Crook County Board of County Commissioners Minutes
of June 17, 2026, Regular Session

Be It Remembered that the Crook County Board of County Commissioners met in a Regular Session on June 17, 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; County Counsel Eric Blaine; Finance Director Christina Haron; Budget Manager Jamie Berger; Public Health Modernization Manager Stephanie O'Neal; Fairgrounds Manager Casey Daly; IT Manager Blaine Cheney; Systems Engineer Chelsea Watson; Natural Resources Coordinator Tim Deboodt; Health and Human Services Director Katie Plumb; Emergency Manager AJ Crawford; ODFW Rangeland Coordinator Don Tschida; Road Superintendent Brad Haynes; Landfill Director Jacquie Davis; County Clerk Cheryl Seely; Assistant Building Official Terry Weitman; Undersheriff Bill Elliott; Fire Chief Matt Smith; Business Analyst Micheala Edwards; Clinic Manager Jeffrey Berkebile; Community Development Director John Eisler; Administrative Services Manager Katrina Weitman; Julie Thompson; Twandy Byrd; Justin Alderman; Laura; Ashley McCormick; Crystal Irish; Dick Zimmerlee; M.Reed; and members of the public.

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

Public Comment
None

Consent Agenda

1. Approve Minutes

2. PrineTime Internet Service Agreement

3. IGA with Multnomah Education Service District for Medicaid Administrative Claiming

4. Crook County School District MOU- Shelter

5. PacificSource Community Solutions CMHP Contract

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

6. Review of Wildland Fire Resource Request and Delegation of Authority Processes
Requester:
Matt Smith, Crook County Fire and Rescue Fire Chief
Presenter(s):
Matt Smith, Crook County Fire and Rescue Fire Chief
Dylan Web, Oregon State Fire Marshal
Don Tschida, Oregon Department of Forestry
AJ Crawford, Crook County Emergency Manager
Details: Matt Smith, Crook County Fire and Rescue Fire Chief attended the Regular Session and introduced key partners involved in wildfire coordination, including AJ Crawford, Crook County Emergency Manager, and Don Tschida, Rangeland Coordinator with the Oregon Department of Forestry. Chief Smith provided an overview of fire protection responsibilities within Crook County, noting that while Crook County Fire and Rescue provides structural fire protection across approximately 450 square miles, portions of the county remain under protected or unprotected for structural fire response. Chief Smith reviewed the County's role and authority regarding fire protection in unprotected areas and explained his responsibilities as the County Fire Defense Chief. In this role, he coordinates with the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office to request additional structural fire protection resources when life and property are threatened. Any approved deployment of state resources requires delegation of authority from the County to allow incoming incident management teams to operate within unprotected areas. The discussion included a review of County Order 2025-29, which outlines the process for delegating authority to incoming fire management teams. The order designates the County Manager, or alternatively a Commissioner designee, to execute the delegation when needed. Chief Smith emphasized the importance of coordination among local, state, and federal agencies during wildfire incidents, including the Oregon Department of Forestry, federal wildland fire agencies, and the County Emergency Manager. Commissioners expressed confidence in the current coordination process and support for continuing the existing system. The conversation also highlighted wildfire preparedness efforts, including defensible space assessments, vegetation management, emergency planning, evacuation considerations, and homeowner responsibilities for reducing wildfire risk. Chief Smith noted that the Fire District offers defensible space assessments and limited mitigation assistance to residents both inside and outside the district. County staff and commissioners discussed updating Order 2025-29, which currently references only the 2025 fire season. Staff recommended extending the order's authority through the 2026 fire season and revising the language to apply more broadly to future fire seasons. Commissioners expressed support for maintaining the current delegation process and discussed taking formal action to ensure continuity until an updated order can be adopted and recorded.

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to update our order number 2025-29 in the matter of the delegation of authority to include the 2026 wildfire season. Brian Barney seconded. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

Commissioner Hermreck reflected on the Durgan Fire response near Paulina two years prior, noting that as a newly elected commissioner she gained valuable insight into the wildfire response and mutual aid process. She discussed how the delegation of authority allowed structural fire protection resources from across Oregon to be deployed to help protect the community of Paulina when the fire threatened the area. Commissioner Hermreck expressed appreciation for the extensive coordination among local, state, and regional fire response agencies and commended the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office for its ongoing support, communication, and preparedness efforts. She thanked all involved agencies for their collaboration and dedication to protecting Crook County communities during wildfire incidents.

