

MINUTES

BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Community Development, Natural Areas, Parks & Events and Public Works Directors

April 9, 2025

9:00 a.m.

Present: Nancy Wyse, Chair; Pat Malone, Vice Chair; Gabe Shepherd, Commissioner; Rick Crager, Assistant County Administrator; Jesse Ott, Natural Areas, Parks and Events; Gary Stockhoff, Public Works; Laurel Byer, Public Works; Jennifer Ficek, Public Works; Petra Schuetz, Community Development.

Excused: N/A

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m.

1. Approval of Minutes: January 30, 2025.

MOTION: Commissioner Wyse called for a motion to approve January 30, 2025, minutes. Commissioner Malone motioned to approve. Commissioner Shepard seconded the motion, which carried **3-0**.

2. Public Works (PW) – Gary Stockhoff, Director of Public Works

2.1 Traffic Safety Action Plan (TSAP), Laurel Byer, Public Works

Two open houses have been held. The first one at Adair Village had a turnout of about 6-10 attendees including staff. The second open house was at Corvallis Public Library which was a joint effort between the County and the City. There were over 100 attendees in a drop in format. Focused mostly on Corvallis specific issues but sign-in sheets showed broader interest across the County. Both events had valuable feedback. The final open house is tonight at the Monroe Community Library from 5-7 PM. An online open house has been started that will remain open through April 27th. Additional outreach is ongoing.

Next step is to schedule a task force meeting at the end of April to review public feedback, identify high injury/crash-prone locations, and validate data.

This will move into project and policy discussions, help with education and outreach strategies and plan for a second round of open houses in September or October. L. Byer confirmed for Commissioner Malone that we have consultants helping with the public outreach and event planning. The consulting partner is DKS Associates, who is also the consultant for the City of Corvallis.

Community feedback and data will be gathered and uploaded onto one map for the public. The results will become available to the public once analyzed. Laural talked about setting a clear vision or goal and mentioned we'll need to revisit this topic after outreach data is compiled, possibly in May.

2.2 Courthouse, District Attorney, Emergency Operations Center

Cement-treated base is being laid for parking lots and roads. Foundation prep underway and work is expected to begin mid-May. The public dashboard is under development by Shannon from Otak. The dashboard will replace project updates and include project data and milestones, photos, videos, and drone footage. There is a groundbreaking ceremony scheduled for May 9th at 4:00 PM. Planning meeting set for the week prior with Otak and Hoffman teams. Hoffman pre-purchased steel to avoid tariff related cost increase and this has been a substantial savings. There are no current concerns regarding tariffs or delays, subs have largely honored original bids. Assistant County Administrator Crager mentioned that we're still waiting for the funding agreement from the State and the bonds should be issued by the end of April.

2.3 Benton Area Transit (BAT)

The self-performance assessment is moving forward, we're about to do a staff level review of the data. The consultant is Kittleson and they've done this type of assessment before. The next steps will be to refine findings, schedule a work session to present findings, and get directions from the board. There is growing oversight from state and federal agencies so we're making sure we're aligned and compliant.

2.4 Alpine and Alsea Sewer Project

Our application with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was deemed complete. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process is underway, the expected timeline is around 60 days, then 30-60 days for funding. Hoping for funding in July or August. 60% design is expected in about a month and bidding will likely be this fall. We must wait for federal funds before proceeding to ensure compliance with federal contract requirements.

2.5 Innovation Mobility Grant

We were awarded \$80,000 to study a rural shuttle concept. ODOT is finalizing rules for the program, and we expect guidance mid-to-late April. We plan to hire a consultant to explore the feasibility of a fixed route rural shuttle.

2.6 Other Grants

USDA-Monroe Clinic- No new information. Commissioner Malone asked what the plan is for the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) money for the Monroe Clinic roof. G. Stockhoff states since the status for the new clinic is awaiting federal funds, we need to preserve the old clinic as best we can. Due to the uncertainty in the new clinic's timeline, effort is shifting to maintaining the current building. There is around 1 million in grant funding for the new clinic and the funds are expected to expire around 2027. With grant money, the funding gap is currently estimated at \$1.2 Million for new construction. The old clinic is estimated to need around \$40,000 for roof and paint to keep the facility functional for 3-5 more years. The quote will be handled through CIP process. The new clinic is intended to move to the high school area driven by Health priorities.

Next steps for the new clinic model will be to use state funds which are flexible and in hand to hire an architect and engineer. Need 30-40% design completion to present to USDA as part of the funding application. Still waiting for confirmation that the Request For Proposal (RFP) meets USDA requirements. Will move forward with design work, construction will be on hold until funding gap is resolved.

Federal Transportation Association- Electric Vehicles via ODOT- No news expected until July.

2.7 Miscellaneous Updates, G. Stockhoff

The ramp is installed in front of Kalapuya and the flagpole will be up by mid-May.

