

CITY OF COOS BAY CITY COUNCIL
Agenda Staff Report

MEETING DATE	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER
April 15, 2014	

TO: Mayor Shoji and City Councilors

FROM: Rodger Craddock, City Manager

ISSUE: Doing Business in Coos Bay

BACKGROUND:

We have all heard at least once someone say “Coos Bay is not business friendly” or “It’s hard to do business in Coos Bay.” Over the years, many have tried to determine if this is myth or reality. In 2008, the City hired the Building Department, LLC to conduct an assessment which included interviews of staff and a number of local contractors along with a review of the permitting process. As you will find in the attached report, their assessment reveled “the City building department shows a high degree of competency and customer satisfaction which is commendable”...”There is much good and admirable about the people and the processes”...”Nine contactors were interviewed about the processes. Their comments are interspersed throughout this report. Even though they were assured their input would be anonymous, there was little negativity about the permit system or the staff.”

As was suggested in the Assessment by the Building Department, LLC, the City began using surveys in an effort to gage customer satisfaction. In doing so, staff regularly sent surveys to customers after the customers had completed their project or obtained their permit(s). The surveys, like the assessment, showed a high degree of customer satisfaction.

Does this mean everyone is happy or that we are doing everything right? No. As long as we hire from the human race, there will be mistakes from time to time and there is always room for improvement. It’s also important when gaging customer satisfaction to remember that our Public Work’s and Community Development staff’s duties are often regulatory in nature. In addition to helping our customers through the process, staff’s job includes enforcing the ordinances and codes of the Council as well as those from state and federal agencies. Despite one’s best efforts, there will also be some who don’t want anyone, especially someone in a governmental role, telling them what they can or can’t do.

As the 2008 assessment is now somewhat dated and as we stopped sending out customer satisfaction survey forms out over a year ago, I asked the Public Works and Community Development Directors to provide the Council some information on what their departments have done, are doing, and/or planning to do in the future to make the City a friendly place to do business. In addition, I asked them to tell you a little about personnel working in those departments. Attached you will find their report. I hope you are as impressed by the knowledge, skills, and abilities of our staff as I am.

ADVANTAGES:

It's always advantageous to examine business processes and try to find better ways of serving the public.

DISADVANTAGES:

None Identified

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

None Identified

RELATED CITY GOAL:

This report is in keeping with the City's goal "to review and evaluate....policies to provide for the current and future needs of the citizens."

ACTION REQUESTED:

No action is requested.

Attachments:

1. 2008 Assessment by the Building Department , LLC
2. Survey Form used by the City Post 2009 and Pre 2013
3. Report from the Public Works and Community Development Directors



ASSESSMENT OF COOS BAY

BUILDING DEPARTMENT, PROGRAM ASSUMPTION, AND DOWNTOWN PLAN

PRESENTED DECEMBER 12, 2008

BY

CHARLCIE R. KAYLOR, BUILDING OFFICIAL
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ASSESSMENT OF BUILDING DEPARTMENT

The City's building department shows a high degree of competency and customer satisfaction which is commendable considering the turn-over of staff in the past few years. There is much good and admirable about the people and processes. While there is room for improvement, the core skills and knowledge required are well met. The camaraderie among the staff is excellent.

Nine contractors were interviewed about the processes. Their comments are interspersed throughout this report. Even though they were assured their input would be anonymous, there was little negativity about the permit system or the staff.

The following report includes bulleted items which are our recommendations for action to improve or enhance the department.

Productivity/efficiency

Interdepartmental Communication -

The weekly meeting of all the related departments (planning, engineering, building, fire and public works) is a model for other jurisdictions. The “Current Projects” form is well conceived to make sure the agenda is complete and nothing is missed. Besides keeping all informed of progress, it encourages teamwork to deal with concerns and allows the group to brainstorm solutions. While this is a fairly close-knit group and information could be exchanged in a less formal way, the meeting is a much more efficient method to distribute information from department to department.

Software –

We would recommend the City purchase the inspection tracking module offered by Tidemark.

If staff reductions are necessary or activity greatly increases, tracking would increase efficiency. The cost is modest as software goes so it’s likely the investment will pay for itself fairly quickly. There are several other advantages – two that come to mind is the lead-up to ePermitting and paperless archiving.

