

**CROOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MINUTES
OF OCTOBER 15, 2025, REGULAR MEETING
Open Portion**

Be It Remembered that the Crook County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular meeting on October 15, 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:

Others Present in Person or Via Zoom: County Counsel Eric Blaine; Assistant County Counsel Bryan Libel; County Manager Will Van Vactor; Executive Assistant Breyanna Cupp; HR Director Meghan McKee; Legal Assistant Alex Solterbeck; Natural Resources Manager Tim Deboodt; Triangle; Health and Human Services Director Katie Plumb; Katie Slattery; Assessment Technician Elise Ray; County Clerk Cheryl Seely; Crook County Community Development; Finance Director Christina Haron; Community Development Director John Eisler; Senior Planner Katie McDonald; Road Superintendent Brad Haynes; Saving Grace Regional Services Manager Joanna Gardner; Community Corrections Lieutenant Aaron Boyce; Undersheriff Bill Elliott; Administrative Division Manager Stephanie Wilson; Health and Human Services Deputy Director Camille Day; District Attorney Kari Hathorn; Landfill Director Jacquie Davis; Facilities Director James Preuss; Public Health Modernization Manager Stephanie O'Neal; Craig Kilpatrick; Tory; Ashley McCormick; Dick Zimmerlee; JC; Prineville Review; Ryan Farncomb; Terry Dugan; Melissa Pearson; Garry Likens; Brian Carmack; Tawndy Byrd; and members of the public.

REGULAR SESSION

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

Public Comment: None

Additions/Removals: None

Consent Agenda:

1. Approval of Amendment 1 for MAT in the Crook County Jail
2. Approval of Appointments to Property Value Appeals Board (PVAB)

MOTION to approve the consent agenda as written. 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 #3: Proclamation stating that October is recognized as Domestic Violence Awareness Month:

Requester: Joanna Gardner

Details: Saving Grace Regional Services Manager Joanna Gardner attended the Regular Session to request that the Board of Commissioners declare October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Crook County. The purpose of the declaration is to raise community awareness and support efforts to prevent domestic violence. Commissioner Brian Barney read the official proclamation, formally recognizing October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Crook County.

MOTION to accept the proclamation of domestic violence awareness month. 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 #4: Funding 2025 Puckett Road Overlay:

Requester: Brad Haynes

Details: Road Superintendent Brad Haynes attended the Regular Session to update the Board on the funding and progress of the Puckett Road overlay project. The project includes a 3" cold plane removal and 3" overlay, as well as intersection improvements and repairs to the impact panels on the Lone Pine Crooked River Bridge. The project, budgeted under the 2025 Puckett Road Overlay (1TB), received four bids, with the lowest bid of \$473,625.00 submitted by Tri County Paving LLC. The project has been fully budgeted and will not require a budget adjustment.

County Counsel Eric Blaine noted that while the lowest bidder did not use the bond form included in the packet, they did submit a valid bond form. He confirmed that there were no material differences between the forms. Based on this, Eric recommended moving forward with a motion to award the contract to the lowest bidder, with the legal department to follow up by issuing a notice of intent to award.

MOTION for the boards of commissioners to find that Tri-County bid form is a minor formality and deem that it is acceptable in response to the county's and request for proposals. 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 award the contract for the Puckett Road Overlay Project to Tri-County Paving as the low bidder. 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: Signature for CJC grant for Deflection program for 25-27 budget year:

Requester: Aaron Boyce

Details: Community Corrections Lieutenant Aaron Boyce attended the Regular Session to request a signature on the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) grant for the Deflection Program for the 2025–2027 budget cycle. The Crook County Community Corrections Office is managing the grant for the Crook County Deflection Program, which has been awarded funding by the CJC. The grant will provide continued financial support for the program’s operations. Commissioner Crawford asked if there had been a funding cut, and Aaron clarified that the grant amount remained the same as last time, with no reduction. He explained that this is only the first part of the process, and a second phase of the grant award is still underway and expected to be completed in the coming months.

