



Board of Commissioners

Office: (541) 766-6800

Fax: (541) 766-6893

4500 SW Research Way

Corvallis, Oregon 97333

bentoncountyor.gov

MINUTES OF THE MEETING BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MARCH 11, 2025, 9 AM

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

Elected Official: Jef Van Arsdall, Sheriff

Staff: Erika Milo, Board Recorder; Rachel Bulder, Maura Kwiatkowski, Board Staff; Bailey Payne, Community Development; Sean McGuire, Sustainability; Linda McGirl, Information Technology; Carly Fredericks, Anne Thwaits, Communications; Gary Stockhoff, Public Works; James Morales, Records and Elections.

Guests: John Harris, Horsepower Productions; Heather White, Neighbor-to-Neighbor; Todd Anderson, Carolyn Ashton, Teagan Moran, Richard Riggs, Otilia Schreuder, OSU Extension Service; Connor Reiten, PNGC Power; Christopher Jacobs, Corvallis Benton County Economic Development Office

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Wyse called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM and introductions were made.

2. Review and Approve Agenda

The following items were added to the agenda under Section 11, Other:

- 11.1 Community Member Concerns Regarding House Bill 3419 Requiring Rules Study Related to Water – Nancy Wyse, Board Chair
- 11.2 Letter of Support for the Corvallis Daytime Drop-In Center (CDDC) – Gabe Shepherd, Commissioner

- 11.3 Order No. D2025-041, Appointments to the Environment and Natural Resources Advisory Committee – Nancy Wyse, Chair
- 11.4 Written Testimony Regarding House Bill 3518, County Assessment Function Funding Assistance (CAFFA) Grant – Rachel McEneny, County Administrator
- 11.5 Willamette Criminal Justice Commission (WCJC) Lay Member Positions – Gabe Shepherd, Commissioner

3. Announcements

No announcements were made.

4. Proclamation

- 4.1 Proclaiming March 2025 as Women's History Month, Proclamation No. P2025-003** – Nancy Wyse, Board Chair

Wyse read the Proclamation aloud.

MOTION: Malone moved to adopt Proclamation No. P2025-003, proclaiming March 2025 as Women's History Month in Benton County. Shepherd seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

5. Comments from the Public

Heather White, Neighbor-to-Nighbor (NTN). NTN serves Linn, Benton, Marion, and Yamhill Counties with mediation services. NTN is preparing for another grant application to collaborate with the County. NTN does victim offender mediation, restorative justice conversations, small claims and landlord-tenant. NTN works with police departments in the cities to do code enforcement and other neighbor-to-neighbor conflict resolution. NTN provides training and works in schools. NTN uses volunteer mediators, so the grant funding amount requested is relatively small. White indicated that, in the near future, the County will see a request for authorization from the University of Oregon. White expressed a desire for NTN to collaborate directly with Benton County as opposed to through the University of Oregon College of Law.

6. Work Session

- 6.1 Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Annual Report to the Board** – Richard Riggs, Carolyn Ashton, Todd Anderson, Teagan Moran, and Otilia Schreuder, OSU Extension Service

Ashton introduced as a 4-H faculty member at OSU Extension Service and the local liaison with the Board of Commissioners and County Administrator. Ashton introduced Small Farms Program and Horticulture and Master Gardener Programs.

Anderson indicated the Small Farms Program serves Benton, Lane, and Polk Counties. Anderson introduced other staff and indicated they work as a regional team to serve growers throughout area.

Moran works with land stewards and local operators to explore what is possible; innovation for farmers and ranchers, solving problems and addressing challenges, bridging services from the University to the community, and connecting farmers and ranchers to each other. The podcast “For the Love of Farming” features Benton County farmers and ranchers and tells their stories. Many farmers starting today do not come from farming backgrounds. They do not have access to historical information, especially regarding the more personal side of farming and farming is deeply personal. The podcast is an opportunity to hear those stories, those voices, and to gain access to farmers in our community and get people onto farms. In 2024, there were 12 on-farm events, 17 workshops, 21 meetings, a Women Farmers Equipment Workshop.