The Oregon Building Codes Division is working on state-wide, web-based permitting software. It is being financed by 4% of the 12% surcharge assessed on permits so there will be only nominal costs to cities to use the system. The full system is not up and running. Quick Permits is available now (see below). The good news for Coos Bay is it is Accela-based, the same platform for the City’s existing permit software and will not require much investment in software and training.

The City should consider whether or not to sign on to the state’s system right away or wait. Quick Permits is a state-based system and the starting point for transition into the ePermitting system. Quick Permits may not be feasible for the City now since it is only available to contractors (not homeowners) for plumbing, electrical, and mechanical permits.

There may be some technical stoppers, the greatest being available address data file in the city. I would encourage staff to talk to BCD personnel regarding those needs. I believe Kevin Neff is working on something like an address data file and perhaps he would be the likely person to discuss with Patrick Allen at BCD as to what would be necessary for ePermitting.

Allen@state.or.us

http://www.bcd.oregon.gov/online_permits_project/How_to_Join_Checklist.pdf

Even though implementation of on-line permitting and plan checking is likely to be several years away, I think it is absolutely inevitable and will be expected as the norm.

Communities which are ready to receive electronic submissions will be perceived as forward thinking and user friendly. Knowledge of system requirements will allow the City to allocate resources (like address data file) toward that end.

- Consider adding the inspection module of the Tidemark software.
- Prepare for the eventuality of on-line permitting.

Forms

Forms are included in this category because well conceived forms improve efficiency.

Permit Applications -

Is the staff aware of State's requirement for standardized permit application forms by January 1, 2009? Attached is information from BCD and links to examples.

- Change permit applications to BCD requirements.

Locator cards –

Usually florescent in color and posted at the work site, these serve several purposes. As the name suggests, it helps the inspector locate the building. It also indicates to code enforcement as well as the general population that the work being done is permitted. Barry may well be able to remember whether a particular location has a permit, but a relief inspector likely will not. Often folks will call City Hall to inquire about (or rat on) work being done in their neighborhood. Locator cards will discourage non-compliant work.

- Use locator cards.

Web site –

The City's web site is well done, but building department information is lacking and what is there is poorly organized. All permit forms, survey/comment forms, work sheets, fee schedules, etc. should be posted there in an easy to use format.

- Put forms and other information on web site.

Survey –

A survey is an excellent way to determine how to improve service. It is recommended the survey response not require identification. Anonymity assures the respondent there will be no retribution and encourages more frank opinion.

- Make it clear to people who have complaints they can do so anonymously.

Handouts

The weakest aspect in the building department is communication with homeowners, as is evidenced by the response to Measure 63 in the past election. Homeowners may not be the customers that bring in the most revenue, but they are the voters. 58% of the voters in Coos County approved of the measure which would have allowed homeowners to perform work valued up to \$35,000 without a permit. This is a public relations problem in many parts of the state and not surprising in Coos County. However, this, along with interviews and observations, points to a need for the City staff to make a greater effort to educate the customers.

A disturbing number of people don't understand the permitting process. They see it as a money making scheme for the city and/or government interference rather than something of value. Often permit holders don't realize they have paid for a service – inspections – which will insure their safety and protect their investment.

Attached are examples of handouts which can be customized for the City and made available in the hallway outside the building department. It is recommended these be included on the City's web site.

- Look at all forms with an eye to making them easy to understand by the average homeowner.
- Develop handouts to explain the permit process in a clear and logical manner.
- Streamline, simplify, and keep transparent the permit process.

Service delivery

Counter staff –

These women are very good at what they do. Each possesses the skills difficult to teach – how to get along with people. I had more time with Amy and as she is the more experienced at the job, she is more confident. They have the potential and are eager to improve their skills to deliver the best possible service. They would welcome more training, formal and informal.

The consensus among the contractors interviewed was they were helpful and easy to get along with. All but one of the contractors interviewed was entirely positive about the permit techs and his complaint had more to do with their lack of experience. Several contractors missed Debbie's expertise on the counter. They felt she was an advocate and would smooth the path through the processes.

- I strongly recommend they take part in the Oregon Permit Tech Association opportunities. OPTA offers training and networking to advance the professionalism of its members.
- In house training would be beneficial if Debbie could teach what it is that she did for customers.

Planning –

Analysis of this department was not particularly assigned but as it is so closely associated with the building department, it seemed important enough to include in this report.

There were a number of complaints about planning – mostly that the process takes too long. This complaint is common everywhere and probably not deserved. The hold-up could be the developer/builder who doesn't respond in a timely manner to the requirements of the department. Several complained their projects "got lost" or were held up because someone wasn't in the office for a week.

