

**CROOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MINUTES
OF FEBRUARY 5, 2025, REGULAR SESSION
Open Portion**

Be It Remembered that the Crook County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on February 5, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in the County Meeting Room located at 320 NE Court Street, Prineville, Oregon 97754.

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

Absentees: None

Others Present in Person or Via Zoom: Legal Counsels Eric Blaine and John Eisler; Executive Administrative Assistant Sarah Puerner; Executive Assistant Breyanna Cupp; Legal Assistant Alex Solterbeck; Airport Manager Kelly Coffelt; County Manager Will Van Vactor; Road Superintendent Brad Haynes; Assessor Jon Soliz; Natural Resources Manager Tim Deboodt; Administrative Assistant Mona Glade; Assessment Technician Elsie Ray; Health and Human Services Director Katie Plumb; Library Director Sarah Beeler; Modernization Manager Stephanie O’Neal; Budget Manager Jamie Berger; James Staniford; Administrative Assistant Haley Crow; Carol Benkosky; Chanda Wallace; Sommers Taylor; Russ Deboodt; Bill Kuyper; Mike Ervin; Adam Mikulski; Karen Mikulski; Tawndy Byrd; Heather Ford; and members of the public.

REGULAR SESSION

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

Public Comment:

Adam Mikulski inquired about how citizens can determine if Knife River is violating their Conditional Use Permit (CUP), noting that the Ochoco Irrigation District (OID) does not disclose this information. He questioned whether there is an established process for citizens to follow, as obtaining the necessary information to report violations has been challenging. Adam emphasized the need for a clear procedure and better communication from the county regarding their actions in these situations. He also raised concerns about whether the county expects citizens to independently report such violations. Specific issues mentioned include the requirement to inspect vehicles before mining, concerns about mining in water, and issues with vehicles dripping oil, as well as obtaining permission from OID to use water. Adam reported that despite efforts, they still lack information on several matters. He asked if the county has initiated the process discussed several months ago.

Community Development Director John Eisler responded by clarifying that the approach depends on the specific topic(s) in question. He mentioned that either he or Louis Seals will contact Adam to discuss the concerns further. Mr. Eisler also noted that he has a scheduled meeting with Louis this week to address current complaints. Additionally, he confirmed that there is an established process for handling reports and information related to Conditional Use Permits (CUPs).

Commissioner Crawford mentioned that he met with Greg from DEQ and asked that he put together a list of what is and isn't a state violation so that people know what to look for.

Adam Mikulski expressed additional concerns about how the county handles violations related to Conditional Use Permits (CUPs), questioning the effectiveness of follow-ups on these issues. He pointed out that neighbors are tired of shouldering the burden of reporting if the county permits such activities, specifically referencing ongoing issues with the Woodward site and potential future issues with Vanier.

Karen Mikulski raised a specific issue regarding a dust mitigant plan required in the 2015 CUP for Woodward, questioning whether a copy was provided to the county as mandated. She also mentioned difficulties in communicating with DOGAMI to confirm the existence of such a plan, suggesting it might constitute a violation.

John Eisler, who was not present in 2015, acknowledged the need to investigate whether the dust mitigant plan was submitted. He also mentioned an upcoming meeting with Louis Seals to address new complaints and follow up on Adam's questions.

Commissioner Hermreck recalled a checklist process that should have ensured the inclusion of necessary documents in the file before proceeding. Will Van Vactor noted that the availability of such documents depends on how the conditions were drafted or prepared. Commissioner Hermreck encouraged the Mikulski's to continue bringing these issues to the county's attention, emphasizing that their concerns are taken seriously.

Consent Agenda:

1. Signature on Amendment to Crook County Drug Court Grant
2. OHA 2023-2025 Intergovernmental Agreement Amendment 16

MOTION to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Crawford. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

Discussion item #3: Acknowledgement of Road Department Heroes:

Requester: Commissioner Barney

Details: Commissioner Barney recognized three Road Department employees, James Staniford, Erick Kufeldt, and Roger Chapman, for their quick thinking and exceptional service that resulted in saving a Crook County resident's life. During the public acknowledgement, Commissioner Barney commended the employees for their bravery and read from a staff release that praised their life-saving actions.