Anderson discussed the technical support services provided to the general public, including a wide variety of workshops – winter/fall soil preparation, disease management, and annual pruning. In addition to workshops, OSU Extension also provides general technical assistance to the public.

Moran discussed a new collaboration between Linn and Benton Counties. Food access groups have been led by the County Health Department for many years. The new focus is a value chain coordination group, which looks at soft skills to make hard infrastructure work and to move active collaborative projects forward. The group will meet quarterly, and partners include the Benton and Linn County Health Departments, Corvallis-Benton County Economic Development Office, Natural Resource Conservation Office, private farm businesses, grocery stores, and the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

Moran noted that OSU Extension also partners with Benton County on the Area Wildfire Protection Plan, and Moran has served on the grant committee for the past four years. The grant program provides small grants for implementation of non-lethal wildlife deterrents. Grant funding goes directly to local farmers and ranchers and helps prevent the destruction of wildlife.

Another OSU Extension initiative is the Farmer Networks Program, which connects farmers and land stewards. There are several networks, including place-based regional networks, a statewide military veterans’ network, the women's farmers network, dry farming networks, and several other sub-groups. The program helps build community

resilience by creating groups that develop solutions to their unique situation. A recent survey indicated 91 percent of those in a network said the network increased their skills and knowledge, and 23 percent learned about a grant and received funding. Recent events include the Military Veteran Farmers Annual Winter Gathering; and in Benton County, the annual small farm conference, attended by approximately 1,000 farmers and ranchers. This year's theme was Resilience.

Malone reported having benefited from OSU Extension when starting a tree farm.

Shepherd asked about the podcast schedule, and Moran indicated a new podcast is uploaded every 30 to 60 days. There are currently 18 podcasts uploaded.

Schreuder discussed the Master Gardener Program. The purpose of the program is to train people to go out in communities and provide education. By supplementing staff with these volunteers, more projects can be supported. In 2024, there were 89 certified master gardeners and 50 others who were active but not certified. Nineteen trainees/interns graduated from the program in 2024. Projects include school gardens, public demonstration gardens, plant clinics, a public seed library, a Seed to Supper Class (garden with minimal resources), free gardening classes, and plant sales. In 2024, Master Gardeners had 5,381 direct public contacts, and 2,045 pounds of food were donated from the Benton County demonstration garden to local food banks. All food from the demonstration garden is donated. For 2025, goals include more County-centered training programs, a home horticulture needs assessment, and an emerald ash borer class.

Shepherd mentioned having seen presentations about Master Gardener funding sources and noted that some is federal funding. Where specifically does that federal funding come from, has funding been cut, or could funding be at risk? Ashton indicated some funding comes from SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) Education and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. Ashton will provide the Commissioners with additional information regarding program funding.

Moran indicated some of the core funding comes from the Federal Beginning Farmer and Rancher Program. Moran reported working with nonprofit organizations, which are at the highest risk currently and are losing staff due to funding cuts. It is a shifting situation; and sufficient information is not yet available to identify appropriate steps.

Shepherd reported having read a recent media report indicating the US Department of Agriculture cut over \$1 billion in funding for schools buying food from local farmers and asked whether OSU Extension was involved in that program. Ashton indicated Extension does have a farm-to-school program. It is currently too early to project any impacts, but several farmers Ashton has spoken with are optimistic about their contracts for the program.

Malone noted the State pays the salaries of OSU Extension employees. Several years ago, Benton County transitioned from General Fund support for the Extension to a voter-approved County Service District (CSD) model. Seventy-five percent of voters were in favor of establishing the CSD, which is a positive indicator of community support.

Ashton expressed appreciation for the County's and public support for the Agriculture Extension District.