Chair Wyse passed on that the Mayor of Philomath is interested in the 19th street project including raised crosswalks and curb cuts in the area. G. Stockhoff noted that typically speed humps are not allowed on county roads but raised crosswalks/speed tables may be permitted depending on location, speed limits, emergency responder consideration and are determined on a case-by-case basis. The mayor should be referred to L. Byer to discuss integration of traffic-calming features. G. Stockhoff notes that this section of

19th will remain under county jurisdiction and we're trying to move quickly on the grind and inlay due to favorable contractor availability.

3. Community Development (CD) –Petra Schuetz, Community Development

3.1 Coffin Butte Expansion

The first public hearing is scheduled for April 29th with continuations on May 1st and 6th if needed. Public hearing setup is being enhanced with signage for public testimony guidance and posting applicable criteria. Accessibility upgrades include online comment submission and signing up as an interested party to receive decisions and appeal updates. There have been over 100 written comments received so far. All will be documented verbatim in the staff report. Staff will categorize comments and create a thematic summary to help the Planning Commission focus on relevant testimony.

Hearings will be held in the usual board room with overflow viewing available in the foyer. On-site security and tech support will be available. Hybrid participation is mandatory due to statutory requirements, on-line testimony must be allowed. Staff and support will be all hands-on-deck with designated personnel for managing remote input.

Testimony will be encouraged to be concise and relevant, limiting verbal testimony to 3 minutes with a stoplight (green, yellow, red) timer and a gavel for moderation. Commissioners will be seated at the dais. Staff and consultants will be stationed at designated tables. Testimony lectern will be miked and fixed to avoid disruptions. Public will be guided to face the Planning Commission directly.

3.2 Comprehensive Plan & Development Code

Projects are on time and on budget, wrapping up in May. Project manager is going on family leave, but a succession plan is in place.

3.3 Historic Resources Month

May is Historic Resources Month, this is being led by Morgan Driggs, Community Development who is doing an excellent job. The Commissioners would like to have a brief presentation on events.

3.4 Alsea citizen Advisory Committee

Not addressed, will be coming to regular session soon.

3.5 Floodplain

Not addressed, will be coming to regular session soon.

3.6 Solid Waste

Not addressed, will be coming to regular session soon.

3.7 Resource Assistance for Rural Environment (RARE)

County has applied for a RARE participant to support Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). This is sponsored by the University of Oregon and AmeriCorps, with DEQ covering the stipend. If accepted, the participant(s) will provide 11 months of full-time work at no cost. The goal is to fill in gaps left by unfilled water resources position and meet compliance.

3.8 Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy and Multi Unit Property Tax Exemption

This item was heard by the BOC yesterday

3.9 Personnel Updates

None

3.10 Enterprise Permitting, Rick Crager, Assistant County Administrator

Moving into phase 2, around \$43,000 remaining from the \$100,000 allocation this biennium. Focus on customer centric improvements, simplifying navigation of the permitting process. Project now reframed as the Enterprise Navigation Project. Larger system overhauls are long term goals, current phase aims to demonstrate immediate benefits.

P. Schuetz confirmed for the Commissioners that the Land Conservation and Citizen Advisory Committee meetings have had strong attendance with consistent quorum since last summer, noted that L. Byer presented at the most recent meeting and was well received. Floodplains and Citizen Advisory business will come to the Board in April or May.

4. Natural Areas, Parks, and Events (NAPE), Jesse Ott

4.1 McBee Campground

A community meeting was held last week. Around 28 members attended. There was good participation along with presentation boards, online materials and breakout conversations. Attendees included Hubert K. McBee's family, historic and new users. The community input is split between historic and new campers. Over 100 responses collected from an ongoing survey. Feedback ranges from enthusiastic support to concern over campsite

expansion. A follow-up meeting is scheduled with David Evans and Associates to review comments and survey data. Emphasis is placed on preserving the peaceful and secluded character of the site. The current plans to redesign the spaces reflect a maximum conceptual design to be scaled down based on feasibility.

Some comments reflect the desire for fewer campsites but the ability to accommodate large groups, 200+ people. Historic informal group use acknowledged but noted as challenging under County management. Discussion around allowing group reservations in early January to honor traditional events. There are mixed opinions about the need for a camp host, established users prefer no camp host to preserve the informal free-spirited atmosphere.

J. Ott noted that County campgrounds must be self-sustaining and operate on an enterprise account, not general fund. The budget comes from timber thinning and State Parks grant. The grant requires ADA and Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan compliance and alignment. The goal is balancing access, sustainability, and preservation.

There are some concerns with well and water access. Jesse learned from BLM's mixed experience with wells at nearby LC Falls campground that there are concerns about reliability and maintenance. Historically users bring their own water.

The space will need new restrooms to meet modern standards and be ADA compliant. The old restrooms are in poor condition.

