



Board of Commissioners

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
March 18, 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 Bulder, Maura Kwiatkowski, Board Staff; Sean McGuire, Sustainability; Deven Kephart, Gary Stockhoff, Public Works; April Holland, Staci Yutzie, Health Services; Marilee Hoppner, Financial Services; Lacey Mollel, Christine Mosbaugh, Community Health Centers; Tracy Martineau, Human Resources; Jared Bennett, District Attorney's Office

Guests: John Harris, Horsepower Productions; Jessica Hougen, Benton County Historical Society

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

There were no changes to the agenda.

3. Announcements

Shepherd thanked staff for the operationalization of the CivicPlus Meeting Management Platform and indicated positive feedback from the community.

4. Comments from the Public

There were no comments from the public.

5. Work Session

5.1 Benton County Historical Society Update – Jessica Hougen, Executive Director, Benton County Historical Society

Hougen presented a brief history of the Benton County Historical Society (BCHS) and reminded the Board of the BCHS's mission, vision, and values:

Mission: The Benton County Historical Society connects our community, preserving and sharing its diverse evolving stories through history, culture, and art. **Vision:** We are a center of the community, fostering dialogue and ideas that catalyze an inclusive understanding of our past and culture and consideration of the shared future we hope to create. **Values:** authenticity, curiosity, cultural humility, and excellence.

BCHS currently has six full-time and three part-time staff, and the organization's annual budget is just under \$1 million. In Fiscal Year 2023-24, BCHS museums combined recorded 15,500 visitors.

Looking forward, Hougen reported on the development of a conceptual master plan for the Philomath Museum, which draws a significant number of rural visitors. BCHS worked with a Portland-based architect who specializes in the reuse of historic structures. The master planning process included focus group conversations in 2024 with the public, volunteers, donors, and partners. There are no permanent exhibits in the Philomath Museum; nothing about rural, farming, or forestry. Hougen's goal is to include a permanent education space (currently located in a gallery) to make it easier for teachers to take students to the museum on school field trips. BCHS and the City of Philomath are exploring ways to partner to create a community center area the community could use. Hougen indicated the conceptual master plan would take approximately 10 years to come to fruition.

Hougen discussed BCHS's various partnerships, including The Arts Center, Casa Latinos Unidos (CLU), Cornerstone Associates, Corvallis Chamber of Commerce, The Arc of Benton County, Heartland Humane Shelter and Care, Philomath Chamber of Commerce, and the Corvallis Multicultural Literacy Center, among others. Hougen recently partnered with CLU and the library for a Day of the Dead (Día de los Muertos) event. The celebration was held in the Corvallis Building, with over 700 attendees.

BCHS has partnered with the Corvallis Chamber to allow other Chamber members who do not have physical space in their own office to host chamber events, greeters, and business after hours. BCHS has also partnered with the Philomath Chamber on similar events.

Heartland Humane Shelter and Care has partnered with a local yoga instructor for Kitten Yoga classes. Every class has sold out, and every kitten has been adopted.

Classes are to resume in April or early May, and BCHS realizes some revenue from use of its space.

Programming at both museums attracts a broad audience; however, Philomath programming had been reduced over the last few years due to road construction and the BCHS property sometimes being used as a staging ground. Programming at Philomath will be ramping back up over the next six to nine months.

Hougen reported that the addition of a marketing position is helping BCHS think more strategically about how to market the different things BCHS does. BCHS is working to think about history and exhibits in a broader sense, with topics that appeal to community members. An example included a recent program and presentation on the history of video games, which went from the mid-1970s to the present. The program included an event and a display with vintage games. Regarding exhibit design, the first new exhibit on the second floor, "Put a Bird on It," combines science, history, and art.

BCHS acquired most of the Horner Museum collection after Oregon State University decided to close that museum. This year, BCHS is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Horner Museum collection, which kicked off with an event on February 20 to open the new exhibit. The year-long celebration of the Horner Museum coincides with BCHS's year-long fundraising campaign. The goal of the campaign is to build operational reserves to care for BCHS buildings and to care properly for the Horner Museum collection.