MOTION to approve BHD-27-05 grant agreement with the Criminal Justice Commission for Behavioral Health Deflection Program. 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 #6: Treasurer’s Report for September 2025:

Requester: Christina Haron

Details: Finance Director Christina Haron attended the Regular Session to present the Treasurer’s Report for September 2025, which covers financial data from August 2025. The report included information on total cash on hand held by the County Treasurer, the banks where county funds are deposited and the amounts in each, the security provided by each bank for those deposits, interest rates earned, and a summary of the County’s outstanding warrant indebtedness, including the date through which warrants have been redeemed. This was a no-action item, intended to keep the board and the public informed about the County’s financial standing.

Discussion item #7: OHP Assistance & Navigation Grant:

Requester: Katie Plumb

Details: Health and Human Services Director Katie Plumb and Deputy Director Camille Day attended the Regular Session to provide an update on a new grant award for the Crook County Health Department. Historically, the department stepped back from offering Oregon Health Plan (OHP) outreach and enrollment services due to insufficient grant funding and the availability of similar services in the community. However, with anticipated federal cuts to Medicare/Medicaid and increased requirements for maintaining coverage, the department applied for renewed funding and has been awarded a \$100,000 grant for the period of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2027. This grant will support community-based outreach to individuals and families eligible for health coverage through OHP, offering direct enrollment assistance and system navigation, regardless of eligibility status. Unlike previous funding, this grant provides more adequate support, and the implementation strategy has been revised. Multiple staff members will be cross trained in OHP assistance, reducing program costs and improving long-term sustainability.

MOTION to approve the Oregon Health Authority grant agreement number PO-44300-00049319. 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: First Hearing of Ordinance 355; a zone map amendment:

Requester: John Eisler

Details: Community Development Director John Eisler and Senior Planner Katie McDonald attended the Regular Session to present a zone map amendment in the Powell Butte area, which had already been approved by the Planning Commission. They noted that there had been no public comments, letters, or testimony regarding the amendment. The ordinance will implement the approved zone map change, and the county zoning map will be updated following the ordinance's recordation.

Commissioner Barney opened the public hearing at 9:20 a.m. and read Ordinance 355 regarding Zone Map Amendment 1 into the record.

MOTION to read by title only. 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 read the full script for Ordinance 355, a zone map amendment. He then asked the board if any members had conflicts of interest related to the matter and invited members of the public to voice any challenges to the board's participation.

Public Comment:

Craig Kilpatrick explained that the matter at hand is a zone map request, originating from work done in 1999 to propose properties for a zone map amendment. He noted that this is a procedural step to establish specific areas under new zoning designations. Katie McDonald confirmed that no additional public comments were received regarding this ordinance.

Discussion item #9: Second Hearing of Ordinance 354: 2025 Transportation System Plan:

Requester: John Eisler

Details: Community Development Director John Eisler attended the Regular Session to provide an update on the County's ongoing work to revise its Transportation System Plan (TSP), a 20-year planning document intended to guide transportation priorities and funding strategies. The County began the update process in early 2024. Eisler presented Ordinance 354, which includes the updated draft TSP as Attachment A. Since the first reading, the TSP has been revised to include the Juniper Canyon Road widening project (JC-3), incorporate language addressing the accommodation of agricultural vehicles, and respond to comments provided by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT).

At 9:34 a.m., Commissioner Barney read the script to begin the second public hearing regarding the update to the Transportation System Plan (TSP) and the declaration of an emergency related to its adoption.

MOTION to read by title only. 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 read the full script for Ordinance 354. He then asked the board if any members had conflicts of interest related to the matter and invited members of the public to voice any challenges to the board's participation.

John Eisler presented to the board during the second public hearing on the Transportation System Plan (TSP), noting that this could serve as the final hearing if the board chooses to proceed. He confirmed that all changes requested by the board during the first hearing had been incorporated into the updated TSP. Ryan from Parametrix reviewed the specific updates made, and it was noted that ODOT had also submitted comments, including an increased cost estimate for the Powell Butte roundabout project. John emphasized that adopting the TSP would open the door for grant opportunities and additional funding. Commissioner Seth thanked the TSP team for including agricultural language in the final version of the plan.

Public Comment:

Melissa Pearson spoke in support of the Transportation System Plan (TSP), emphasizing the concerns shared by a large group of residents regarding the intersection at Powell Butte and the Post Office. She highlighted the importance of approving the plan and expressed gratitude to the board, staff, and consultants for their work. Melissa, along with many of her neighbors, supports the TSP and is looking forward to exploring additional funding sources to address local transportation needs.

