Crook County Board of County Commissioners Minutes
of May 20, 2026, Regular Session

Be It Remembered that the Crook County Board of County Commissioners met in a Regular Session on May 20, 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; Legal Assistant Alex Solterbeck; Finance Director Christina Haron; Community Development Director John Eisler; Assessment Technician Elsie Ray; Public Health Modernization Manager Stephanie O'Neal; Fairgrounds Manager Casey Daly; Emergency Manager AJ Crawford; Administrative Assistant Mona Glade; Senior Planner Katie McDonald; Landfill Director Jacquie Davis; Systems Engineer Chelsea Watson; Health and Human Services Deputy Director Camille Day; Road Superintendent Brad Haynes; Administrative Division Manager Stephanie Wilson; Administrative Services Manager Katrina Weitman; Appraiser Kaaren Bushnell; Community Health Worker Shelby Fisher; Clinic Manager Jeffrey Berkebile; Stephen Gilday; Twandy Byrd; Julie Thompson; Laura; Joe Merrill; Shelly Reed; Andy Archer; Prineville Review; Michelle Jonas; Laura Craska Cooper; Barbara Punch; and members of the public.

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

Public Comment
None

Consent Agenda

1. Approve Minutes

2. Approval of New Aircraft Hangar Land Lease

3. Approval of Termination of Aircraft Hangar Land Lease

4. Order No. 2026-21 In The Matter Of Approving An Increase To Rates Charged By The Crook County Solid Waste Franchisee Pursuant To Crook County Code Section 8.28.120(3)

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

5. Housing Works Presentation
Requester:
Cleydy Tejada, Executive Leadership Assistant
Presenter(s):
Lynne McConnell, Executive Director
Keith Wooden, Real Estate Director
Details: Housing Works Executive Director Lynne McConnell and Housing Works Real Estate Director attended the Regular Session to provide a presentation regarding affordable housing needs and Housing Works programs within Crook County. Lynne introduced Housing Works staff and board members in attendance and reviewed the organization's mission of fostering dignity through housing. She explained that Housing Works distributes approximately $13 million annually in rent assistance across the region, much of which supports local landlords and businesses through economic activity.

Lynne presented state housing needs analysis data for Crook County, noting that the community is performing well in meeting market-rate housing goals but continues to face challenges in developing affordable housing, particularly for residents at or below 30% of Area Median Income (AMI). She reviewed current affordable housing inventory in Crook County and discussed the populations most impacted by housing affordability, including seniors on fixed incomes, minimum wage workers, and individuals with disabilities.

The presentation included an overview of Housing Works' rental assistance and voucher programs in Crook County, noting that approximately $80,000 per month in rent assistance is currently distributed locally. Lynne also discussed the organization's emphasis on accessibility in future housing developments and highlighted the importance of accessible housing options for aging and disabled residents.

Housing Works staff reviewed the organization's HomeQuest homeownership assistance program, which helps participants improve financial stability and transition off assistance programs through homeownership, education, and career advancement opportunities. Commissioners discussed the lack of recent homeownership placements in Crook County and asked questions regarding strategies to increase opportunities moving forward.

Lynne and Real Estate Director Keith Wooden also provided information regarding the financial challenges of developing affordable housing projects. They explained the funding gaps that exist due to lower affordable housing rental rates and described the variety of partnerships, grants, tax credits, fee waivers, and other collaborative efforts necessary to complete affordable housing developments in the region.

The presentation concluded with discussion regarding future collaboration opportunities with Crook County and potential future housing project tours for commissioners.

6. Amendment 1 to CMHP Funding Agreement
Requester:
Eric Blaine, Crook County Counsel
Presenter(s):
Camille Day, Deputy Director, Health and Human Services
Details: Health and Human Services Deputy Director Camille Day attended the Regular Session to present an Amendment 1 to the CMHP agreement on behalf of Eric, who was out of the office. Camille explained that the amendment includes language and verbiage updates, though the overall responsibilities for Crook County remain unchanged. The amendment also includes a net funding increase of approximately $217,000 from the state, along with reallocation of funds between project areas within the agreement.

