Director
Becky Cunningham-Rimrock Recycling	Denise Rose-HC Economic Development

- Greg Smith** welcomed the group and called the meeting to order. Brief introductions were made around the table.
- Old Business:** August meeting minutes were provided via the website with email reminders. By general agreement, there were no changes or additions to the minutes.
- New Business:**

**A. Regular Reports:**

**Business Oregon, Scott Fairly**-no report but Scott will be in town next week.

**Harney County Court, Judge Runnels**- the County Assessors position will be vacant at the end of the year; the County Court will appoint an interim. The Court is working with the owners and managers of the pellet mill (Biodynamics of Oregon) regarding DEQ and Cleaner Air Oregon issues. Courtney Crowell from the Governor’s office is facilitating conversations. They have gotten permission to pour concrete for setting machinery, but there have been delays. Current plans are for a June completion date. Greg Smith added that the investment of time and equipment in the community by Biodynamics is equal to or greater than the contributions by Port of Morrow in Boardman.

**City of Burns-Judy Erwin, City Councilor**-The council is searching for a city manager again after the resignation of David Sneddon. The suggestion was made by a councilor that this may be a good time to start the discussion of combining some of the services with the City of Hines. The mayor was not interested in this idea. The CLG (Certified Local Government) Ordinance passed so historic properties can now be designated for more funding options. For more information about the program see the State Parks website <https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/HCD/SHPO/pages/clg.aspx>

Judge Runnels asked why the sidewalk, Safe Schools project was stalled on Monroe Street, and wondered if they had some engineering problems. Judy did not have additional information, and suggested checking with the City Manager.

**City of Hines, Kirby Letham-** no report

**Infrastructure Committee, Pete Runnels-** An agreement has been reached between the county, MiWave, Business Oregon, to implement comprehensive broadband services to businesses and homes. Following an information gathering and planning process by Vantage Point Consultants last year, the county created a phased plan for providing services to both home and businesses. The judge noted that at a CRT Broadband meeting in February 2019, many providers were in attendance and encouraged to participate in growing high speed services for the county. MiWave is the only one who stepped up to work with the County in a public-private network partnership.

**Housing Committee, Curt Blackburn, Jen Hoke**—no report, but Housing Roadmap presentation later in the evening.

**Workforce Committee, Brenda Smith**—No Report

**Small Business Development Committee, Jen and Forrest Keady and Myndi Hemphill-**No Report

**Harney County Economic Development, Greg Smith** —Anderson Perry Engineering work is being done in Burns, Hines and Crane, and they are helping develop a water district. Greg suggested it may be interesting for the group to have Brad Baird attend a meeting to talk about the projects. Typically, summer and especially August are slow for economic development activities but expect to see an uptick after the Harney County Fair. A reporter from Oregon Business Magazine was in town last week to profile Burns/Hines and the business growth in the county. She interviewed a number of business owners and the economic development staff. He will let the group know when the article comes out. The October CRT meeting will be on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Greg proposed a tour of the pellet mill if it can be arranged. The group supported this activity.

## **B. Focus Reports:**

### **Harney County Workforce Housing Roadmap Presentation-Patty Dorroh**

The full report was made available on both the County website and the Economic Development website. [Housing Roadmap on County site](#) and [Economic Development site](#)

Commissioner Dorroh outlined the background of the 2019 Workforce Housing Roadmap for the county. The pilot project was funded by DLCDC and was the only one in the state to gather information for planning processes. It can be adopted as part of a comprehensive plan. She then presented a Power Point with highlights from the report, including the following:

- Population trending numbers +/- from Portland State University data are different than local impressions.

- Non-farm employment statistics were primarily addressed as having the most impact on housing in Burns and Hines.
- Land is available and for the most part zoned for our needs, but services (water, sewer, electric, communications) to properties are frequently not in place on vacant lots.
- Building costs and challenges in obtaining skilled trades make spec. homes not financially feasible.
- Five new homes a year would meet the projected growth needs over the next 10 years.
- The report provides financial tools and some action items to make the next steps possible.

A discussion was held after the presentation with questions and comments. Greg Smith clarified that from a financial perspective mortgage lenders are limited by comparables in the area. It may be helpful for the housing group to meet with lenders and lay out issues, including the gap in financing new home construction.

Further discussion considered the idea of CTE programs at the high schools to build homes. Greg asked what the cost would be to start such a program and Superintendent Steve Quick said he would research the number and respond to Economic Development in the next week or two.

A suggestion was made to take a sub-committee of housing to John Day to meet with Nick Green about their incentive program.

Fred Flippence gave a short report on the progress of the three solar farms in the area.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:37 PM. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 2, 2019. The possibility of combining the November and December meetings was mentioned.