Garry Likens spoke about the daily traffic challenges on Highway 126, often experiencing delays of 2–10 minutes, especially when turning left toward Redmond. He noted that increased traffic has led many locals to use backroads, like Reif Road, to save time, resulting in higher speeds and congestion on roads not designed for such volume. He mentioned that even the local mail carrier had to change her entire route due to the increased traffic caused by growth in the area. He emphasized the need for action, stating, “the sooner, the better.”

Craig Kilpatrick praised the staff for their hard work on the Transportation System Plan (TSP), expressing support for the plan and stating that everyone should be pleased with the progress. He suggested adding agricultural language to the TSP. He also raised a question about the Juniper Canyon area, asking whether any specific routes had been resolved or if they remained in flux. John Eisler responded that there isn't a single resolution to address all the challenges in that area. He explained that the most sensible approach would involve a comprehensive fire evacuation plan. According to a recent survey, the top public request was to widen Juniper Canyon Road. Eisler noted that all three proposed routes are viable, with funding being the next critical step.

Terry Dugan expressed concerns about increasing traffic in the area and referenced a previous plan to build a store, expressing relief that it did not move forward. When asking the Planning Commission about improvements at Reif Road and Highway 126, Terry was told there was no interest. Terry is particularly worried about a proposed daycare, which could add up to 100 extra cars during peak morning and evening hours. He emphasized that any traffic study should reflect current real-world conditions rather than theoretical projections. Terry urged the commissioners to consider the safety of the community, stating that many residents currently feel unsafe. He also encouraged careful consideration of the daycare and community center projects. John Eisler noted that a conditional use permit for the daycare was approved on October 8, and the appeal period is still open, meaning the issue could come before the commissioners. Commissioners Barney and Crawford explained that in order to secure funding, these types of concerns must be identified as priorities and included in an approved plan.

The public hearing was closed at 10:04 a.m., and the Board of Commissioners began deliberations on the Transportation System Plan (TSP). They emphasized to the public that approving the plan is a critical first step toward securing future funding. Commissioner Hermreck made the motion to approve Ordinance 354. Commissioner Crawford expressed appreciation for the process, noting that while it was long and challenging, the necessary changes were made based on public input, and it's now time to move forward. Commissioner Barney also thanked the teams involved and highlighted the importance of the plan for the community's future. John Eisler concluded by thanking Parametrix for their work on the project.

MOTION to accept the Planning Commission's recommendation and approve Ordinance 354 and the 2025 Transportation System Plan as presented, to be signed out of the Board of Commissioner meeting. Motion seconded by Commissioner Crawford. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

Manager Report:

Will VanVactor- Congratulations were extended to Blaine Chaney on his promotion from IT Operations Manager to IT Director. Blaine was recognized for his strong leadership in implementing structural changes within the IT department and for being a valuable contributor across the organization. Additionally, two upcoming meetings were highlighted: a special meeting on Friday to continue discussions with the Sheriff's Office regarding core services and service levels, and a Budget Committee meeting scheduled for Thursday, October 23rd, to discuss the upcoming budget and ongoing funding for the Sheriff's Office.

Commissioner Updates:

Brian Barney- None

Susan Hermreck- None

Seth Crawford- None

Public Comment: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

10. ORS 192.660(2)(e) For the purpose of conducting deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions.
11. ORS 192.660(2)(f) To consider information or records that are exempt by law from public inspection

Commissioner Barney stated Before moving into the executive session, that the executive item is a real estate matter. It was proposed that, if all agree an executive session was unnecessary, they could delegate authority to County Manager Will Van Vactor to handle the negotiations on behalf of the county.

MOTION to delegate authority to the manager Will to negotiate on behalf of the county. Motion seconded by Commissioner Crawford. No discussion. Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye, Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

Will clarified that the authorization allows him to negotiate with the potential buyer and sign necessary documents. Final decisions would still be returned to the board for approval.

There being no further business before the Board of Commissioners, the meeting was **adjourned at 1012AM.**

MOTION to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Commissioner Crawford. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Breyanna Cupp