



Board of Commissioners

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
APRIL 1, 2025**

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 Officials: Ryan Joslin, District Attorney; Jef Van Arsdall, Sheriff

Staff: Erika Milo, Board Recorder; Rachel Builder, Maura Kwiatkowski, Board Staff; Anne Thwaites, Public Information Officer; Sean McGuire, Sustainability; Sara Hartstein, Health Services; Ian McGuire, Public Works; Matt Wetherell, Juvenile; Tracy Martineau, Jo Missler, Human Resources

Guests: Jim Hoyt, Resident; Karsen O'Bryan, ABC House; Scott Ramsey, Resident

1. Call to Order and Introductions

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

2. Review and Approve Agenda

No changes were made to the agenda.

3. Announcements

No announcements were made.

4. Proclamations

4.1 Proclaiming April 2025 as National Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month, Proclamation No P2025-004 – Karsen O'Bryan, Executive Director, ABC House

O'Bryan read the Proclamation aloud.

MOTION: Malone moved to adopt Proclamation No. P2025-004, proclaiming April 2025 as National Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month. Shepherd seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

4.2 Proclaiming April 7 through April 13, 2025 as Public Health Week in Benton County, Proclamation No. P2025-006 – Sara Hartstein, Health Services

Hartstein read the Proclamation aloud.

MOTION: Shepherd moved to adopt Proclamation No. P2025-006, proclaiming April 7 through April 13, 2025 as Public Health Week in Benton County. Malone seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

5. Comments from the Public

*Jim Hoyt, resident, asked if the Board of Commissioners will change the noise ordinance in Benton County. It is too broad. Hoyt's lives across the road from a winery initially permitted to hold five musical events per year. Now, with the new code regarding agritourism, there are unlimited musical events. Hoyt is a disabled combat veteran, has severe PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), and is very bothered by amplified music three nights each week during summer and fall. Hoyt's wife is also severely disabled. They cannot escape the noise. Hoyt presented a permit with no restrictions on it. There should be a restriction or a decibel meter; something should be done.

[Exhibit 1: Noise Ordinance Decision]

*Scott Ramsey, resident, bought the Newman Family Rock Quarry years ago. It was dug from 1969 through 1998, hit water, and was full by 1999. After purchasing the property, Ramsey deliberated about the best use of the water. It is between three and four hectares (a hectare is a metric unit of area equal to 10,000 square meters), and the average depth is 125 feet. It is the largest volume of water in Benton County. Oregon State University (OSU) is interested in using the water for experiments, dive training, instrumentation testing, and mapping. OSU has used it a great deal, as have dive teams from Salem. It is also a USGS (US Geological Survey) firefighting water dip site; Ramsey filed with the US Forest Service to be listed as dip site. Ramsey filed an application to name the reservoir; and as part of the naming process, Ramsey was advised the Board of Commissioners would be notified of the proposed naming and asked whether it supports the naming. Ramsey expressed hope the Board would support the naming.

[Exhibit 2: Lake Naming Document; Exhibit 3: EDGE Analytical Water Report 50 feet and 100 feet; Exhibit 4: EDGE Analytical Water Report Surface; Exhibit 5: Fern Road 2 Document]

6. Consent Calendar

- 6.1 Proclaiming April 7 through April 14, 2025 as National Library Week in Benton County, Proclamation No. P2025-005**
- 6.2 Proclaiming April 6 through April 12, 2025 as Crime Victims' Rights Week, Proclamation No. P2025-007**
- 6.3 Proclaiming April 2025 as Native Plant Appreciation Month, Proclamation No. P2025-008**
- 6.4 Order No. D2025-042, Appointments to the Willamette Criminal Justice Council**
- 6.5 Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes: March 7, 2025 and March 10, 2025**

MOTION: Malone moved to approve the April 1, 2025 Consent Calendar. Shepherd seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

7. New Business

- 7.1 Acceptance of Right of Way Dedications for Norton Creek Road Bridge Replacement – Ian McGuire, Civil Engineer, Public Works**

McGuire requested the Board accept two right-of-way dedications from Starker Forests and Peak View Tree Farm, which provide the County with sufficient space to install a bottomless fish passage culvert instead of a timber bridge at Norton Creek, proximate to Norton Bridge Road.

Malone asked when the culvert would be replaced. McGuire indicated the work would begin after the Independence Day holiday and be complete approximately 60 days thereafter.

MOTION: Shepherd moved to accept the right-of-way dedication from Starker Forests, Incorporated and the right-of-way dedication from Peak View Tree Farm, LLC. Malone seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

- 7.2 Acceptance of the 2025-27 Juvenile Crime Prevention Plan (JCPP) – Matt Wetherell, Director, Juvenile Department**

Wetherell presented the 2025-27 JCPP. The plan is administered through the Youth Development Division of the Oregon Department of Education. The goal of the plan is to keep youth from entering the juvenile judicial system; and since 2019, the JCPP has focused on strengthening rural families. Since the last biennium, 102 youths have been

served under the plan. The 2025-27 JCPP was approved by the local public safety committee, the Willamette Criminal Justice Council, and now requires approval by the Board of Commissioners. Grant funds that support the plan will be awarded on or about July 1, 2025.

MOTION: Malone moved to accept the Juvenile Crime Prevention Plan for the 2025-27 biennium. Shepherd seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

7.3 Personnel Policies Update: P100 through P103 – Tracy Martineau, Human Resources Director; Jo Missler, Senior Human Resources Analyst

Martineau introduced the revised personnel policies and indicated revisions primarily reflect modernized format, modern pronoun usage, reflection of current practices, and other housekeeping changes. Staff is requesting Board input and direction regarding the revised content, as well as how the Board would like future policy revisions brought forward. Martineau noted the meeting agenda listed four policies for consideration; however, one is duplicated, and one was not included. Staff will return with the Cultural Proficiency Policy in the next batch of policy revisions.

