Crook County Board of County Commissioners Minutes
of April 15, 2026, Regular Session

Be It Remembered that the Crook County Board of County Commissioners met in a Regular Session on April 15, 2026, at 9:00 AM in the Crook County Annex Meeting Room, located at 320 NE Court Street, Prineville, OR 97754.

Regular Session Agenda

Board Members Present: Seth Crawford, Susan Hermreck, Brian Barney
Board Members Absent:
Others Present in Person or Via Zoom: County Manager Will Van Vactor; Executive Assistant Breyanna Cupp; County Counsel Eric Blaine; Legal Assistant Alex Solterbeck; Finance Director Christina Haron; Landfill Director Jacquie Davis; Road Superintendent Brad Haynes; Assessor Jon Soliz; Fairgrounds Manager Casey Daly; HR Director Meghan McKee; Library Manager Kim Bales; County Clerk Cheryl Seely; Public Health Modernization Manager Stephanie O'Neal; Natural Resources Coordinator Tim Deboodt; Administrative Division Manager Stephanie Wilson; Administrative Assistant Mona Glade; Facilities Director James Preuss; Erica Haitsma; Dan Strandy; John Heylin; Kelsey Haskett; Jon Stark; Julie Thompson; Joel Komarek; Shelby Schuppe; Dick Zimmerlee; Jessica Barnes; Randy Winders; Heather Ford; Brian Carmack; Brenda Comini; Gwen Carr; and members of the public.

The meeting was called to order at 09:00 AM.

Commissioner Crawford noted that the consent agenda included a letter requesting the appointment of Dr. Rebecca Roach as District Medical Examiner. He explained the item was added after the work session and had not previously been discussed by the Board, but stated the appointment was necessary to ensure continuity of service and was not anticipated to be controversial. Commissioner Crawford reminded attendees that consent agenda items are typically reviewed during work sessions to allow for Board and public awareness, and encouraged anyone with questions or concerns regarding consent agenda items to raise them during or prior to the meeting for further discussion.

Public Comment

Randy Winders, Crook County resident and Director/Head Coach of the Prineville Composite Youth Mountain Bike Team, provided public comment thanking the Board and County employees for their service and expressed appreciation for the positive atmosphere of the meetings. He shared information regarding the youth mountain biking program, which participates in the National Interscholastic Cycling Association, and highlighted the program's growth over the past five years from a small group of participants to involvement from numerous families, business sponsors, and trained coaches. Winders stated the program would now include fifth-grade participants and emphasized the importance of providing opportunities for youth involvement in cycling.

He encouraged the community to help spread awareness of the program and noted recruitment efforts were ongoing throughout local schools. Randy also commented on a recent Republic Services rate increase presentation presented to the City Council. He expressed concerns regarding how local governments evaluate and negotiate rate increases for large corporations, questioning whether broader corporate revenues and profits should be considered in addition to local operating costs. He further discussed the cumulative impact of rising costs on community members, including increases in healthcare, utilities, and taxes, and encouraged consideration of the broader economic impacts on residents when evaluating future rate increases.

Consent Agenda

1. Approve Minutes

2. Acceptance of Emergency Management Grant agreement 25-506

3. Approval of Oregon Department of Forestry IGA

4. Approval of Library Meeting Room Policy

5. Amendment 7 to Services Agreement with BestCare

6. Letter Requesting the Appointment of Dr. Rebecca Roach as District Medical Examiner

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to accept the consent agenda as presented. Brian Barney seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

Discussion

7. Republic Services Rate Increase Request
Requester:
Erica Haitsma, General Manager
Presenter(s):

Erica Haitsma, General Manager
Dan Strandy, Finance Manager
John Heylin, Municipal Sales Manager
Details: Erica Haitsma, Dan Strandy, and John Heylin from Republic Services attended the Regular Session and presented an overview of the company's 2025 financial results and 2026 projections related to its franchise agreement with Crook County. Erica Heitsman, General Manager for the Central Oregon Market, explained that Republic Services provides exclusive collection services for trash, recycling, and yard debris within the County. She reviewed the company's 2025 revenues and operating expenses, including disposal fees, labor, equipment operations, truck maintenance, depreciation, call center operations, administrative costs, and franchise fees. Representatives stated that the franchise generated approximately $2.9 million in revenue with operating costs totaling approximately $2.6 million, resulting in a contract operating margin of approximately 10 percent.