7. Grandridge Subdivision 2 Phase 3 Plat Signing
Requester:
John Eisler, Community Development Director
Presenter(s):
John Eisler, Community Development Director
Details: Community Development Director John Eisler attended the Regular Session to present the final plat for Grandridge Subdivision 2 Phase 3, noting that it represents the final phase of the subdivision, consisting of 15 units. He advised that all required reviews and signatures had been completed and that the plat was ready for Board signature. Commissioners discussed the approval process and determined that signing the plat was a routine administrative action.

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to sign Grandridge Subdivision 2 Phase 3 plat. Brian Barney seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

8. Crook County Vector Control District Follow-Up Discussion
Requester:
Will Van Vactor, County Manager
Presenter(s):
Will Van Vactor, County Manager
Details: County Manager Will Van Vactor attended the Regular Session and presented a follow-up discussion regarding the Crook County Vector Control District stemming from the February 2026 joint meeting between the Board of Commissioners and the Vector Control District Board. Staff reported that the District had responded to the Board's prior concerns by distributing public meetings' law materials, consulting with legal counsel and accounting professionals, and indicating its belief that it was operating within applicable legal requirements. Staff requested direction from the Board regarding any additional information needed and whether a follow-up joint meeting should be scheduled.

Commissioners expressed a desire for additional information before conducting a follow-up meeting. Areas of interest included the District's financial management practices, use of credit cards and bank accounts, contractor arrangements, internal controls, and oversight processes. Commissioners requested written documentation from the District's legal counsel and accounting professionals supporting the District's current practices and addressing concerns related to contractor classification and financial procedures.

The Board also discussed public meetings' law compliance and requested additional information regarding actions taken by the District to address concerns raised during the February meeting. Commissioners indicated they would like the District to seek guidance from the Oregon Government Ethics Commission regarding specific public meetings law concerns and provide any resulting recommendations. The Board further expressed support for all District Board members completing ethics and public meetings' law training.

Following discussion, the Board directed staff to prepare and send a letter requesting the additional information, with a requested response timeframe of 30 days. Commissioners indicated that a follow-up joint meeting with the Vector Control District Board should be considered after the requested information has been received and reviewed.

9. Discussion on appointment of applicants for Prineville Lakes Acres 1 (PLA-1) Road District governing board

Requester:

Breyanna Cupp, Executive Assistant

Presenter(s):

Will Van Vactor, County Manager

Eric Blaine, County Counsel

Details: County Manager Will Van Vactor and County Counsel Eric Blaine attended the Regular Session to present a request to reappoint two individuals to the PLA Road District Board whose terms had expired. The applicants were the only individuals who had expressed interest in serving on the board. County Counsel explained that the Board of Commissioners has the authority to appoint members to the special district board and recommended appointing the individuals by motion, with a formal order to be brought back at a future meeting. Commissioners discussed the circumstances that led to the lapse in appointments, noting that changes in administrative processes contributed to the situation and that improvements would be made to ensure board terms are tracked and addressed in a timely manner moving forward. The Board also discussed the importance of maintaining staggered terms to preserve continuity and avoid multiple vacancies occurring simultaneously. Eric Blaine reviewed historical appointment records and confirmed that the board's terms had previously been staggered. Following discussion, the Board supported reappointing the two applicants and restoring the staggered term structure by backdating the appointments to align with the expiration dates of their previous terms. Staff was directed to prepare a formal order memorializing the appointments and term dates for future Board consideration.

