

Linn County to buy US Bank building

ALBANY — Linn County has agreed to purchase the former US Bank building at 205 Ellsworth St. for \$1.3 million.

Linn County Commissioners Roger Nyquist, Sherrie Sprenger and Will Tucker unanimously agreed to the deal Tuesday morning.

The 12,054-square-foot building was constructed in 1957 and was always housed a bank, until US Bank closed what it called its “community branch” location on January 2, 2021.

The building is primarily made of brick and includes a partial second story.

According to records at the Linn County Assessor’s Office, the building is valued at about \$1.2 million. It is owned by Mittleman Properties of Portland.

Linn County has been looking for additional office space for some time and tried without success to purchase the former Wells Fargo bank building at First and Broadalbin.

Board Chair Nyquist said he was pleased to be able to secure this much office space and parking for far less than a new building would cost. He estimated a new building would cost “seven or eight times” the county’s offer.

The building’s proximity to other county buildings is also a plus, all of the commissioners agreed.

Nyquist said he could envision moving the county’s Juvenile Department out of the Old Armory, which also houses the county’s Alcohol and Drug programs. He said freeing up that space could allow the county to enhance it’s A & D programs, many of which are based on the 12-step principle and take time to work through.

Commissioner Sprenger said that with 700 employees, there is no question the county needs more office space and the bank building will help keep a “sense of connectiveness” throughout the county building complex.

Commissioner Tucker said he was “excited to see this happen.”

In other business the commissioners:

- Were told by Treasurer Michelle Hawkins that the state has given the county \$761,519 in lieu of revenue lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Hawkins said there were no strings attached to the funds and the county can use them as the commissioners see fit. Nyquist suggested the county department most negatively affected by the pandemic revenue wise would be the Linn County Fair & Expo Center, which had to cancel numerous events over the last 18 months.
- Approved First-Time Youth Wage Grant agreements with Morley Thomas Law, A & W Restaurant, Cascade Timber Consulting, Kirk Century Farms and Schmisza Public House/Figaro’s Newman-Lebanon-Stayton Inc.



- Was told by Law Library Manager Amber Boedigheimer that she successfully applied for a \$41,000 ARPA grant to develop an eviction prevention assistance program for low-income Linn County residents. An eviction prevention clinic will be established that will help participants access a pro bono attorney, find financial aid resources and learn about early intervention. The goal will be to reduce the number of evictions and improve housing stability. In addition to the county, clinic partners will be the Linn-Benton Housing Authority, Community Services Consortium, Legal Aid Services of Oregon and the Albany Public Library.
- Were told by Juvenile Director Torri Lynn that the number of young people requiring services is about eight per day, still below the pre-pandemic average of 12. The same is true for the number of young people on probation, 179 compared to 200 to 300 before the pandemic.
- Approved an Easement and Equitable Servitudes for the western lot of the former Weyerhaeuser mill site property in Sweet Home. After the EES is recorded, the Department of Environmental Quality will issue a no further action needed at the site, which the county has put up for sale.

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July 27, 2021