Board discussion included questions regarding call center costs, allocation of corporate overhead expenses, equipment purchases, and the relationship between local operations and Republic Services' broader corporate structure. Representatives explained that financial reporting for the Crook County franchise reflects only local operational costs and revenues associated with the Central Oregon market. Discussion also occurred regarding equipment financing, including truck purchases supported by the corporation with depreciation costs allocated locally.

Dan Strandy, Business Finance Manager for the Central Oregon market, reviewed projected 2026 operating costs and assumptions used in developing the requested rate increase. He stated that some projected costs, such as landfill disposal fees, were known increases, while others were estimated conservatively based on long-term inflation trends. Dan Strandy noted that temporary spikes in fuel costs were not fully incorporated into projections and emphasized efforts to minimize impacts to customers.

Commissioners discussed concerns raised by the public regarding affordability and cumulative economic impacts on residents. Additional discussion focused on operational efficiencies, employee retention, route optimization, and other measures Republic Services utilizes to control costs while maintaining service levels. Commissioners requested additional information regarding specific efficiency measures and asked clarifying questions regarding projected contract margins associated with different rate increase scenarios. It was also noted that customer service complaints had decreased and service reliability had improved over the prior year.

8. EDCO Update
Requester:

Kelsey Haskett, Prineville/Crook County Director
Presenter(s):
Kelsey Haskett, Prineville/Crook County Director
Jon Stark, CEO
Details: Kelsey Haskett, Prineville–Crook County Director for EDCO, and John Stark, CEO of Economic Development for Central Oregon attended the Regular Session and provided an update on regional and Crook County economic development activity, performance, and strategic initiatives. Kelsey began with a local update, noting that Crook County currently has 23 pending projects across EDCO's "move," "start," and "grow" categories. These include 10 move projects, 1 start project, and 12 grow projects, with the majority of activity concentrated in advanced manufacturing, building products, aerospace and aviation, renewable energy, agriculture, and food processing. She reported approximately $1.3 billion in anticipated capital investment from move and start projects combined, and an additional $961 million from grow projects, along with an estimated 200 jobs associated with these developments. Since 2023, Crook County has seen over 203,000 square feet of new industrial development, primarily in the Tom McCall area, contributing to a total EDCO-supported investment of more than $11.8 billion and approximately 2,675 jobs created since the program's inception. Major active projects highlighted included Lexington's redevelopment of the former Owens Corning site, CV International's 70,000-square-foot consolidation project, and Oppiden's data center nearing completion, collectively representing significant investment and job growth. Kelsey also emphasized Crook County's strong statewide performance, ranking number one in Oregon for population growth, job growth, and income growth rate, and number two in average wage.

John Stark then provided a broader regional update, explaining EDCO's strategic focus on business growth, innovation and entrepreneurship, and policy advocacy. He noted the organization operates on a $2.2 million budget supported by private sector funding, public contracts, events, and grants, and targets key industries including high-tech, advanced manufacturing, clean tech, lifestyle and outdoor products, bioscience, and corporate operations. John reported that the prior strategic plan resulted in approximately 750 jobs created and $200 million in capital investment, and emphasized that Central Oregon's GDP has grown about 70 percent since 2019, significantly outpacing statewide growth. He also discussed a softening in regional employment trends, describing a more balanced labor market with increasing unemployment and shifting job demand, while noting continued strength in traded sector industries and ongoing construction activity across multiple projects. Additional highlights included EDCO's Bend Venture Conference, which supports early-stage companies, and the launch of a Regional Innovation Hub aimed at strengthening entrepreneurship and supporting rural business development. John concluded by outlining ongoing advocacy efforts related to land use, workforce housing, infrastructure, and business competitiveness, including efforts to improve urban area reserve tools and support utility expansion and workforce development initiatives. Overall, the presentation emphasized continued economic growth, strong investment activity, and collaborative regional efforts to support long-term development across Central Oregon and Crook

County.

9. Fee Waiver Request for Hospice Auction
Requester:
Anna Contreras, St. Charles Foundation Events and Development Officer
Details: Anna Contreras attended the Regular Session to present a request on behalf of the Hospice Auction to waive or reduce the rental fee for use of the fairgrounds arena for the annual Hospice Auction held the first weekend in December. She also requested an additional day of access, proposing use of the arena from Tuesday through Sunday to allow for setup, event operations, and tear down. Following discussion, it was noted that the Foundation has been encouraged to contribute more toward facility use costs. A cost-sharing arrangement was proposed in which the approximately $2,200 total rental fee for the extended timeframe would be split evenly between the Foundation and the County, at approximately $1,100 each, not including the security deposit. The Foundation indicated agreement with this arrangement, and fairgrounds staff confirmed there were no scheduling conflicts with the additional day requested.

