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September 11, 2023

Board of Commissioners' Office  
Attention: Rachel Hagerty, Chief of Staff  
Tillamook County Courthouse  
201 Laurel Avenue  
Tillamook, Oregon 97141

**Letter of Interest**

Dear Ms. Hagerty:

Please accept this as my letter of interest for the position of County Commissioner, Position 2, pursuant to your August 14, 2023, press release.

**Why am I applying for the position of Commissioner?**

Since retiring from my law practice more than a decade ago, I have developed an unexpected but genuine interest in local civic involvement: what an old political mentor once described as "that nagging urge to serve." I had other priorities in mind for my free time when my since-departed friend Judson Randall cajoled me into succeeding him as President of the Oceanside Neighborhood Association six years ago. Once elected, however, I found that few endeavors are as gratifying (or addictive) as marshalling ideas and resources to address community quality-of-life issues. Such work lets me apply career skills that would otherwise languish, and I seem to have a knack for it.

Beyond that general motivation, I found that my efforts to contribute have followed a consistent pattern of progression from local grass roots projects to initiatives with countywide implications. For example ...

- My involvement in individual short-term rental disputes as CAC President led to forming a community Short-Term Committee and eventually to participation on the countywide STR Advisory Committee.
- Assisting our Community Hall board of directors with informal legal advice led to negotiating its 15-year lease with the U.S. Post Office and ultimately to guiding its transition from volunteer to professional management, resulting in greater participation in the county's tourism economy.

- Monitoring land use disputes as CAC President led to coordinating two substantive updates of the Oceanside Community Plan and, eventually, to studying the Tillamook County Comprehensive Plan and consulting regional LCDC officials for background when designing 2022 Oceanside incorporation initiative.
- Dissatisfaction with the utility of our community bulletin board led to compiling an effective community e-mail list and finally to launching *The Oceansider* – an electronic community newsletter with nearly 500 active subscribers that is republished countywide in the *Tillamook County Pioneer*.

When it comes to my civic involvement, nearly all roads have led to the county. This opportunity seems like a natural extension of my previous pursuits.

While I do not currently anticipate running for election if appointed (see below), I do intend to continue other forays into civic service as a volunteer after the term ends. To that end, I view this appointment as a tailor-made opportunity to (1) deploy skills, knowledge and relationships acquired in previous civic activities, (2) gain exposure to a broader range of future community service opportunities and (3) develop a deeper understanding of the interests, resources and dynamics already at play to address them. I would make good use of that opportunity to inform future civic endeavors after completing my term.

Finally, I have refrained from citing any specific policy agenda or pet projects as motivation for seeking this appointment. If pressed, I would identify workforce housing, unincorporated community relations, emergency preparedness and infrastructure (both physical and digital) as particular areas of interest. To my mind, however, pledging to champion major policy initiatives or operational reforms would be unrealistic and even presumptuous for an unelected Commissioner who plans only a year of service. It would also be premature. If appointed, prudence would dictate consulting with my fellow Commissioners and the Leadership Team for their perspectives on issues of special importance or urgency within my competence before determining priorities for my time. Once such priorities are identified, history shows that I will dig deeply, think creatively and follow through.

### **Why would I be a good choice for appointment to the Board of Commissioners?**

This vacancy will leave the Board short-handed and without a tie-breaking vote as it confronts myriad issues of critical importance in the coming year. To fill the gap, my background offers an opportune blend of professional and political experience, engagement in county issues and established working relationships. This will facilitate and expedite the orientation I require to become effective and productive. Below, I have taken the liberty to outline specific aspects of my background that I would deem pertinent were I making this selection:

### Technical Preparedness

- I understand BOCC's legal and institutional role relative to that of the state, cities, unincorporated communities and rural areas.
- I am familiar with the constraints on officials subject to open meeting laws, and I understand the difference between quasi-judicial and legislative decisions. Most importantly, I appreciate the importance of being guided by county counsel in such matters.
- I am well-versed in both the drafting and interpretation of ordinances, statutes and their implementing rules.
- I have taken online seminars explaining the public budget laws and navigated the Netarts-Oceanside Sanitary District's annual budget process as its Treasurer.

### Substantive Readiness

- I have a basic knowledge of Oregon land use statutes, agencies, procedures and concepts.
- I have served on the STR Advisory Committee since 2018 and attended nearly every BOCC meeting involving Ordinance 84 and its companion ordinances.
- I have studied the TLT ordinance and the state statutes governing its use. I have also conferred at length with CEO Jason Brandt at ORLA about TLT use constraints on several occasions.
- In addition to my general legal background, I retain a working knowledge of insurance coverage principles, workers' compensation and private health care delivery issues and employment discrimination laws.
- As a law student, I served as an editor of a national criminal law journal and published a research article surveying criminal arrest procedures across the country.

### Relationships and Interactions

- I have enjoyed cordial and effective working relationships with Director Absher and Director Laity over the past six years as a CAC President and Vice President. I would approach the responsibilities of Commissioner equipped with a realistic appreciation of how much they and their staffs accomplish with limited resources and a patchwork of funding sources.

- Comparing notes with other CAC leaders during 5 years of monthly meetings has provided me with insight into the issues and challenges faced by unincorporated communities other than Oceanside.
- I have worked collaboratively with the editors of both the *Tillamook County Pioneer* and, to a lesser extent, the *Tillamook Headlight Herald*. I also have a journalism degree and a significant amount of experience in interacting with media during previous legal and political endeavors.
- Having conducted four vigorous legislative campaigns, appeared in hundreds of appellate court arguments and presided over five years of CAC meetings, I am no stranger to public speaking or comporting myself during public presentations and question-and-answer sessions.
- As events warrant, I can draw upon my past participation in state legislative proceedings and my relationships with the leaders of prominent business and natural resource associations, such as Oregon Business and Industry and the Oregon Nursery Association. I am especially ready to spend the time and effort needed to enhance Tillamook County's presence and advance its interests during the 2024 legislative session.

#### **Intent to Run for Election in 2024**

While I do not rule it out, I do not foresee running for election to a full term in 2024. My husband Rob Hoeper and I have been retired for more than a decade. An extended return to professional work would entail a major reworking of our life plan. That said, I would readily undertake a year-long sabbatical from retirement to devote my full attention to serving the people of Tillamook County for the balance of Commissioner Yamamoto's term, undistracted by long-term ambitions or campaign considerations.

Finally, I am aware the Commissioners have engaged the PSU Center for Public Service to help develop a long-term strategic plan with the Commissioners and the Leadership Team. While I would embrace the chance to participate in that effort, I realize that the Commissioners may not view a short-term appointment to be consistent with formulating long-term goals.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Keene