6.2 Pacific Northwest Generating Cooperative (PNGC) Power Landfill Gas Overview – Connor Reiten, Chief Member Services Officer, PNGC Power

Reiten presented on the PNGC onsite projects at Coffin Butte Landfill (CBL) that have generated electricity over the last 30 years. PNGC generates, transmits, and contracts for transmission. The end use and distribution of electricity is done by local cooperatives. PNGC is a public utility that serves 25 cooperatives in the Pacific Northwest. PNGC is owned by those cooperatives, and the cooperatives are owned by their members. One long-time owner is Consumer Power in Benton County, hence PNGC's involvement with CBL. PNGC is currently experiencing significant growth driven by major population growth in rural areas across the west, (approximately 450,000 meters), including significant growth in Oregon, Southeast Washington, Western Montana, and Idaho.

PNGC's partnership with CBL began in 1995 and has been generating electricity since then. CBL produces the biogas, which PNGC uses to generate electricity. PNGC built three generating machines at CBL in 1995; it was a small project but cutting edge at the time. Using gas for renewables was considered best practice even then. In 2007, PNGC added capacity to bring capacity to 5.65 megawatts. All of the five original machines are still in place; but at 30 years of age, PNGC needs to determine the future of this energy. PNGC also signed a contract with Portland General Electric (PGE) where electricity is generated by PNGC and sold to PGE. That contract expires in 2027. Given these factors and the new opportunities in biogas, this is crucial moment for PNGC in the future of CBL. In 2023, PNGC began considering options and began negotiations with Republic Services regarding what a contract would look like and how to prioritize best uses going forward. PNGC is the owner of gas at the moment of combustion, but renegotiation of some terms of the contract is needed in order to build a renewable gas project onsite. The current contract gives PNGC rights until 2074.

Reiten indicated renewable natural gas has positive potential for the CBL site. Renewable natural gas is energy chemically identical to traditional natural gas and is produced from methane generated by landfills, dairies, and wastewater treatment

facilities. The renewable natural gas market has grown, the practice is more common, technology has improved considerably, and options are better now than as recently as five years ago.

Over the last seven years, there has been a fairly sustained spike in the supply of the biogas. It would take PNGC an additional three large generating units to have sufficient capacity to handle the supply currently regularly coming in. Given that, it is important for PNGC to invest in the CBL property to ensure the best use of the biogas that exists there, as well as to ensure gas is diverted away from the flare to the extent possible.

If the project moves forward, PNGC would be cleaning up the natural gas and injecting it into the Northwest Natural pipeline system. Some of the benefits PNGC would hope to bring to Benton County would be to effectively end combustion, at least through the electric generating process onsite, as well as a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

There are two viable markets for biogas. One would be utilities like Northwest Natural that use this as a compliance mechanism to help them lower the carbon intensity of the natural gas supply. The second possibility would be through the transportation market. There is a fairly substantial market for medium and heavy-duty trucks and buses that operate on natural gas. California, Oregon, and Washington are popular markets for renewable natural gas for those fleets to use to reduce their emissions profiles.

Another benefit is the replacement of aging infrastructure with cutting edge technology, something that will last for 25 years or longer. PNGC is starting to see a reduction in the percentage of the time the equipment is online, and it is not viable for those machines to continue to stay online. The replacement of those machines would provide an enduring solution for the site and will remove some of the questions about what the biogas will be serving.

Reiten acknowledged there will be considerably more revenue associated with using CBL as a renewable natural gas facility. PNGC's renegotiation of the contract with Republic Services would result in increased revenue for PNGC from selling the biogas into the renewable natural gas market, and PNGC would increase its payments to Republic Services. The investments PNGC would receive from that would go directly to rate mitigation for Benton County electricity users through the Consumer Power system, as well as across the PNGC system. In addition, PNGC is hopeful that increased revenues for Republic Services would also result in increases in investment in the gas collection system that would have benefits onsite and for the neighbors of the landfill.