- Planning needs an objective look to determine whether staff or builder is the reason for the hold-ups.
- Cross train others, if possible, to prevent holding up planning approval.
- Consider adopting a routing method to ensure plans keep moving and don't get held up.

Plans examination

Opinions from contractors were all positive. They liked that Barry works with them to get compliance. His quick turn-around for plan changes is much appreciated.

Mick Nolte's report regarding plans examination is attached. He found no major problems and said what he did find was "nickel and dime". He advised a checklist contain more than the most current changes in the codes. A more all-inclusive list of applicable codes would ensure nothing is missed during the plan check.

The residential check list is also a helpful resource for permit techs and customers. Copies of our residential and commercial plan check lists are attached.

- Consider a more comprehensive list of commonly required code references.

Inspection

Since there was little activity during our inspector's ride-along with Barry it was difficult to have a comprehensive view of his skills, inspection methods, and interpersonal ability. David Mortier was satisfied Barry's code knowledge was of a high caliber. I also rode along at another time and saw that Barry was very quick to note deficiencies and was good at delivering the information to the contractor. He takes personal pride in the community and was lavish with praise when a good job was accomplished.

More than one contractor commented they tried not to schedule inspections when Barry could not perform them.

He is to be commended for the "Think Permit" campaign he has adopted from OBOA. The information on the back of Barry's business card is an excellent way to inform the public of the mission. The refrigerator magnets encouraging people to call for final inspection is also a positive PR tool.

However, while we did not witness such a problem, other sources let us know that Barry could improve his skills in dealing with the non-contractor community. This is typical of inspectors who come from a contractor or technical background and have difficulty talking to a homeowner or others who are unfamiliar with the jargon and practices. It may not be apparent to all staff that not catering to the needs of the homeowners can result in painful legislation or measures such as #63. There is a state-wide effort to address this public relations problem.

- Concentrate on learning how to deal with people who are unaware of the benefits of the codes. OBOA is offering a class at the OBOA Spring Institute.
- Re-evaluate forms and processes taking into consideration a typical homeowner.

ASSUMPTION OF ELECTRICAL & PLUMBING PROGRAMS

Program Assumption

Assuming the electrical and plumbing programs is essential in providing good customer service and assurance that all aspects of the code are in compliance.

Sending the homeowner or builder to Coquille to get permits for parts of their project is a bad idea. Experience shows if it's easier to buy a permit, folks are more likely to do so. The Quick Permit on-line service offered by the State is only accessible to contractors. Homeowners, who most need the inspections to assure safe work, are burdened by a trip to Coquille during work hours in order to buy a permit.

The survey of contractors showed support for the idea. They saw the advantage of being able to go to one place to submit plans and coordinate all the disciplines (building, mechanical, plumbing and electrical). Permit staff felt it was doable and thought it would be very helpful to their customers to have all in one jurisdiction.

My trip to Salem to discuss with the Director of Building Codes Division, Mark Long revealed some issues. The Division has long wanted to get out of the inspection business. It has been a long process. A few years back I assisted five counties along the Columbia River under the umbrella of Mid-Columbia Council of Governments to assume the programs from the State. The process is cumbersome and time consuming but was easy compared to the machinations necessary to appease the groups upset by the change.

BCD is very supportive of the effort to have Coos Bay take over the electrical and plumbing programs, but believes unless the whole county is taken over by local jurisdictions, it will be a difficult pull. North Bend is interested in assuming electrical and plumbing. What remains is the rest of Coos County, which includes code enforcement in every discipline.

So the question is - can you help with convincing the County administrators they could assume the programs? I'll talk to whomever you think might be amenable to the idea.

Terence O'Connor, City Manager of Coquille consulted with us in a matter regarding a dangerous building which, by their ordinance, required the action of a building official. He was told the state BO who is assigned to the area "didn't do that kind of thing". Among other solutions, I urged him to press a little harder but I haven't heard whether he did or if it worked.

It's this lack of service and control which might convince the County they would be better served with the program if they were to assume it.

Of course, I am prejudiced, but if all three jurisdictions assumed the programs and agreed to contract out the service to one contractor, there would be continuity of code enforcement, yet each would have the ability to have other needs met which require a building official.

