Crook County Board of County Commissioners Minutes of June 24, 2026, Work Session

Be It Remembered that the Crook County Board of County Commissioners met in a Work Session on June 24, 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; Legal Assistant Alex Solterbeck; County Counsel Eric Blaine; Finance Director Christina Haron; Budget Manager Jamie Berger; Public Health Modernization Manager Stephanie O'Neal; Systems Engineer Chelsea Watson; Natural Resources Coordinator Tim Deboodt; Community Development Director John Eisler; Administrative Services Manager Katrina Weitman; Building Official Randy Davis; County Clerk Cheryl Seely; Library Manager Kim Bales; Road Superintendent Brad Haynes; Assessment Technician Elsie Ray; Community Health Worker Shelby Fisher; Julie Thompson; Twandy Byrd; Laura York; Joel Komarek; and members of the public.

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

Public Comment

None

Discussion

1. Request for Mutual Termination of Grant No. IMP-LL-001

Requester:
Kim Bales, Library Manager
Presenter(s):
Kim Bales, Library Manager
Details: Library Manager Kim Bales attended the Work Session requested Board approval to execute a mutual termination of the e-bike grant agreement with the Oregon Department of Transportation (Oregon Department of Transportation). She explained that, following evaluation of project needs and current circumstances, both parties agreed that termination of the grant is appropriate. She noted that all e-bikes and related equipment previously acquired under the grant have been transferred to other entities and that the full grant amount has been reimbursed to ODOT. Because the Board of Commissioners originally executed the grant agreement, formal signatures are required to complete the termination process and close out the agreement in good standing. Kim confirmed that legal counsel prepared the termination documents for execution. The Board discussed procedural handling of the

item to ensure proper closure of the grant agreement. County Manager Will Van Vactor mentioned scheduling and procedural options for finalizing the mutual termination of the e-bike grant with the Oregon Department of Transportation. Due to the need for a special meeting on June 29th to address year-end business, Will proposed moving the related consent agenda items from the canceled July 1st regular meeting to either the June 29th special meeting or the June 15th regular meeting. Commissioners indicated support for placing the item on the June 29th special meeting consent agenda, noting that all grant-related obligations have been completed, including transfer of equipment and reimbursement of funds, and that the termination is largely a procedural finalization. Staff confirmed they would update the termination documents accordingly, including correcting minor clerical errors and ensuring accurate contact information prior to execution.

2. Discuss Options for Renewing Crook County Title VI Plan
Requester:
Eric Blaine, County Counsel
Presenter(s):
Eric Blaine, County Counsel
Details: County Counsel Eric Blaine attended the Work Session and provided an overview of the upcoming update to the County's Title VI plan, which is required periodically for federal transportation funding compliance. The County currently maintains its own plan, but also has the option to adopt the Cascades East Title VI plan administered through Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council. County Counsel explained that adopting the regional plan would reduce administrative workload, requiring only adoption of an order and minor updates such as website postings and required forms. Developing a County-specific plan would require additional staff time but would allow greater local customization and control. The Board discussed prior history, noting that the County has traditionally maintained its own plan. The board expressed interest in reviewing both the existing County plan and the Cascades East option in more detail before making a decision, including questions regarding scope, cost, and administrative impact. The Board directed staff to provide additional information and return the item for further consideration at a future meeting.

3. Review Draft Letter for BLM Grazing Rule Update
Requester:
Tim Deboodt, Crook County Natural Resources Coordinator
Presenter(s):
Tim Deboodt, Crook County Natural Resources Coordinator
Details: Natural Resources Coordinator Tim Deboodt and NRAC Committee Member Laura York attended the Work Session to present the County's draft response to proposed Bureau of Land Management grazing rule changes published in the Federal Register on May 12th, which initiated a 60-day public comment period ending July 13th. The NRAC formed a subcommittee to review the proposed rules and develop a white paper summarizing the analysis, including areas of support and concern. The full committee reviewed and approved the document and forwarded it to the Board of

Commissioners for consideration as an official county comment. Discussion noted that the proposed rules would impact grazing allotments across the West, and emphasized the importance of public land grazing to the county’s culture, economy, and natural resources. The document also referenced anticipated similar rulemaking by the U.S. Forest Service. The Board discussed timing constraints due to the comment deadline and upcoming meeting schedule. Options included placing the item on the consent agenda, using a special meeting, or approving and signing the letter immediately. The Board agreed the document was well-prepared and did not require revisions. Staff confirmed it could be finalized on county letterhead the same day, and the Board proceeded with approval and signature authorization to ensure timely submission before the deadline.

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to accept the review, a proposed revision of the BLM grazing regulations, transfer it to county letterhead with the Commissioners' signatures, and go ahead and approve that and sign outside the meeting. Brian Barney seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

4. Goal 5 Wildlife Inventory Pause Reconsideration (Solar)
Requester:
John Eisler, Community Development Director
Presenter(s):
John Eisler, Community Development Director
Details: Community Development Director John Eisler attended the Work Session to provide an update regarding the previously discussed Goal 5 wildlife inventory “pause” option as part of the county’s broader Goal 5 work and potential development moratorium discussions. Staff revisited the option of adopting Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) wildlife inventory data as a “safe harbor” step, which would allow the county to impose a 120-day pause while completing required Economic, Social, Environmental, and Energy (ESEE) analysis. Updated GIS mapping was reviewed, including comparisons between older (2011) and more recent ODFW datasets. Concerns were raised regarding the expanded scope of elk winter range and other habitat designations, as well as the dynamic nature of wildlife data due to fire impacts, drought conditions, and ongoing changes to ODFW management units. Following review, staff advised that adopting the ODFW inventory at this stage could have significant policy implications and may not be in the county’s best interest given ongoing uncertainty and upcoming changes in wildlife data methodologies. The Board discussed alternatives, including continuing with the statutory moratorium process while not pursuing the Goal 5 pause option. County Counsel Eric Blaine clarified that the prior motions related to exploring these options remain in place and that no additional formal action was required at this time.

