



Board of Commissioners

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**MINUTES OF THE GOAL-SETTING MEETING
BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MAY 13, 2025**

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

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

Staff: Erika Milo, Recorder; Rachel Bulder, Maura Kwiatkowski, Board Staff; Anne Thwaites, Public Information Officer; Sean McGuire, Sustainability; Bailey Payne, Community Development; Gary Stockhoff, Public Works

Guests: Charlene Pech, City of Corvallis; Nick Meltzer, Kittleson & Associates; Amy Griffiths

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Wyse called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

2. Review and Approve Agenda

No changes were made to the agenda.

3. Announcements

No Announcements.

4. Consent Calendar

**4.1 Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Intervention (CAMI) Fund Grants
Signatory Authority**

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

5. Discussion Topics

5.1 Review and Discussion of the Performance Evaluation Process for the County Administrator and County Counsel – Nancy Wyse, Board Chair

Wyse acknowledged the NeoGov platform, used for Performance Evaluations, is complicated and difficult to use.

McEneny completed work on NeoGov last year and a portion of it was accidentally erased; the same instance happened to McEneny's predecessor.

Wyse listed additional issues with the platform, such as a lack of formatting or spelling corrections. The questions that are asked on NeoGov that the Commissioners answer to review the County Administrator and County Counsel are not entirely relevant or meaningful to the positions reviewed. Wyse asked the Board its opinion regarding the use of the NeoGov for performance evaluations; keep the current system or redo the evaluation process in a more meaningful way that focuses on the specific aspects of the positions the Commissioners are reviewing for.

Malone agreed that NeoGov is challenging; one of the reasons being it is infrequently used by the Commissioners. Malone suspected the platform is user-friendly to employees who use it regularly and acknowledged its countywide benefits. Malone is interested in exploring alternatives to NeoGov for the County Administrator and County Counsel evaluation process.

Wyse believed previous evaluations were created as a separate Word document and considered that method as an option. Another idea is to rate the employee in different areas on a numerical or an agree or disagree scale.

Shepherd is relatively new to using NeoGov and has not experienced discontent with the platform yet. Shepherd stated it was difficult to make a determination without knowing the previous questions asked during the employee evaluations. Shepherd preferred using evaluation questions that are related to the position Commissioners review for.

Wyse stated the County Administrator and County Counsel positions interact with the entire organization more frequently than with the Commissioners. Wyse asked if it would be useful to receive Countywide feedback of the two employees when conducting evaluations. Wyse asked if that method was used for Counsel's position in previous years.

Counsel confirmed it was used many years ago.

Wyse is in favor of expanding the evaluation process to include multiple points of view.

Shepherd agreed and discussed the importance of the perspectives of those who are direct reports and staff to the County Administrator and County Counsel.

Wyse discussed the differences in evaluation process used for each employee and suggested a different method to the process currently used for the County Administrator.

McEneny stated that Human Resources (HR) is her direct report and with the current review process, HR has access to McEneny's evaluations from the Board; McEneny believed it was not appropriate for a direct report to facilitate the evaluation process. McEneny stated the year prior an employee that does not work under her purview took notes for the County Administrator evaluation, but the notes were stored in 360, which is managed by HR. McEneny asked other County Administrators how their review process is done; some sent McEneny templates that the Board can review. McEneny stated Washington County uses an outside facilitator to conduct County Administrator evaluations, and described that process. McEneny suggested if utilizing NeoGov continues, the process could vary each year; for example, different employees or community leaders could provide feedback.

Counsel was in agreement on considering an outside facilitator to conduct the evaluations, one of the reasons being is Counsel and the County Administrator could receive feedback for improvement from the individuals both positions work with on a daily basis. Counsel agreed that NeoGov does not provide the Board with relevant questions that would elicit job specific feedback. Counsel added if the evaluation questions were to better reflect the daily role and how it interacts with County employees and the community, the Board would have a more accurate perspective for its evaluation.

Malone agreed that utilizing feedback from varying perspectives would be useful. Malone added that NeoGov is a constraining platform to use and frequently contacts HR regarding its challenges.