There is a lot of focus on allowing large group camping, the only other Benton County group site is at Mary's Peak which is underused and remote. Group camping demand remains high across the valley. BLM's Fall Creek bike trail expansion is expected to increase area use.

Plan is to continue to evaluate public feedback and revise designs. Begin financial modeling and estimate operational revenue. Infrastructure development (road overlays, restrooms and fire rings) will continue. Fire rings are required for state funding and will be ordered as part of grant expenditures, these rings are Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) approved for fire suppression. Jesse plans for a second public meeting to present updated designs. Summer 2025 use will be day use only with limited group camping by reservation.

4.2 Jackson Frazier Wetland Boardwalk

This project is still underfunded despite strong advocacy efforts. We have a 6-month grant extension. The project is highly regarded by Oregon State Parks, it was ranked #1 among all projects awarded at the state level. Some of the permits for the project need renewed and that impacts the budget (around \$1,000 per permit). Renewing the permits is critical to remain as close to shovel ready as possible. Alternative funding is under consideration, including bonds or loans/lines of credit. There are ongoing evaluations about whether to retain the current grant or reapply for a larger one if additional funding becomes available. Most grants require a 50% match. Alliance for Recreation and Natural Areas (AFRANA), has donated \$350,000 as part of the current match. Currently waiting for FY26 federal allocations which may delay the project further. There is uncertainty in current federal applications, though local and congressional support remains strong. The boardwalk remains stable due to maintenance efforts.

OSU and local schools regularly conduct research and educational activities at the site. The area is well known for ecological study and student engagement. The Grand Ronde tribe uses the site for camas planting and ceremonies. Staff will seek direction from Commissioners on prioritizing the project and pursuing alternative funding options.

4.3 Fairgrounds Facility Projects

A generous donor from the Fair Foundation is funding a new structure to replace an open area currently used for 4-H livestock during the fair and RV storage during the off season. The proposed covered structure would match the current pavilion in height and appearance. It's currently going through the permitting phase to assess feasibility due to existing site limitations. The new structure will allow for more comfortable and expanded space for the 4-H auction, year round RV storage, increasing off season revenue, and protection for the Corvallis Witner Market participants and visitors from the elements. The project is 100% privately funded. The Fair Board, Fair Foundation, 4-H, and other stakeholders support it. This area has been identified in the Master Plan to be replaced by a grand promenade, that plan would eliminate RV storage and reduce income unless major facilities like a new exhibit hall and livestock pavilion are built first. The donor is fine with the structure being temporary if the promenade eventually goes in. For now, the project increases revenue and enhances user experience.

The solar building is currently underserved with no nearby restrooms, which impacts rental and event logistics. Planning to build a permanent restroom and have 2 locations in mind. One between the outdoor arena and the solar building, and the other attached directly to the solar building. This project is in its early stages but there is potential support from the Fair Foundation. A

permanent restroom offers ADA compliant access, supports both the Solar Building and Outdoor Arena use, reduces the need for portables, and makes fun runs and other outdoor events more feasible. Adding the restrooms could increase rentals by around 6 per year which over a decade could mean \$80K-\$120K in revenue.

Exhibit Hall and Master Plan Review- The 2019 marketing survey identified a lack of mid-sized, climate-controlled venues in the Willamette Valley. Refreshing the survey post- COVID is in the works. Corvallis is missing out on concerts, trade shows, and events that are going to Linn and Lane counties instead. The Exhibit Hall was shown to have the highest return on investment, ahead of the covered arena and other facilities. The goal is to define our niche in the event market, not to compete with other county fairgrounds, and hope to provide a unique modest size option that draws steady events and boosts local impact.

4.4 Upcoming Outreach

The first week of May is Natural Areas Week and there will be a banner displayed at the Fairgrounds.

April 19 (Earth Day): NAPE will participation in Planapalooza at St. Timony Park with Corvallis Parks & Rec.

Fort Hoskins Chimney Repointing Workshop: Part of an Oregon Heritage Grant-funded project, this includes outreach, new interpretive signage (created by Public Works' sign shop), and restoration of historic resources.

Natural Areas Week (early May): Partnering with the Sustainability Coalition and others to host: Sundown Walk at Jackson-Frazier Wetland, Evening Star & Light Gazing event, and Bazelle Open House and Mother's Day Walk (May 11)

May 17: Spring Stampede All-Girls Rodeo at the Fairgrounds, a county fair qualifier.

History Month Event: Crystal Lake Headstone Restoration Workshop, led by Carol Chin and trained staff.

May 31: Get Outdoors Day at OSU's Research Forest

Flyers for several events are available now. Others are being finalized with partner organizations. J. Ott encouraged anyone interested in attending or covering the events to reach out for support or coordination.

5. Adjournment.

Chair Wyse adjourned the meeting at 10:56 AM.

 07/09/2025
Nancy Wyse, Chair date

Pat Malone 07/09/2025
Pat Malone, Vice Chair date

 07/09/2025

Gabe Shepherd, Commissioner date