Wyse thanked BCHS staff for their work, encouraged community members to visit the museums, and requested a Board tour be scheduled.

5.2 Benton County Crisis Center Update – April Holland, Director, Health Services; Staci Yutzie, Crisis Center Project Manager, Health Services

Yutzie reviewed the project timeline. Occupancy is now expected on May 7. This later date will cause a delay in the rollout of services, which will be accomplished in two phases to avoid breaks in services. Staff hopes to have the facility fully operational by for existing crisis services by June 2.

Yutzie reviewed recently completed tasks. Specialty equipment for the stabilization facility, as well as information technology network equipment, has been ordered. The performance plan for the Oregon Health Authority startup fund grant was completed and submitted. A team is working on billing codes for the new services to be offered.

Yutzie next reviewed tasks in progress. Union bargaining continues. Work continues on the residential treatment facility certification application, which is very complex. Updates are being made to the upstairs staffing model; Deschutes County shared its facility staffing model and has been very helpful. Position approvals are being sought,

and some of these are dependent on union bargaining. Recruiting and hiring options are being explored with the Human Resources Team. Staff will be meeting soon with the Communications team to develop a recruitment video and complete updates to the website and messaging to community partners. Memorandum of understanding and intergovernmental agreement needs have been identified. Policies and procedures are being drafted. Scoping is being defined for several external contracts, including 24/7 security and custodial services. Staff also met recently with the Corvallis Police Department to answer their questions.

Holland indicated the first two weeks of May is still the timeframe for the ribbon cutting. Having the celebration prior to the start of services is key.

Holland also reported that the Crisis Program Manager left the County about a month ago. Replacement recruitment is far along, and there are some very well qualified candidates.

Malone appreciated the thoughtful transition from existing services to the new facility and would like to continue to receive updates on staffing progress. Malone asked if the state-of-the-art facility will be an asset in recruiting.

Holland expressed belief that the quality of the facility will make a positive impact on recruiting. Workforce challenges abound across the behavioral health field, and it will be a challenge to get to full 24-hour staffing. Holland indicated careful planning, as well as creative and flexible staffing models, will promote success.

Malone asked about facility clients. Holland advised it is a voluntary, walk-in facility. Behavioral health professionals onsite will determine if stabilization or respite is the appropriate level of care. Capacity is expected to alleviate some Emergency Department needs. If another level of care is needed, the client would be referred appropriately, including to hospitals or services outside Benton County or the region.

5.3 Benton County Facilities Update – Gary Stockhoff, Public Works Director

Courthouse. Regarding the new Courthouse, Stockhoff reported the interior and exterior digital assessment of the Swick House had been completed as required by the State Historic Preservation Office. A request for proposals has been prepared to solicit bids for deconstruction, which is the salvage of historical components. Sitework is underway. The wetlands work – to the north and west – will be done after July 1. That is where the sewer lines will go to the Corvallis treatment facility and the storm drain to the Willamette River. The building will be substantially complete in early fall 2026.

Malone asked about the schedule for the ribbon cutting ceremony. Stockhoff indicated the plan is for May 9, which is a Friday, and there is no construction onsite on Fridays. The County's Communications team is planning the event. Malone stressed the importance of getting the message out about the project to the community.

Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Stockhoff indicated that the final plans will be complete soon, and construction will begin in August or September. The EOC will be complete at the same time as the Courthouse.

Malone asked about adherence to the budget. Stockhoff indicated the County has entered into a Guaranteed Maximum Price agreement with the contractor, and the cost is as expected; slightly higher.

5.4 Benton County Fleet Update – Deven Kephart, Gary Stockhoff, Public Works; Marilee Hoppner, Financial Services

Stockhoff presented the quarterly update on Fleet Services and indicated great progress had been made since the last update.

