

**CROOK COUNTY COURT MINUTES  
OF OCTOBER 25, 2023, WORK SESSION  
Open Portion**

**Be It Remembered** that the Crook County Court met in a regularly scheduled Work Session on October 25, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. in the Administration Conference room located at 203 NE Court Street, Prineville, Oregon 97754.

Court Members Present: Judge Seth Crawford and Commissioner Brian Barney

Absentees: None

Others Present in Person or Via Zoom: Legal Counsels Eric Blaine and John Eisler; Administrative Executive Assistant Sarah Puerner; Human Resources Director Kim Barber; Clerk Cheryl Seely; Undersheriff Bill Elliott; Lieutenant Aaron Boyce; Chief Administrative Deputy Stephanie Wilson; Office Manager Alex Solterbeck; Airport Manager Kelly Coffelt; Assessor Jon Soliz; Karen; Contract County Administrator Andy Parks; District Attorney Kari Hathorn; Assessment Technician Linda Pepper; Finance Director Christina Haron; Community Development Director Will Van Vactor; Building Official Randy Davis; Levi Roberts; Budget Analyst Jamie Berger; Appraiser Shannon Alleman; Library Director Sarah Beeler; Assessment Technician Stephanie West; Mike Ervin and members of the public.

**WORK SESSION**

The meeting was **called to order at 9:00 a.m.**

**Public Comment:** None

**Discussion Item #1: Public Records Fee Waiver Request:**

**Requester:** John Eisler

**Details:** Legal Counsel John Eisler attended the work session to discuss a public records fee waiver request. The County received a request in July for communications from and by various public agencies regarding the Lemon Gulch project from 2019 to the present. Initially, staff estimated the cost at \$122.50, covering one hour of administrative staff time and half an hour of legal review and redactions. The fee waiver request is based on the reasoning outlined in Mr. Winder's email. A public body may waive or reduce its fee if a particular request "is in the public interest because making the record available primarily benefits the general public." Waiving the fees is entirely optional. Commissioner Barney does not believe waiving the fees is in the public interest, as the decision was made by the Forest Service. No motion was made, and the request was not approved.

**Discussion Item #2: Acceptance of FY 2023 Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act Implementation Project Grants:**

**Requester:** Christina Haron

**Details:** Aaron Boyce attended the work session to discuss the Court's acceptance of a 2023 Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act Implementation Project grant. The Crook County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) will use these funds to establish a Peer

Support Program. The program aims to offer public safety employees emotional support during personal or professional crises and to help anticipate and address potential challenges. With this program, the Crook County Sheriff's Office will have between 10 and 15 Peer Support Team Advisors. This grant does not require any matching funds from the County and covers the entire budget for the program. This item will be placed on the consent agenda for November 1st.

**Discussion Item #3: New hangar building infrastructure/Approve construction bid:**

**Requester:** Kelly Coffelt

**Details:** Airport Manager Kelly Coffelt attended the work session to discuss new hangar building infrastructure and the approval of a construction bid. The airport is developing infrastructure to accommodate new aircraft hangars, potentially locating up to three buildings. Site #1 has already been leased for a 100x80 building, and Site #2 has an interested party for an 80x80 building who wants to enter into a lease. This item will be placed on the consent agenda for November 1st.

**Discussion Item #4: Airport Policy Updates:**

**Requester:** Kelly Coffelt

**Details:** Airport Manager Kelly Coffelt attended the work session to discuss updates to airport policies. In June 2023, the County Court approved a new land lease policy for non-commercial aeronautical activity at the Prineville/Crook County airport. After further review and circulation of the document, slight modifications in terms and structure were deemed necessary. These changes are intended to benefit both the public and Crook County. This item will be placed on the agenda for November 1st.

**Discussion Item #5: Community Development Monthly Update:**

**Requester:** Will Van Vactor

**Details:** Community Development Director Will Van Vactor and Building Official Randy Davis attended the work session to provide the Court with the department's monthly update. The building department reported 22 new houses, though these numbers are lower compared to 2019. Commercial activity has also slowed down. The team will begin holding monthly meetings with Apple to coordinate their new projects. The planning department remains steady, receiving 28 applications in September, slightly behind the same period last year. The onsite department experienced a very slow September with only two site evaluations. Code compliance remains steady, with the team currently handling some tougher cases. A few code compliance hearings are anticipated in November.

