

**CROOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MINUTES  
OF SEPTEMBER 4, 2024, REGULAR MEETING  
Open Portion**

**Be It Remembered** that the Crook County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on September 4, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in the County meeting room located at 320 NE Court Street, Prineville, Oregon 97754.

Board Members Present: Commissioner Seth Crawford, Commissioner Brian Barney, and Commissioner Susan Hermreck

Absentees: None

Others Present in Person or Via Zoom: Legal Counsels Eric Blaine and John Eisler; Executive Administrative Assistant Sarah Puerner; Administrative Assistant Breyanna Cupp; Payroll/Benefits Administrator Kathy Puckett; Accounts Payable Accountant Laura Fladung; Undersheriff Bill Elliott; Library Director Sarah Beeler; Operations Manager Cindy York; Appraiser Karen Bushnell; Accounting Manager Lisa Neuberger; Appraiser Jason Elliott; Heather Roberts; Budget Analyst Jamie Berger; Clerk Cheryl Seely; Airport Manager Kelly Coffelt; Courtney Voss; Business Analyst Micheala Edwards; Appraiser Stephanie West; Finance Director Christina Haron; Natural Resources Manager Tim Deboodt; Legal Assistant Alex Solterbeck; District Attorney Kari Hathorn; Assistant Building Official Terry Weitman; Mia Acevedo; Angelica Lavin Garica; Sheriff Gautney; Building Official Randy Davis; Onsite Coordinator Julie Lancaster; Chief Deputy Appraiser Shaun Christofferson; Assessor Jon Soliz; Rich Evans; Tech Deputy Tish Plasterer; Parole/Probation Deputy Chris Estes; and members of the public.

**REGULAR SESSION**

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

**Public Comment:** None

**Consent Agenda:**

1. 2024 School Based Health Center Agreement with BestCare
2. 2024 Community Mental Health Provider Agreement with BestCare
3. OHA Amended & Restated 2023-2025 Intergovernmental Agreement

**MOTION** to accept the consent agenda as presented. Motion seconded. No discussion. Motion carried 3-0.

**Discussion item #4: Swearing in of Corrections Deputy:**

**Requester:** Stephanie Wilson

**Details:** Sheriff John Gautney attended the Regular Session to formally administer the oath to Corrections Deputy Alexander Acevedo. During the ceremony, Deputy Acevedo introduced his family, including his mother and sister, who participated in a pinning ceremony to mark the occasion.

**Discussion item #5: Recognize employees with 20+ years of service and two employees retiring:**

**Requester:** Breyanna Cupp

**Details:** Executive Assistant Breyanna Cupp attended the Regular Session to formally recognize employees for their years of service, including honoring two retiring employees. Staff reaching milestone anniversaries of 20 years or more received a commemorative pin and certificate in recognition of their dedication and accomplishments. This event is part of a series of planned ceremonies aimed at ensuring proper acknowledgment of such milestones, celebrated during the regular Board of Commissioners Meeting.

**Discussion item #6: Employee Promotion:**

**Requester:** Christina Haron

**Details:** Finance Director Christina Haron attended the Regular Session to propose an employee promotion within the Finance Department, prompted by recent organizational changes. Since June 1st, Jamie Berger, currently serving as Budget Analyst, has taken on additional responsibilities, including budget preparation, long-range forecasting, and collaborating with departments to develop key performance indicators. She has also assumed further duties related to grant reporting across various departments. Given Jamie's exemplary performance, Christina recommends promoting her to Budget Manager, effective June 1st. This promotion aligns with the existing Finance Department budget approved for FY25 and will replace the Budget Analyst position.

**MOTION** to grant authority to Will Van Vactor to sign the PA form for Jamie Berger. Motion seconded. During Discussion, Commissioner Hermreck extended her congratulations to Jamie for stepping up and doing an outstanding job, and she also commended the entire Finance team for their hard work and dedication. No further discussion. Motion carried 3-0.

