

**CROOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MINUTES
OF FEBRUARY 26, 2025, WORK SESSION
Open Portion**

Be It Remembered that the Crook County Board of Commissioners met in a regularly scheduled Work Session on February 26, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in the Administration Conference room located at 203 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 Counsel Eric Blaine; Executive Administrative Assistant Sarah Puerner; Community Development Director John Eisler; County Manager Will Van Vactor; Executive Assistant Breyanna Cupp; Administrative Assistant Mona Glade; Road Superintendent Brad Haynes; Airport Manager Kelly Coffelt; Finance Director Christina Haron; Library Director Sarah Beeler; Building Official Randy Davis; Health and Human Services Director Katie Plumb; Natural Resources Manager Tim Deboodt; Extension Manager Rebecca Keegan; Clerk Cheryl Seely; Fairgrounds Manager Casey Daly; Assessor Jon Soliz; Operations Manager Katrina Weitman; Sheriff Gautney; Legal Assistant Alex Solterbeck; Assessment Technician Elsie Ray; Appraiser Stephanie West; Modernization Manager Stephanie O'Neal; Assessment Technician Linda Pepper; Community Health Worker Shelby Fisher; Bruce Scanlon; Mike Ervin; Chris Cheng; Sara Pimentel; Jerimiah Kenfield; Laura York; and members of the public.

WORK SESSION

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

Public Comment: None

Discussion item #1: Western Ridged Mussel ESA Listing Potential Impacts and Engagement:

Requester: Bruce Scanlon

Details: Bruce Scanlon, Manager of the Ochoco Irrigation District, attended the Work Session to brief the Board of Commissioners on the potential ESA listing of the Western Ridged Mussel and its implications for Crook County. Mr. Scanlon requested the Commissioners' approval to participate in a grant-funded study of the mussel, which has been under consideration for endangered status since a 2020 petition, with a US Fish and Wildlife Service review indicating it might be listed as "threatened" or "endangered" by 2025. Found in the Crooked River, the potential listing of this mussel could have substantial impacts on the local community. The study aims to assess these impacts by reviewing existing data and collecting new information. The grant application seeks \$4800 to cover the scope of work needed to complete the study. Discussion covered funding sources, the urgency of the March grant application deadline, potential conflicts of interest, and the need for further details on the grant's requirements and

commitments. It was concluded that while a letter of support was unnecessary, active participation and the allocation of \$4800 were essential to proceed.

MOTION to direct Will Van Vactor to have additional conversations with Bruce to ensure this is consistent with how the Board has used the Community Fund in the past and to make sure we have the funding available and to give Will Van Vactor the discretion to make the decision on whether to spend the funds or not. Motion seconded by Crawford. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

Discussion item #2: Update on NRAC Vacancy Application Process:

Requester: Tim Deboodt

Details: Tim Deboodt, the Natural Resources Manager, attended the Work Session to update the Board of Commissioners about the current vacancy on the Natural Resource Advisory Committee (NRAC) and the status of applications received. There is one open position on the NRAC, with the deadline for applications set for this Friday, February 28th. The NRAC will convene a special Zoom meeting on Monday, March 3rd, to review the applications collectively. Commissioner Hermreck highlighted the committee's heightened importance for Crook County, especially in light of recent federal funding cuts. The NRAC's recommendation for filling the vacancy will be presented to the Board of Commissioners at their meeting on March 5th.

Discussion item #3: Update on Ag Extension Advisory Board Appointments:

Requester: Rebecca Keegan

Details: Ag Extension Manager Rebecca Keegan attended the Work Session to update the Board of Commissioners about the recruitment for the Ag Extension Advisory Board. The County advertised for vacancies and received several applications. The Ag Extension Advisory Board will hold a special zoom meeting on Monday to review the applications received. The Ag Extension Advisory Board's recommendation for filling the vacancies will be presented to the Board of Commissioners at their meeting on March 5th.

Discussion item #4: Crook County Ambulance Service Plan:

Requester: Katie Plumb

Details: Health and Human Services Director Katie Plumb attended the Work Session to present the Crook County Ambulance Service Plan to the Board of Commissioners. Initially developed in 2008, this plan is part of the county's responsibility, as mandated by Oregon state law (ORS 682.062), to ensure the efficient and effective provision of ambulance services. While there are no substantial functional changes to the existing plan, it does reaffirm that partners are actively engaged and that coverage extends into areas like Deschutes County. The discussion also covered the advisory council that oversees the plan, with future plans to formally establish this council. Katie will draft the bylaws for the council, and the Commissioners have requested she return with these bylaw revisions. The plan's adoption is scheduled for final approval on the consent agenda of the March 5th meeting.

