



Board of Commissioners
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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Tuesday, August 6, 2024
9:00 a.m.**

Present: Xanthippe Augerot, Chair; Nancy Wyse, Commissioner; Pat Malone, Commissioner; Vance Croney, County Counsel; Rachel McEneny, County Administrator; Rick Crager, Assistant County Administrator

**Elected
Official:** Jef Van Arsdall, Sheriff

Staff: Laurel Byer, Gary Stockhoff, Public Works; Andy Chuinard, April Holland, Rocío Muñoz, Health Services; Cory Grogan, Public Information Officer; Marilee Hoppner, Financial Services; Maura Kwiatkowski, Amanda Makepeace, Board staff; Adam Loerts, Information Technology; Tracy Martineau, Regan Orsborn, Ray Woothtakewahbitty, Human Resources; Sean McGuire, Sustainability Coordinator; Erika Milo, Board Recorder, Board Staff; Lacey Mollel, Christine Mosbaugh, Community Health Centers; Bailey Payne, Community Development; Undersheriff Don Rogers, Sheriff's Office

Guests: John Harris, Horsepower Productions; Christopher Jacobs, Corvallis-Benton Economic Development Office; Eliza Murphy, independent journalist; Brett Davis, Julie Jackson, Ian Macnab, Ginger Richardson, Republic Services; Sarah Edwardsson, Ken Eklund, Jim Fairchild, Marcy Follett, Joel Geier, Camille Hall, Kate Harris, Patricia Morrell, Carrie Norris, Robert Orton, Debbie Palmer, Lisa Pierson, Virginia Scott, Nancy Whitcombe, residents

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Augerot called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

2. Review & Approve Agenda

The following item was removed from the agenda:

5.2 Broadband Update – Adam Loerts, Information Technology;

3. Proclamation

3.1 Proclaiming August 4 to August 10, 2024 as Health Center Week, Proclamation #P2024-015 – Lacey Mollel, Christine Mosbaugh, Community Health Centers

Mollel and Mosbaugh read the Proclamation aloud.

Mollel announced the Twentieth Anniversary Celebration of Benton County's Community Health Centers on August 23, 2024. The event is open to the public at the Corvallis Senior Center.

Mosbaugh added Community Health will staff an information booth at the Albany and Corvallis Farmers Markets.

MOTION: Malone moved to adopt Proclamation #P2024-015 proclaiming August 4-10, 2024 as Community Health Center Week in Benton County. Wyse seconded the motion, which **carried 3-0.**

4. *Comments from the Public

Robert Orton, resident and former Republic Services (RS) employee, explained that RS suspended Orton's employment after Orton presented a video to the Board showing active methane leaks at Coffin Butte Landfill (CBL) and an email about contaminated soil at CBL. RS blasted and removed the soil one week later. Orton stated there were inconsistencies in records (see report for Agenda Item 5.1) made by RS employees Davis and Macnab. Orton has worked with non-profit organization Beyond Toxics, Senator Ron Wyden, Senator Jeff Merkley, and the Signals Network, a whistleblower support organization. Orton expressed frustration with the Board's actions related to RS, and stated the RS 2023 Hauling Report will not provide the facts.

*Virginia Scott, resident, stated methane is a greenhouse gas with 80 times the atmospheric warming power of carbon dioxide (CO₂). Although Oregon is working to decrease greenhouse gases, the State is not reducing methane emissions from CBL. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) opened a file on CBL due to public concern. The file led to an EPA inspection of CBL on June 22, 2022, which reported 61 leaks, including three leaks that exceeded the instrumentation maximum of 70,000 parts per million, an ignitable level of gas. Scott discussed wildfires exacerbated by climate change and the massive costs of firefighting, recovery, and loss of lives. The Oregon Health Authority has reported record numbers of heat-related deaths caused by climate change, including 14 deaths since July 5, 2024. Reducing methane release would be more effective than building resilience to the effects of methane releases. Methane release causes losses in human life and environmental quality, and incurs costs at the county, state, and global level. Regular fires at CBL consume resources that could be used to protect residents elsewhere. Ashes from CBL equipment fires can travel up to

five miles. Methane monitoring must be independent of RS, automated, and constant. The penalty for failing to address the leaks should be commensurate with actual costs to life, health, and livelihood.