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to waive 50% of the fees for hospice. Brian Barney seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

10. Fee Waiver Request for Carey Foster Hall for Casino Night
Requester:
Heather Ford, Operations Manager of Humane Society Thrift Store
Details: Heather Ford, Operations Manager for the Humane Society thrift store, attended the Regular Session and requested a fee waiver for the upcoming "Lucky Dogs Casino Night" event at the fairgrounds. Commissioners expressed support for the organization, acknowledging the valuable service the Humane Society provides to the community, and indicated approval of the fee waiver.

MOTION: Brian Barney moved to waive $588 for the humane society. Susan Hermreck seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

11. Treasurer's Report for March 2026
Requester:
Christina Haron, Finance Director
Details: Finance Director Christina Haron attended the Regular Session and presented the March Treasurer's Report to the Board. Christina reviewed current cash balances, noting they remain steady compared to the previous month, and explained the reconciliation between bank accounts and the general ledger. Christina also outlined how cash is allocated across county funds and provided an overview of current investments, including unrealized gains. She reminded the Board that investments are held to maturity or call to minimize risk. In March, a $1.5 million investment matured and

was reinvested on a shorter-term basis through 2027 to maintain a laddered maturity structure for cash flow purposes. Interest rates remained unchanged from the prior month. No questions were raised by the Board.

12. FY2025 Audit and Financial Statements & Letter from Auditors

Requester:

Christina Haron, Finance Director

Details: Finance Director Christina Haron attended the Regular Session to present the Fiscal Year 2025 final financial statements and audit, reporting that the County received a clean audit opinion. Christina highlighted that there were no significant deficiencies or findings requiring corrective action. She also noted upcoming GASB standards that will be implemented in future reporting periods and mentioned general challenges within the accounting profession. The Board expressed appreciation for the strong audit results and commended staff and IT for maintaining effective controls. No questions were raised.

13. Consider approval of the Annual financial assurance update and recertification for Landfill

Requester:

Christina Haron, CPA, Crook County Finance Director

Details: Finance Director Chrisinta Haron attended the Regular Session to present the annual financial assurance update for landfill recertification. Christina explained that the update demonstrates the County has sufficient funds to meet post-closure obligations for landfill cells and confirmed that all requirements are being met. The report includes supporting information from the County's financial statements, along with required letters from staff and the Board for signature. No concerns or questions were raised, and the Board indicated approval to proceed.

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to approve the annual financial assurance update and recertification for the landfill. Brian Barney seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

14. Wolf Compensation and Financial Assistance 2026 Grant Agreement – Grant #: ODA-4688-GR

Requester:

Christina Haron, Finance Director

Details: Finance Director Christina Haron attended the Regular Session to present a grant agreement for the state Wolf Program, noting Crook County was awarded a total of $52,545.61. Christina explained that $14,803.69 is designated for depredation compensation to producers for livestock losses, with the remaining funds allocated for prevention efforts. She confirmed that no 10% match is required this year, as the County did not request reimbursement for administrative expenses. The grant period spans two fiscal years and ends in January, with the Wolf Committee responsible for determining fund allocation in accordance with grant guidelines. Discussion clarified that a match would only be required in the future if administrative costs are requested. No further questions were raised.

MOTION: Brian Barney moved to approve the 2026 grant agreement Grant # ODA-4688-GR. Susan Hermreck seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

15. Grass Butte Cinder Crush 2026-03

Requester:

Brad Haynes, Road Superintendent

Details: Road Superintendent Brad Haynes attended the Regular Session to present the results of the cinder crushing bid process. He reported that three bids were received out of twelve attendees, with the lowest bid submitted by 4 Our Equipment LLC in the amount of $73,450, which was confirmed as accurate. Brad requested approval to sign the contract out of session following the required seven-day notice of intent to award period. It was noted that the waiting period is required under public contracting law to allow for any potential bid protests.

