



Linn County NEWS



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Commissioners commend staff, county for COVID-19 efforts

ALBANY — Tuesday morning, Linn County Commissioners Roger Nyquist, Sherrie Sprenger and Will Tucker celebrated the approaching end of the state's COVID-19 mask mandate on Saturday (March 12) and commended county staff and elected officials who continued to keep their offices open and provide services for the past two years.

"I also want to express my gratitude to the citizens of Linn County who made it work," Nyquist said.

Nyquist said the county staff reacted to the pandemic like the 130,000 residents of Linn County.

"We persevered, lived life and did what we could do for each other," Nyquist said.

Nyquist said that the commissioners held every meeting as scheduled and "all departments were open to the public." He said the county provided normal and usual services to the public and added, "I commend our staff, it has been quite a ride."

Nyquist praised health care workers, law enforcement, the business community "especially small businesses," and schools, teachers and parents.

Commissioner Sprenger said she didn't know of a group of people who worked harder than those in the Health Department.

"They worked nights, weekends," Sprenger said. "I don't think anyone worked more intimately, or was impacted more by COVID-19."

Commissioner Tucker said he was amazed at how quickly the entire county staff "pivoted" to deal with the pandemic.

"We went to Portland and bought plexiglass for office shielding and put spacing stickers on the floors," Tucker said. "We continued to provide building permits, to accept tax payments and record births and deaths. Our staff constantly reorganized work flows to meet new demands."

Tucker thanked the Linn County Sheriff's Office and Juvenile Department.

"We have not had a kid who has contracted COVID while in our care," Tucker said. "Across the board we responded, such as our shot clinics."

In other business:

- The commissioners encouraged people concerned about proposed large-scale chicken farms in the Scio area to review a summary of the state's land use laws on the county website at <http://www.co.linn.or.us/>. While the commissioners can approve or deny building permits, the siting of farm operations on land zoned Exclusive Farm Use is controlled entirely by the state. The commissioners said they can be advocates for local families, but individuals should contact the appropriate state agencies to address their concerns.
- Were informed by Alyssa Boles of the Planning and Building Department that eight building permits were issued in February. Six were for single-family dwellings and two were for manufactured dwellings. There were 43 permits issued in contract cities. The county has waived about \$102,000 in permits for projects in the Santiam Canyon affected by the September 2019 wildfires.

- Approved a Road Department construction contract for \$2,993,068 with Marcum and Sons for the Thomas Creek, Richardson Gap Road Covered Bridge Project. It is funded by the State Funded Local Project Program and will be reimbursed at 89.73% by ODOT.
- Approved contracts between the Road Department and Blueline Transportation Co. for liquid emulsion for the 2022 chip seal projects and with Sierra Santa Fe Corporation to provide liquid asphalt emulsion fog seal (which covers the chip seal). Roadmaster Wayne Mink said the overlays cost about one-third as much as new asphalt and last seven to eight years compared to a 10- to 12-year lifespan for a new paving job.
- Approved a \$150,000 transfer within the Public Health Fund for the purchase of a trailer and several tool boxes on wheels to facilitate public vaccination clinics. The funds from the federal COVID-19 program.
- Were told by Wayne Mink that discussions are underway about how to complete the Hasso Hering Bikeway between Albany and Corvallis.

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