{Exhibit 1: Virginia Scott Public Comment}

*Joel Geier, resident, listed problems at CBL, including fires, methane leaks, leachate disposal, union busting, and workplace safety violations. Geier noted indications of groundwater contamination, which affects Geier and other residents who rely on rural well water. Item 5.1 documents include a memorandum by Richardson. The document addressed arsenic, but, according to Geier, was full of factual errors, misstatements, and unrelated data. The memorandum claims arsenic is a common local issue and combines CBL data with the southern Willamette Valley, but CBL is in the mid-Willamette Valley. The memorandum claims that well MWS9 provides baseline data, but glosses over several years of leachate seepage into the well before it was sampled for arsenic. Also, two compliance boundary wells have frequently exceeded site-specific manganese limits in recent years. Geier stated the report's use of averages and generalized statements made the data hard to review. The memorandum and the data are inconsistent; the wells show fluctuating values and at least one well shows an increasing trend. Geier recommended the Board remand the report to RS and request an honest analysis of the data.

{Exhibit 2: Joel Geier Email 1}

{Exhibit 3: Joel Geier Email 2}

*Marcy Follett, resident, referenced a graph from healthcare company Kaiser-Permanente which shows that American life expectancy is decreasing for younger generations. Doctor Shiva [recorder's note: first name not provided] attributes this to government policies that affect human biology. Follett asked the Board to consider if the current system is working under power, profit, and control, or if it is a system working under truth, freedom, and health. Follett explained the evolution of waste management from Pioneer times to the present, including the addition of CBL. The site chosen for CBL was not ideal; there is extensive runoff (see Exhibit 4). During a 100-year flood, CBL could be underwater again. Follett concluded that the goal of RS is not to get rid of or recycle waste, but to make a profit.

{Exhibit 4: Marcy Follett 1973 Letter}

{Exhibit 5: Marcy Follett Life Expectancy Graph}

Kate Harris, resident, described numerous forest fires caused by lightning strikes over the past month in Benton County. In the past several months, two fires have started on CBL property, and two wildland fires occurred in summer 2023 within a mile of CBL. RS has assured the public that it quickly acts on threats to safety, but Harris stated this has not been the case. In the Fire Risk Assessment from the most recent Conditional Use

Permit (CUP) dated November 2023, after the two wildland fires, RS stated that the risk of wildfires coming on or off the CBL site is low, and that there was no history of wildfires in the CBL area. Harris mentioned a fire that happened at CBL, and a delayed response from dispatch that was due to previous instances where several members of the public had mistakenly called in methane stacks as a fire. In another quotation from the Fire Risk Assessment, RS states that surface fires are common at any landfill, and the key is to quickly identify and extinguish such fires. Harris questioned how RS identifies fires that occur after operating hours. Harris mentioned another after-hours fire near CBL that the City of Adair Village prevented from escalating. In an article about this fire, RS claimed to have robust monitoring and Emergency Management Systems in place, and stated the system worked as designed. Harris questioned how the community can continue to trust RS when the company has no after-hours fire monitoring to prevent catastrophe.

Carrie Norris, resident, lives near CBL, is currently impacted by CBL and would be impacted by the potential expansion. Norris stated the Board is obligated to represent the citizens of Benton County, instead of the profitability of RS. Norris expressed concern over increasing air quality issues around CBL, particularly on foggy winter days. Norris urged the Board to take reported methane leaks very seriously. Community members have concerns about water quality and fire risk. Norris stated the foliage surrounding the area is tinder-dry, so a fire could start at CBL and move to the two main evacuation routes from the valley. Norris commented that RS is not interested in fair play with the community.

*Lisa Pierson, resident, lives five miles from CBL. Pierson provided background on CBL fees for Benton County self-haulers, which were set at flat fees in 2020. The current fee for residents who self-deliver household waste to CBL is \$36.75. On July 27, 2024, Pierson drove a truck to CBL with a load of household garbage. Although Pierson mentioned being a Benton County resident to a CBL employee, Pierson was charged more than \$36.75, and Pierson's receipt was marked as a Linn County resident. When Pierson asked a CBL employee to correct the bill, the employee stated Pierson's vehicle was not residential, hence Pierson did not receive the Benton County resident rate. Pierson asked why this vehicle was not considered residential. CBL staff replied the truck used to be a U-Haul rental vehicle, which CBL does not consider to be residential. Pierson stated the fee structure says nothing about vehicle type. Pierson emailed the Board about the incident on July 28, 2024, and spoke to a CBL manager on July 30, 2024. The manager confirmed that CBL staff charge the commercial rate to anyone in a vehicle that staff deem non-residential. Pierson explained that many students, among others, have likely been overcharged as a result.