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to accept Grass Butte Cinder Crush for 2026-03, to be or our equipment, and to be signed out of office. Brian Barney seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

16. Chip Seal 2026

Requester:

Brad Haynes, Road Superintendent

Details: Road Superintendent Brad Haynes attended the Regular Session to present a multifaceted item related to this year’s chip seal program. He reported that one bid was received for the chip seal rock crushing project, with Clint Woodward Construction LLC submitting a bid of $180,901. Brad requested approval to sign the contract out of session following the required seven-day notice of intent to award period. The Board approved the motion unanimously. Brad also outlined plans for procurement of oil materials for the chip seal project, identifying Albina Asphalt as the supplier based on Deschutes County’s bid pricing. The delivered cost is $531 per ton, with approximately 550 tons anticipated for use. Additional costs include a distributor at a rate of $350 per hour for an estimated eight days of work. The project is scheduled to begin June 8th, with work focused on local and city interface roads. Brad requested authorization to proceed with ordering the materials, which the Board supported.

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to accept the Clint Woodard bid for the chip seal and to be signed out of office. Brian Barney seconded. Votes Yes: Seth Crawford, Susan

Hermreck, Brian Barney. Votes No: None. Motion Passed 3-0.

MOTION: Brian Barney moved to approve albino asphalt's motion, proposal for $531 a ton for the chip seal material, freight and distribution. Susan Hermreck seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

17. Review of Draft Public Records Policy
Requester:
Will Van Vactor, County Manager
Details: County Manager Will Van Vactor attended the Regular Session to provide an update on the public records request policy, noting that additional feedback from outside counsel and a member of the local press is still being incorporated. He recommended postponing Board action until the first meeting in May to allow time for further refinement. Will explained that the updated policy is intended to improve transparency, efficiency, and consistency by centralizing the process within the administration department, clarifying timelines, and establishing a more cost-effective approach for both the County and requestors. Updated forms were included in the packet for review, and the Board was invited to provide feedback. The Board agreed with the delay in order to ensure a more complete and effective final policy.

<u>Manager Report</u>

County Manager Will Van Vactor provided a brief report, noting that April includes five Wednesdays and confirming that there will be no Board meeting held on April 29th in accordance with the established schedule. The Manager also shared information regarding a request from AOC and OASIS for counties to support federal legislation known as the BASICS Act (Bridges and Safety Infrastructure for Community Success), House Resolution 7437. The proposed legislation aims to adjust how federal funds are distributed by directing more funding straight to counties rather than through the state, thereby increasing local control and efficiency. Road Superintendent Brad Haynes provided additional context, explaining that the intent is to streamline funding distribution and reduce state-level intermediaries. Will recommended that the Board consider signing a template letter of support, along with Brad Haynes, to express the County’s support for the legislation due to its potential benefits and the time-sensitive nature of the request.

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to approve the sending of this letter with the signatures of the commissioners and the Roadmaster, and it to be signed out of office. Brian Barney seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Barney reported no updates.

Commissioner Hermreck provided an update on recent activities, noting that through COACT, the Highway 126 and Powell Butte Post Office intersection roundabout project was ranked within the top five regional priorities to be submitted to ODOT. While the ranking does not guarantee funding or immediate advancement, she emphasized that the project has now been established as both a county and regional priority, marking an important step forward. She also shared that Emerald Shirley is expected to provide an updated list of project rankings, which has not yet been received. Additionally, Commissioner Hermreck referenced a prior discussion regarding a potential support letter for BestCare following a work session presentation; however, due to recent developments involving the Central Oregon Health Council, she stated that she will hold off on moving forward with the letter until more information is available, and the situation becomes clearer.

Commissioner Crawford reported attending the AFRC conference with Tim DeBoodt, where they received valuable information about a group that has been effective in supporting Secure Rural Schools (SRS) funding. He noted that the group appears to offer potential benefits to the County at a relatively low cost and expressed interest in further evaluating its effectiveness. Commissioner Crawford also shared that there are ongoing federal discussions focused on increasing timber production, forest management, and the use of public lands, which may present future opportunities for the County. He indicated that he is continuing to research these developments to determine how the County might become involved and potentially increase local funding.

Public Comment

None

Executive Session

At 10:51AM the Board of Commissioners convened into Executive Session under the following statute(s): ORS 192.660(2)(h) To consult with counsel concerning the legal rights and duties of a public body with regard to current litigation or litigation likely to be filed

18. ORS 192.660(2)(h) To consult with counsel concerning the legal rights and duties of a public body with regard to current litigation or litigation likely to be filed

MOTION: Brian Barney moved to authorize the County Legal Counsel to correspond with the counterparties as discussed in the executive session. Susan Hermreck seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to Adjourn. Brian Barney seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

There being no further business before the Board of Commissioners, the meeting was **adjourned at 11:28 AM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Breyanna Cupp, Executive Assistant