

Crook County Road Agency Board Minutes of April 21, 2026, Regular Meeting

Be It Remembered that the Crook County Road Agency Board met in a Regular Meeting on April 21, 2026, at 2:30 PM in the Crook County Annex Meeting Room, located at 320 NE Court Street, Prineville, OR 97754.

Regular Meeting Agenda

Board Members Present: Brian Barney, Jerry Brummer, Casey Kaiser, Lori Hooper, Russ Deboodt

Board Members Absent: Steve Forrester

Others Present in Person or Via Zoom: County Manager Will Van Vactor; Executive Assistant Breyanna Cupp; County Counsel Eric Blaine; Road Superintendent Brad Haynes, Crook County Finance Director Christina Haron; and members of the public

The meeting was called to order at 02:30 PM.

Public Comment

None

Consent Agenda

None

Discussion

1. Appointment of Budget Officer for Fiscal Year 2027

Details: Will Van Vactor presented the item regarding the appointment of a Budget Officer for preparation of the fiscal year 2026–2027 Road Agency budget, noting that the appointment is required under Oregon budget law. Will stated that he served in the role during the previous fiscal year and expressed his willingness to continue serving in that capacity. He explained that the Board, rather than the Budget Committee, is responsible for formally appointing the Budget Officer. Members expressed support for the appointment, and the Board approved Will Van Vactor to serve as Budget Officer for the Road Agency budget process.

MOTION: Jerry Brummer moved to appoint Will Van Vactor as the Budget Officer. Brian Barney seconded. Brian Barney votes Aye, Jerry Brummer votes Aye. Motion Passed 2-0.

2. Review of Term Expirations for Board and Budget Committee Members

Details: Will Van Vactor explained that the Road Agency Budget Committee member

terms needed to be clarified and staggered in accordance with Oregon budget law. He noted that when the Road Agency was newly formed under the intergovernmental agreement, the Board appointed three Budget Committee members with three-year terms; however, the terms must be staggered into one-year, two-year, and three-year increments. Will stated that because the committee had limited activity during the prior year, staff recommended a direct reappointment process for the expired position. Following discussion among the committee members, Lori agreed to take the one-year term, Casey agreed to the two-year term, and Russ agreed to the three-year term. Will explained that staff would return with a memo documenting the exact term dates for the record and requested a separate motion to reappoint Lori for Fiscal Year 2027, so the budget process could continue. The Board concurred with the proposed term assignments and reappointment process.

MOTION: Jerry Brummer moved to clarify Lori to serve a one-year term, Casey to serve a two-year term, and Russ to serve a three-year term, and appoint Lori for FY27. Brian Barney seconded. Brian Barney votes Aye, Jerry Brummer votes Aye. Motion Passed 2-0.

3. Secure Rural Schools Funds Update

Details: Crook County Finance Director Christina Haron provided an update on Secure Rural Schools (SRS) funding. She reported that SRS funding was reauthorized in December 2025, retroactive to 2024 after lapsing in 2023. The reauthorization approved payments for federal fiscal years 2024, 2025, and 2026. As a result, the County will receive two payments in fiscal year 2026 and one payment in fiscal year 2027 to account for the retroactive funding. Christina stated the County has received the fiscal year 2024 payment and is awaiting notification of the fiscal year 2025 payment amount, which is expected within the next few weeks. She noted the payment amounts are anticipated to be slightly lower, but generally comparable to prior years.

Following the update, discussion continued regarding the importance of SRS funding in supporting the Crook County Road Department and maintaining the county road system. It was noted that, with the formation of the road agency, the agency now has discretion regarding distribution of SRS Title I funds within allowable use limitations. The discussion also highlighted the significance of SRS funding for future road department operations and projects.

4. Crook County Road Department Presentation

Details: Brad Haynes, Crook County Road Superintendent, presented an overview of the Road Department's operations, funding sources, current projects, and future challenges. Brad described the department's responsibilities, including road maintenance, snow and emergency response, gravel road grading, pothole repair, culvert and cattle guard replacement, signage, traffic safety, and support for emergency responders and partner agencies such as ODOT, fire districts, and the

Sheriff's Office. He emphasized the department's role in maintaining safe travel conditions, supporting commerce, and preserving county infrastructure.