Missler discussed revisions to Policy 101 Administration of Personnel Policies. The revisions reflect the combination of three previously separate policies to streamline and make it easier for employees to request their personnel records. The revised policy also includes updates to reflect all gender identities, as well as updated language on classified/unclassified to include Elected Officials.

Martineau directed the Board's attention to Policy 100, Page 2, Section 1, Exceptions, Variances. The policy was implemented when there was no County Administrator, and the Board had sole authority to make exceptions. Since the creation of the County Administrator position, the Board informally delegated this operational authority to the County Administrator. Martineau asked if the Board would like to formalize the delegation in the policy with the addition of suggested wording, "the Board of Commissioners or their designee."

Shepherd inquired whether staff was asking if Commissioners were comfortable with "Board of Commissioners alone" in the language. Martineau responded yes.

Wyse asked what other counties do. Martineau indicated approaches vary; there is no standard practice.

McEneny noted that the Commissioners do not supervise employees, except for the County Administrator and County Counsel. It is important for the Board to consider whether it wants to weigh in on individual personnel issues and exceptions, which could place the Commissioners in a position they may not want to be in.

Shepherd expressed discomfort with informal, uncodified agreements and noted the points made by McEneny. The Board has appropriately delegated day-to-day operations to the County Administrator. Shepherd did not believe the Board should be discussing individual policy exceptions in public meetings and believed there should be written delegation of exceptions authority to the County Administrator.

Malone agreed and indicated policies should be accurate and aligned with the County's operational structure.

Wyse agreed the authority is within the purview of the County Administrator and preferred wording such as "The Board of Commissioners or their designee" and removal of the word "alone."

MOTION: Shepherd moved to adopt revised Personnel Policy 100 as amended by Commissioner Wyse: on Page Two, Section 1, under Exceptions, under Variances, "the Board of Commissioners, or their designee, alone have the authority to vary or modify the application."

AMENDED MOTION: Wyse offered an amendment to Shepherd's motion to remove the word "alone." Shepherd accepted the amendment. Malone seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

Martineau introduced the next revised policy for consideration: Policy 101, Equal Opportunity Employer.

Missler indicated there were few changes to the policy; primarily updated format, pronouns, and current practices. The Definitions section of the revised policy includes more robust definitions of some protected classes and identifies Human Resources as the policy contact.

Martineau noted the policy is related to the County's Affirmative Action Policy.

Missler indicated the only substantive change to the Affirmative Action Policy was in the language "to recruit, hire, and promote qualified women" "Women" was changed to "people." Revisions also include updated format, pronouns, current practices, and contact department.

Martineau suggested the Board might want to consider language regarding cultural values and internal processes; the policy name could be changed. There is no legal requirement for an Affirmative Action Policy, but the County is required to report equal employment data to the federal government. Many organizations title the policy Equal Employment Opportunity Policy and Plan. The Plan would become the Procedure, and the policies would be combined.

Wyse expressed support for the suggestion, and Malone and Shepherd concurred.

Shepherd liked the consideration of policies in batches, as did Malone.

Martineau indicated staff will return to the Board with a new version, along with the Cultural Proficiency Policy.

Wyse requested that when the policies are brought back the packet include a copy of the existing policy and the proposed new policy for comparison. Martineau indicated staff will also provide redlined versions that highlight proposed revisions.

Martineau indicated the Policy Oversight Committee reviews policies and provides input on procedures, updates, and revisions. The policies are then:

- posted for 10 days for staff comment,
- the policy author reviews and considers employee comments and makes any changes, and
- the policy is republished for 10 days with comments and revisions, as well as responses to any questions.

This process is completed prior to policies being presented to the Board for approval.

7.4 Sponsorship Request: Rotary Club of Philomath Salmon and Jazz Event – Nancy Wyse, Board Chair

Wyse indicated the Board had previously sponsored the Rotary Club of Philomath Salmon and Jazz Event at \$150, which includes one event ticket. Additional tickets can be purchased if desired.

Malone reported having attended in the past and indicated the event is worthy of County sponsorship.

Shepherd supported sponsoring at the \$150 level and having one Commissioner attend. Crager previously mentioned the Board had utilized its sponsorship budget but could use other available funds. Shepherd suggested increased prices impacted the budget but does not generally support overspending what has been budgeted. However, since funds are available in the overall Board of Commissioners budget, Shepherd agreed support at the \$150 level was appropriate.

Malone noted that planning for the upcoming biennium budget provides an opportunity to be more accurate for the sponsorship line item. It would be helpful to have a report on organizations and events the Board typically sponsors and the amounts of those sponsorships.

McEneny indicated a report would be prepared for the Commissioners.

Wyse expressed support for the event because it gets Commissioners out into other parts of the County. Wyse suggested each Commissioner could contribute \$50 or purchase their own tickets in lieu of a County sponsorship.

MOTION: Malone moved to sponsor the Philomath Rotary Club's Salmon and Jazz Festival at the \$150 level. Shepherd seconded the motion.

Crager noted that previously, the Board sponsored the event at the \$250 level, which was the amount requested by the organization for their 2025 event.

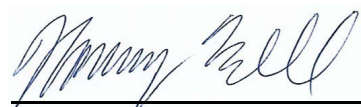
AMENDED MOTION: Malone amended the motion to sponsor the Philomath Rotary Club's Salmon and Jazz Festival at the \$250 level. Shepherd seconded the amended motion, which carried 3-0.

8. Other

No other business was discussed.

9. Adjournment

Chair Wyse adjourned the meeting at 9:50 AM.



Nancy Wyse, Chair



Erika Milo, Recorder



Maura Kwiatkowski, Transcriptionist

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