



Board of Commissioners

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Tuesday, July 1, 2025, 9:00 AM**

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

Excused: Vance Croney, County Counsel

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

Staff: April Holland, Rebecca Taylor, Health Services; Maura Kwiatkowski, Board of Commissioners staff; Toby Lewis, Community Development; Erika Milo, Board Recorder; Gary Stockhoff, Public Works; Anne Thwaits, Public Information Officer

Guests: Christopher Jacobs, Corvallis-Benton County Economic Development Office; Mark Shepard, City of Corvallis

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Wyse called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM, and introductions were made.

2. Review and Approve Agenda

An Executive Session under **ORS 192.660[2][o] – Safety of the Governing Body** was added to the agenda under **9. Executive Session**

3. Announcements

No announcements were made.

4. Comments from the Public

Dan and Nancy Chapel, owners of Cardwell Hill Cellars, discussed the application of zoning code with regards to the operation of food trucks at wineries. The Chapels' tasting room is on two acres zoned Agricultural Industrial, out of a 32-

acre property. Several weeks ago, the Chapels received a letter from Benton County Community Development that authorized neighboring Lumos Winery, owned by Dai Christ and PK McCoy, to host food trucks. Lumos has a 77-acre parcel, with a footprint almost identical to Cardwell Hill Cellars. Lumos Winery is zoned entirely Exclusive Farm Use, and is authorized for up to 200 people per event, with 18 events per year. Cardwell Hill Cellars typically has 40-60 people per event, with 6-8 events in the summer. The Chapels feel the code application is inconsistent with Federal law, where government must have equal application. The Chapels would like to know a path forward, and asked if the County would allow Cardwell Hill Cellars to host a food truck outside the Agricultural Industrial part of the property.

N. Chapel stated that Cardwell Hill Cellars is at an economic disadvantage from Lumos Winery, which is less than half a mile away. Food trucks provide an economic and safety advantage, since the Oregon Liquor Control Commission requires that establishments serving alcohol also provide food, yet the Chapels are not allowed to provide that food. The inconsistency of the zoning application is marked. Clients ask why Cardwell Hill Cellars does not offer food. In Benton County, restaurants are not allowed in Agricultural Industrial and most EFU areas, but unlike a restaurant, food trucks are temporary.

D. Chapel clarified that both wineries are located on Cardwell Hill Drive near Highway 223, with about 500 yards between them.

N. Chapel had been told that the County is doing an overall survey of its development code, which will take a long time. Meanwhile, the Chapels are greatly economically disadvantaged. N. Chapel asked the County to provide a temporary waiver to the code until a fairer solution can be made, or if not, to disallow food trucks at all wineries.

Wyse asked if the Chapels would like to receive a staff response about the matter.

D. Chapel confirmed.

Marge Popp, Benton County resident, expressed concern about Wyse's comments during the June 17, 2025 Board Meeting. Wyse referred to employee salary comparisons between Benton County and the City of Corvallis, as posted on www.gov.com. Wyse noted that Corvallis employees earn 36% less than the national average. However, Benton County employees earn 36% more than the national average, according to the same site. Such selective references can unintentionally contribute to divisiveness. Public employee compensation is a very serious matter that affects morale, equity, and the quality of services that communities rely on. Popp believes that residents want all public servants to be compensated fairly and equitably. Popp urged local leaders to come together in a

spirit of transparency and cooperation to examine any real or perceived disparities and ensure a balanced, fact-based dialogue going forward. This is not merely a budget issue, but a matter of tone and leadership. Remarks that come across as veiled critiques or point scoring are unproductive and counter to the values of mutual respect and collaboration. The relationship between Corvallis and Benton County government should remain constructive. Residents expect mature, solution-oriented leadership. Popp asked that everyone recommit to working together thoughtfully to resolve difficult issues rather than deepen existing tensions.

Wyse thanked Popp for pointing this out. Wyse noted it was never her intent to be divisive.

5. Work Session

5.1 Floodplain Program Update - Toby Lewis, Floodplain Administrator, Community Development Department

Lewis explained that wildfires can cause increased flooding risk in new and unexpected places, not necessarily areas listed as flood hazards. Communications Coordinator Carly Fredericks issued a social media campaign about steps residents can take during the dry season to prepare for the wetter season. Other flood-related outreach includes an annual mailer and direct conversations with members of the public. The County received a request from the Willamette chapter of Professional Land Surveyors of Oregon (PLSO) for an elevation certificate training. County staff offered a training at the PLSO meeting and reviewed flood revision map updates.