Discussion item #5: Grant Acceptance for eBikes Addition to Crook County's Library of Things Collection:

Requester: Sarah Beeler

Details: Library Director Sarah Beeler, James Good from Good Bike, and Chris Cheng from ODOT attended the Work Session to request permission to accept an ODOT grant. This grant would allow the Crook County Library to acquire three eBikes, along with accessories and LINKA locks, to enhance its Library of Things Collection. The library plans to enter a separate agreement for the maintenance of these eBikes, which will be stored in an unused shed at the library. The bikes are equipped with anti-theft tracking devices, enabling the library to monitor and retrieve disabled bikes. Graybeal noted that additional insurance would cost approximately \$1,000/year, which the grant will also cover. Commissioner Hermreck raised concerns about the proposed three-week rental period, suggesting it be shortened to allow more community members access to the bikes. Chris Cheng clarified that while the program aims to gauge user enjoyment, the rental period is flexible and can be adjusted as it is not specified in the grant agreement. The approval to accept the grant and proceed with this initiative will be considered on the consent agenda for the meeting on March 5th.

Discussion item #6: Legislative Bill Tracking:

Requester: Breyanna Cupp

Details: Executive Assistant Breyanna Cupp attended the Work Session to introduce a Legislative Bill Tracking system that would enable the tracking of legislative sessions. The initial cost for Crook County to set up the account is \$125, with additional monthly charges depending on the number of bills being tracked. This system will allow the Commissioners to monitor legislative bills, submit testimony, receive updates on bills they are tracking, and forward relevant information to the affected department heads. The Board of Commissioners has agreed to proceed with implementing this Bill Tracking system.

Discussion item #7: Community Development Monthly Update:

Requester: John Eisler

Details: Community Development Director John Eisler and Building Official Randy Davis attended the Work Session to update the Board of Commissioners on recent community development activities. In January 2025, the building department issued 123 permits, closely aligning with the number issued in January 2024. The department is currently overseeing over 1200 active projects, including inspections and plan reviews. This activity is aligning more closely with the expectations for a community of our size, indicating stability in operations. Despite high activity levels, the building department is operating with fewer staff, down by three inspectors and a plans examiner. Given budget constraints, these positions remain unfilled, with existing staff taking on diversified roles to manage workload effectively. On the planning side, the department received 31 applications last month, marking a 615% increase. This surge in activity has led to a fully booked planning commission calendar through the end of May. The planning department is also involved in several key projects: wrapping up the Transportation System Plan (TSP), advancing the safety action plan, and managing both the Department of Defense (DOD) military grant overlay and changes to the energy code. Significant developments include the construction of the Haus substation near the

BPA substation, the Crooked River Taphouse's application for a location on 2nd Street, and an expansion project at a veterinary clinic also located on 2nd Street.

Manager Report:

Will Van Vactor announced that going forward, he will primarily focus on delivering the manager report during regular board meetings. Commissioner Hermreck and himself recently spent a few days in Salem at the AOC County College, where they explored topics such as assessment, taxation, community development, and risk management. They are scheduled to attend two more County College events in the future.

Commissioner Updates:

Commissioner Hermreck mentioned that she has drafted a letter of opposition concerning House Bill 2640. This bill addresses the issues of aggravated harassment, specifically spitting on law enforcement officers and the potential transmission of communicable diseases. The letter expresses strong opposition from Crook County residents to the bill, which imposes stringent prosecution requirements. Specifically, the state must prove that an individual intentionally spat at a law enforcement officer, complicating the legal process.

MOTION to sign the letter in opposition to HB2640. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hermreck. No discussion. Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye, Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

Commissioner Crawford shared that he had a productive day in Salem, participating in a rally related to the wildfire hazard risk map. He noted that many legislators spoke at the event and expressed optimism about the progress, emphasizing the need to maintain pressure. He is collaborating with John Eisler to devise a strategy for Crook County to challenge the wildfire hazard risk map, aiming to represent not only Crook County properties but also the interests of all residents. Additionally, Commissioner Crawford is preparing to travel to Washington D.C. for the NACo conference, where he has scheduled meetings with staff from the Speaker's office. His agenda includes discussing the Secure Rural Schools program and exploring funding opportunities. He is also working on arranging a meeting with FEMA to discuss issues related to the flood plain.

Commissioner Barney reported that he recently testified in support of CORE3 and has a letter ready for signing as an elected official to further endorse his testimony. Additionally, on the 12th and 13th, Commissioner Barney will travel to Denver, Colorado, with CORE3 to tour two to three different facilities. This trip is aimed at understanding what plans are being considered for implementation in our regional area.

There being no further business before the Board of Commissioners, the meeting was **adjourned at 10:34 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Puerner / Breyanna Cupp