{Exhibit 6: Lisa Pierson Receipts}

{Exhibit 7: Lisa Pierson Written Account}

In the Zoom meeting chat, Geier added that it would be helpful to clarify whether the CBL Franchise Agreement refers to Benton County 'residents' or 'residential-sized'

vehicles. If a rural resident uses a large pickup to haul household trash, Geier felt the criterion should be based on the weight of the trash after accounting for the tare weight of the vehicle.

*Rana Foster, resident, submitted prior written comment which expressed concerns regarding CBL's expansion request, particularly the use of cell 6 6A and related safety issues such as water leachate, traffic impacts, and odor containment Foster requested more information about the placement of a membrane cover at CBL and stated the County provided insufficient notice to the public about the topic of Agenda Item 5.1.

{Exhibit 8: Rana Foster Written Comment}

Camille Hall, resident, requested that the Board and the Planning Commission spend time at CBL every week. Although CBL is far enough from the City of Corvallis to be out of sight for most people, it shapes the lives of residents in Benton and surrounding Counties. Benton County produces approximately 10% of the solid waste delivered to CBL. Hall asked the Board to protect Benton County residents' health, safety, and livability. Effective systems and staffing are needed to monitor CBL operations and enforce agreement terms. Benton County has an opportunity to correct and clarify RS's conduct and interpretations of the Franchise Agreement. Benton County residents should be the Board's partners in securing accountability in CBL daily operations.

*Nancy Whitcombe, resident, expressed discontent with County staff and elected officials' interactions with Benton County residents and volunteers, citing public insults and disparagement. When asked why this has happened, community members are told that such events are in the past and to let bygones be bygones. Whitcombe urged the County to acknowledge that mistakes have been made and resolve to do better in the future.

{Exhibit 9: Nancy Whitcombe Comment from Zoom Meeting Chat}

*Ken Eklund, resident, DSAC chair, stated the 2023 CBL Annual Report for Item 5.1 does not mention that in 2023, CBL was subject to an EPA enforcement effort regarding methane leaks, following an on-site EPA investigation in June 2022. Eklund stated that corporate annual reports must abide by laws and mandatory disclosures. The Item 5.1 Report is not regulated in this way, only regulated by the Board in terms of what will be accepted or not. Eklund quoted Michael Regan, the EPA's Head Administrator, as saying during 2024 public hearings that CBL "is an active enforcement situation, so I can't speak to that without betraying the confidence or the legal obligations I have, but . . . we are coordinating with the State of Oregon, it's an active case, and we are laser-focused on this case." Eklund added that the Environmental Monitoring section of the Item 5.1 Report omitted this and other information on Federal and State action on CBL. Because of these omissions and other staff and community concerns, Eklund requested that the Board reject the Item 5.1 2023 CBL Annual Report and send it back to be rewritten, including methane data.

In the Zoom meeting chat, Eklund later added that he had requested all CBL's quarterly air quality testing reports for the past several years from RS; that request had been acknowledged, but not fulfilled.

{Exhibit 10: Ken Eklund Email}

Debbie Palmer, resident, urged the Board not to accept the Item 5.1 Report, because:

1. RS misrepresented its obligation to provide disposal services to Benton County. The 2023 Coffin Butte Landfill Annual Report states, "An approved CUP would ensure continuity of disposal services," and "We need to begin permitting and constructing new disposal cells now to ensure continuous, safe, reliable, and affordable disposal of the County's waste." [Recorder's note: both quotations are from report page 6/ agenda packet page 27.] Palmer referenced the County's Franchise Agreement with RS, citing an existing obligation for RS to provide continuous disposal of County waste through 2040. The RS space crisis is self-made and irrelevant to the company's obligation to the County; instead, the RS crisis is connected to a higher profit margin. Ninety percent of the waste entering CBL originates outside of Benton County.
2. RS is diverting the Board's attention from CBL's chronic methane leaks by providing information on well quantity and gas collection system costs. That information fails to address gas leaks into the atmosphere and climate change. The number of wells CBL drilled is 25% higher than industry standard, and CBL is in a terrible location. Palmer concluded that RS is not a strong partner, and the deeds of RS do not match the words.

5. Work Session

5.1 *Republic Services (RS) Presentation of the 2023 Coffin Butte Landfill and Pacific Region Compost Annual Report – Ginger

Richardson, Director of Public Affairs, Brett Davis, Operations Manager, Ian Macnab, Environmental Manager, Julie Jackson, Municipal Manager, Republic Services; Bailey Payne, Solid Waste Coordinator, Community Development

Augerot noted that past practice was for the Disposal Site Advisory Committee (DSAC) to review the RS Annual Report before recommending that the Board accept it. Since the County has just re-established DSAC, which has held only one meeting, Augerot preferred to hear the report but leave the record open and not accept the report until DSAC has had time to review it.