If PNGC moves forward with the project, construction would begin in January 2026 and be complete in September 2027, with go live of injection October 1, 2027. If PNGC and Republic Services do not come to terms, PNGC will need to develop a plan to replace

the existing generating capacity with new generators that can handle existing supply. PNGC would likely stop selling gas to PGE and power to Consumer Power and other Pacific Northwest utility members. PNGC believes continuation is the best path forward and is committed to a process that benefits PNGC, Republic Services, the community, and the neighbors. PNGC would like to have ongoing conversations with Benton County.

Wyse asked about the process for cleaning natural gas of impurities.

Reiten indicated there would be a fairly capital-intensive buildout of machines to remove impurities before the natural gas would reach what Northwest Natural considers pipeline quality natural gas. PNGC would ensure pipeline quality before the gas is put through a compression system onto a two-mile gas lateral that would also be built as part of the project to connect with Northwest Natural's system.

Wyse asked about the environmental impacts of that process.

Reiten indicated the impact from the cleaning process is minimal; small energy use onsite is needed to power the machines, which are electric. PNGC would provide that energy as needed, but there is no parasitic use on the system (use of gas to power system).

Wyse asked where the impurities go, and Reiten indicated they are collected, not emitted. There are minimal environmental impacts of the actual process of cleaning out the impurities of the gas. There is a small amount of energy use onsite that would be needed to power the equipment, which is predominantly electric, so PNGC, via Consumer Power, would need to provide electricity to the machines.

Wyse asked about the disposition of the disassembled machines, and Reiten indicated PNGC would try to sell the two 2008, one- to two-megawatt generators and likely recycle the 1995-unit pieces.

Shepherd asked how many homes would be served by electricity generated from CBL. Reiten responded there would be none in Benton County. PGE would receive the energy, and it could serve between 5,000 and 6,000 homes.

Shepherd asked about the structure of PNGC leadership and the hierarchy of decision-making. Reiten indicated the decision-makers are the PNGC Board of Directors and the General Managers and Chief Executive Officers of the cooperatives. The Board of Directors is the final decision-maker. Reiten noted the cooperatives each also have their own Boards of Directors.

Shepherd asked whether any of what is produced will become liquified natural gas (LNG) and noted Republic Services has LNG-operated trucks.

Reiten responded that there is no current intention for onsite refueling infrastructure. PNGC would need to identify an offtake contract for where the Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) would go. LNG is a less common use.

Shepherd asked about the purpose of PNGC's presentation to the Board.

Reiten indicated it is to inform the Board of the proposed project. PNGC would like to build a partnership with Benton County. PNGC is aware there is a great deal of business before the Board regarding CBL, and PNGC wants to ensure the highest and best use of RNG is done at the site.

Malone asked what happens when the landfill is full and there is a 50-year contract. Is that a reasonable amount of time for a landfill to produce biogas after new material stops coming in?

Reiten was not sure how long methane would continue to be produced but suggested that by 2074, the site would not be generating a sufficient return on investment. PNGC estimates usable energy would be produced for 20 to 25 years.

Malone referenced a chart in the presentation that indicates a great deal of biogas is wasted. If the new system is implemented, will it have sufficient capacity to process all of what CBL produces?

Reiten responded yes. The equipment would be sized to accommodate a continued increase in biogas supply. PNGC would aim for flare not to be used except for maintenance.

McEneny asked whether PNGC would still operate onsite after a landfill is closed.

Reiten indicated likely yes; PNGC looks at a 25-year economic analysis, but more information will be needed about the anticipated CBL closure date.

Reiten noted that PNGC is the largest generating and transmission utility west of Utah. Reiten's hope was that if the industry-best standard for dealing with biogas is implemented at CBL, the facility would be brought to a point where Benton County would not want to close it.

Chair Wyse recessed the meeting at 10:16 AM and reconvened at 10:28 AM.

