

Crook County Board of County Commissioners Minutes of July 22, 2026, Emergency Special Session

Be It Remembered that the Crook County Board of County Commissioners met in a Emergency Special Session on July 22, 2026, at 4:00 PM in the Administration Conference Room, located at 203 NE Court Street, Prineville, OR 97754.

Emergency Special 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, Sheriff John Gautney; Undersheriff Bill Elliott; Crook County Fire Chief Matt Smith; Road Superintendent Brad Haynes; Fairgrounds Manager Casey Daly; Assessment Technician Elsie Ray; GIS Analyst Senior Scott Henry; Chelsea Watson; Library Customer Service Specialist Stephanie Glisson; Leslie Young; Mary Schnetzky; Ashley; Crystal Irish; and members of the public.

The meeting was called to order at 04:00 PM.

Public Comment

None

Discussion

1. Declaration of a State of Emergency

Requester:

Will Van Vactor, County Manager

Presenter(s):

Will Van Vactor, County Manager

Details: County Administrator Will Van Vactor presented a request from the Sheriff's Office and Emergency Management to declare a local state of emergency in response to multiple active wildfires within Crook County and neighboring jurisdictions. He explained that the declaration is consistent with the County's Emergency Operations Plan and Oregon law and is intended to ensure emergency responders have the necessary authority to protect lives, property, and livelihoods during the ongoing wildfire response.

Fire Chief Matt Smith expressed support for the declaration, noting it could help streamline access to state and federal disaster assistance, including potential FEMA reimbursement, if significant losses occur. He highlighted the elevated wildfire threat due to existing fires near residential areas, red flag weather conditions, lightning, and unpredictable outflow winds that increase risks to firefighters and nearby communities.

Sheriff John Gautney confirmed the request was made in accordance with County Ordinance 2003-66 and the Emergency Operations Plan. He emphasized the importance of adopting the declaration proactively to better position the County and affected residents should major property losses occur.

Commissioners discussed the duration of the declaration. Will explained there is no set expiration date and recommended reassessing the emergency status in the coming weeks as conditions evolve and determining whether additional action, including a request to the Governor, may be warranted. Commissioners thanked emergency responders for their leadership and proactive efforts to protect the community.

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to proclaim a declaration of a state of emergency resolution 2026-34. Seth Crawford seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye. Motion Passed 2-0.

Public Comment

None

MOTION: Susan Hermreck moved to adjourn this special session. Seth Crawford seconded. No discussion. Seth Crawford votes Aye, Susan Hermreck votes Aye. Motion Passed 2-0.

There being no further business before the Board of Commissioners, the meeting was **adjourned at 04:09 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Breyanna Cupp, Executive Assistant