The external hourly labor rate for the 2025-26 fiscal year has been set at \$192. Parts rates were low, and those have been adjusted upward. The rate the County charges to help other agencies acquire vehicles was also quite low and has been adjusted. The number of hours required for the program to be effective were added to the model and are attainable; those are being tracked monthly. The parts inventory currently in progress shows Fleet was storing many old parts; these parts are charged to the program upon purchase, but the County is not reimbursed until the parts are used. Going forward, only critical parts with long lead times will be stored over a long period. Kephart and the Fleet team are pulling old parts to resell, and the inventory will be complete by the end of May.

The Service Writer position request will be included in the 2025-27 budget request. This position is needed to ensure the most efficient use of mechanics' time.

Stockhoff advised the 2021-23 external fleet budget was about even, but the 2023-25 projected deficit is expected to grow. That growth is primarily due to the seasonal nature of the work, as well as invoices that need to be issued for completed work orders. The remaining amount is attributed to tools acquired. The County moved to a model where the County owns all the tools used by the mechanics. May 1 will complete the transition to all County-owned tools.

Crager indicated that based on the current analysis, the deficits, as well as the trending, are still within what the Board previously approved. Hoppner noted it is

difficult to estimate the amount of work that will come in; it is currently trending at approximately \$92,000 monthly. Hoppner has taken a cautious approach to revenue projections.

Wyse asked about General Fund impacts; for clarification that is the amount the General Fund is subsidizing the external fleet program. Stockhoff indicated yes. Wyse noted the tools transition resulted from negotiations with the union, which was not previously predictable.

Malone asked whether the County will now review the labor rate annually. Stockhoff indicated yes, in the summer each year.

Stockhoff reported new County logos are being added to vehicles as the vehicles come in for service; the process should be complete by July 1. Fleet will communicate the 2025-26 rate to customers and will position the fleet program to react to the direction required. Kephart has done an excellent job building the program foundation.

Crager cited Stockhoff's leadership in getting the fleet program on track.

Malone asked about the plan to match specific parts with interested buyers. Kephart advised that the parts will be posted online starting in April at www.GovDeals.com. Fleet has used this online marketplace previously to sell used vehicles. Benton County is realizing an average of \$1,500 per vehicle more than other municipalities for their used vehicles. This can be attributed to the good care the County takes of its vehicles.

Chair Wyse recessed the meeting at 10:19 AM and reconvened at 10:25 AM.

5.5 National Association of Community Health Centers Policies and Issues Forum Highlights – Lacey Mollel, Executive Director, Christine Mosbaugh, Strategy and Community Engagement Manager, Community Health Centers

Mollel indicated the current presentation was in the context of Community Health Centers (CHCs). Information is changing quickly, but CHC leadership is working to keep everyone informed as conditions change.

Mollel cited the various sources of information for CHCs regarding the situation at the federal level: partners across the country; the Oregon Primary Care Association; Feldesman Law Group, which does a great deal of advocacy, including at fed level; Oregon Health Authority; and the National Association of Health Centers.

Mosbaugh reported that during the recent policy forum in Washington, DC, our CHC leadership met with Representatives Hoyle and Bynum, as well as Senators Merkley and Wyden, and asked for continued funding support for CHCs.

Mollel shared the timeline for the early Trump administration executive orders and actions relative to CHCs.

The primary concern is funding and access to funds. The ability to access funding is varied across organizations. Our CHC has been able to draw down funds, but the current concern is awards to grantees as reconciliation moves forward. Linn Benton CHCs recently received a six-month extension (to September) on funding expiration, but the funds are not yet available in the PMS (Payment Management Services) system. Critical funding areas include the National Health Service Corporation, 330 grants, and telehealth for Medicaid.

Mosbaugh indicated the US House and Senate have different approaches to funding. The House bill calls for \$800 billion in reductions over 10 years, largely from Medicaid. The Senate bill calls for \$1 billion in healthcare cuts.

Mollel reported operational site visits were initially paused through March, and the Linn Benton CHCs visits are currently scheduled for Fall 2025.