Lewis provided an update on flood hazard mapping in the Upper Willamette River Watershed. At a meeting last week, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) presented draft flood hazard maps to Benton County and Corvallis representatives, and discussed where FEMA found the County's existing floodplain mapping to be accurate, and where FEMA proposes changes. Lewis detailed flood hazard zones on a map [slide #3]. Additional flood hazard areas will be mapped. Jurisdictions have 30 days to review and comment on the FEMA maps. After the comment period, FEMA adjusts the maps as needed, then meets with each jurisdiction to help plan public outreach, including a public open house. FEMA then issues the finalized maps. After a 90-day review period, FEMA will issue the final version to the County, and the County will adopt the map into Benton Community Code within six months. Staff hope for an effective date in late 2027.

Lewis updated the Board on the integration of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Oregon, with upcoming opportunities for public comment on the draft EIS. Cooperating agency document reviews are complete. FEMA is finalizing the draft and expects to publish

in late summer 2025. Next, there will be a public comment period and FEMA will provide outreach in affected areas. Then FEMA will publish the finalized EIS and move towards final implementation.

Responding to a question from Malone, Lewis replied that the application for the Luckiamute River Letter of Map Revision is with the Army Corps of Engineers. The application was deemed complete last month, although FEMA just requested a few clarifications. Hopefully the map revision will be adopted in time to include in the largescale maps.

6. Consent Calendar

- 6.1 Approval of the December 3, 2024 Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes**
- 6.2 Approval of the December 17, 2024 Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes**
- 6.3 Approval of the March 11, 2025 Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes**
- 6.4 Approval of the March 18, 2025 Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes**
- 6.5 Approval of the April 1, 2025 Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes**

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

7. New Business

- 7.1 Proposal for Use of Oregon Department of Administrative Services Housing Award Funds** - April Holland, Director; Rebecca Taylor, Coordinated Homeless Response Office; Health Services

Holland explained that in 2024, the State legislature awarded the Coordinated Homeless Response Office (CHRO) a \$2.5 million grant through Senate Bill 701, to

be used for at least 11 units of housing with services. CHRO seeks approval to use these funds for three proposals:

1. Use up to \$600,000 to support the Corvallis Housing First Third Street Commons project, including up to \$50,000 to eliminate an environmental concern on the adjacent County-owned property, and \$250,000 to bridge a gap in the City of Corvallis budget for the project.
2. Provide up to \$1.2 million to complete renovations of City-owned and County-operated facilities to ensure these properties meet the needs of the prioritized populations.
3. Provide at least \$700,000 for flexible rapid rehousing support services. The housing will not be as successful without intensive case management support and other flexible supports for the people who are housed. The phrase 'at least' gives the Board flexibility in the overview and intent of use. Any remaining funds would go to flexible rapid rehousing support services.

Shepherd asked Holland whether the \$1.2 million included renovations of potential future properties.

Holland confirmed.

Shepherd noted having spoken to Community Services Consortium (CSC) about the organization's Flexible Rapid Rehousing Program, and asked for details about the relationship between the County and CSC regarding this work.

Taylor replied that the Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool (FHSP) is a program Benton County established using State funding received after Oregon Governor Tina Kotek declared an emergency on homelessness. The funding was to house a certain number of eligible households. Even before that, County staff were working with Linn and Lincoln Counties, in coordination with CSC, to understand how those funds would be used and administered. The Counties decided that each would receive and administer its own funding and have its own goals. Once funding was awarded, staff determined that CSC did not have enough capacity to achieve the goals, so the County established the FHSP.

This work was also intended as a foundation for future projects. When staff brought the matter before the Board, staff proposed to establish this program now, and evaluate in future whether the work needs to be transferred to a non-profit organization or agency. During planning and development, it emerged that staff needed access to units that were not subject to the private market, because some populations the County assists are ineligible for those units. Thus, the County partnered with Corvallis to evaluate ways of purchasing units as set-asides for this program.

County staff continue to work with CSC on how to coordinate State rapid rehousing funds with CSC's Federal rapid rehousing funding. Benton County and CSC have established a Memorandum of Agreement about coordinating the funding based on household eligibility. County staff are also in close communication with CSC about developing coordinated entry, how populations are prioritized, and how to coordinate more effectively with the Benton County Housing Authority. Both organizations want to avoid creating a redundant system that adds unnecessary complexity for applicants. FHSP has an effective local presence that can coordinate with County case management contracted services. Staff are finding ways to better partner with tri-county, regional, and State agencies.

Holland provided an update on the Third Street Commons housing project. In early spring 2025, County staff attended meetings with Corvallis Housing First which identified some needs. According to realtor Bear Development, the work is on track and on budget, but it would help to include this proposed funding. Holland will provide more cost information later.

Responding to a question from Malone, Holland replied that there is no time limit on spending the grant funds, but the County must submit regular reports.