DOWNTOWN PLAN

Downtown Plan

Downtown Coos Bay has a charming feel and holds very architecturally interesting buildings. It would be unfortunate for this treasure to continue to deteriorate.

Structural issues

As you well know it is difficult to convince a building owner to take care of deferred maintenance. Out of town/state ownership further leads to lack of concern especially if there is a tax benefit to have an empty building. It's tough to appeal to pride of ownership or community benefit to an out of town owner. Owners can be under-capitalized or flat unwilling to spend money.

We did not check out the Lockhart Building to see if there were indications of structural issues since the City had already condemned it. Of the other buildings we saw only the Chandler Building appears to have potentially significant structural issues. The American and Fletcher Buildings had cosmetic problems due to deferred maintenance, but our cursory look didn't reveal any signs there are structural problems. Without an in-depth assessment by an appropriately qualified engineer or architect, it is not possible to determine the condition or recommend a "fix".

More than one person mentioned the soils problem plaguing downtown. Our experience shows this may not be the problem it is feared to be. If there are existing pilings supporting some of the buildings, it can't be assumed they are failing. Recently, a new hotel was built on very old pilings in Astoria. They were sound enough to build on because they were not exposed to air. It may be the same for downtown Coos Bay. The expense of driving new pilings might discourage new building, but one can't assume a structural fix is prohibitive for an existing building. For instance the Chandler Building may need to only raise the corner. Helical piers may be the answer and there are a number of other possible solutions that aren't cost prohibitive.

Incentives

There is funding set aside in the State of Oregon 07/09 biennia to revitalize downtowns. <http://www.oregon.gov/ECDD/mainstreet/index.shtml>

It is a statewide commercial district revitalization program administered through the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department. The goal of the program is to assist communities in achieving viable downtown commercial districts. The next application date for the Performing Main Street and Transforming Downtown programs is March 20th 2009.

In conjunction with Main Street, the Oregon Building Codes Division has adopted the International Existing Building Codes. The IEBC allows building departments to be more flexible when a building owner wishes to improve or remodel a building. With it, design professionals and building departments have reasonable, usually less expensive, alternatives to current code requirements. (The code official should get IEBC training.)

We recommend the City institute a program to assist building owners in determining the extent of structural stabilization needed. Local professionals (Crow/Clay?) could do the assessment. If, as we suspect, the fear of failing pilings isn't deserved, that would give developers confidence to invest in downtown.

Zoning may not be much of a challenge because it probably already allows the desired mixed uses. Building codes may be more problematic as mixed-use which includes living space requires fire sprinkling.

Downtown Development Group

It is paramount the City create an organization which will develop the direction and goals for a revitalized downtown.

Such a group should contain representatives of
City Council
Planning Commission
Downtown Business Organization
Economic & Community Development
Urban Renewal Agency
City Planning

A focused group with dynamic leadership is essential. The ideal candidates would be respected and politically well-connected members of the community who can convince others to do their part and confidently present downtown as a viable location for business.

Separate sub-committees with specific expertise can concentrate efforts on:

Zoning

Scrutinize current zoning for any opportunity to make changes which will enhance the desired direction.

Finance

Seek sources of money from existing funds within the City, County, State and Federal programs.

Structures and Infrastructure

Determine if buildings are indeed salvageable and whether there is potential for buildable sites downtown. For future development, long range planning for streets, adequate parking, sufficient fire flow and utilities needs to be established.

Development

Approach developers and businesses outside the community to consider opportunities in downtown Coos Bay.

For example – McMenamins, a company interested in using historic buildings for their brewery, restaurant, lodging and event businesses, could be interested in any of several buildings in downtown Coos Bay.

Advertising

Probably part of development, advertising is vital to not only bring tourists to down town but to show potential developers, Coos Bay is serious and organized. Co-op advertising with existing businesses and organizations, Mill Casino, Chamber of Commerce, etc.

A personal aside –

Besides the architecture downtown, I was enchanted by Coos Bay during my visits. I'm not wild about casinos or typical coastal attractions. I've lived in Eugene since 1970 and had only been to Coos Bay once prior to this year. I loved the drive via 38, the traffic was negligible, I always saw elk, and y'all arranged the weather to be great every time I was there. The farmers market was awesome and there was interesting food at the restaurants. I'm eager to go to the Egyptian, the art museum and generally exploring.

I know of Portlanders who spend hours fighting their way out of town on Friday night to stay the weekend on the coast. Am I the only person in Eugene not to realize the charms and the proximity of Coos Bay?

