

**CROOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MINUTES
OF OCTOBER 17, 2025, SPECIAL MEETING
Open Portion**

Be It Remembered that the Crook County Board of Commissioners met in a Special meeting on October 17, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. in the County meeting room located at 320 NE Court Street, Prineville, Oregon 97754.

Court Members Present: Commissioner Brian Barney and Commissioner Seth Crawford
Absentees: Commissioner Susan Hermreck

Others Present in Person or Via Zoom: County Manager Will Van Vactor; Executive Assistant Breyanna Cupp; Sheriff John Gautney; Undersheriff Bill Elliott; Administrative Division Manager Stephanie Wilson; Finance Director Christina Haron; Budget Manager Jamie Berger; Jail Commander Andrew Rasmussen; Community Corrections Lieutenant Aaron Boyce; Kristal Hughes; Patrol Sergeant Javier Sanchez; Emergency Manager AJ Crawford; HR Director Meghan McKee; Human Resources; Cas Schunk; Denny Salisbury; Steve Nagorski; Doug Olson; and members of the public.

SPECIAL SESSION

The meeting was **called to order at 1:00 p.m.**

Discussion item #1: Continue discussion of Sheriff's office core services and level of service options:

Requester: Will Van Vactor

Details: County Manager Will Van Vactor attended the Special Session to present a structured review of the Sheriff's Office service divisions, outlining three levels of service: Ideal, Critical (Middle), and Minimum. Each division includes a table detailing services provided at each level based on current staffing and budget constraints, along with narrative summaries highlighting functions that are not provided or are at risk. This framework is intended to support future budget discussions and help establish clear service expectations. Will also provided a recap of the previous meeting and explained the purpose of the current session and the information he would be sharing with the board.

Bill Elliott and Stephanie Wilson addressed questions from the commissioners that were raised during the prior meeting. From January 1 to October 10, patrol staff responded 685 times to assist the Oregon State Police (OSP), including providing backup and handling calls for service. Of those 685 responses, 53 were related to traffic accidents occurring on state highways. Additionally, patrol staff have been required to provide extra courthouse security 297 times so far this year. This number does not include coverage provided by the Sheriff, Undersheriff, or Lieutenant Rasmussen.

The Community Corrections Lieutenant explained that budget projections are based on estimated supervision numbers over the next two years, making them difficult to predict. The number of individuals under supervision during specific snapshot periods—such as September, October, and November—heavily influences the budget. Recent major impacts on the budget have stemmed from policy changes. For example, the decriminalization of small amounts of drugs significantly reduced the number of people under supervision, while the recent move to recriminalize certain offenses is now causing those numbers to rise again. As a result, the future remains uncertain.

Commissioner Crawford clarified that their primary concern was whether the state might start paying less per person under supervision, potentially diverting funds to another department. They acknowledged that fluctuations in the number of people arrested—and the resulting budget changes—are understandable and largely out of local control. However, their focus was more on intentional funding shifts rather than natural changes in supervision numbers.

Commissioner Barney shared that he had spoken with the Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) and discussed similar challenges being faced by other counties, emphasizing that the issue is not unique to their county. He noted that court security is mandated by statute and that while the state had considered creating a program to address it, the legislature ultimately voted it down, leaving the responsibility with the counties. Commissioner Barney suggested that moving forward, it would be helpful to track statistics—including efforts by the Sheriff and Undersheriff—to demonstrate the support being provided for court security.

Will Van Vactor presented core services tables designed to show a side-by-side comparison of Ideal, Current/Critical, and Minimum service levels for each division, including Patrol, Jail Services, and Parole & Probation, to provide a clear picture of operational capacity. Stephanie Wilson explained the Administrative Services table using the same format, outlining what each level looks like and identifying key needs. Will also noted that an Excel-based tool is available, which allows users to adjust figures and explore different budget and staffing scenarios.

Kristal Hughes guided the commissioners through the tool, explaining how it works and highlighting the differences across each division. She reviewed the current, critical, ideal, and minimum service levels to demonstrate how the tool represents these scenarios, focusing on where the Sheriff's Office currently stands for FY 2026. Commissioners Crawford asked about how hybrid levels might work and if there could be options between the defined levels. Kristal explained that the board's role involves deciding how much funding is allocated. Seth expressed concern that there aren't enough options between levels, suggesting that the current level might be too high and that additional tools are needed to better understand where service levels stand.

Will emphasized that the tool is intended to provide a general idea of the service levels being offered. Commissioner Barney expressed support for the tool, noting that it aligns with how the sheriff manages and allocates resources within the department.

Will asked the board for any additional feedback and mentioned that the full package of core services for all departments would be brought back to the board in early 2026. Bill Elliott responded to Commissioner Barney's concerns about deferred equipment, noting that he and Stephanie have discussed the issue. Bill also highlighted the high cost of vehicles and the ongoing efforts to manage budget dynamics. Sheriff Gautney thanked the commissioners for their attention and emphasized that the information presented is meant to foster understanding of the department's needs. He stressed that even though the incidents occur on state highways, the citizens are local, and it is the Sheriff's duty to respond. Sheriff Gautney outlined the budget requirements and assured that the funds provided would be spent to best serve the community. Commissioner Barney reiterated his support for assisting citizens but noted that tracking statistics would help clarify the state's obligations, especially given ongoing state budget cuts that shift responsibilities to the counties.

Public Comment: None

MOTION to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Commissioner Barney. No discussion. Commissioner Crawford votes Aye and Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 2-0.

There being no further business before the Board of Commissioners, the meeting was **adjourned at 142PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Breyanna Cupp