

Crook County Board of County Commissioners Minutes of May 13, 2026, Work Session

Be It Remembered that the Crook County Board of County Commissioners met in a Work Session on May 13, 2026, at 9:00 AM in the Administration Conference Room, located at 203 NE Court Street, Prineville, OR 97754.

Work 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; Community Development Director John Eisler; Finance Director Christina Haron; Airport Manager Kelly Coffelt; Landfill Director Jacquie Davis; Natural Resources Manager Tim Deboodt; Administrative Services Manager Katrina Weitman; Assessor Jon Soliz; Public Health Modernization Manager Stephanie O'Neal; Building Official Randy Davis; Fairgrounds Manager Casey Daly; Undersheriff Bill Elliott; IT Manager Blaine Cheney; Systems Engineer Chelsea Watson; Community Health Worker Shelby Fisher; Assessment Technician Elsie Ray; Fire Marshall Russ Deboodt; Katie Slattery; JC; Jessica Barnes; Julie Thompson; Brenda; Joel Komarek; and members of the public.

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

Public Comment

None

Discussion

1. Treasurer's Report for April 2026

Requester:

Christina Haron, Crook County Finance Director

Presenter:

Christina Haron, Crook County Finance Director

Details: Finance Director Christina Haron attended the Work Session to present the April Treasurer's Report to the commissioners. She reviewed the county's bank and investment account balances, noting that overall cash flow remained relatively stable, with balances approximately \$55,000 lower than at the end of March. Christina explained this is a typical lull between major year-end payments and anticipated balances may decrease somewhat over the coming months. She also reviewed the county's pooled cash accounts and explained how cash is allocated among the county's various funds and bank codes. Christina reported that the county currently holds approximately \$52.4 million in investments, which are distributed across several funds, including reserve funds, and laddered over a five-year period to support lower risk and more predictable returns. She discussed the comparison between the book

value and market value of the investments, noting an unrealized gain of about \$900,000, while emphasizing that the county generally holds investments to maturity under its investment policy and may not realize the full gain shown. The report concluded with an update on interest rates for smaller savings accounts and the Local Government Investment Pool, with Christina noting that rates remain stable and favorable. Commissioners briefly commented positively on the strong returns being maintained through the LGIP.

2. Review proposed changes to the FY27 Fee Schedule

Requester:

Christina Haron, Crook County Finance Director

Presenter:

Christina Haron, Crook County Finance Director

Details: Finance Director Christina Haron attended the Work Session to present the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 fee schedule, which would take effect July 1st and serves as the basis for the budget approved by the Budget Committee earlier in the week. Christina explained that commissioners received two packets for review. Exhibit B identifies all proposed changes by showing the current fee, the proposed fee, and the difference between the two, with all revisions to wording or amounts highlighted and removed language shown with strike-through text. Exhibit A provides a clean copy of the proposed fee schedule as it would appear effective July 1st. Christina offered to answer questions or walk through the proposed changes with commissioners. It was noted that the fee schedule will be returned for discussion and a public hearing at the next regular meeting.

3. Request Approval for New Aircraft Hangar Land Lease

Requester:

Kelly Coffelt, Airport Manager

Presenter(s):

Kelly Coffelt, Airport Manager

Details: Airport Manager Kelly Coffelt attended the Work Session to present a proposed new lease agreement and corresponding lease termination related to the sale of an existing airport building. Kelly explained that the new lease was created under the airport's updated lease policy for the buyer of the building, while the accompanying termination agreement would end the seller's existing lease. He noted that the lease language is standard boilerplate with no substantive changes. Kelly and legal counsel Eric discussed an unusual circumstance in which the buyer and seller were hesitant to sign documents prior to commission approval and instead requested that all parties complete the transaction simultaneously. County Counsel Eric Blaine reported that he had spoken with Mr. Cooper, who informed him that Mrs. Cooper had passed away, requiring an update to the termination document's signature block. Eric explained that the parties hoped to coordinate a closing-style meeting where the lease termination, new lease, and sale documents could all be signed together after approval. Kelly noted that the process differs from the county's typical sequence for lease approvals and document execution, requiring additional coordination. Commissioners discussed

placing the items on the consent agenda pending further communication and scheduling with the parties involved.

4. Request Approval for Termination of Aircraft Hangar Land Lease

Requester:

Kelly Coffelt, Airport Manager

Presenter(s):

Kelly Coffelt, Airport Manager

Details: Airport Manager Kelly Coffelt explained this item in conjunction with Item 3. See Item 3 notes for additional information.

5. Draft ordinance 359 – Update to the County’s outdoor burning code

Requester:

Eric Blaine, County Counsel

Presenter:

Eric Blaine, County Counsel

Details: County Counsel Eric Blaine attended the Work Session to present a draft ordinance related to outdoor burning regulations and asked commissioners to consider whether to move the proposed changes forward to a public hearing. Fire Marshall Russ Deboodt attended the discussion to provide input from the fire district’s perspective. Eric explained that the draft ordinance was prompted by an incident the previous summer in which an individual was cited for outdoor burning during hazardous fire conditions, but the activity did not technically fall within the county’s current definition of outdoor burning. Commissioners and staff discussed the distinction between criminal offenses, such as reckless burning that damages another person’s property, and county ordinance violations, which function more as civil infractions intended to encourage safe behavior and compliance with burn regulations.

Russ provided an overview of the county’s current burn regulations, including requirements for checking daily burn status through the county website or burn line, obtaining permits for agricultural or large debris burns, and following safety requirements for permitted burning activities. He explained that the existing ordinance was originally developed through a collaborative county and city effort focused on air quality concerns and wildfire risk management. Russ stated that the fire district supports periodically reviewing ordinances to ensure they remain effective but recommended postponing any formal ordinance changes until after fire season. He noted that opening public hearings on burn regulations during peak wildfire season could create unnecessary public concern and that any review should involve all affected agencies, including law enforcement, the district attorney, the county, and the city.