With the news that the rail line will be restored between Eugene and Coos Bay, I wonder if a passenger train could be encouraged. If Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad in Chama, NM can pack a train full of tourists just to go to nowhere and back, I'd think something better could be done here since there is so much more to offer at both ends. I'd love to hop on a train Friday afternoon, watch the scenery go by and see the sun go down in Coos Bay.

The effort to build an arena in Coos Bay is an exciting possibility. As is the thought that cruise ships would stop. The potential for tourism is enormous.



City of Coos Bay

Public Works and Development Dept.

500 Central Ave., Coos Bay, Oregon 97420 • Phone (541) 269-8918
Fax (541) 269-8916

We want to make sure we are doing everything we can to provide the best quality service possible. We would appreciate it if you would take a moment to rate our service during your most recent contact with us. Please mail this survey back in the stamped envelope provided.

Date: _____

What brought you to City Hall? _____

Please mark accordingly.

Excellent

Good

Fair

Poor

1. Knowledge and competence

2. Responsiveness and courtesy

3. Information provided to you

4. Timeliness of process

5. When you left, did you understand the next step in the development process? YES NO
If no, why not?

Comments:

Name (Optional): _____ Phone: _____

Address (Optional): _____

☐ Check if you would like a staff member to contact you (be sure to include contact information).

Thank you!



City of Coos Bay

Community Development Department

500 Central Avenue, Coos Bay, Oregon 97420

541-269-8918

<http://www.coosbay.org>

March 6, 2014

Coos Bay City Council
Via - Mr. Rodger Craddock
City Manager
City of Coos Bay

Dear Mr. Craddock and Coos Bay City Council:

The Coos Bay Community Development and Public Works Departments were asked at the March 4th City Council meeting to update the City Council on what the departments are doing to make the City a friendly place to do business. We are very pleased to be given this opportunity to respond to this very important issue and be able to highlight some of the measures that we have taken to make Coos Bay a great place to do business.

Recent Improvements

Over the past few months, as a team, we have implemented the following measures in order to make receiving and reviewing a variety of permits a more simplified and easier to understand process for our applicants:

1. Started tracking permits on a weekly basis during our team meeting with an emphasis on moving the permits along as quickly as possible and as a team figuring out any possible impediments that may delay their issuance. This procedure has reduced the issuance of most permits from 5-8 weeks down to 2-4 weeks in most cases. There are still procedures that need to be ironed out but for the most part applicants are receiving their permits in a much more timely fashion.
2. A pre-application conference procedure has begun to be implemented for larger land use projects. The purpose of this conference is to give the applicant all of the information that they would need up front in order to apply for a land use permit application. This step diminishes all of the need to run around and speak to a variety of people as all of your information will be given to you in one place and at one time. We have held a few of these to this date and have had very good results.
3. We have put together a variety of development packets for applicants which contain all of the necessary applications and instructions to apply for the particular permit. For example one of the packets is to construct a single family home within the City. All of the information is ready to go either at the front counter or in our new convenient file folders that we have located outside the customer service window. It is not even required to wait in line to speak to someone at the counter. If you know what you are doing you can just grab your application and run.
4. A new software which is used to track permits of all types has been instituted called E-Permitting. Using this software, applicants can apply for as well as see the progress of their permits as well as track staff comments from any location that has internet access.

5. The City's website has been re-designed to include more information including:
 - a. City events,
 - b. A larger list of applications,
 - c. Public meeting minutes and links to videos, and
 - d. City codes and documents.

How are we doing?

As a City we receive applications for everything from land use reviews to plan reviews (requiring planning and engineering review but not subject to the statewide land use process and timelines) to a wide array of required building permits. Each of these review types require a different set of standards and procedures that staff has to follow in order to issue the permit. Most of the permits can be issued over the counter or in a few weeks. However, many land use permits can take up to 6 months (including appeals to the City Council) depending upon the application type, how busy we are as a department and the quality of the applicants submittals. In most cases, the State regulates the process and code and our staff implements the regulations as best and uniformly as possible. Where there is grey area the department director is at times asked to step in and make a decision. We try to make our decisions with customer service in the forefront of our decision making process.