Medicaid is more than 40 percent of national-level CHC revenue. Health centers cannot function without Medicaid funding. CHCs and partners are working to **Educate** members of Congress, **Evaluate** proposals, and **Execute** on advocacy plans with CHCs and coalition partners. Oregon Senators and Representative are responsive and represent the community well.

Mollel advised the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has pulled information on health equity for the Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) through Section 1115 waivers. Now, CMS is declaring it will only consider state waiver applications on a rolling basis and then determine whether the applications meet federal requirements.

Oregon's current 1115 Waiver (2022-2027) uses Medicaid funding to pay for health-related social needs. Since CMS is not invalidating existing approvals, nothing has changed with the current waiver. The likelihood for approval of the next waiver is questionable.

Mollel discussed the executive order that overturned a 1998 interpretation of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. Proposed restrictions on federally funded benefits for undocumented individuals would also apply to DACA (Dreamers) and Temporary Protected Status recipients. Legal Permanent Residents, asylees, and refugees are exempt from these restrictions.

The White House may have found a way to significantly restrict how CHCs care for undocumented persons – without changing the 330 statute – and it launched that process the week of March 17. While there are strong grounds for challenging the policy change in court, the White House will likely enforce it in the meantime. The policy change would apply to several programs (including Head Start) – not just CHCs. Therefore, the Administration could choose not to apply the change to CHCs. English as Official Language does not impact services the Linn Benton CHCs provide. CHCs are obligated to serve individuals in their preferred language.

Regarding gender affirming care, there are multiple lawsuits around executive orders. Last week, CHC leadership received letters indicating the CHCs are covered by the first preliminary injunction. On March 4, a judge issued a nationwide preliminary injunction. For now, all CHCs are covered. HRSA (Health Resources and Services Administration) still issued letters to all grantees that HRSA is still looking at potentially implementing the executive order. A question is whether federal agencies will abide by the injunctions while the litigation makes its way through the courts.

Mosbaugh noted there are many questions about what the Make America Healthy Again approach will be.

Mollet indicated CHC has offered all staff multiple trainings and has communicated with patients that they are protected by HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) and Oregon's Sanctuary State Status. CHC leadership has taken steps to ensure staff and providers are safe. Resources are also available for staff through the Employee Assistance Program, and there are community-based organizations that can help.

6. New Business

6.1 In the Matter of Amendment to District Attorney's Office Discovery Fees, Order No. 2025-040 – Ryan Joslin, District Attorney

Joslin presented the request for amendment to the District Attorney's Office (DA) discovery fee schedule. Discovery is the term used to refer to any documented evidence the DA has of an alleged crime (police reports, media, photographs, etc.) and is required to provide to defense counsel.

Fees were historically associated with the production of discovery that could be completed by staff and the materials, including copying reports, tapes, and photos, etc. Technology has evolved to the DA receiving digital police reports, but the DA still receives videos, photos, and other materials by USBs and DVDs. Most Benton County law enforcement agencies now use Axon body cameras, and drone cameras to collect media. The Oregon State Police will likely also soon transition to Axon. Also, the DA

recently contracted with Axon for a \$30,000 per year, five-year contract that began March 1. The DA will now save digital media from law enforcement as links instead of USBs and DVDs. The DA is still asking law enforcement to provide media on USBs and DVDs so they can be provided, along with links, to defense counsel to ensure the links are working properly. The DA is in the early stages of providing links to defense attorneys.

Joslin noted the DA has not formally requested a fee adjustment since 2006. Bennett is the DA's Criminal Media Division Manager and works with three criminal media specialists. A large portion of the division's work is pricing discovery to defense.

As the DA shifts to a new model of discovery provision, a fee amendment seems appropriate. DA staff has studied past average costs and what it is expected to cost going forward. For Measure 11 cases, which are more serious cases, discovery is more time intensive and expensive. Joslin may come back to the Board for another amendment after seeing how the Axon system works.