Wyse and Malone indicated agreement.

Jackson provided highlights from the RS 2023 Coffin Butte Landfill and Pacific Region Compost Annual Report [see packet]. RS goals for 2030 include reducing absolute scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions by 35%. RS will send the Board a new sustainability report [exhibit 12]. In 2023, RS donated more than \$46,000 of cash and in-kind services to the local community. RS also provides recycling education programs.

RS anticipates an increase in recycling tonnage and new materials being recycled in 2025-2026. Benton County is making more landfill waste compared to 2022-23.

Augerot asked if RS's company-wide goal of 35% reduction in greenhouse gases could be achieved in Benton County.

Jackson confirmed that was the objective. RS has been ahead of the industry in gas collection systems and continues to explore uses for landfill gas. RS is transitioning to electric fleets to reduce emissions, with electric garbage truck trials expected to begin in late August 2024 in the Cities of Bend, Salem, and Portland.

Wyse requested Benton County data on how RS would meet and/or work towards the 2030 goals. Wyse mentioned that most rental and multi-family housing in the City of Corvallis lacks organics collection or glass recycling.

Jackson hoped Benton County could address this in the SMMP, because those services are potentially available to all residents. RS worked with Corvallis to provide an organic collections cart, along with glass collection to multi-tenant units. However, property managers/owners often cancel services due to cross-contamination of waste and recycling. Multi-tenant recycling and waste recovery is a major focus of the state-level Recycling Modernization Act (RMA), and RS is discussing promotional ideas with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

Malone asked why Benton County's recovery rates were lower than the statewide average.

Jackson did not know, stating that nothing materially had changed in recycling. Recovery went down statewide. Additional materials will be recyclable soon. Except for Portland, recycling rules will be the same statewide.

Malone asked what the community could do to keep materials out of CBL. Malone hoped to see a proposal to encourage Benton County to reduce the amount of construction debris sent to CBL.

Jackson concurred. Much construction debris from Oregon State University is hauled to a sorting facility.

Augerot asked if the recovery rate in the report included the efforts of other recyclers.

Jackson affirmed that if other entities report recycling to DEQ, RS includes that in the report.

Richardson noted that when presenting the 2022 Report to the Board in February 2024, RS pledged to increase public transparency about events at CBL. EPA enforcement at CBL was not mentioned in the 2023 Report because the document was submitted just before the first community meeting on the CUP application. RS was not aware of

remarks about CBL made by EPA Administrator Michael Reagan on May 1, 2024 during a public hearing, and was not aware of a possible EPA enforcement action against CBL until a field representative of Senator Jeff Merkley informed RS on June 28, 2024. RS still has not received any official EPA notification that CBL is subject to an enforcement action. RS will inform the Board immediately if so notified.

McEneny asked whether RS had a government affairs consultant in Washington, DC, and if so, was the consultant contacted about this matter by any Senators.

Richardson replied that RS had lobbyists in Washington, DC. The RS air quality expert and legal department did watch the hearing after being contacted by Merkley's field representative. Responding to a question from Wyse, Richardson confirmed the methane emissions in question were from 2022.

Wyse commented that RS was thus aware of the issue. Wyse requested that future reports acknowledge past RS mistakes and describe remediation steps RS had taken.

Richardson agreed to do so and added that RS wrote a methane memorandum between the 2022 and 2023 Reports.

Macnab shared statistics on CBL gas emissions and capacity from the report, followed by key points of CBL's expansion application. The current proposal requests 50% less space than the 2021 proposal, and includes land improvements. CBL will expand its gas collection and control system, which is expected to be complete by late August 2024.

Macnab described RS emissions testing and new developments in monitoring technologies. CBL is currently monitored by an onsite technician using an EPA method. Barometric pressure, weather, and temperature cause CBL emissions to fluctuate daily.

Macnab summarized current CBL permits and groundwater monitoring. The closed landfill section is CBL's oldest portion; this waste was moved from unlined areas to lined cells. Any residual impacts will dissipate over time now that the source of potential contamination is gone. Several wells on the east side exceeded acceptable levels of arsenic. Macnab discussed arsenic trends with the Board in February 2024. The arsenic is naturally occurring from rock and does not seem to be increasing over time. All results in 2023 were below standards, and DEQ approved the monitoring report.