So far this fiscal year (the seven months from July 1, 2013 through January 31, 2014) we have issued 463 applications (Over 66 per month). Keep in mind this is the number of permits that we actually issued; not reviewed. Of this number, 209 were related to building permits; 96 were related to right-of-way activities; 51 were for land use; and 47 were floodplain permits. We have received very few complaints based on the number of applications that we review. As a staff we understand that the Council is complained to from time to time about a variety of factors concerning the review of applications which for the most part can be summed up as the applicant did not like the decision that they received for whatever reason. We understand that this can be a difficult and lengthy process to many people, especially people that are new to this type of process. We believe our success rate of satisfied customers to be one of our strengths. We have a folder of customer service letters complimenting us of our service that we give every day and we are very proud of the job that we do for the citizens of Coos Bay and the people that do business here.

Staff Qualifications

Attached are basic job descriptions and professional biographies of the many of the City staff involved in the permitting and land use review process. I think that you will see that we have excellently qualified staff that in many cases is overqualified for the jobs that they are performing and bring that experience and their expertise to City Hall for the benefit of our citizens.

Sincerely,

Eric Day
City of Coos Bay
Community Development Director

Jim Hossley
City of Coos Bay
Public Works Director

Staff Bio's

Information on the Public Works staff is as follows:

Engineering Services Coordinator - GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES: Performs professional engineering administrative work; directs the planning, designing and construction of street, sanitary sewer and storm drain projects. Supervises and maintains an organization through which these projects may be properly planned, designed and constructed. Provides technical support for all Department activities and performs related work as required. The person in this position works with general public, contractors, developers, engineers and architects on a day-to-day basis to assist them with the City's wastewater and development permitting process, regulations, and standards.

Jennifer Wirsing holds this position for the City of Coos Bay has a BS in Civil Engineering from San Diego State University and has 15 years of professional Engineering experience of which 10 years was in the private sector. Jennifer is skilled in professional engineering disciplines related to public works. She is especially skilled in drainage/stormwater hydrology and hydraulics. She is also skilled managing consultant contracts and negotiation of consultant contracts. She started with the City in 2010.

Her Accomplishments:

- National Engineer's Week Award Recipient - Water Resources Manager in Charge of Olympic Training Center – BMX Course February 2009
- City of Chula Vista Beautification Award Recipient - Water Resources Manager in Charge of Wolf Canyon Park - November 2007
- NCEES Principles and Practice Exam (PE Civil Exam) - Passed 8-hour exam, October 2007
- Tribute to Women and Industry (TWIN) Honoree - May 2007
- Co-Author of Paper Titled, "Sedimentation in Floodplain Management" - Published in Journal of Floodplain Management - summer 2003
- Civil Engineering, San Diego State University Bachelor of Science degree - May 2000
- Engineering-in-Training, State of California - Certificate received, February 2000
- Professional Engineer, State of Oregon - Currently coordinating with state to obtain licensure

Engineering Technician - GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES: Performs engineering work of a moderately complex nature in the investigation, location, design and construction of improvements and maintenance projects, e.g., drafting, surveying, preparing cost estimates and assessment rolls, inspection, updating maps and related tasks. Works with general public, contractors, developers, engineers and architects on a day-to-day basis to assist them with the City's right-of-way permitting process, regulations, and standards.

Jessica Spann holds this position for the City and has a BS in Civil Engineering from Oregon Institute of Technology and has 7 years of professional experience of which 5 is in the private sector. Jessica started with the City in 2011.

She is skilled in AutoCAD and other engineering software programs; experienced preparing plans and specifications for various engineering designs/projects. She is skilled in field inspection of asphalt road construction and wastewater collection system construction projects. Jessica also has excellent customer service skills.

Operations Administrator - GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES: Provides administrative support to City Infrastructure; Streets, Sidewalks, Traffic Signals, Street Lights, Underground Utilities, Wastewater Facilities, Storm Water, Facilities Maintenance, Construction Management, Fleet Services, Parks and City Docks. Works close with State and Federal organizations regarding grant opportunities or on projects that affect the City. Coordinate with; other utility providers and engineers, contractors. Assist the Director of Public Works and Development in his/her absence.

Randy Dixon is in this position for the City of Coos Bay. He has an MBA in Business Management from Florida

State University. He also has a diploma in Forestry and Wildlife Conservation, American Public University, Atlanta, Georgia. He has 28 years of municipal experience plus several years of private sector experience as contractor. Randy's past positions include City of Salem, Department Manager; Tuscaloosa County Alabama, Public Works Assistant Executive Director and as the Planning & Development Director. He also worked for the Bend Metropolitan Park and Recreation District, Bend, Oregon for seventeen years in the following positions; Operations Manager, Construction Superintendent and as the Facilities Superintendent. He served as team leader for the Tuscaloosa County Emergency Management Team. From January 2007, up until his departure, Randy served as a Board Member for Alabama Recreation and Park Association as Treasurer, National Recreation and Parks Association, County Public Works Association and has served on other community civic organizations.