Wyse asked what the fees are currently. Bennett indicated the current fees for discovery for a Measure 11 case is \$250 plus the cost of media. It is difficult to determine an average media cost because cases can be quite different. The current fees for media are quite substantial compared to what is being requested; physical media fees have been decreased by more than half of current charges.

Joslin indicated media was being provided on USBs, which were quite expensive at one point; they now cost significantly less. For USBs, Bennett indicated a non-Measure 11 case is currently \$30 plus the cost of a criminal history (\$5) for paper discovery, plus a cost for media – disk or USB drive. Disk cost is \$20 per disk, and USB drives start at \$25 and increase in cost based on increasing memory capacity. There can be numerous USB drives on a case, so cost can range from \$75 to \$100.

Malone suggested more regular evaluation of costs would be appropriate. Joslin agreed and suggested the DA will come back to the Board after one year of Axon to modify fees again, if necessary.

MOTION: Malone moved to adopt Order No. D2025-040, amending discovery fees charged by the Benton County District Attorney's Office. Shepherd seconded the motion which carried 3-0.

Shepherd invited Benton County District Attorney Ryan Joslin to comment on two Oregon House Bills regarding discovery fee reimbursement. Joslin did not anticipate any local changes whether or not the House Bills pass.

6.2 Jackson Street Youth Services: Sponsorship of April 24, 2025 Youth Rising Event – Nancy Wyse, Board Chair

Wyse indicated the Youth Rising Event is free to the public, but the Board received a request to sponsor.

Shepherd noted the Board previously discussed sponsorships and that the sponsorship line item was over budget following the sponsorship of Celebrate Corvallis.

Crager noted the Board's overall budget was continuing to trend under projections, so the Board did have flexibility if the Commissioners want to support the Youth Rising Event.

Shepherd expressed interest in supporting the event and was comfortable at \$250.

Wyse agreed the \$250 level was appropriate given the status of the sponsorship budget line item.

MOTION: Malone moved to approve sponsorship of the Jackson Street Youth Rising April 24, 2025 event at a level of \$250. Shepherd seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

6.3 Letter of Support for Justice Reinvestment Program Grant Funding for the Sheriff's Office – Jef Van Arsdall, Sheriff

Van Arsdall reminded the Board that the Sheriff's Office reapplies for the Justice Reinvestment Program Grant every two years. In previous years, grant funds have been invested in pretrial processes and community-based, best practices training clients receive from probation deputies, as well as Department of Corrections short-term transition benefits for people who are qualified to leave the Department of Corrections early and return to Benton County. Funding assists them with finding housing, clothing, or other needs.

MOTION: Shepherd moved to approve signing the letter of support for the Justice Reinvestment Program Grant funding for the Sheriff's Office. Malone seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

6.4 Ratification of Letter of Agreement to Settle a Benton County Deputy Sheriffs' Association (BCDSA) Grievance – Jef Van Arsdall, Sheriff; Tracy Martineau, Human Resources Director

Van Arsdall indicated the agreement changes language from referring to hourly rate of pay to regular rate of pay. It incorporates the Oregon Physical Abilities Test; and if a canine handler passes, that becomes the regular rate of pay, which was not previously factored in. The language is retroactive to 2023 and affects one of the three canine handlers.

Wyse noted the agreement also included a retroactive payment of \$857.57.

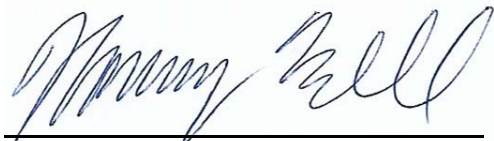
MOTION: Malone moved to ratify the letter of agreement with Benton County Deputy Sheriffs' Association and Teamsters Local Union No. 223 to settle the grievance regarding canine pay calculation. Shepherd seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

7. Other

ORS 192.640(1) "...notice shall include a list of the principal subjects anticipated to be considered at the meeting, but this requirement shall not limit the ability of a governing body to consider additional subjects."

No other business was conducted.

Chair Wyse adjourned the meeting at 11:32 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.