Macnab explained that CBL receives domestic wastewater containing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAs). DEQ and EPA are developing regulations for PFAs treatment and testing. RS works with wastewater disposal partners in Corvallis and Salem as regulations evolve. Macnab described the multi-layered CBL liner and leachate collection systems.

Davis reported on CBL worker safety, including two inspections by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which found two violations listed as 'serious': improperly secured oxygen-acetylene canisters, and a slip hazard due to moisture. RS

immediately rectified these issues. During one investigation, there were claims of contaminated soil near the workshop due to employees washing equipment nearby. RS later demolished the shop and removed the top 12 to 18 inches of soil; samples were independently tested, but no contamination was found. Another concern was the impact of methane or dust on CBL employees. RS hired an independent industrial hygienist to test air quality and methane exposure. The results will show whether employees need additional personal protective equipment.

Davis showed sources of CBL waste, of which about 80% comes from the Willamette Valley region. RS is required to cover the waste with soil daily and is looking into opportunities to bring in soil.

Macnab described the Environmental Trust Fund (ETF), which was created in the early 2000s to safeguard long-term environmental health at the site. The Benton County Franchise Agreement outlines permitted uses of the ETF.

Macnab explained that DEQ and EPA require RS to set aside funds (currently \$19.2 million) for CBL closure and post-closure maintenance (currently \$6 million). The landfill owner must care for the landfill for at least 30 years after closure, but this period can be extended at DEQ's discretion.

Jackson discussed elements of the upcoming RMA. In partnership with regional counties and producer responsibility organizations, RS has issued surveys about recycling operations. RS will work with Benton County to plan expanded recycling depots (commingled recycling processing facilities) at CBL and the Corvallis Recycling Center. The depots will collect additional materials at no cost to the consumer. RS is waiting for DEQ to develop education and outreach materials that can be used statewide. RS is considering ways to revive the Master Recycler Program.

Wyse asked for clarification about the 25 odor complaints against RS. [Recorder's note: see Exhibit 11 slide titled "Landfill Operations: Worker Safety, Odor, and Daily Cover".]

Richardson stated that in April 2024, RS received a spreadsheet from Payne documenting email and voicemail complaints that Benton County received from late 2022 through early 2024 regarding CBL odor, methane, and fire risks. In some cases, multiple complaints were made by the same individual. Richardson did not realize that the spreadsheet should be included in the annual report and offered to do so in future.

Wyse requested that the complaint information be included. Wyse also noted that page 32 of the packet, under "Title Five Air Monitoring Report," states CBL did not receive any odor complaints from the public in 2023. Wyse took this to mean RS did not receive any public complaints directly, because the following paragraph states that DEQ gave RS nine odor complaints from the public. Wyse asked for that information to also be included in future reports.

Jackson shared there is no single CBL odor reporting system, and DEQ reports can be delayed by months. To become more responsive to complaints, RS added an odor reporting portal to the company website, which immediately emails several staff to follow up.

Augerot noted that one of DSAC's key roles is to assemble these complaints.

Payne mentioned that DSAC was assembling reports from 2021-2023. Payne also contacted DEQ about complaints the agency received.

Augerot observed that data about the CBL methane collection system would be more informative if shown in proportion to the amount of methane produced or waste deposited. Augerot expressed frustration that RS promises of biogas plant expansion at CBL had not produced results. Augerot asked about flare improvements.

Macnab stated the new enclosed flare, which will replace the two existing flares, should start August 6, 2024.

Malone and Macnab discussed the need to minimize organic waste and construction debris going to CBL.

Wyse asked about the discrepancy between the report's description of CBL's robust gas collection system and CBL's 2022 methane leaks.

Macnab explained it is typical to find leaks during surface emission monitoring. The EPA does not establish methane limits, but rather provides monitoring method requirements. Anything over 500 parts per million is a finding, but there is no level of exceedance. RS finds leaks and remediates as needed.

Wyse requested more information on remediation for the 2022 methane emissions.

Jackson replied the EPA visited CBL in June 2024 to perform another surface monitoring survey, which found about 40 exceedances. RS seeks further steps to address exceedances, such as final-capping part of CBL.

Augerot found it disturbing that during the 2023 EPA survey, the RS technician used a monitoring protocol that was not in compliance with EPA protocol. Augerot expressed skepticism of RS's self-monitored data and analysis. Examining this material is another role of DSAC. Augerot requested more background data on the sites RS is using to compare arsenic levels at CBL. Richardson's memorandum did not address why arsenic levels are significantly higher at CBL than in local rock. The lack of data from early years creates a false baseline. These discrepancies generate community skepticism.