Discussion item #4: Request for Continued Support of Bi-Annual Ochoco Creek Clean-Up: Funding for Landfill Tipping Fees:

Requester: Carol Benkosky

Details: Carol Benkosky, a member of the Rotary Club, attended the Regular Session to seek continued support for the Ochoco Creek Clean-Up project. The Rotary Club of Crook County is requesting the County Commissioners cover the landfill "tipping" fees for the bi-annual clean-up events. Republic Services has committed to providing a dumpster and handling the transportation of the trash collected to the landfill. This initiative, now in its seventh year, involves cleaning the creek from Willowdale to Gardner Street twice annually, removing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 pounds of trash and 2 to 6 tires each session. Last year, the effort expanded to include cleaning the hill area up to the lookout. The cost to the County would be under \$200 per year. Carol is asking for the Commissioners' approval to fund the tipping fees to help sustain this vital environmental effort.

MOTION to approve the support of the bi-annual Ochoco Creek Clean-up for the Rotary Club and the Landfill tipping fees. Motion seconded by Commissioner Crawford. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

Discussion item #5: Request for Donation of Carey Foster Hall Rental Costs for Humane Society Casino Night:

Requester: Chandra Wallace

Details: Chandra Wallace, the Executive Director, attended the Regular Session to request support for the upcoming Humane Society Casino Night. The Humane Society is seeking a donation of the rental fee for Carey Foster Hall, where the event has been held for the past six years. Currently, all funds of the Humane Society are being directed towards the construction of a new building, with an emphasis on conserving resources. The organization is in the first phase of the new facility, which will provide additional space for community dogs and is expected to be completed in the coming months. The Casino Night, scheduled for March 29th, is a critical fundraising event. Haley Crow from the fairgrounds indicated that the facility fee would be approximately \$588. The Humane Society is requesting that this fee be waived to aid their fundraising efforts.

MOTION to approve the fees for the Humane Society Casino Night. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hermreck. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

Discussion item #6: CWPP Presentation for Final Adoption:

Requester: Sommers Taylor

Details: Program Coordinator Sommers Taylor presented at the Regular Session to discuss the final adoption of the 2024 Crook County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). This plan represents a comprehensive county-wide strategic assessment that identifies risks, hazards, and opportunities for mitigation and prevention of wildfires within Crook County communities. It updates the previous 2014 CWPP document. Fire Marshal Russ Deboodt clarified that the CWPP is distinct from the wildfire risk map, highlighting the differences between the two. He emphasized that the CWPP is not an enforcement tool or regulatory document, but rather a coordinated effort documented in a plan for enhancing collaboration among the 16 agencies

involved. Russ praised Sommers and her team for their robust planning efforts. During the discussion, Commissioner Susan inquired about the term "flame length" used in the plan. Russ explained that flame length literally refers to the measure of a flame, which directly correlates with the type of vegetation on fire, including its height and density. This measurement is crucial for predicting and identifying areas where more intense fire might occur. The request at the session was for the approval of the CWPP, aiming for its full adoption as the county's wildfire protection strategy.

MOTION to approve the 2024 Crook County Community Wildfire Protection Plan as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Crawford. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

Discussion item #7: Request for Replacement of 1999 140H Motor Grader:

Requester: Brad Haynes

Details: Road Superintendent Brad Haynes presented at the Regular Session to propose the replacement of the 1999 140H Road Grader. He provided details about the Relife program available through the Caterpillar dealership, which involves refurbishing the grader by removing and replacing worn parts that are out of tolerance. This refurbishment includes updates to the transmission, engine, rear ends, carburetor controls, and circle gears. The decision to rebuild rather than purchase a new grader result in a cost saving of over \$200,000. After evaluating the costs and benefits, the decision was made to opt for the rebuild, which has been budgeted for. Brad Haynes requested the Commissioners' signatures to proceed with the project, referencing the Sourcewell contract and the circle addendum included in the packet. He noted that some parts required replacement as part of the refurbishment process.

