

## **MEETING SUMMARY- SOUTHERN OREGON REGIONAL SOLUTIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

October 24, 2018

Medford Fabrication Conference Center

1109 Court Street, Medford, OR

### Committee members present:

Bill Thorndike, convener\*

Jackson County Commissioner Rick Dyer\*

Steve Roe\*

Kathy Bryon, Gordon Ellwood Foundation\*

SOU President Linda Schott

Commissioner Lily Morgan (by phone)

\*Executive Committee

### Regional Solutions Team:

Alex Campbell, Coordinator, Governor's Office

Ian Holacher, ODOT

Kate Jackson, DEQ

### Guests:

Brad Niva & Bob Hackett, Travel Southern Oregon

Michael Sellers, Sen. Baertschiger's Office

Beverly Layer

Kate Foley

### Approval of Minutes

Bill Thorndike requested approval of minutes from the July 2018 meetings. Minutes were accepted by assent as presented in the meeting packet.

### Regional Infrastructure Finance Project Process Recommendations

Commissioner Dyer thought the process and outcome was generally good; did appreciate hearing presentations from applicants.

Bill Thorndike suggested some criteria and/or a rubric for the staff to score by and for weighting the scoring factors versus each other would have been useful.

Steve Roe suggested another means for transmitting applications; the large files were often caught by email servers/filters.

## **Project Updates**

- *WISE*
  - Alex reported that the engineering is on target for completion this fall and the six members of WISE are prepared to discuss a restructure that would expand the broader stakeholder representation
  - Alex organized a meeting with the large grower stakeholders to update them on progress.
- *New Project: Butte Falls Community Forest*
  - Alex shared that he has facilitated discussions with the landowner of the property surrounding the City of Butte Falls and the city leadership.
  - Oregon Solutions Assessment of an OS project is underway
  - Kathy Bryon noted that there is a lot of good work being done by the school at the fish hatchery that could be complementary.

*\*Commissioner Dyer suggested Alex follow up with RCC regarding a possible funding shortfall related to equipment for the new health sciences building.\**

- *North Valley Industrial Park*
  - Test pits for the proposed drain field were not successful; are examining additional areas.
- *Illinois Valley Industrial Park – RIF funded project*
  - Recent stakeholder meeting confirmed general approach as proposed/approved.
  - Next steps: Evaluating water flows – testing wells – and fine-tuning cost estimate.
- *Dutch Bros HQ Expansion*
  - RST assisted with enterprise zone approval.
  - Team facilitated a meeting last week with Jackson County Housing Authority, ODOT, and others that could play a role in the project. Particular focus on possible sources of assistance regarding traffic, pedestrian access, and parking.
  - With recent infusion of capital from new minority investor, appears that Dutch Bros may be pushing forward with a project in near future—though numerous details, including program, footprint, layout all TBD. Core of the project will be 45-50 ksf office and public plaza.
- *Gold Hill Whitewater Project*
  - Draft Biological Assessment is quite positive in terms of overall impact on fish passage.

- A pre-application meeting with US Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies is scheduled for November 20.
- Recent visit by representative of American Canoe Association suggested great deal of interest in site as possible venue for major competitions.

### **Regional Brownfields Project**

Kate Jackson reported on the coalition (City of Medford, City of Grants Pass, and Jackson County) brownfields assessment project being managed by RV-COG. \$600,000 is available to assist with site characterization, clean-up planning and area redevelopment planning. Coalition partners have approved two sites for work and are actively seeking/considering additional willing property owners interested in having property evaluated in preparation for development/redevelopment.

### **Fire Recovery/State Response**

Brad Niva and Bob from Travel Southern Oregon described a recently funded project to survey past and potential visitors to Southern Oregon about how recent years of smoky weather may have impacted perceptions and possible future travel. The goal is to provide tourism and hospitality businesses with information to assist them in business decision making. The grant is for ~\$51,000 from the State “Local Economic Opportunity Fund.” The Governor announced the grants, as well as an award of \$70,000 to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival to assist with air filtration upgrades, at a recent event in Ashland.

Alex shared that the team is also exploring ways to support the Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative and, in particular, the Rogue Basin Cohesive Forest Restoration Strategy.

President Schott noted that they are launching an image study; their recent enrollment dip may be partially impacted by smoke/fire perception. She heard that JPR corporate donations are down 14%, concerned that corporate giving may be down generally.

Steve Roe reported that Asante saw a negative effect on their ability to recruit/retain professionals.

Commissioner Dyer suggested that more action than mitigation is necessary. The County is working to see if additional helicopter resources can be permanently based in the Rogue Valley. Fire-fighting resources were simply overwhelmed by the number of lightning strikes on July 15. He supports better forest management, but also need to make sure resources for initial attack are available. In addition, USFS managers need to consider the smoke public health impacts when they are making decisions how to attack vs. manage wildfire.

Kate noted that recently proposed changes to the smoke management plan would/will allow more extensive prescribed burning.

Commissioner Morgan echoed Commissioner Dyer’s comments and pointed to the need to maintain—or at least not abandon—more roads in forest areas. Federal approach is moving

away from direct line containment, so need more options for defensive lines or the “box” can be enormous. She also agreed with the need for more local assets and noted smoke-jumper teams had previously worked through the winter prepping helicopter pads and other contingency efforts. She invited interested folks to attend the fire chief’s after action discussion on Thursday.

### **Roundtable**

Commissioner Dyer said he was glad to learn about the team’s involvement with City of Butte Falls. We need to keep the more remote communities in mind when we consider economic development projects.

Ian reported that the 2021-24 “STIP” is under development—but we should expect it to be very much focused on “fix it” (maintenance and repair) projects rather than “enhance” (i.e., new capacity) projects. The Blackwell access road project is still in the works and will move into construction next year.

Michael Sellers noted that Sen. Baertschiger co-founded the fire caucus in the Oregon legislature and encourage bringing suggestions/concerns to the caucus.

Kathy Bryon reported that her primary focus is currently on mental health and homelessness issues, and in particular reminding funders and others to fund up-stream prevention work.

Bill Thorndike encouraged folks to attend the Oregon Business Summit of December 3. He believes that the Oregon Business Plan is a real attempt to help guide legislative action, particularly around revenue reform.

Brad reported that they have stepped in to assist local grape growers with public relations around the issue or perception of “smoke taint.”

President Schott reported that SOU will hold a summit on November 8 (at 3:30 PM) to share how they market and recruit students. On November 29, SOU (along with RCC, OIT, and KCC) will be holding a signing ceremony announcing a new agreement to collaborate regionally.

Kathy reported that she was impressed to learn recently about the strong role local chambers of commerce are taking in the Bend area to support hiring internship coordinators. President Schott noted that SOU has recently completed “Earn & Learn” agreements with Rogue Community Credit Union and Lithia that will help their most financially challenged students earn some money and expose them to work experience.

**Public Comment.** None

*Meeting adjourned at 3 PM.*