Macnab noted that the complete technical data was found in RS's annual DEQ monitoring report to the Board.

Wyse and Augerot requested that RS submit the DEQ report to the Board as a Consent Calendar item.

Malone asked RS to clearly present self-hauling fees on the CBL website for the community.

Jackson agreed to ensure the fee information matches the Franchise Agreement.

Malone suggested that RS provide quarterly reports to the Board.

Richardson expressed willingness to do so, and also offered to send additional memoranda on specific topics.

Augerot recommended that the Board and staff first discuss the matter further, taking the cost of additional staff time into consideration.

Wyse shared that the Board received several questions about CBL from the public, some of which could be addressed by DSAC. Multiple neighbors of CBL expressed concerns about fire risks. Wyse asked if CBL employees monitor fires after hours.

Davis replied that RS relies on the City of Adair Village's emergency response. Davis offered to contact other partner landfills about available monitoring technology.

Wyse asked whether RS would consider notifying neighbors of future incidents at CBL.

Macnab replied emergency response handles notifications.

Wyse encouraged RS to consider notifications in future.

Richardson mentioned RS's new "E-Blast" system, which updates users on important CBL news, and asked how often RS should communicate with community members.

Augerot felt emergency notices should come from emergency managers, not RS, but emphasized a need for better collaboration between emergency managers and RS, establishing a protocol for communication with community members.

Wyse asked how to sign up for RS notifications.

Richardson replied people can sign up through the website www.coffinbuttelandfill.com or email grough@republicservices.com.

Wyse summarized her requests to RS:

1. Describe the progress is RS making locally towards its 2030 greenhouse gas reduction goals.

2. Acknowledge 2022 methane emissions in the CBL report and describe what has been or will be done to correct the issue and prevent it in future.
3. Clarify CBL odor complaints and origins.
4. Add the 25 complaints listed and the gist of Payne's complaint spreadsheet to the report.

McEneny asked if RS uses drones at CBL for purposes such as measuring methane emissions or monitoring for fires.

MacNab replied that drones are not used at CBL.

Richardson discussed drone flyover air quality mapping services which RS has used at some of its other landfills. However, flyovers only capture a point in time. There is not a continuous monitoring drone approach.

{Exhibit 11: Republic Services Annual Report Presentation 2024}

{Exhibit 12: 2023 Republic Services Sustainability Report}

{Exhibit 13 Recycling Modernization Act Flyer from DEQ}

Chair Augerot recessed the meeting at 11:14 a.m. and reconvened at 11:26 a.m.

5.2 Broadband Update – Adam Loerts, Information Technology; Joseph Franell, Rural Prosperity Partners

This item was removed from the agenda.

5.3 Corvallis-Benton Economic Development Office (CBEDO) Update – Christopher Jacobs, Corvallis-Benton Economic Development Office

Jacobs presented highlights from the revised Corvallis-Benton County Economic Development Plan. Jacobs' team and the Economic Development Coalition conducted a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis. To illustrate CBEDO's Strategy 1: "utilize tools such as multi-unit property tax exemptions, enterprise zones, and opportunity zones," Jacobs shared the percentage of change in Benton County taxable assessed values in 2019-2023.

Augerot asked if there is a need to research new geographic areas and zones for new companies to take advantage of the types of incentives.

Jacobs affirmed. Strategy 1 Goal 1.b is to "manage and encourage adoption of tools for mixed use and industrial development and housing, and assist with marketing those opportunities." Jacobs showed a list of currently used economic development tools. Any Benton County jurisdiction could adopt additional tools, such as a Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption Program. The City of Adair Village was working on an Urban Renewal

District, which could eventually help with housing. Adoption of additional Enterprise Zone Districts could also help many development projects.

Goal 1.c is to “effectively manage the Airport Industrial Park (AIP) and market development opportunities to encourage new construction.” Jacobs’ team is following the adoption of an annexation budget, and regularly works on the application and updates the Land Development Code to fit market demand. The project should be completed before the end of this Fiscal Year. Staff also finished the AIP Wetland Delineation Report, which showed a significant reduction in the estimated quantity of wetlands compared to projections in the local wetland inventory. With that plus 17 banked wetland credits, areas south of South Airport Avenue will be better positioned for investments in new construction.

Augerot asked if those properties come with any tax abatement.

Jacobs replied that the properties are not within an eligible zone.

Malone mentioned an Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) grant program for airports, ports, and railways. Benton County received a proposal from Corvallis Transportation Services Supervisor Lisa Scherf for about \$800,000 for runway improvements. Malone asked if Jacobs was involved in the work.

