

Crook County Board of County Commissioners Minutes of July 8, 2026, Work Session

Be It Remembered that the Crook County Board of County Commissioners met in a Work Session on July 8, 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; Public Health Modernization Manager Stephanie O'Neal; Natural Resources Coordinator Tim Deboodt; Library Manager Kim Bales; Road Superintendent Brad Haynes; Assessment Technician Elsie Ray; Community Health Worker Shelby Fisher; Health and Human Services Director Katie Plumb; Assessor Jon Soliz; Administrative Division Manager Stephanie Wilson; Fairgrounds Manager Casey Daly; Jodie Schiffman; Dr. Jen Fenton; Prineville Review-Justin Alderman; Kates; Julie Thompson; Mike Ervin; and members of the public.

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

Public Comment

None

Discussion

1. Oregon Living with Fire Update

Requester:

Jodie Schiffman, Oregon Living with Fire Co-Coordinator

Presenter(s):

Jodie Schiffman, Co-Coordinator

Dr. Jen Fenton, MBA Co-Coordinator

Details: Jodie Schiffman, Co-Coordinator, and Dr. Jen Fenton, MBA, Co-Coordinator, Oregon Living with Fire attended the Work Session and provided an overview of the Oregon Living with Fire program, a regional partnership serving Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson, and Klamath counties. The program, funded through a four-county memorandum of understanding, focuses on promoting fire-adapted communities, resilient landscapes, and safe, effective wildfire response through public outreach, education, and grant support. Crook County is represented on the program's steering committee by Tim DeBoodt. The presentation included an overview of the program's funding structure, which leverages county contributions as matching funds for U.S. Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) grants. These funds support part-time coordinators, educational outreach, website maintenance, and community engagement activities. Recent efforts benefiting Crook County included co-

hosting the annual Wildfire Preparedness Fair, participation in the Natural Resources Advisory Committee, advocacy for wildfire resilience projects, and support for Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) updates to strengthen future grant applications. Dr. Jen Fenton highlighted grant assistance provided through Oregon Living with Fire, including support for regional wildfire resilience projects, funding opportunities for private landowners, and collaborative grant applications benefiting multiple counties. She discussed work on an \$8.7 million Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant application, assistance securing funding for regional fire and EMS agencies, and ongoing efforts to identify additional funding opportunities through the Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) program. Jodie also highlighted the CentralOregonFire.org website as a regional resource for wildfire preparedness, prescribed fire information, evacuation resources, grant opportunities, and public alerts. They noted the website received more than 1.3 million views in the past year and continues to serve as a central hub for wildfire information throughout Central Oregon. Commissioner Hermreck discussed engagement with local Rangeland Fire Protection Associations (RFPAs), including the Post-Paulina district. Oregon Living with Fire staff confirmed they work closely with the Oregon Department of Forestry and RFPAs by providing outreach, grant writing assistance, and support for equipment funding, while seeking updated contact information to improve communication with local volunteer organizations.

2. Request to consider approval of Amended & Restated 2025-2027 IGA for the Financing of Public Health Services Agreement #185807-9

Requester:

Katie Plumb, Health & Human Services Director

Presenter(s):

Katie Plumb, Health & Human Services Director

Details: Health and Human Services Director Katie Plumb attended the Work Session to present an updated Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the Oregon Health Authority, which provides the majority of funding for the County's public health programs. She explained that the agreement has been revised to reduce administrative burden by eliminating the mid-biennium fiscal reconciliation process. All funding changes were anticipated and included in the FY 2027 budget. Katie reported that the department received additional funding due to increased WIC participation and earned more than \$22,000 in Public Health Modernization incentive funding after meeting program benchmarks. County Counsel Eric Blaine stated the agreement had been reviewed, and no concerns had been identified. The item was placed on the July 15th meeting consent agenda for Board approval.