Malone asked whether funds can be moved between the three proposed projects.

Holland replied that staff would return to the Board if any changes were needed.

Taylor noted that proposal two should be corrected to say 'at least \$1.2 million', not 'up to \$1.2 million'.

Responding to Malone, Holland confirmed that the awards are one-time funding.

MOTION: Shepherd moved to approve the proposal for the use of Oregon Department of Administrative Services Housing Award funds with the change of item 2 to 'at least \$1.2 million'. Malone seconded the motion, which **carried 3-0**.

7.2 Fiscal Year 2025-26 Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) Between Benton and Linn Counties for Placement of Benton County Juveniles in the Linn-Benton Juvenile Detention Center - Rick Crager, Assistant County Administrator

Crager requested approval of the IGA, which has been reviewed by the Linn County Commissioner and Benton's legal counsel. This is a standard agreement which secures four beds in the Linn-Benton Juvenile Facility. The number of beds needed could be re-evaluated at any time, but Crager recommended that this only be done annually.

Responding to a question from Shepherd, Crager replied that there are 20 beds in total.

Shepherd noted he was erroneously listed as Board Chair in the signature section, which had been crossed out, but his last name was also misspelled.

MOTION: Shepherd moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Intergovernmental Agreement between Benton and Linn Counties for up to \$481,524 for the Placement of Benton County Juveniles in the Linn-Benton Juvenile Detention Center, with corrections to Commissioner titles and names. Malone seconded the motion, which **carried 3-0.**

7.3 Retroactive Authorization for Federal Transit Administration Bus Replacement Grant Application Submission - Gary Stockhoff, Public Works Director

Stockhoff explained that this opportunity arose late in the Oregon Department of Transportation process, so staff did not have time to seek Board approval before submitting the application. Benton County applied for seven vehicles: four to replace ones that will be over recommended mileage in the next few years, and three for vehicles the County currently has on loan from Corvallis for Benton Area Transit. Matching funds were already allocated in the 2025-27 State Transportation Improvement Fund project list; this request is for retroactive authorization for those funds.

MOTION: Malone moved to authorize, retroactive to June 23, 2025, the submission by staff of the Federal Transit Administration Bus Replacement Grant application. Shepherd seconded the motion, which **carried 3-0.**

7.4 *Draft City of Corvallis/Benton County Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) for Staffing for Coordinated Offices - Rick Crager, Assistant County Administrator; April Holland, Health Department Director; Christopher Jacobs, Corvallis-Benton Economic Development Manager

Crager explained that the IGA was a work in progress. Late changes were made on June 27, 2025, but County Counsel was out of the office, so changes resulting from today's discussion would be subject to Counsel's review and approval. Crager presented a clean version and a redline version [Exhibits 1 and 2] based on the Corvallis attorney's changes. During the County Budget Hearings, County and City staff discussed how in the past, the two have shared the cost for the Corvallis-Benton Economic Development Office (CBEDO) and the Coordinated Homeless

Response Office (CHRO). The amount each party paid the other essentially balances out. McEneny and Corvallis City Administrator Mark Shepard suggested making the process more efficient by creating an IGA on shared services. The County will pay for CHRO, and the City will pay for CBEDO. As part of past agreements, CBEDO has sub-awards to Linn-Benton Community College and the Regional Accelerator and Innovation Network; in future, the County would directly fund those awards instead of sub-contracting to Corvallis, but Jacobs would still help with contract administration. Holland, Shepard, Jacobs, and McEneny had reviewed the IGA.

Shepard shared that the annual back-and-forth process for these programs is bothersome for staff. Also, as staff considered how to integrate the Home, Opportunity, Planning, and Equity Board into CHRO, and as those two groups came closer to merging, the parties held detailed conversations about salaries and benefits at the end of each year, which created some friction. Now, the contracts are identical, and the City and the County have a good working relationship.

Crager thanked Shepard, Thwaites, and Jacobs for help during the IGA process. Supplemental budget adjustments can be made if needed.

Holland noted that the most important aspect for all is to preserve the commitment to partnership, without sharing these costs, which has been accomplished. While financial investment in a project is one way to indicate commitment, both the City and the County already have shown commitment through Memoranda of Understanding and IGAs.

Wyse felt slightly nervous about changing the method, preferring that both parties contribute to each program. However, if the outcomes will not change, Wyse would support this course of action.

McEneny emphasized the importance of the City and the County working well together. The IGA helps with that. McEneny and Shepard meet monthly. McEneny asked Shepard and Jacobs to comment on how the two jurisdictions work together on important projects and share many values.

Shepard shared he and his staff transferred to Holland's division for about a year during the pandemic, which fostered close relationships. Shepard and Holland confer multiple times a day.