6.3 Courthouse Groundbreaking Event Planning – Anne Thwaites, Public Information Officer (PIO); Gary Stockhoff, Public Works Director

Thwaites reported working with Public Works to plan a groundbreaking event for the new courthouse. The tentative date is May 9; the time is to be determined. Shuttles may be used to transport the anticipated approximately 50 attendees to reduce the number of vehicles onsite. An invitation list is being developed, and Thwaites will request input from the Board and others regarding invitees.

Stockhoff reported the Public Improvement by Private Contract (PIPC) permit had been received; the Corvallis Miscellaneous permit is still needed. Construction on the new courthouse and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) began on March 10.

6.4 Public Information Officer Update – Anne Thwaites, Public Information Officer; Carly Fredericks, Communications Coordinator

Thwaites updated the Board on County communications activities and introduced Carly Fredericks, the new Communications Coordinator. This position had been vacant for approximately five months. Fredericks has helpful OSU contacts; and is bilingual in Spanish. Fredericks will enhance the County's efforts on website management, including search engine optimization (SEO) best practices; video production; and communications project management.

In addition to ongoing public information and communications activities, Thwaites and Fredericks are working on projects with two County Departments: 1) with Public Works on the Transportation Safety Action Plan, and 2) with Community Development on the Comprehensive Plan update.

Since arriving at the County, Thwaites and McEneny have been discussing how communications needs have changed. The County's most important communication tool, the website, must be fully utilized at a time when public trust in government institutions is waning. Social media has constantly changing algorithms, and there is no guarantee people will see it. The website must be as comprehensive and correct as possible. Thwaites and Fredericks are collaborating with Information Technology's Innovations Team for website updates. The Board's website and others needed some improvements to better communicate with constituents. The goal is to make it as easy as possible for community members to do business with the County and to get answers to their questions. Website SEO is one way to accomplish this. The average person may not know which municipality to contact, so they use a search engine.

AI (artificial intelligence) is another challenge. Website content needs to be adapted for AI searchability. It is important to ensure AI, which will search our content and generate

answers, gets the best content and best input possible. There are locations on the County site with incorrect or conflicting information that need to be addressed.

Another issue to address is social media algorithms; County content is not being seen often enough, even by subscribers, because algorithms prioritize short-form video. JonnaVe Stokes did a series of Public Works videos last summer, and that series was very successful. Staff will continue to work in this medium. It is a greater time investment, but it will help the County be more visible on social media channels.

The County's Website Policy will need to be updated in the near future to optimize and adapt for AI search and to address social and political change. Fredericks indicated this will make a significant impact on our website performance.

Malone acknowledged the challenging staff transition last fall and believes it is more critical than ever to get County messages out and tailor messaging to the right audience.

6.5 Regional Sustainable Materials Management Plan Task Force Update – Sean McGuire, Sustainability Coordinator, Board of Commissioners Office; Bailey Payne, Solid Waste Coordinator, Community Development

McGuire reported the full Sustainable Materials Management Plan (SMMP) Task Force has met three times since January and approved four subcommittees. Each of the subcommittees has met twice and will meet twice more between now and May. The first goal of each subcommittee was to identify three to five focus areas. What are the desired outcomes, how will success be measured, and what is the contribution to regional solid waste management? The goal is not to solve the issues; it is a call to action to develop a direction for the next phase.

State Representative Sarah Finger McDonald submitted House Bill 3794 which, if passed, will create a regional solid waste management task force that would start after this session and pick up where the current process leaves off.

Malone emphasized CBL is a regional facility, and some partners were not considering that. Some coastal counties are sending 100 percent of their waste to CBL, but some leaders were not aware of that. Malone believed the main question for the future is will we be able to organize quickly enough in a regional way to develop regional solutions, or will it be each county working independently, since that is easier and more familiar. Having to quickly create a new structure appears to be the greatest challenge.