Randy currently holds a General Contractor, All Structures license in the State of Oregon. He also holds certifications in numerous Public Works related disciplines including Emergency Management, National Recreation and Park Association, American Public Works Association, Project Management Institute. Among his awards includes City of Coos Bay employee of the year. Randy started with the City in 2010.

Randy has obtained several million dollars in grants for various City infrastructure. He has expertly completed numerous construction projects for the City. He consistently puts in over 60 hours of work each week (plus many additional hours during weekends) to the City and receives no additional compensation for this work.

Information on Community Development staff is as follows:

Codes/Planning Specialist - GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES: Performs a variety of technical and non-technical tasks related to the intake and processing of building code and non-building code related permits and forms as well as planning applications and actions. Informs the public on land use and building code processes and standards. Performs a variety of secretarial tasks related to planning and codes implementation work. Composes, transcribes, edits and types correspondence, monthly reports and special projects; takes minutes at hearings and meetings; serves as receptionist for the department. Performs other related duties as required.

Nik Rapelje and Sheri Corgill currently have this position for the City.

Nik graduated magna cum laude from Western State Colorado University (Gunnison, CO) with a Bachelor of Arts in English and earned a Master of Science in Management Information Systems from the Mays Business School at Texas A&M University (College Station, TX).

Nik Rapelje joined the staff of the City of Coos Bay in September 2013. Prior to moving to Coos Bay, Nik had a successful career as a government analyst, focused on evaluating operations and systems for accuracy, efficiency, and compliance with regulations and standards. She spent several years as a Senior Information Technology Analyst with the US Government Accountability Office (GAO), the investigative arm of Congress, where she specialized in critical infrastructure protection while evaluating federal government agencies' information management. She developed and wrote key portions of reports and presentations, presented reports to Congressional staff and agency management, and earned numerous awards for outstanding performance and service. After leaving GAO, she worked as a Senior Auditor for the Texas State Auditor's Office and most recently as an Internal Review Specialist for the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). She has also worked in journalism and technical writing, web design, computer programming and horse training. She relocated to Coos Bay for her spouse's career.

Nik serves on the Board of Directors for Forever Morgan's Rescue, Inc., a nationwide 501(c) 3 equine rescue. Locally, she is a member of the Coos County Sheriff's Posse and the Coos County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue team.

Sheri Corgill began work at the City of Coos Bay in September 2012. After nearly 30 years in the Lincoln City area, relocation due to her husband's job brought them to Coos Bay. Sheri attended a business school in Southern Oregon straight out of high school and completed the course work prior to working for a financial institution in Medford. She then moved to Brookings where she was a bookkeeper for 7 years at a local car dealership. Prior to leaving this job, she helped convert a manual bookkeeping system to a computerized system. Her husband's job then took her to

Lincoln City where they spent nearly 30 years. During this time, Sheri spent 18 years working for the Lincoln County School District as an assistant to the Handicapped Learner's Specialist where her primary duty was working with special needs children, testing, compiling and filing federal paperwork related to the children's individual education plans. During her time at this job, she was awarded the Superintendent's Award in recognition of her efforts during a 4 month absence of the certified learner's specialist. She also received training and was a part of the Lincoln County School District Crisis Response Team. This team responded to events of various nature, including death of students and staff members when the need arose. After 18 years, Sheri accepted a job with the City of Lincoln City as a Building Permit Technician, working in the Planning and Community Development Department for nearly 10 years. During this time she implemented the statewide permitting program for the city, receiving recognition by the city manager during one of the local council meetings. During this same time period she was instrumental in researching and restructuring building permit fees and presented these before the council with a unanimous decision. She took numerous classes through the Oregon Building Official's Association and the Oregon Permit Technicians Association over the 10 year period to stay up to date for her work with the construction industry. She currently holds certification as a notary and several levels of FEMA certification for government employees.

Sheri has held leadership roles for both the local swim team and youth baseball programs as well as church and school related organizations.