Brad explained that the Road Department is funded primarily through state road taxes, vehicle registration fees, grants, federal funding, and Secure Rural Schools (SRS) funds, with no support from the County General Fund. He noted that state gas tax revenues have declined due to increased fuel efficiency and electric vehicle use, while costs for labor, equipment, fuel, and materials have significantly increased since 2019. Brad stated that SRS funding remains critical to department operations and helps offset declining federal timber receipts and rising maintenance costs.

Brad reviewed trends showing declining federal revenue and increasing financial pressures, including deferred maintenance and equipment replacement needs. He noted the department is currently able to maintain only about 5% of the asphalt road system annually, contributing to a gradual decline in pavement condition ratings. He also discussed challenges associated with grant funding, including long timelines, increased project costs, and required local matching funds.

Christina Haron provided additional background on SRS funding, explaining its historical connection to federal timber receipts and outlining the distribution structure for Title I, II, and III funds. Christina noted that SRS funding continues to decline but remains a significant operational funding source for county road departments in timber counties.

Brad also highlighted several current and upcoming projects, including road stabilization work on Sharp Road and Rimrock Road, culvert replacements, hazard tree removal, chip seal projects, crack sealing, and in-house paving efforts intended to extend roadway life and improve safety. He emphasized the importance of preventative maintenance, long-term planning, and identifying innovative approaches to maximize limited funding resources.

Following the presentation, additional information was shared regarding county road systems statewide, noting that county road departments maintain approximately 62% of Oregon's non-federal road network.

Will discussed the critical role county roads play in supporting public services, including school transportation, mail delivery, emergency response, fire and rescue, and overall economic activity throughout the county and state. It was noted that county roads are essential for supporting commerce, including timber, agriculture, freight movement, rail access, and connections between communities and transportation networks.

Discussion highlighted the significant responsibilities of county road departments statewide and the financial challenges they face due to limited local transportation funding options. Will explained that counties rely heavily on state and federal funding sources, as the use of local property tax revenue for road operations is restricted unless specifically approved by voters for designated projects. It was also noted that

local gas taxes and registration fees are generally more effective in urban areas with larger populations.

Additional discussion focused on the State Highway Fund allocation formula, which distributes transportation funding between the state, counties, and cities, and the importance of maintaining the county share of those revenues. Will noted statewide forecasts project significant funding shortfalls for county road systems over the next five years, emphasizing the importance of federal funding sources such as Secure Rural Schools (SRS) to maintain safe and operable road systems in rural counties.

Will requested general direction and continued support from the Budget Committee and Board as staff proceeds with budget planning for the Road Agency for fiscal year 2027.

Jerry Brummer commented that the Road Department does a great job maintaining the county's gravel roads. Casey requested additional clarification regarding the Road Department's estimate that only approximately 5% of the asphalt road system can be maintained annually and asked about the level of funding needed to improve pavement conditions and slow infrastructure decline. Brad Haynes responded that approximately \$6 million annually would be needed to reverse current trends and improve roadway conditions, although he acknowledged that level of funding may not be realistically attainable. Brad noted the department is pursuing additional maintenance strategies and tools to help slow the projected decline in pavement condition ratings over the next decade. Additional discussion addressed the cost differences between surface reconstruction and full-depth reclamation projects, including increased safety upgrade requirements such as guardrail improvements. Casey also inquired about the deferred maintenance backlog, and Brad stated he did not have the figure immediately available but could provide it later. Committee members also complimented Brad on the presentation.

Will requested confirmation from the Budget Committee and Board to proceed with development of the fiscal year 2027 budget recommendation for the Road Department, including appropriation of Secure Rural Schools (SRS) Title I funds. Discussion clarified that the committee's role relates specifically to allocation of SRS funds received by the Road Agency. Members also discussed the status of anticipated PILT-related funding adjustments, noting the County had not yet received official notification from the state.

Committee members expressed support for moving forward with the budget planning process. Additional discussion noted that many similarly sized rural counties are reducing road programs due to limited reserves and ongoing funding challenges. Brad Haynes emphasized the seriousness of long-term funding concerns facing rural road departments.

The committee also discussed scheduling the next Budget Committee meeting and agreed to hold the meeting on the afternoon of May 18th, with staff to distribute a

calendar invitation.

MOTION: Jerry Brummer moved to Adjourn. Brian Barney seconded. No discussion. Brian Barney votes Aye, Jerry Brummer votes Aye. Motion Passed 2-0.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was **adjourned at 03:20 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Breyanna Cupp, Executive Assistant