McGuire cited the PNGC project as one that is looking to the future, and these are the kinds of questions the SMMP Task Force is asking. For example, how much would construction of a transfer station cost? What are the barriers?

Payne noted the Task Force members are very collaborative, but there are gaps because some counties have not yet become involved. Staff will lean on Board leadership to have those voices heard.

Shepherd asked about HB 3794 and whether there will be an ask of the Board to support the legislation. Does this body want to have a discussion regarding the legislation?

Wyse indicated yes and indicated the topic will be added to a future Board meeting.

McGuire noted that March 17 will be the first Task Force meeting since the legislation was introduced and the details have not yet been discussed with Finger McDonald. Next will be a conversation with Crager and CFM Advocates. CFM will track the legislation.

Shepherd pointed to the deadline of April for the bill to leave the first chamber. No date is currently posted for a public hearing, but the timeline is compressed, and the Board may need to discuss the legislation quickly. Wyse requested staff take note to have the issue brought back to another meeting.

Shepherd indicated that at the recent Legislative Breakfast, attendees heard from Finger McDonald about moving forward with a bill regarding methane emissions. Shepherd was dismayed to learn the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) does not support the bill and has testified against it, calling it an unfunded mandate and poorly written.

Shepherd suggested the Board should offer McDonald support via one-on-one meetings or testimony. Shepherd prefers not going against AOC recommendations, but believes the organization took the incorrect position.

Wyse asked if Malone or Shepherd could take the lead on this legislation. Shepherd indicated yes.

Malone reiterated support for a regional approach and suggested there are opportunities for economies of scale that can be accessed. Polk County is relatively far out on the development of a new transfer facility, but how might that fit in with the current SMMP effort? Do we need to engage all neighboring counties in the discussion?

McGuire advised the Board that the Environment and Natural Resources Advisory Committee (ENRAC) is meeting on March 12. ENRAC replaced the Solid Waste Advisory Committee to provide recommendations to the Planning Commission regarding the conditional use permit application for expansion of CBL. In addition to McGuire, Community Development staff Payne and Wright will attend the ENRAC meeting.

7. Consent Calendar

7.1 Ratification of March 5, 2025 Written Testimony Regarding Senate Bill 702, Banning the Sale of Flavored Products with Tobacco or Nicotine – Nancy Wyse, Board Chair

7.2 Ratification of March 5, 2025 Letter of Support to the Oregon Health Authority Regarding Continued Support for Benton County Tobacco Prevention and Education Program Efforts – Nancy Wyse, Board Chair

MOTION: Shepherd moved to approve the Consent Calendar of March 11, 2025. Malone seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

8. Public Hearings

No Public Hearings took place.

9. Old Business

9.1 In the Matter of Enacting Chapter 41 of the Benton County Code, Titled Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (CPACE) Financing, Ordinance No. 2025-0324 – Christopher Jacobs, Corvallis Benton County Economic Development Office

Jacobs reminded the Board that the resolution creating CPACE has been adopted previously, and the Second Reading of the Ordinance is the next step.

MOTION: Malone moved to adopt Ordinance No. 2025-0324, enacting Chapter 41 of the Benton County Code, entitled Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (CPACE) Financing and to conduct a second reading. Shepherd seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

Counsel read the Ordinance aloud (short title), which will be effective April 10, 2025.

10. New Business

10.1 In the Matter of Records and Elections Department Optional Service Fees, Order Nos. D2025-038 and D2025-039 – James V. Morales, Recorder

Morales presented a request for approval of the two orders. Over the last few months, there have been conversations amongst Oregon's county clerks regarding HB 3833 and discussions at conferences about some of the optional services clerks provide and the fees associated with these services. Some counties provide witnesses to marriage ceremonies. The Clerks Association presented HB 3386, which is now in the Senate, allowing clerks to deputize deputy clerks to perform marriage ceremonies to increase capacity.