Commissioners agreed that additional study and coordination would be beneficial before considering ordinance amendments and expressed support for evaluating the issue further during the fall or winter months. Discussion also included public education surrounding safe burning practices, the limited penalties currently associated with ordinance violations, and the importance of balancing enforcement with education and

accountability. No action was taken to move the draft ordinance forward to a public hearing at this time.

6. Discussion of Potential Moratorium Related to Solar Development Applications

Requester:

Will Van Vactor, County Manager

Presenter(s):

Will Van Vactor, County Manager

Details: County Manager Will Van Vactor and Community Development Director John Eisler attended the Work Session to present a preliminary discussion regarding the potential use of a moratorium related to large-scale solar development applications in Crook County. Commissioners were advised that the discussion was intended only to provide direction to staff and did not involve adoption or endorsement of a moratorium. Will explained that recent public concern regarding solar development has focused on issues including compatibility of land use, impacts to agricultural lands and wildlife, proximity to city limits, cumulative impacts of multiple projects, and the overall pace and scale of development. It was noted that any moratorium under Oregon law requires a specific legal framework, defined findings, limited duration and scope, and a clear work program or corrective process. Community Development Director John Eisler discussed the county's ongoing Goal 5 update and work funded through a DLCD grant to revise the county's commercial energy siting regulations, including solar development standards. Staff explained that the county previously opted out of state Eastern Oregon solar siting rules and is working toward implementing its own locally tailored program for large-scale solar facilities. Commissioners discussed balancing community concerns with property rights, economic development, tax revenue generated from solar projects, and the need for reliable future energy infrastructure. Concerns were also raised regarding potential litigation risks, staff workload, legal costs, and whether a moratorium could withstand legal challenges.

Commissioners expressed support for conducting an initial analysis of a possible moratorium and directed staff to further review the legal requirements, risks, potential costs, and possible narrowly tailored approaches focused on large-scale commercial solar facilities. Staff were also directed to evaluate alternatives and consider how any potential moratorium could align with the county's ongoing Goal 5 planning efforts. No formal action or motion was taken, but commissioners provided directions for staff to return with additional information and recommendations.

7. Review and Consideration of 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 Work Session to present a revised Public Records Request Policy following previous work session discussions

and feedback received from legal counsel and local media representatives. The updated policy is intended to create a clearer and more standardized process for handling public records requests while ensuring compliance with Oregon public records law. Will explained that revisions included changing the term “records custodian” to “records officer” for clarity and consistency with statutory terminology, adding clearer request processing and closure provisions, and separating internal staff forms from the formal policy document to allow administrative updates without requiring board approval for minor procedural changes.

Will also reviewed operational procedures included in the policy, including requirements that requests be submitted in writing through approved methods, acknowledgment of requests within five business days, provisions regarding de minimis costs and staff time, and processes for fee waivers or reductions based on public benefit considerations. He noted that the revised policy incorporated feedback from outside counsel, county legal staff, and the public. Commissioners expressed appreciation for the work completed on the policy update and agreed the revised policy should move forward as a discussion item at the next regular board meeting for possible adoption.

Manager Report

8. Landfill Update for Q1 2026

Details: County Manager Will Van Vactor presented a quarterly landfill report as part of his manager’s report, noting it was provided to ensure the Board receives regular updates in accordance with the landfill operating plan. Will indicated that the report was informational in nature, with landfill staff available to address questions if needed. Landfill Director Jacquie Davis noted an approximately 8% decrease in self-haul volumes during the winter reporting period and attributed the decline to seasonal patterns, with activity expected to increase in the spring and summer months as seasonal cleanup increases. Commissioners briefly discussed landfill usage trends and observed that seasonal fluctuations are typical, with higher volumes generally occurring during warmer months. They also made general comments regarding illegal dumping in public and rural areas and the ongoing challenges associated with waste disposal in remote locations.

Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Hermreck raised a discussion regarding the upcoming 4th of July community fireworks event in recognition of the 250th anniversary celebration. He noted that the County has traditionally budgeted for participation and asked whether any formal motion or additional approval was needed to contribute this year, including consideration of a modest increase in funding if necessary. The County Manager and commissioners reviewed prior year contributions from partner organizations, noting that the County’s prior contribution was approximately \$2,400, with other contributions from

the Chamber, City, Parks and Recreation, and private partners. It was clarified that no specific additional funding amount had been formally requested, but a small increase beyond the usual contribution may be needed. After discussion, commissioners agreed that a formal motion was not required and directed staff to proceed within existing authority, with flexibility to modestly increase the County's contribution if funds are available and if needed to support the event. Commissioners briefly discussed the celebratory nature of the event and made informal comments regarding the fireworks display.

Commissioner Barney provided no updates.

Commissioner Crawford provided no updates.

Public Comment

None

Executive Session

At 10:07AM the Board of Commissioners convened into Executive Session under the following statute(s): ORS 192.660(2)(e) To conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions; and ORS 192.660(2)(f) To consider information or records that are exempt by law from public inspection.

9. ORS 192.660(2)(e) To conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions.

10. ORS 192.660(2)(f) To consider information or records that are exempt by law from public inspection

No motions were made following the executive session; the matter was informational only, and additional information will be gathered for future consideration.

MOTION: Brian Barney moved to Adjourn. Susan Hermreck 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 10:32 AM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Breyanna Cupp, Executive Assistant