**Discussion Item #6: Approval of 2023-2025 State CAMI grant:**

**Requester:** Kari Hathorn

**Details:** District Attorney Kari Hathorn attended the work session to discuss the 2023-2025 State Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Intervention (CAMI) grant, which requires signing before submission to the State. The CAMI grant provides \$114,385.02 in funding for the specified period. A significant portion of this funding will be allocated for training new law enforcement officers, ensuring they are well-equipped to handle child abuse cases effectively. This training is crucial for improving response times and the

overall handling of such sensitive cases. The grant will also support other essential multidisciplinary interventions aimed at protecting children and supporting affected families. This item will be placed on the consent agenda for November 1st for formal approval and signature.

**Discussion Item #7: New project – fire prevention/noxious vegetation control program:**

**Requester:** Kev Alexanian

**Details:** Andy Parks presented this item on behalf of Kev Alexanian. The proposal outlines a new project to be funded through Title III, requesting \$30,000 per year over four years, totaling \$120,000. The project will involve the Crook County Weed Department and the Crooked River Cooperative Weed Management Area, with each organization contributing \$15,000 annually. This funding will support initiatives aimed at managing and controlling invasive weed species, promoting healthier ecosystems, and improving land use for agriculture and recreation. The collaborative effort between these two entities will enhance the effectiveness of weed management strategies and provide educational resources to the community about invasive species. This item will be placed on the consent agenda for November 1st for approval.

**Discussion Item #8: Human Resources Policy Updates:**

**Requester:** Kim Barber

**Details:** Human Resources Director Kim Barber attended the work session to discuss updates to Human Resources policies. She introduced a newly condensed employee policy handbook, now streamlined to 25 pages, covering essential information such as policies, pay schedules, holiday schedules, and Paid Time Off. Additionally, she proposed creating a second, more detailed handbook specifically for Managers and Directors to provide further guidance and clarity. Ms. Barber also addressed the critical issues of employee retention and recruitment. She noted that retention rates hover around 20%, highlighting the high cost associated with losing employees. To address this, she introduced a new concept: a non-standard work scheduling program designed to accommodate employees' varying schedules and day-to-day lives. The proposed program includes five different categories: onsite, flexible, compressed, remote, and hybrid schedules, offering greater flexibility and work-life balance. Furthermore, there was a discussion about the Lateral Employee Accrual Rate, which would allow specific employees with lateral experience to earn more Paid Time Off when joining the County. This initiative aims to protect current employees while also attracting new talent by recognizing and valuing their prior experience. These updates and proposals are designed to enhance employee satisfaction, improve retention rates, and make the County a more attractive employer. This item will be placed on the consent agenda for November 1st for further consideration and approval.

**Discussion Item #9: Communication ideas and improvements for increased transparency:**

**Requester:** Sarah Puerner

**Details:** Administrative Executive Assistant and Communications Officer Sarah

Puerner attended the work session to discuss communication ideas and improvements to enhance transparency. She presented a draft communications plan aligned with Goal 7 of the Strategic Planning, which is to "Plan, develop, and implement an organization-wide communication plan and protocols." Creating a comprehensive communications plan for Crook County involves several key components: defining clear goals, identifying the target audience, establishing consistent branding, and developing specific communication strategies. Ms. Puerner emphasized the importance of coordinating efforts to ensure effective communication through various channels. These include social media, website updates, monthly email newsletters, and other strategies designed to engage the community and establish a positive image for the County. Ms. Puerner outlined several objectives, such as maintaining consistent branding, reaching the target market and demographics, and improving transparency. She also discussed the need for regular evaluation and adjustment of the plan based on evolving community needs and feedback. By implementing these strategies, Crook County aims to enhance transparency, improve communication efforts, and effectively engage the community. This item will be further developed and refined to ensure it meets the County's communication goals and fosters a more connected and informed community.

#### Administrator Report:

Andy Parks announced that the Chief Information Officer candidate has withdrawn from the process. Consequently, the position was offered to the second candidate, who has accepted the offer. This item will be on the agenda for November 1st. Additionally, there is a new operator position being added at the Road Department. Airport Manager Kelly Coffelt has received communications regarding state grants, which are currently in the application phase.

#### Court Member Updates:

Judge Crawford is actively working with the residents of Paulina to address recent communication challenges. The phone lines in the area near the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) territory have been cut, causing significant disruptions. In response, Judge Crawford is coordinating efforts to establish a reliable alternative communication system by setting up satellite phones.

At 10:01 a.m. the Court read into Executive Session under the following statute(s): ORS 192.660(2)(h) Consulting with Counsel concerning the legal rights and duties of a public body with regard to current litigation or litigation likely to be filed.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At the conclusion of the Executive Session, the County Court convened back into Open Session, inviting members of the public into the meeting room.

**MOTION** for staff to correspond with counter parties as discussed in the Executive Session. Motion seconded. No discussion. Motion carried 2-0.

There being no further business before the Court, the meeting was **adjourned at 10:36 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

**Sarah Puerner**