Commissioners discussed revisions to the agreement language related to services for removing barriers to community-based care, specifically the replacement of "room and board" language with broader terminology regarding costs associated with obtaining or continuing representative payee or guardianship services. Camille explained that the updated language was intended to be more comprehensive and inclusive of additional situations.

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to approve Amendment 1 to the CMHP funding agreement #054285. Brian Barney seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

7. Traffic Control Plan Approval in existing Road Crossings
Requester:
Joseph (Joe) Merrill, King of the Kastle LLC
Presenter(s):
Joseph (Joe) Merrill, King of the Kastle LLC
Details: King of the Kastle organizer Joe Merill attended the Regular Session to provide an update regarding the annual road crossing project, noting challenges encountered this year due to health issues, staffing shortages, and last-minute changes with contractors unable to perform the work. It was explained that there are limited qualified providers in the region for the required services, and alternative providers from outside the area were significantly more expensive.

Despite the challenges, arrangements were finalized with a contractor from Sisters to complete the work at a reasonable rate. The project is prepared to move forward with approximately 35 cars participating and traffic control personnel secured for the event.

Commissioners expressed appreciation for the continued partnership and commitment to safety.

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

8. Consider Adoption of the Public Records Request Policy
Requester:
Will Van Vactor, County Manager
Presenter:
Will Van Vactor, County Manager
Details: County Manager Will Van Vactor attended the Regular Session to present an updated Public Records Request Policy, noting the Board had previously discussed the revisions during prior meetings and work sessions. Will explained the updated policy is intended to improve efficiency, cost-effectiveness, communication with the public, transparency, and alignment with Oregon public records law. Key revisions include designating the County Manager or designee as the administrator of the policy, replacing the term "records custodian" with "records officer" to align with state law terminology, and removing referenced forms from the policy to allow administrative updates for efficiency and operational needs.

Will also explained that language regarding out-of-scope requests was refined to better clarify whether the County is the custodian of requested records, particularly for departments such as the Clerk's Office. He stated the updated policy was developed with input from the Board, legal staff, outside counsel, and public feedback, and is intended to provide a clearer, more standardized process for handling public records requests and fee waiver determinations.

Commissioners expressed support for the revised policy, highlighting its focus on transparency, consistency, and reducing costs for requesters where appropriate. Commissioners also noted the policy provides a clear roadmap for both staff and the public and will help streamline records request processing. Will further emphasized that the updated fee waiver process is intended to ensure consistency and transparency in future decisions. The Board briefly opened the meeting for public comment regarding the policy.

Justin Alderman of the Prineville Review provided public comment regarding the County's updated Public Records Request Policy. Justin acknowledged prior challenges and disputes regarding the County's public records process in early 2025 and expressed appreciation for the County's efforts to refine and improve the policy with guidance from outside counsel and the Oregon Public Records Advocate process. He thanked Will Van Vactor for including the Prineville Review in discussions during the drafting process and stated that concerns previously identified had been addressed. Justin emphasized the importance of open government and public records access as a core responsibility of journalism and expressed support for the County’s efforts to improve transparency and public access to information.

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to approve in the matter of adopting an updated policy for responding to public records requests order number 2026-17. Brian Barney seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

9. Public Hearing to Consider Approval of Fee Schedule for FY2027
Requester:
Christina Haron, Crook County Finance Director
Presenter(s):
Christina Haron, Crook County Finance Director
Details: Finance Director Christina Haron attended the Regular Session to present the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Fee Schedule Order and noted that the item required a public hearing. Christina explained that one revision had been made since the previous work session presentation, correcting a reference from “County Court” to “Board of Commissioners” within the Community Development fee section.

The Board opened the public hearing and received no public testimony. During the discussion, Commissioner Hermreck noted concerns regarding several state-required fees, including appliance vent permit fees and private burial fees, but acknowledged those fees were mandated by state statute rather than established locally by the County. Following discussion, Christina confirmed that only one public hearing was required for the fee schedule, and the Board could proceed with approval if desired.