The Recorder's Office has a somewhat unique setup for handling passport photos: the setup was implemented to address health concerns during the pandemic and was supported by ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding. Other counties charge \$20 to \$25 for a photo, and Morales has some concerns about the ability to pay for repairs and/or a replacement of the system. The increased fee would support the actual cost of services and potential expansion of services.

Shepherd asked whether the photo fee increase would apply to candidate photos as well as passport photos. Morales responded yes, and candidates can also supply their own.

Shepherd asked whether changes would be effective after voters' pamphlets are published for the upcoming May election? Morales responded yes.

Shepherd asked how the \$25 per witness fee would work. Is that per County-provided witness? Morales responded yes; the fee compensates for staff time. Shepherd noted that individuals can bring their own witnesses and not pay a witness fee.

Shepherd asked how many witnesses are required for a marriage ceremony. Morales indicated two, plus the officiant.

Malone noted it is appropriate to periodically adjust fees. Morales agreed, noting the photo fee has been \$15 since 2008. Fees need to increase appropriately to support the actual cost of services provided.

MOTION: Malone moved to adopt Order No. D2025-038, Setting the Fee for County-Provided Marriage Ceremony Witnesses in Benton County. Shepherd seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

MOTION: Malone moved to adopt Order No. D2025-039, Setting the Fee for Photo Services in the Records and Elections Department. Shepherd seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

10.2 Invitation to Participate in the Selection Process for the 2025-27 Community Dispute Resolution Program Grant – Nancy Wyse, Board Chair

Wyse reported the Board received a letter from the University of Oregon School of Law, which administers community dispute resolution grant funds. There is \$28,248 available for 2025-27 period. The Board must decide if the County should participate in the grant funding selection process or opt out and have the University of Oregon School of Law participate in our place. In the past, the County has opted out. Wyse indicated having spoken with Resolution Oregon, and they anticipate only one applicant for the grant. If the County does elect to participate, it would require staff time. The meeting packet includes a letter to the University of Oregon School of Law and a draft resolution, depending on the Board's decision.

MOTION: Shepherd moved that the Board decline to adopt Resolution No. R2025-004 and approve the letter to the University of Oregon indicating Benton County will opt out of the selection process and authorize the Dean of the University of Oregon School of Law to assume Benton County's role in the process. Malone seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

11. Other

11.1 Community Member Concerns Regarding HB 3419 Requiring Rules Study Related to Water – Nancy Wyse, Board Chair

Wyse indicated a constituent brought this proposed legislation to the attention of the County. The concern in the community is that individuals with wells will be required to perform monitoring, which could be a hardship. The larger concern, however, is that well owners would have to pay fees to use their own water. Wyse did not see that in the bill, but the bill's language does allow rulemaking and study.

Shepherd reported having contacted Evelyn Lee from the Monroe area, who has a great deal of well experience. Lee indicated that one of the concerns of rural residents is they want testing to understand water levels and to have a central place at the State level to handle that. It is currently very haphazard, and there is not much testing occurring. Some well owners are concerned about fees, and some very much want testing. Shepherd preferred the Board not take a position at this time and wait to see the direction the legislature is heading on the bill.

Malone pointed out there are over 3,000 bills introduced, and CFM Advocates is keeping the County informed regarding legislative activities. Malone also suggested this may be an issue for the AOC.

Wyse was not aware of any AOC involvement and added the item to the agenda in response to a concern expressed by a community member.

Malone indicated not being in a position to advance or delay HB 3419.

Wyse agreed the County would remain neutral at this time and will so inform the community member.

11.2 Letter of Support for the Corvallis Daytime Drop-in Center (CDDC)* –
Gabe Shepherd, Commissioner

Shepherd reported the Commissioners received a request from Corvallis Daytime Drop-in Center Executive Director Alison Hobgood for a letter of support regarding the organization's acquisition of a new building for expansion of services on a new, larger property. There are \$2 million in earmarks from Senator Merkley's office that would help support the project.

