

# **Columbia River Gorge Commission**

## **Meeting Minutes**

January 16, 2008

***A complete record of this meeting is available on compact disc***

Location: Gorge Commission Office, 57 Wauna Avenue, White Salmon, WA

Time: 9:10 am

### **MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Harold Abbe \*

Jeffrey Condit\*

Doug Crow \*(9:30 am)

Judy Davis \*

Dan Harkenrider \*

Jane Jacobsen\*

Walt Loehrke\*

Carl McNew (9:40 am)

Joyce Reinig

Honna Sheffield\*

*\*via telephone*

### **MEMBERS ABSENT**

Lonny Macy (excused)

Jim Middaugh

Joe Palena (excused)

### **STAFF PRESENT**

Jill Arens, Executive Director

Kathy Obayashi-Bartsch, Specialist

### **AUDIENCE PRESENT**

None

Jill Arens, Executive Director provided an update on the upcoming Government to Government Summit in Portland, OR and encouraged Commission members to attend this event. She said Al Wright has agreed to assist as a facilitator with the Tribes, City of The Dalles, OR and Wasco County to discuss Urban Area boundary issues. She said Wasco County is very supportive of this approach and Mr. Wright will be attending the Summit in Portland.

### **Call to Order**

Vice-Chair Reinig called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. and role was called.

### **Approval of Minutes –December 11, 2007**

Vice-Chair Reinig asked the Commission to review the draft minutes. Commissioner Sheffield said the meeting minutes should reflect that she was there for the start of the meeting until 3:10 p.m.

Commissioner Condit made a motion to approve the draft minutes with a change to reflect Commissioner Sheffield's suggestion.

Commissioner Sheffield seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and unanimously approved.

### **Public Comment**

No one was present for public comment.

### **Opportunity for Tribal Nations to address Commission**

No one was present for public comment.

### **Personnel Policies Discussion and Approval**

Jill Arens, Executive Director said the State of Washington requires a number of personnel policies for each agency it deals with. There are four policies that the Gorge Commission should add in order to be current with the standard suite of personnel policies. She said these policies are drafted from a template from Washington, so these are standardized forms. She said if the Commission approves of these policies, references to state laws will be removed as these are not applicable to the Commission since we are not a state agency.

She said review and approval by the Commission on these policies is requested, as well as delegation to the Executive Director for future changes to personnel policies (**see attachment A**).

Vice-chair Reinig suggested that the Commission vote on the four personnel policies as a separate matter from the issue of delegating authority to the Executive Director.

Commissioner Sheffield made a motion to update the four personnel policies with removal of the references to state laws. Commissioner Loehrke seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Harold Abbe -aye

Jeffrey Condit- aye

Judy Davis-aye

Jane Jacobsen-aye

Walt Loehrke-aye

Joyce Reinig-aye

Honna Sheffield-aye

Commissioner Davis asked why the Executive Director would need the authority to make personnel policy changes. She said the personnel policies that should be exempt from the Executive Director's authority are any that pertain to Executive Director's salary and the rules about how this salary is determined.

Chair Condit said the reason for delegating the authority to change personnel policies is to allow the Executive Director to manage the agency effectively and efficiently. He said personnel changes to remain in compliance with state policies

should be delegated to the Executive Director subject to reporting to the Commission about these changes. He said he agrees with Davis that the authority should not include rules related to the Executive Director's salary and how to determine the salary.

Chair Condit made a motion to delegate to the Executive Director the authority to amend personnel policies as the Executive Director sees fit, subject to Commission notice of any changes, with the exception of any policy that involve the relationship between the Executive Director and the Commission, rules related to determining the Executive Director's salary or that would have a fiscal impact on the Commission. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Harold Abbe -aye

Jeffrey Condit- aye

Judy Davis-aye

Jane Jacobsen-aye

Walt Loehrke-aye

Joyce Reinig-aye

Honna Sheffield-aye

### **Executive Committee Report**

Vice-Chair Reinig, Executive Committee Chair said the issue of the Executive Director's salary range should have been addressed earlier. She said the Commission is aware that past Executive Directors sought other employment due to salary concerns. In addition to this retention issue, there are recruitment problems that the Commission experienced when Ms. Bennett resigned.