Jacobs noted that CBEDO started offering office hours about a year and a half ago. Jacobs regularly attends County Community Development meetings and meets with McEneny periodically. There is now much more integration of CBEDO and its focus countywide.

Malone supported the proposal, but was also concerned about making sure there was an even relationship between the City and the County.

Crager shared that he and Shepard were comfortable with the most recent draft; the only step remaining is legal group review. The Board can approve contingent on finishing legal review, or staff can return for approval once the legal review is done.

Shepard noted that the City's attorney suggested a section about how each organization would respond to records requests.

Wyse would prefer to review the final version, even if that item is placed on a Consent Calendar for approval.

Shepherd agreed, and shared similar concerns with the other Commissioners, but expressed full trust in City and County staff to work out the arrangement. Shepherd emphasized that the County would still work with the City to help the unhoused, the City will not cut off all support, and CBEDO would not suddenly cease to work outside of city limits. Shepherd noted the following edits:

1. On the redline version [Exhibit 2], page 3, the first two sentences in items 2.1.1.2 and 2.1.2.2 repeat.
2. The date on page 7 says 'June', but presumably that will change with final approval of the document.
3. On pages 5-6 about the living wage ordinance for Corvallis, a section of municipal code is quoted. However, because code can change, Shepherd suggested mentioning a version date, such as, 'the 2025 version of 1.25.090'.

Shepherd concurred with waiting for Counsel's legal review of the IGA, and having the item return on a Consent Calendar.

Crager stated that he and Shepard would make the revisions noted today, and return with the item at the July 15, 2025 Board Meeting.

Wyse summarized that the Board's consensus is to support the IGA with some small changes, and to review the final version before approval.

{Exhibit 1: Benton-Corvallis Coordinated Office IGA, Revised Draft, City Attorney Edits}

{Exhibit 2: Benton-Corvallis Coordinated Office IGA, Redline Revised Draft, City Attorney Edits}

8. Other

Shepherd shared that he attended his last County College training on June 27, 2025, in the City of Salem. On the same day, the House Bill (HB) 2025 transportation package failed to reach the floor, and the State released a new bill that would remove counties from the follow-up package, meaning that the 50%/30%/20% gas tax distribution rule would not be followed; instead, the funds would go directly to the Oregon Department of Transportation. At County College, Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) Executive Director Gina Nikkel learned of this and announced, "We're canceling the last half of County College; we're all going to the State Capitol, and we will sit there and tell [the legislators] that is not acceptable." The 20 county commissioners attending County College proceeded to the Capitol. A meeting was scheduled for 3:45 PM, but House Democrats did not arrive till 6:10 PM. The bill subsequently failed on the House. Many Capitol staff and others agree that the commissioners' presence affected the outcome. Ryann Gleason, a lobbyist from CFM Advocates, was also present and assisted Shepherd. The Benton County Commissioners were well-represented by AOC to advocate for local governments.

Malone asked whether this was the transportation bailout proposal to raise the gas tax by three cents.

Shepherd confirmed; those three cents would not have been subject to the split. The amendment came out at noon and the sponsors were trying to push the bill through both Houses before the end of the day. That did not happen.

Malone observed that HB 2025 was complicated, with multiple funding streams. To attract more support, legislators lowered the proposed gas tax increase from 20 cents to 15 cents per gallon used. However, there was not enough time to pass the bill by the end of the session.

Shepherd mentioned that Governor Kotek might call for a special legislative session. The Board should stay very engaged to remind legislators that local governments are part of the same transportation system and need support.

Shepherd asked whether the Chair would add ORS 192.660[2][d] Labor Negotiations to the Executive session.

Wyse confirmed adding a discussion about labor negotiations to the Executive Session.

Malone noted that this year's Open Streets Corvallis was a well-attended event. Malone talked to an organizer about considering the City of Philomath as a future location.

Chair Wyse recessed the meeting at 10:14 AM.

Chair Wyse reconvened the meeting at 10:24 AM.

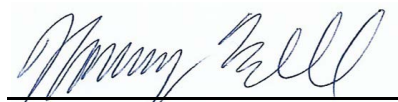
9. Executive Session

Chair Wyse recessed the regular Board Meeting at 10:24 AM and immediately convened an Executive Session under **ORS 192.660[2][o] – Safety of the Governing Body** and **ORS 192.660[2][d] – Labor Negotiations**.

Chair Wyse recessed the Executive Session at 10:46 AM and immediately reconvened the regular Board Meeting.

9. Adjournment

Chair Wyse adjourned the meeting at 10:36 AM.



Nancy Wyse, Chair



Erika Milo, Recorder

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