**Discussion item #7: Final Letter - Wildfire Hazard Map:**

**Requester:** Will Van Vactor

**Details:** Community Development Director Will Van Vactor attended the Regular Session to present the finalized letter to Andy McEvoy and Branden Pursinger, outlining Crook County's concerns and issues with the Wildfire Risk Map. The letter highlights specific inconsistencies, such as classification differences for lots in Brasada Ranch and Juniper Canyon. It notes that property owners will not be notified until the map is finalized, at which point they will have 60 days to appeal, a process that requires appearing before an administrative law judge. Once the letter is sent to Andy and Branden, a request will be made for the sit-down meeting promised to Commissioner Crawford. The governor, representatives, and senators are copied on the letter to ensure they receive the information as well.

**MOTION** to approve the final letter that has been drafted by Will Van Vactor to be sent out to the parties concerning the Wildfire Hazard Map. Motion seconded. During Discussion, Commissioner Hermreck questioned sending the letter to Oregon Senators as well to cover consideration of State and Federal land. Will Van Vactor mentioned a

copy of the letter can be sent to them in an email. No further discussion. Motion carried 3-0.

**Discussion item #8: Amendment to County's participation resolution in PERS system, to add Deputy District:**

**Requester:** Eric Blaine

**Details:** County Counsel Eric Blaine attended the Regular Session to present an amendment to the County's participation resolution with PERS. Earlier this year, the County voted to include Deputy District Attorneys (DDAs) in PERS. Following this decision, the PERS board required a formal resolution to officially add the DDAs, which was approved as Order and Resolution 2024-36. Upon receiving the signed resolution, PERS requested an additional amendment to the County's original 1973 resolution, which established Crook County's participation in PERS. This original resolution, effective July 1, 1974, stated that Law Enforcement Personnel would be enrolled in PERS without prior service credit. PERS accepted this initial resolution as a contract, assigning the County employer number 2044 and treating the resolution as the governing document. The current amendment will add specific recitals to this contract, per PERS requirements.

**MOTION** to approve the amendment to the County's participation resolution in PERS system to add Deputy District Attorneys to PERS. Motion seconded. No discussion. Motion carried 2-1. Commissioner Barney voted in opposition.

**Interim Manager Report:**

Will Van Vactor announced an upcoming ice cream social for all County employees on September 12th. This event offers a relaxed opportunity for staff from different departments to connect outside of their usual work environment. Employees are encouraged to join at Pioneer Park, if schedules permit, to enjoy some ice cream and a break in the fresh air.

**Commissioner Updates:**

Commissioner Hermreck shared that she received multiple calls from the Paulina area last night regarding the Pal Mountain Fire, which has a seven-mile front stretching from Humphrey—formerly known as the Ray Sessler Ranch, now the Michael Stafford Ranch. Federal resources have now arrived, and Commissioner Hermreck dispatched their cat truck to assist in fighting the fire. She encourages everyone to keep the landowners and firefighters in their thoughts, noting the importance of improved forest management to help prevent fires of this magnitude.

Commissioner Crawford has recently been in discussions with the Forest Service and conservation groups regarding the potential purchase of a large private ranch. He said that it's essential for the County to formally oppose any further federal land acquisitions within Crook County. Commissioner Crawford emphasized the importance of reaching out to congressional representatives to explore ways to prevent the expansion of federal lands in the area.

Commissioner Hermreck highlighted that Crook County has 26,000 citizens and expressed a desire to see increased public engagement. She emphasized the importance

of actively moving in a direction that recognizes taxpayers as the foundation of local government and the true employers of public officials.

Commissioner Barney echoed Commissioner Hermreck's sentiments, emphasizing that property owners have the right to sell their land as anyone else does. He noted that it's not his role to dictate a property owner's decisions. Commissioner Barney shared that he spent time discussing the matter with Kevin and Chris and respects their enthusiasm for wanting to purchase the property. However, he believes the process is premature and that the public should have the opportunity to provide input before any sale moves forward.

**Public Comment:** None

At 9:50 a.m. the Board of Commissioners convened 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 Board of Commissioners convened back into Open Session, inviting members of the public into the meeting room.

**MOTION** to direct staff to prepare the letter to the counter party and to authorize the Board of Commissioners to sign outside of the meeting. Motion seconded. No discussion. Motion carried 3-0.

There being no further business before the Board of Commissioners, the meeting was **adjourned at 10:42 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

**Sarah Puerner / Breyanna Cupp**