MOTION: Brian Barney moved to approve order number 2026-20 in the matter of ordering fees for the fiscal year 2027, budgeted, beginning July 1st, 2026. Susan Hermreck seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

10. Public Hearing to Consider Application for a Social Gathering Permit for event proposed for June 13 and 14, 2026
Requester:
Eric Blaine, County Counsel
Presenter(s):
John Eiser, Community Development Director
Details: Community Development Director John Eisler attended the Regular Session to present a social gathering application for the 2026 Central Oregon Celtic Festival and Highland Games, scheduled for June 13–14 at O’Neill Arena. Astor explained that the event had previously operated below the attendance threshold requiring a social gathering permit, but organizers now anticipate approximately 1,300 attendees per day, triggering permit requirements under county code. He reviewed the application details, including event activities, insurance coverage, sanitation, potable water, traffic

control, security, and fire safety considerations.

Staff recommendations included requiring 12 portable restrooms, ensuring potable water availability, prohibiting any activities excluded under the event's insurance policy, and requiring compliance with Crook County Fire and Rescue conditions. Concerns regarding traffic control and emergency access were also discussed, with staff noting the site's long driveway and parking configuration should help prevent traffic backups onto nearby roads.

Festival organizer Shelley Reed addressed the Board and stated the organization would comply with insurance exclusions, coordinate with traffic control professionals if necessary, provide water for medical and emergency needs, and ensure emergency vehicle access. Reed also requested leniency on the standard $5,000 security deposit due to the nonprofit nature of the event and limited funding resources.

The Board reviewed and discussed the draft permit conditions in detail, including alcohol service hours, security staffing, medical response arrangements, fire prevention requirements, and traffic management provisions. Commissioners agreed to amend several permit conditions, including reducing the refundable security deposit to $2,000, requiring a minimum of 12 portable restrooms, ensuring water availability for health and medical needs, requiring compliance with fire and rescue requirements, prohibiting activities excluded by the insurance policy, and requiring three security personnel onsite.

Following discussion and public hearing procedures, the Board approved Social Gathering Permit Application CC Social Gathering 2026-01 as amended.

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to approve application CC 2026-01 as amended. Brian Barney seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

11. Ordinance No. 358 Second Public Hearing for Comprehensive Plan Amendment; Record No. 217-25-000400-PLNG
Requester:
John Eisler, Community Development Director
Presenter(s):
John Eisler, Community Development Director
Details: Commissioner Crawford read the opening statement for the second public hearing regarding Record No. 217-25-000400, a comprehensive plan amendment request to add approximately 4.1 acres to Crook County's inventory of significant mineral and aggregate sites as a Goal 5 Class 3C aggregate resource site. The statement identified the subject property located at 15334 NW O'Neil Highway in the northwest corner of Crook County, adjacent to an existing permitted aggregate site, and referenced the applicable assessor's map and tax lot numbers.

The statement explained that the Board of Commissioners was considering a recommendation from the Planning Commission to add the property to the county's aggregate inventory and noted that supporting materials were available through the Planning Department and on the county website. Commissioner Crawford also stated that the Board could uphold, modify, or reverse the Planning Commission's recommendation. It was further noted that the proceeding constituted the second of two required hearings and would be conducted as a de novo quasi-judicial land use hearing under standard land use procedures.

Following the reading of the opening statement, staff recommended that the Board proceed with a motion to read the ordinance by title only.

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to read by title only Ordinance number 358, second public hearing for Comprehensive plan amendment. Brian Barney seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

Commissioner Crawford read Ordinance 358 into the record regarding a proposed amendment to the Crook County Comprehensive Plan Goal 5 inventory to add a new 3C aggregate site and adopt a site-specific ESEE (Economic, Social, Environmental, and Energy) analysis and program, while declaring an emergency. He outlined the applicable approval criteria under Oregon Administrative Rules, Crook County ordinances, and land use regulations governing aggregate resource sites and hearing procedures. Commissioner Crawford conducted the required polling of board members for conflicts of interest, ex parte communications, bias, or prejudgment, with no conflicts declared. He then invited any challenges from the public regarding board participation and reviewed hearing procedures, testimony requirements, appeal standards, burden of proof, and opportunities to keep the record open or submit final written arguments. Testimony procedures were explained for in-person and online participants. Andy Archer, representing the applicant along with Cascade Geoengineering, identified himself for the record and noted he was appearing in place of prior representative Quinn Burkitt. Commissioner Crawford then formally opened the public hearing.