MOTION: Shepherd moved that the Board approve submission of a letter of support for the Corvallis Daytime Drop-in Center. Malone seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

11.4 In the Matter of Order No. D2025-041, Appointments to the Environment and Natural Resources Advisory Committee* – Nancy Wyse, Chair

MOTION: Shepherd moved to adopt Order No. D2025-041 in the matter of appointments to the Environment and Natural Resources Advisory Committee. Malone seconded the motion, which carried (3-0).

11.5 House Bill 3518, County Assessment Function Funding Assistance (CAFFA) Grant – Rachel McEneny, County Administrator

McEneny reported that County Assessment Director Tami Tracy was enroute to the State Legislature to testify regarding this legislation, and the Assessors Association has requested Board of Commissioners support. House Bill 3518 has substantial movement; more than any in over 20 years. If approved, the legislation will result in additional revenue for the County's Assessment Department at a time when the County property tax base is not growing. There has been a decline in funding provided by the CAFFA grant for county assessment and tax functions, which was once 36 percent.

Currently, CAFFA is nine percent of the County's budgeted assessment expenses. The additional funds would be significant for the County's Assessment Department.

The bill moved very quickly through the House, which is the reason for the rapid turnaround time. The letter of support must be uploaded by 2 PM so it can be given to the County's lobbyists.

MOTION: Malone moved to approve the letter of support from the Board of Commissioners to support House Bill 3518, County Assessment Function Funding Assistance (CAFFA) Grant. Shepherd seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

11.6 Willamette Criminal Justice Commission (WCJC) Lay Member Positions* – Gabe Shepherd, Commissioner

Shepherd reminded that the Board approved new WCJC bylaws on February 4, 2025. One of the revisions was reduced membership, including fewer lay members. The County currently has three lay members but only one lay member seat. Shepherd spoke with the WCJC Acting Chair – District Attorney Ryan Joslin – and County Counsel about how to resolve the issue. Counsel advised the lay member seat cannot be considered vacant in terms of quorum, but the Board does need to designate which is now the voting member.

Shepherd would like the Board to provide direction regarding how to proceed. Options include:

1. Take no action and ignore until the position term expires,
2. Declare the position vacant and invite open applications,
3. Declare the position vacant and invite the three current members to apply, or
4. Decide now whom to appoint.

Shepherd recommended Option 3, since it would not affect the quorum. WCJC is a justice-related council comprised of justice and law enforcement, attorneys, and local elected officials to:

1. Promote and facilitate fair, efficient, and coordinated criminal justice services in Benton County.
2. Provide long-range planning for the delivery of criminal justice services in Benton County.
3. Provide timely information to governmental agencies and to the public on criminal justice matters of local concern.

4. Perform the duties of a local public safety coordinating council as required by law.
5. Promote and facilitate the coordination of policy and long-range planning for criminal justice services and agencies in Benton County.

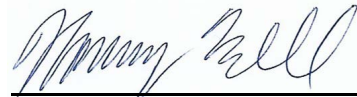
Wyse noted that Joslin could not be present today and asked if the District Attorney had a preference. Shepherd indicated Joslin supported Option 3.

Malone and Wyse were both comfortable with Option 3. Wyse asked what body appoints the lay member. Shepherd responded, the Board of Commissioners.

MOTION: Shepherd moved that the Board declare Willamette Criminal Justice Council Position 10: One Lay Citizen vacant and invite current lay members to apply to fill the seat. Malone seconded the motion, which carried (3-0). Counsel clarified: "...and invite the three former lay committee members to apply for the now singular vacant seat."

Shepherd indicated that in the next few weeks, the Board can expect to see a request to reappoint the five positions the Board appoints to clarify which individuals are serving.

Chair Wyse adjourned the meeting at 11:49 AM.



Nancy Wyse, Chair



Erika Milo, Recorder



Maura Kwiatkowski, Transcriptionist

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