3. Library Code of Conduct

Requester:

Seth Crawford, County Commissioner

Presenter(s):

Seth Crawford, County Commissioner

Details: County Commissioner Seth Crawford attended the Work Session to bring up

concerns regarding potential constitutional issues with portions of the Library's Code of Conduct. Commissioner Seth Crawford recommended temporarily removing the recently adopted policy while staff review it further. He noted that Library Director Kim Bales agreed to compare policies from other rural counties and seek review by a constitutional law attorney before bringing a revised policy back for consideration. County Counsel Eric Blaine advised that the concerns appear to be limited to specific provisions, including language related to misconduct and photography or filming on library property. He suggested suspending only the questioned provisions rather than the entire Code of Conduct while the review is completed. Library Manager Kim Bales explained that the Code of Conduct has existed for many years and is intended to provide consistent expectations for patron behavior and maintain a safe environment for patrons and staff. She supported temporarily suspending only the provisions under review, emphasizing the importance of retaining the remainder of the policy until revisions can be completed.

Justin Alderman, Managing Editor of the Prineville Review, commented on the Library's Code of Conduct, stating that he had previously raised concerns with County officials regarding potential constitutional issues. He expressed concern that portions of the policy, including language related to misconduct and restrictions on photography and recording, were overly broad or vague and could conflict with established constitutional protections. Justin noted that after seeing no action by the Library Board of Trustees, he brought the matter to Commissioner Crawford and County Manager Will Van Vactor and requested the policy be reviewed and revised to avoid future legal issues while protecting constitutional rights.

The Board discussed retaining the Library's Code of Conduct while temporarily suspending only the two provisions identified as raising potential constitutional concerns. Commissioners agreed that the remaining provisions provide important guidance for maintaining a safe and respectful environment for patrons and staff. Justin Alderman, Prineville Review, clarified that his concerns were limited to the specific provisions regarding misconduct and photography/recording, not the entire policy. Library Manager Kim Bales confirmed she had forwarded the concerns to the Library Board of Trustees and had been awaiting legal guidance before proceeding. County Counsel recommended suspending paragraphs 3 and 8 of the Code of Conduct while a revised version is prepared and reviewed by a constitutional law attorney. Staff advised that legal review was already underway and, upon Board approval, the suspended provisions would be removed from posted and online versions of the Code of Conduct until revisions are completed.

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to suspend paragraph 3 and 8 of the Library Code of Conduct. Brian Barney seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye, Brian Barney votes Aye. Motion Passed 3-0.

County Counsel Eric Blaine clarified that the Library Board of Trustees has primary responsibility for adopting library conduct rules under authority delegated by the County. However, the County retains the ability to review and override those decisions

through the appeal process established by ordinance. Staff advised that a revised Code of Conduct draft would be brought to the Board of County Commissioners for review before being forwarded to the Library Board of Trustees with a recommendation.

4. Discuss - Comments on Proposed Rule – Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance; 2 CFR Part 200 (Docket OMB-2026-0034)

Requester:

Will Van Vactor, County Manager

Presenter(s):

Will Van Vactor, County Manager

Eric Blaine, County Counsel

Christina Haron, Crook County Finance Director

Details: County Manager Will Van Vactor; County Counsel Eric Blaine; Finance Director Christina Haron attended the Work Session and presented a discussion regarding proposed federal grant administration rule changes from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), noting the potential impact on counties nationwide. The Board discussed the opportunity to submit comments to OMB by July 13th and provide feedback to local congressional representatives. County Counsel and staff reviewed key proposed changes, noting that some provisions could provide benefits, such as encouraging multi-year grants, while others may create additional administrative burdens and uncertainty for counties. Concerns discussed included expanded federal authority to suspend or terminate grants, increased monitoring and reporting requirements for subrecipients, unclear definitions within the proposed rules, restrictions on cost recovery, and potential impacts on programs and facilities receiving federal funding. Christina noted that Crook County receives approximately \$6.5 million annually in federal funding across more than 30 programs, including public health, wildfire management, emergency preparedness, and other services. Additional administrative requirements or uncertainty in grant funding could significantly impact county resources and service delivery.

The Board agreed that the County should submit comments emphasizing the need for clearer definitions, reduced administrative burdens, and consideration of the impacts on smaller counties. A special meeting was scheduled for Friday, July 10th to review and finalize a draft comment letter. Staff will prepare the draft for Board consideration, incorporating specific concerns regarding grant termination and stop-work provisions, viewpoint neutrality requirements, and unclear policy conditions and cost disallowances.

Manager Report

None

Commissioner Updates

None

Public Comment

None

Executive Session

5. 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 10:05 AM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Breyanna Cupp, Executive Assistant