Jacobs confirmed.

Malone noted the proposal did not succeed, but asked to be kept informed about future transportation projects earlier in the process.

Jacobs described work on Strategy 2: “create a business registry for all commercial and industrial properties in Benton County and use this information to track key data such as vacancy rate or employment by sector and communicate more effectively”. CBEDO has made progress on creating a registry. Because most vacant properties are not located within industrial zones, Benton County is in a weak position in terms of vacant buildings that meet the needs of companies looking to expand or relocate to the area.

Strategy 2 Goal 2.b is to “support Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) and provide grant and loan opportunities.” Jacobs reported on touchpoints: 19% concerned the Food Hub, and 17% concerned grant or loan applications. For Goals 2.c and 2.d, Jacobs has met often with staff at the Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Institute at HP Incorporated, Oregon State University Tech Hub, and Deputy Cristina Killingsworth from the Economic Development Administration (EDA).

Augerot noted many businesses in rural Benton County are home-based and thus not zoned for business activity, and asked if CBEDO accesses the rural business list through Community Development.

Jacobs confirmed that would be one method, but felt the current list provided a good picture of the situation. In November 2024, the City of Corvallis will step up in the Main Street Program to Affiliate Main Street status, and will try to partner with smaller cities regarding a role in the program. Partners could include the Cities of Monroe, Philomath, Adair Village, or the Community of Alsea. Jacobs discussed other organizations CBEDO meets with regularly.

Jacobs explained that the Food Hub grants received ten applications requesting a total of \$1.7 million, but only \$495,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funding is still available. The selection committee will meet in about a week to score the applications.

Jacobs discussed Oregon Prospector, the repository for all commercial and industrial properties, which provides about two dozen leads to CBEDO annually. CBEDO works to keep Oregon Prospector updated, reducing the number of inactive properties and collaborating with property owners to fill in gaps of information that have limited the organization's ability to respond to site selection opportunities. CBEDO brings a Business Oregon staffer on BRE visits when those resources could be useful. CBEDO can access State programs to help emerging technology businesses grow.

Jacobs discussed Strategy 5: "support regional economic development planning and workforce development efforts with partners such as Oregon Works and Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments." These organizations help companies find skilled labor via national searches. Jacobs asked the Board to help CBEDO prioritize its goals and noted the report identifies several priority redevelopment sites.

Augerot asked about the status of downtown Corvallis funds and the new downtown organization.

Jacobs responded that the Corvallis Chamber of Commerce transferred its remaining economic improvement funds to the City of Corvallis, which will transfer the funds to a successor organization. Once a spending plan is developed and other qualifications are met, the Main Street accreditation will be transferred to the successor. Jacobs works with the potential organization regularly.

Malone asked about Jacobs' team members.

Jacobs replied that recently hired Economic Development Officer Lily Bender has had a transformative effect on the Food Hub project. Bender's previous work at the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) enabled a partnership which offers free SBDC support for people working on grant applications. Bi-lingual support also helps engage Spanish-speaking community members.

Malone requested that CBEDO offer a second round of the low-income electric bicycle grant program.

Jacobs expressed support for the program but needed to find funding, and was discussing the program with utility company Pacific Power.

5.4 Benton County Facilities Update – Gary Stockhoff, Public Works

Stockhoff reported that the Crisis Center walls will be constructed soon and the slab was installed. Stockhoff will talk to BP, the original owner of the site, to try to recoup some remediation costs. Benton County retained PDS Engineering and Environmental LLC, a consultant who will help finish the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) component for the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) funding, which is the last piece of funding. The project was on budget.

Stockhoff discussed the new Courthouse. The County has redone the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Army Corps of Engineers and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), including one clarification that SHPO requested. Both the Corps and SHPO must sign the proposal. Hopefully this can be resolved before the end of August 2024. Construction will begin in approximately September 2024. Stockhoff described the permitting timeline with the City of Corvallis. Staff are still waiting for the signed Master Funding Agreement with the State, and are working on the Phase Agreement regarding cost-sharing. The County has been proactive in advancing the process. Staff will soon plat the parcel and the road, another City requirement. Stockhoff confirmed the project was still on budget. Fortunately, costs have stabilized.

Malone and Stockhoff discussed holding a ground-breaking ceremony.

Stockhoff stated the County was working through design development on the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), then would prepare construction plans. Once the County approves and issues the permits, the project should start in late spring or early summer of 2026. The project was on budget.

Augerot requested an update on the Monroe Health Center site.