Community Development Director John Eisler attended the Regular Session to present the staff report for a proposed comprehensive plan amendment to add approximately 4.1 acres to Crook County's aggregate resource inventory. John explained the request was operator-neutral and intended to recognize an existing significant aggregate site and establish the framework for balancing competing land-use interests. He clarified that the request was separate from a future conditional use permit application for mining, crushing, and stockpiling activities.

John reviewed the site location near O'Neil Highway and explained that much of the area had previously been mined outside permitted boundaries. He outlined the state-required four-step Goal 5 process, including determining resource significance, identifying conflicts, conducting an Economic, Social, Environmental, and Energy (ESEE) analysis, and developing a program to achieve compliance. Testing determined the site qualified as a significant Class 1 aggregate resource with an estimated 1.7 million tons of basalt exceeding state thresholds.

John summarized identified conflicts and ESEE findings, including economic benefits from local aggregate supply, potential social impacts from dust and traffic, environmental considerations related to wildlife and water resources, and energy impacts associated with transportation and mining operations. He explained staff and the Planning Commission recommended designation of the site as a “3C” aggregate site, balancing resource protection with surrounding land uses through mitigation measures such as setbacks, dust control, traffic management, and waivers for future conflicting land uses.

Applicant representative Andy Archer testified in support of the application, explaining the proposal would bring previously disturbed mining areas into compliance and provide a valuable local aggregate source. Archer stated the site contained approximately 1.7 million tons of high-quality aggregate and described minimal anticipated impacts due to the site’s remote location, existing mining history, distance from residences, and mitigation measures. He also addressed water and wildlife considerations, noting coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding nearby golden eagle nesting areas and stating no significant groundwater or surface water impacts were expected.

No testimony was received from agencies, the public in favor, neutral parties, or opponents. Following closure of the public hearing, commissioners stated the application met the applicable criteria and acknowledged the importance of the aggregate resource to the county.

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to approve Ordinance 358 and accept the Planning Commission's recommendation and designate the subject property as a 3C site on Crook County's inventory of significant aggregate sites. Brian Barney seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

Manager Report

County Manager Will Van Vactor provided a brief manager’s report, reminding the Board and public that county offices would be closed on Memorial Day. Will also reported that the Budget Committee approved the proposed fiscal year budget during the prior week’s meetings and noted that the budget adoption would return to the Board for consideration of approval on June 3rd.

Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Hermreck reported on the recent Fair Board meeting. Commissioner Hermreck noted that the Fair Board voted to replace the pavilion tent panels, with

Casey planning to order the materials and county staff available to install them prior to the fair. Commissioner Hermreck also provided an update on restroom improvements at the fairgrounds, stating that construction is progressing, with positive public feedback on cleanliness and efforts underway to complete the cinder block restroom facilities before June 5 graduation events. Commissioner Hermreck further reported that the Fair Board discussed plans for the annual Veterans Breakfast, which will again be served by law enforcement. Commissioner Hermreck stated that the Fair Board will produce flyers, with distribution support from the Band of Brothers and the Veterans Office to help improve outreach and attendance, including engaging the Redmond Band of Brothers group. Commissioner Hermreck added that breakfast coffee will be served at 6:00 a.m. and breakfast at 7:00 a.m., and that Ron's Comfort Food will again provide the meal service.

Commissioner Barney reported no updates.

Commissioner Crawford reported no updates.

Public Comment

None

Executive Session

12. None scheduled

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 10:42 AM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Breyanna Cupp, Executive Assistant