Building Official - GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES: Plans, organizes and directs the functions of the Codes Division of the Public Works and Development Department. Develops and implements policies, procedures and practices to provide building plan reviews and inspections of industrial, commercial, and residential construction to determine compliance with Oregon Revised Statutes, Oregon Administrative Rules, State Structural Specialty Code, State Mechanical Specialty Code, Uniform Fire Code, and local ordinances and regulations. Meets with engineers, architects, contractors and the general public to resolve code related issues. Assures the efficient and economical use of departmental funds, work force and time.

Mike Smith holds this position with the City of Coos Bay. Mike has spent his entire professional career (nearly 40 years) within the "built environment", either as a laborer, contractor, or in code compliance. Mike has been with the City of Coos Bay as its Building Codes Administrator / Building Official since August, 2010. Prior to coming to Coos Bay, he was with the Douglas County Building Department. Other positions Mike's held include Building Official for the City of Roseburg's Community Development Department; Building & Zoning Official for City of Indianola, Iowa's Building and Zoning Department as well as the City of Hartford, Iowa. Mike holds an associate's degree in Building Construction Technology as well as certifications in multiple disciplines of the construction industry.

Planner 1 - GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES: Prepares and updates research reports, plans, maps and charts related to short and long range comprehensive planning and community development. Assists in the preparation and implementation of grants, impact studies, and ordinances. Provides information to the general public, citizen groups, planning commission, and other political subdivisions concerning the interpretation and application of planning laws and regulations. The person in this position supports the Community Development Department by ensuring compliance with the City's land use policies and ordinances.

Aaron Harris and Debbie Erler each hold this position for the City of Coos Bay.

Aaron Harris received a Master in Community and Regional Planning at the University of Oregon and his BA in Social Science at Portland State University. Prior to joining the City of Coos Bay in 2013, Aaron worked for the University of Oregon's Community Service Center. Prior to starting his career in planning, Aaron was involved in several service sector positions including having his own business.

Debbie Erler has worked for the City of Coos Bay since 1988. She has been a Planner 1 since 1993. Prior, Debbie held administrative positions in public safety department. Debbie also has 6 years of experience in the banking industry. Debbie has attended SWOCC and is currently the AFSCME Union president. Debbie's experience and extensive memory of City projects is invaluable to her team and the department as a whole.

Public Works Department Director - GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES: Organizes, directs and supervises the varied activities of the Department of Public Works. These include the wastewater, stormwater, parks, streets, and vehicle maintenance programs. Assigns, reviews and conducts professional work related to all department functions. Advises planning boards, study groups and City Council. Administers department budget and personnel actions.

Jim Hossley holds this job for the City of Coos Bay. Jim has a MS in Geology from Acadia University, Nova Scotia; BS in Geology from the University of Texas. Jim has also completed all course work for a Masters degree in physical geography from the University of Texas and all course work for a Bachelors Degree in meteorology from Florida State University.

Jim has 24 years of public works experience. Jim's career has included a wide breadth of public works experience especially related to design review of private infrastructure development; public road construction and maintenance; and storm water quality/quantity programs. Jim also has 4 years of experience working as a geologist in the petroleum industry. Jim is a retired Air Force officer with 20 years of active duty and reserve service including tours of duty in Iraq, Afghanistan, Korea and Turkey.

Some of Jim's accomplishments include being selected as manager of the year for the City of Coos Bay; successful completion of multi-million dollars' worth of infrastructure projects; design review of several hundreds of private infrastructure projects; creation of a small community storm water management program that became the standard/model for Arizona's small communities (<50,000 population); awarded several military citations and commendations.

Community Development Department Director - GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES: Organizes, directs, and supervises the varied activities of the Department of Community Development. These include the building codes, codes enforcement, planning and zoning, permitting, and economic development programs. Works closely with business owners and operators of the Downtown and Empire Urban Renewal Districts. Assists in the management of the City's Urban Renewal programs and projects. Assigns, reviews and conducts professional work related to all department functions. Advises planning boards, study groups and City Council. Administers department budget and personnel actions.

Eric Day holds this job for the City of Coos Bay. Eric comes to the City after working as a Senior Planner for the Lake Oswego Tigard Water Partnership. Prior to taking the position at Lake Oswego in 2009, Eric worked in the private sector for eight years as a planning consultant primarily with local governmental jurisdictions. Eric is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners, and he graduated in 2005 with a Master's degree in Public Administration from Portland State University.