5. Community Development Monthly Update for May 2026
Requester:
John Eisler, Community Development Director

Presenter(s):
John Eisler, Community Development Director
Randy Davis, Building Official
Details: Community Development Director John Eisler and Building Official Randy Davis attended the Work Session to provide the monthly update for May 2026. In the building division, staff reported 134 permits issued during the prior month, including 7 new single-family dwellings and 24 accessory structures, along with plumbing, mechanical, and commercial permits. Year-to-date activity remains consistent with the previous fiscal year, with approximately 164 residential units currently under construction, 604 residential-related permits, and 293 commercial permits in process. The division continues to average approximately 1,100 inspections per month. Staff also noted ongoing work on commercial projects, including deferred submittals and coordination on phased turnover of multi-building residential developments, with initial building openings anticipated in the near term. In the planning division, application volume remained stable at approximately 29 new applications for the month, consistent with prior year trends. Notable projects include an aggregate pit application expected for completeness review later in the summer, completion of the Hidden Canyon Phase 1 subdivision, and upcoming hearings including a modification/revocation hearing scheduled for July 29th, a pit-related hearing, and Planning Commission review of the Pinecrest subdivision prior to Board consideration. Additional items include a scheduled cell tower application and upcoming comprehensive plan and zone map amendments expected in the fall. Staff also noted ongoing Goal 5 planning efforts, including recruitment for public advisory committees with applications open through July 29th. Other updates included transfer activity related to the Ochoco Point project and continued monitoring of code compliance cases. Code enforcement reported 12 new cases opened and 10 closed in May, with year-to-date totals of 53 opened and 31 closed. Overall, workload across divisions remains steady and consistent with multi-year trends.

<u>**Manager Report**</u>

6. Budget in Brief FY27

County Manager Will Van Vactor provided updates on upcoming meeting scheduling and budget communications, noting that with no additional agenda items received, staff proposed moving the remaining consent agenda items from the regularly scheduled meeting on July 1st to the special meeting on June 29th, and the Board concurred with canceling the July 1st regular meeting due to a light agenda and the proximity of the special meeting prior to fiscal year-end. Will also presented the draft “Budget in Brief” document prepared by the Budget Office for public distribution, which provides a high-level, visual overview of county revenues and expenditures and is intended for publication on the county website and inclusion with future tax statements. The Board reviewed the draft positively and expressed appreciation for its clarity and presentation. Discussion further included the potential development of a separate message of appreciation to citizens to accompany annual tax statement materials, recognizing taxpayer support and contributions to county services, and the Board expressed general support for exploring a brief, stand-alone communication for this purpose.

Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Hermreck reported her and Breyanna visited the Bowman Museum to view the new Belknap exhibit and commended museum staff, particularly Carter Bond, for creating an informative and well-presented display highlighting the history of the Crook County Fair, fairgrounds, rodeo, and horse racing. The exhibit prompted discussion of local family history and the county's ranching heritage. The commissioner also noted an upstairs film featuring the history of the Crooked River and its development, praising the overall quality of the exhibits and encouraging the public to visit the museum.

Commissioner Barney reported attending a screening of the documentary By Dawn's Early Light, which was produced as part of a federal initiative examining historical and contemporary issues related to religious liberty and constitutional rights. He noted that the film explores the nation's history and more recent events, including issues arising during the COVID-19 pandemic involving religious accommodations. Commissioner Barney shared that the documentary is publicly available online for those interested in viewing it.

Commissioner Crawford encouraged the public to attend the annual cattle drive on Main Street and highlighted the many community events taking place throughout the week, including rodeo activities, baseball, and the powwow. Commissioner Hermreck commended the completion of the renovated fairgrounds restroom facilities, noting the positive public feedback received during a recent event and expressing appreciation to county staff, the contractor, and everyone involved in the project. Fellow commissioners recognized Commissioner Hermreck for her leadership and persistence in advancing the restroom improvements.

Public Comment

Julie Thompson addressed the Board regarding the City of Prineville's recently adopted Moderate Income Revolving Loan Fund ordinance, expressing concerns about potential impacts on county services, tax revenues, public safety, roads, schools, parks, and long-term financial liability. Commissioners acknowledged the concerns and noted they had heard similar feedback from other community members. County Manager Will Van Vactor explained that the program remains in progress and that the county expects to receive a memorandum of understanding from the administering state agency for review and comment. The Board discussed the importance of evaluating the county's role, potential impacts, and available flexibility before taking any action.

Lorian Maxham requested clarification regarding the status of the Goal 5 wildlife inventory pause and the proposed solar moratorium. Commissioners explained that the

Goal 5 pause related to the adoption of state wildlife maps and remains under consideration, while the statutory moratorium process is a separate effort that will continue with public meetings anticipated later this summer. Lorian also encouraged the Board to consider holding future public meetings later in the day to increase public participation.

Executive Session

7. None scheduled.

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 09:54 AM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Breyanna Cupp, Executive Assistant