

**CROOK COUNTY COURT MINUTES
OF SEPTEMBER 27, 2023, WORK SESSION
Open Portion**

Be It Remembered that the Crook County Court met in a regularly scheduled Work Session on September 27, 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, Commissioner Brian Barney, and Commissioner Jerry Brummer

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; Community Development Director Will Van Vactor; Building Official Randy Davis; Finance Director Christina Haron; Fairgrounds Manager Casey Daly; Assessor Jon Soliz; Library Director Sarah Beeler; Ag Extension Manager Kim Herber; Sean Briscoe; Levi Roberts; Natural Resources Policy Coordinator Tim Deboodt; Undersheriff Bill Elliott; Jack Colpitt; Contract County Administrator Andy Parks; Anna Kaminski; Aaron Landau; Shannon Alleman; Karen Bushnell; Julie Grossmeyer; Monty Kurtz; and members of the public.

WORK SESSION

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

Public Comment: None

Additional Items:

Purchase of Hangar – Legal Counsel John Eisler introduced this agenda item, which was added late. The closing date for this purchase has been advanced to this coming Friday. The legal team is requesting that the documents be signed immediately to ensure they are prepared for Friday. The two documents presented include the termination of the Elden Hangar lease and the lease agreement for the new Fixed Base Operator (FBO) to occupy the building starting October 1st.

MOTION to approve the termination of private hangar lease with Prineville Aviation, LLC. Motion seconded. No discussion. Motion carried 3-0.

MOTION to approve amendment to Crook County/Prineville Airport s39 fixed base operator lease agreement and license. Motion seconded. No discussion. Motion carried 3-0.

Discussion Item #1: Grant applications through ODOTs Local Bridge Program:

Requester: Jeff Hurd

Details: Andy Parks presented this item to the Court on behalf of Jeff Hurd. Crook County has the chance to apply for funding through the ODOT Local Bridge Program for the replacement of one or possibly two bridges currently in need on the county road

system. ODOT requires a 10.27% local match, and the application deadline is October 16th. If the Court is open to applying, the full grant applications will be presented for approval on October 4th, to meet the application deadline. The combined project costs for both bridges total \$3,724,836. If awarded, the funds would need to be obligated as early as 2027 and no later than 2030. This item will move to the consent agenda for October 4th.

Discussion Item #2: Community Development Monthly Update:

Requester: Will Van Vactor

Details: Community Development Director Will Van Vactor and Building Official Randy Davis provided the Court with the monthly update for Community Development during the work session. In the Building Department, although there are 70 fewer permits issued this year compared to last, the department is actively managing 277 commercial projects. Notable projects include a new liquor store, ongoing work at the Museum and Justice Center, increased developments at the Old Mill including a new lease and plans for Abby's, developments in apartment complexes, and activity in an industrial park. The Planning Department has seen a slowdown, receiving just 21 applications in August, with overall activity remaining steady but slow. A notable upcoming event is a planning commission hearing for Grand Ridge two, focusing on an agritourism wedding/event space. Meanwhile, Code Compliance has maintained a high number of active cases, having opened and closed one case this month.

Discussion Item #3: Crook County Solid Waste Application for a Disposal Fee Credit:

Requester: Sarah Puerner

Details: Administrative Executive Assistant Sarah Puerner presented an item to the Court regarding a late application for a disposal credit from BestCare. The application was delayed due to a change in BestCare's Operations Manager, resulting in the new manager not receiving the initial notification to apply for the credit. The Crook County Solid Waste Application is designed to assist nonprofit organizations that are dedicated to promoting recycling and reuse of consumer goods. To be eligible, an organization must be a registered nonprofit, have a physical presence in Crook County, and actively promote recycling and reuse initiatives. This application will be included on the consent agenda for final approval on October 4th.

Discussion Item #4: Consider ratification of appointment of Chief Information Officer (CIO):

Requester: Andy Parks

Details: Andy Parks attended the work session to discuss the ratification of the appointment of a Chief Information Officer with the Court. The County initially received applications from four high-quality candidates, with one withdrawing early in the process. The remaining three candidates were interviewed, and the selection was narrowed down to the top two. The leading candidate has been recommended, with their desired starting salary at the upper limit of the salary range. Court members will meet with this candidate next Tuesday with a decision to move forward with final approval on October 4th.

Discussion Item #5: Consider actions to change form of government and positions of Crook County government:

Requester: Andy Parks

Details: Outside Legal Counsel Aaron Landau attended the work session to advise on potential changes to the governance structure of Crook County government. Judge Crawford expressed that he feels the County needs more time to deliberate before making a decision. One proposed approach is to establish a charter committee. This committee would consist of nine members: four appointed by the Court, four by local legislative representatives, and one selected by the other eight members. The committee would be tasked with developing a charter, conducting a public hearing, and ultimately putting the charter to a vote on the ballot. This process is expected to take 1-2 years. Mr. Landau clarified that changing the governance from a County Court to a Board of Commissioners does not necessitate a public vote according to statute; however, the Court may still opt to put this change to a public vote. Should this change occur, the current County Court members would become the County Board of Commissioners, maintaining the same three members. Decisions about changing from full-time to part-time status rest solely with the Court and do not require public voting. Commissioner Barney wants this information ready for the Court's decision by October 4th, advocating for the continuation towards transitioning to a Board of Commissioners. Additionally, there is support for eliminating the Judge title position in favor of hiring a permanent administrator. Commissioner Brummer expressed concerns about effectively educating the community should this matter proceed to a public vote, citing transparency issues and a general lack of knowledge evident from comments at recent public meetings. Notably, many comments questioned the April decision to hire an administrator, highlighting the community's need for clearer communication. Crook County Court members made the decision to table this discussion until a later meeting date.

Administrator Report: None

Court Member Updates: None

At 10:54 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 to direct staff to proceed as directed in the Executive Session. Motion seconded. No discussion. Motion carried 3-0.

MOTION to authorize Judge Crawford to close the documents on behalf of the County for Prineville.... Motion seconded. No discussion. Motion carried 3-0.

There being no further business before the Court, the meeting was **adjourned at 11:07 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Puerner