MOTION to approve invoice for \$223,223.84 for Ochoco Manufacturing Inc. for the water tank and truck. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hermreck. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

MOTION to approve the invoice for the circle reblade build in the amount of \$16,793.24. Motion seconded by Commissioner Crawford. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

MOTION to approve the invoice for the rebuild of the blade for the back in the amount of \$206,430.60. Motion seconded by Commissioner Crawford. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

MOTION to approve the solicitation number RFP #011723 contract with Sourcewell. Motion seconded by Commissioner Crawford. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

Discussion item #8: Signing Lease Agreement with DSL on Hilltop Mining Site:

Requester: Brad Haynes

Details: Road Superintendent Brad Haynes attended the Regular Session to request approval for signing a lease agreement with the Department of State Lands (DSL). This lease, previously held by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), has been transferred to DSL and is now due for renewal. The Hilltop Mine, serviced under this lease, provides crucial materials for road repairs in Juniper Canyon and surrounding areas. The lease terms include an annual payment of \$500 and a charge of \$1.33 per cubic yard of material extracted from the designated area. Over the 15-year term of the lease, the total payments will amount to \$7,500 with options for two additional five-year extensions. Brad Haynes emphasized the need for the Commissioners' signatures to finalize the new lease agreement with DSL for the mining site.

MOTION to approve the State of Oregon Department of State Lands Lease Agreement 41864-UQ. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hermreck. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

Discussion item #9: Transportation Systems Plan Amendment 2:

Requester: John Eisler

Details: Community Development Director John Eisler attended the Regular Session to provide an update on the Transportation Systems Plan (TSP). The County, in collaboration with Parametrix since August 2023, is advancing the TSP. Amendment 2 to the project outlines the inclusion of two additional open houses—one at Powell Butte Community Center and another in Juniper Canyon—to present alternative options and facilitate a question-and-answer session. The projected cost for these additions to the TSP is \$16,923.00. Commissioner Crawford suggested further considerations for the locations of these Q&A sessions. The extension signed with Parametrix introduces an expanded scope that includes these open house sessions, aimed at wrapping up the TSP development. Seth emphasized the need for more interaction and possibly additional open houses due to varying community needs and interests. John noted that the contract amendment, included in the meeting packet, stipulates that the open house locations will be selected by the county, marking a change from the previous agreement. Commissioner Susan concurred with Seth's suggestion, advocating for more than one presentation to effectively disseminate the information to the public in an organized manner, reflecting the diverse needs and desires of the community.

MOTION to do the meetings for the Transportation System Plan Amendment 2, to schedule meetings to be announced at a different location and to sign the agreement out of court. Motion seconded by Commissioner Crawford. Amendment made to determine place of the meetings to be announced. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

Manager Report:

Will Van Vactor addressed the commissioners about the challenges of winter weather and emergency closures. He proposed creating a plan to update the employee handbook

with detailed weather procedures and suggested that he be designated to manage such situations as they arise. Furthermore, Will intends to develop a policy for department heads concerning necessary emergency closures. Commissioner Crawford highlighted the need for an effective phone messaging system to communicate with employees during such events. Additionally, Commissioner Hermreck expressed her desire to reactivate the previously used Facebook page to disseminate information regarding emergency closures.

MOTION to designate the County Manager to make decisions whether to and to what extent the county will close. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hermreck. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

Commissioner Updates:

Commissioner Crawford discussed having multiple conversations yesterday regarding fair funding, during which he had the opportunity to testify. Mike McLane was also on the committee. They explored the availability of approximately \$20 million in emergency funding and discussed potential options for the county. Commissioner Crawford noted that he and John Eisler are working on a letter that will be shared with the Association of Oregon Counties and hopefully shared with the Association of Eastern Oregon Counties.

MOTION to delegate authority to Commissioner Crawford and John Eisler to prepare and sign on behalf of the county a letter regarding statewide wildfire mapping which would be distributed to AOC and EOCA and sign out of court. Motion seconded by Commissioner Crawford. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

MOTION to have Commissioner Crawford and John Eisler craft a personalized letter in our opposition to this from just Crook County and sign out of court. Motion seconded by Commissioner Crawford. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

Commissioner Barney expressed gratitude towards Commissioner Crawford for dedicating a few days in Salem during Oregon Fair Day to assist with securing funding for the fair.

Commissioner Hermreck also thanked Commissioner Crawford for discussing the water issue with the governor and for his efforts in advocating for fair funding.

Public Comment: None

At 9:53 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 for staff to proceed as directed in the Executive Session. Motion seconded by Commissioner Crawford. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was **adjourned at 10:20 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Puerner / Breyanna Cupp