Stockhoff said Juvenile Services Director Paul Wallsinger and Health Services staff discussed a tentative design and project concept around 3,000 square feet. The County seeks an additional \$1.2-1.4 million for the project. Once funding is secured, an architect is needed for plans, along with the NEPA information.

6. Consent Calendar

6.1 Approval of the May 21, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Wyse moved to approve the Consent Calendar of August 6, 2024. Malone seconded the motion, which **carried 3-0.**

7. Old Business

7.1 Modification of Deposit Requirements for Alsea Service District Water Users, Order No. D2024-049 – Gary Stockhoff, Public Works; Marilee Hoppner, Financial Services

Stockhoff stated that in 2013, Community of Alsea bylaws were modified to require Benton County to collect a renters' deposit. This proved difficult for Financial Services to process, so staff requested that the deposits be discontinued.

Counsel suggested Stockhoff attach the list of residents who would receive refunds.

Hoppner confirmed the deposits were more difficult for the Finance Department to manage than the revenue was worth.

MOTION: Malone moved to adopt Order #D2024-049. Wyse seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

7.2 Initiation of Proceedings to Transfer Jurisdiction of the Following County Road to the City of Albany: NW Gibson Hill Road, Order No. D2024-051 – Gary Stockhoff, Public Works

Stockhoff stated the County was initiating the NW Gibson Hill Road transfer to the City of Albany. The Public Hearing will occur September 3, 2024; Albany will have a similar process.

Counsel asked how many more North Albany roads would need to be transferred.

Stockhoff replied that some roads remain, but funding becomes an issue for the maintenance required before a transfer.

Augerot requested the list of roads.

MOTION: Malone moved to adopt Order #D2024-051, In the Matter of Initiating Proceedings to Transfer Jurisdiction of the Following County Road to the City of Albany, Oregon: Northwest Gibson Hill Rd (County Rd #04910), and to set a Public Hearing date for September 3, 2024. Wyse seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

7.3 Permission to Apply for One-time Funding for the Coordinated Homeless Response Office (CHRO) – April Holland, Health Services

Holland described two one-time funding opportunities in support of CHRO's Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool (FHSP) programs. The first is the Intercommunity Health Network (IHN) Delivery System Transformation (DST) grant. The County's application through the CHRO will propose a landlord engagement and incentive initiative. Holland described components of the proposed program and FHSP work that is already in

progress. The grant would help fund a program coordinator, a housing navigator, and some communications outreach work. Funding can last 12 to 24 months. The contracts are expected to execute in January 2025, and funds must be distributed by the end of 2025.

The second opportunity is from the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department and is tied to House Bill 5019. The pilot program is called Housing 360 and focuses on housing homeless or unsheltered people with behavioral health needs, and reducing racial disparities in that population. The funding complements the existing work and plans of the County. While this is one-time funding, experience gained from the project can be part of future strategies.

MOTION: Wyse moved to approve the request from the Health Department to apply for the InterCommunity Health Network Coordinated Care Organization Delivery System Transformation Grant and the Oregon Housing and Community Services Housing 360 Pilot Initiative. Malone seconded the motion, **which carried 3-0.**

7.4 Statement of Support Regarding Flavored Tobacco Restrictions to Promote Youth Nicotine Addiction Prevention, Resolution #R2024-022 – Andy Chuinard, Tobacco Prevention Coordinator; Sara Hartstein, Public Health Director; Rocío Muñoz, Health Equity Coordinator; Health Services

Chuinard referenced the May 2024 presentation on tobacco prevention efforts, Benton County's administration of the Tobacco Retail License, the current landscape of nicotine products, and the impacts of those products on youth addiction. A new generation of children and youth have become addicted to nicotine through the use of vaping and flavored tobacco products. Chuinard described the negative health effects of nicotine on young people, and shared Oregon's nicotine user demographics.

MOTION: Malone moved to adopt Resolution #R2024-022 declaring the Board of Commissioners' support for the restriction of flavored tobacco products. Wyse seconded the motion, **which carried 3-0.**

8. Other

No other business was discussed.

9. Announcements

Malone praised a new poster showing many Benton County parks and natural areas. Malone encouraged staff to attach a map to future posters.

Augerot suggested adding a Quick Response (QR) code to take interested parties to the County website.

10. Adjournment

Chair Augerot adjourned the meeting at 12:28 p.m.



Nancy Wyse, 2025 Chair



Erika Milo, Recorder



Rachel Bulder, Board Meetings Coordinator

* NOTE: Items denoted with an asterisk do NOT have accompanying written materials in the meeting packet.