Chair Condit agreed and said the Commission is fortunate that Ms. Arens applied for the position in spite of the current salary. He said had Ms. Arens not applied, it's likely the entire candidate pool would have been rejected. He said the Executive Committee analyzed the skill sets and the type of management skills needed and found the current salary is not competitive to attract the caliber of Director needed for the Commission.

Vice-Chair Reinig provided a review of Executive Director's position and salary range. She said an increase in the Executive Director's salary was already included in the 07-09 agency budget.

Commissioner Abbe said he spoke with Washington's Small Agency Client services to be sure about the budget aspect and sufficient funds have been appropriated to the agency.

Commissioner Jacobsen said the research was well done and the recommendations are appropriate.

Vice-Chair Reinig said the Executive Committee wanted the entire Commission to be involved in the determination of the Executive Director's salary range and recommends range 86, with 12 steps running from \$96,648-\$126,720. She said this recommendation is based on salary research in Oregon and Washington for similar positions (see attachment B).

Chair Condit made a motion to set the Executive Director position at Washington's range 86 as recommended by the Executive Committee. Commissioner Jacobsen seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Harold Abbe -aye  
Jeffrey Condit- aye  
Doug Crow-aye  
Judy Davis-aye  
Jane Jacobsen-aye  
Walt Loehrke-aye  
Joyce Reinig-aye  
Honna Sheffield-aye

Chair Condit said another issue is clarification that the Executive Committee has the authority to make a salary adjustment for the Executive Director within the prescribed salary range. He said after checking with Vice-Chair Reinig and legal counsel, it has been the Commission's practice that the Executive Committee authorizes a salary adjustment for the Executive Director and the Commission authorizes the salary range for the Executive Director.

Chair Condit said he would like to have this authority codified if the Commission chooses to uphold this practice.

Vice-Chair Reining said while all staff salaries are public information, there has never been the public discussion of any staff member's performance and/or salary adjustment.

Commissioner Crow said he supports having legal counsel codify delegation of authority as discussed.

Commissioner Loehrke said he supports codifying the Commission's past practice of delegating the authority to the Executive Committee for salary adjustments for the Executive Director's position.

Vice-Chair Reinig said another issue raised by Chair Condit is the authority of the Chair to negotiate the contract with the Executive Director based on the decisions of the Executive Committee

Commissioner Sheffield made a motion including the following:

1. Reaffirm past Commission practices of the Executive Committee authorizing a salary adjustment within the prescribed range for the Executive Director. The Commission shall determine the prescribed salary range for the position.
2. Authorize the Chair to direct legal counsel to codify this practice.

3. Delegate authority to the Chair to negotiate and execute the contractual agreement with the Executive Director based on the decisions of the Executive Committee.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Harold Abbe -aye  
Jeffrey Condit- aye  
Doug Crow-aye  
Judy Davis-aye  
Jane Jacobsen-aye  
Walt Loehrke-aye  
Carl McNew-aye  
Joyce Reinig-aye  
Honna Sheffield-aye

Vice-Chair Reinig thanked Chair Condit for his thoughtful approach to this issue and making sure that the Commission's practices are clearly authorized by Commission rules.

### **Director's Report**

Jill Arens said at the February 12th Commission meeting, there will be two short items before the rest of the meeting which will include a staff presentation on the proposed Recreation Resort Plan Amendment and public comment.

Chair Condit said the next Commission meeting is likely to have an entire day of public comment, so the Commission will most likely not be deliberating until the following meeting.. He said there is a need to have the issues broken down into segments and will be sharing more of his ideas on how to structure the deliberation portion with the Commission.

Commissioner Sheffield said she will not be attending the February meeting but will attend the March meeting. She expressed support of Chair Condit's approach to structuring the discussion in segments.

Arens said if any of the Commissioners wish to consider a substantive change to the Director's Report, please make note of it during the February meeting. She said if possible changes are not articulated, then another public notice period is required which would delay the deliberation and decision.

### **Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:51 a.m.

Notes taken by Kathy Obayashi-Bartsch  
Minutes approved on 2-12-08