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to appoint Debra Kowalski to a term of September 15th, 2024 to September 15th, 2027 and to appoint David Chamberlain for a term of August 17, 2025, till August 17th of 2028, to the PLA Prineville Lake Acres Road District Governing Board. Brian Barney seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

10. Recommended Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for FY2027 Non-Represented Employees
Requester:
Will Van Vactor, County Manager
Presenter(s):
Will Van Vactor, County Manager
Details: County Manager Will Van Vactor attended the Regular Session to present the annual Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) recommendation for Fiscal Year 2026-2027. He explained that the County's recent practice has been to use the May Consumer Price Index (CPI) data, published in June, as the basis for determining the annual COLA effective July 1st. He noted that this methodology provides an objective and transparent approach and has resulted in annual adjustments ranging from 2.4 percent to 4.9 percent in recent years. For Fiscal Year 2026-2027, the May CPI figure resulted in a recommended COLA of 4.2 percent. Will made the recommendation to use the County's current methodology for this year's adjustment. Will also advised the Board that there may be an opportunity to review and potentially revise the County's COLA methodology in the future to provide greater protection against unusually low CPI figures and improve budget predictability. He indicated that staff would bring potential options and recommendations to the Board during the upcoming budget planning process for Fiscal Year 2027-2028. The Board discussed the recommendation and expressed interest in reviewing alternative methodologies during future budget discussions while maintaining the current CPI-based approach for the upcoming fiscal year.

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to approve the cost of living adjustment of 4.2% for non-represented employees for fiscal year 27. Brian Barney seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

11. Consider Adoption of Crook County Core Services Final Report
Requester:
Will Van Vactor, County Manager
Presenter(s):
Will Van Vactor, County Manager
Details: County Manager Will Van Vactor attended the Regular Session to present the final countywide Core Services Report, which consolidates core service statements

from all County departments following a series of special meetings and discussions. He explained that the project was undertaken to clearly define the County's essential services, distinguish between mandated and discretionary functions, improve transparency, and strengthen long-term operational and budget planning. Will noted that the report provides a standardized framework for understanding service delivery, funding, legal obligations, and resource allocation. He emphasized that the document serves as a valuable planning tool for departments, County leadership, and the public by connecting budget decisions to service outcomes, promoting accountability, and improving communication regarding the services provided by Crook County. The report includes an executive summary, guiding principles, departmental core service statements, organizational information, and the Board's adopted goals and priorities. Will stated that the report is intended to be a living document that will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains aligned with legal requirements, operational needs, and Board priorities. Commissioners expressed support for the project and commended Will and County staff for their extensive work developing the report. Commissioners noted that the process helped identify and clarify the County's core responsibilities, supports fiscal responsibility, and provides a useful long-term planning tool for the organization. Appreciation was also expressed to department heads and staff who participated in developing the core service statements. Following discussion, the Board expressed its intent to adopt the inaugural Core Services Report and continue reviewing and updating the document annually as part of the County's planning and budget process.

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to adopt Crook County core service final report. 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 reported that County offices would be closed on June 19th in observance of Juneteenth.

Commissioner Updates

12. Letter of Support for Ochoco Irrigation District Grimes Flat Piping Project

Commissioner Barney asked the board to sign a support letter for Ochoco Irrigation District's (OID) funding request for the Grimes Flat Piping Project. Commissioner Barney provided an overview of the district's ongoing modernization efforts, including pumping station improvements, the Iron Horse Piping Project, the relift pumping station, and the Mackay Creek Relift and Mainline System. He explained that the district is seeking grant funding for the project and is requesting letters of support rather than financial contributions. Commissioners expressed support for the project and discussed potential conflicts of interest. Commissioner Crawford disclosed that he is a customer of the irrigation district. County Counsel advised that, as a customer receiving the same services as the general public, no actual or potential conflict of interest existed. Commissioner Barney disclosed that he serves on the Ochoco Irrigation District Board of Directors and, out of an abundance of caution, elected to recuse himself from participation in the matter.

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to support, and it would be the McKay Creek Grimes Flat pumping station. Seth Crawford seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye. Motion Passed 2-0.

Commissioner Hermreck reported that she attended and spoke at a meeting of the Democratic Party held at the Bowman Museum. She shared that attendees asked questions on a range of local issues, including solar development, Juniper Canyon, secondary access concerns, data centers, and potential water contamination near Stahancyk Road. She noted that the discussion was informative, expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate, and stated that she hoped her responses adequately addressed the questions raised.

Commissioner Crawford reported no updates.

Public Comment

None

Executive Session

13. None scheduled.

MOTION: Brian Barney moved to Adjourn. Susan Hermreck seconded. 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 09:51 AM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Breyanna Cupp, Executive Assistant