Wyse discussed ambiguity of the current evaluation questions for County Counsel. For example, Counsel is rated on integrity, but it is not defined nor is it determined how the Board should rate integrity on a year to year basis. Wyse was interested in better defined ratings and questions, along with maintaining an easy method to compile the information and have access to it long-term, which NeoGov offers. Wyse noted the County has moved away from Performance Management, but had learned the proper way to perform the evaluations according to the instructions is to meet with the Board's employees throughout the year and maintain the notes specific to employee goals and evaluation ratings, which Wyse believes the Board does not do currently.

Malone does not conduct meetings formally, but agreed the employee's evaluations should reflect the entire year.

Wyse noted if any issues regarding an employee occurs, it is best practice to mention it at the time it happens rather than waiting for the annual evaluation. Wyse suggested if the Commissioners are in favor of exploring new options for the evaluation process to revisit the topic at the next Goal-setting meeting. Wyse will bring more information from other Counties and suggested Shepherd and Malone bring ideas or information.

5.2 Regional Sustainable Materials Management Plan Task Force Update - Sean McGuire, Sustainability Coordinator; Bailey Payne, Solid Waste Coordinator

McGuire mentioned an article that was published a few weeks ago regarding CleanLane Resource and Recovery Facility; the proposed facility for Lane County will differ from a traditional landfill. Its zoning permit was denied, and the delay showcased concerns from the private sector. The Solid Waste Coordinator for Lane County did not express concern over the delay, but if the permit is not approved, it will limit future options for waste disposal and could add pressure onto Benton County.

Malone acknowledged existing opposition of CleanLane from haulers and a small Public Utility District that is collecting biogas from the current disposal facility. The opposition is due to a change in process that CleanLane has proposed to separate organics and to offer more composting options. The original timeline for operations to begin was the end of 2026, but Malone believes it could move to 2027.

McGuire discussed the delays associated with CleanLane as an example of the regional issues on waste disposal.

Malone stated that waste collected in Springfield is sent to Ryan Creek facility in Medford, which is approximately 360 miles roundtrip. Malone is interested in the financial and carbon footprint details regarding the claims that sending Lane County's waste to a facility in Medford is saving customer's money. The Lane County government owns the landfill and is promoting the CleanLane facility, which will expand the regional capacity for waste disposal.

Payne stated if a portion of waste was sent to CleanLane, Benton County's recovery rate would increase at approximately 8 to 10 percent.

Malone confirmed that Lane County had approximately a 50% recycle and reuse rate and asked if Multnomah County had a better rate.

Payne believed Lane County had the best rate, the Portland Metro region following, then Marion County.

Malone stated that Benton County's rate is approximately 32 percent, but the County

does not have the infrastructure in place to maximize separation and recovery; it would improve if the County utilized the CleanLane facility.

McGuire stated House Bill (HB) 3794 evaluates challenges in waste disposal at a regional level. The bill is currently with the Ways and Means subcommittee and a hearing is not yet scheduled. McGuire began to discuss the SMMP; subcommittee discussions regarding findings and final recommendations are completing. The final task force meeting is on May 28 and the SMMP facilitator is expected to present to the Board on June 17.

Malone stated HB 3794 is a \$150,000 ask for standing up a Task Force. Malone asked how much time does that amount allot the County.

McGuire confirmed the bill allots 18 months, but is not specific. McGuire believes the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) will facilitate the process.

Malone expressed concern over the transition process of the County's SMMP task force if the bill is stood up.

McGuire stated that topic will be addressed during the May 28 meeting; another question that will be discussed is if the bill does not continue, could each County contribute to maintain the momentum to continue operations.

Malone listed Benton County's partners: Lane, Linn, Marion, and Polk Counties.

McGuire added Lincoln County due to its dependency on Coffin Butte Landfill (CBL).

Malone stated the importance of having a plan for next steps when the CBL lifespan reaches its end.

Wyse is hopeful that CleanLane will be a future option, but if the facility does not materialize, the region has learned what not to do, and there will be other opportunities.

Malone added that Lane County is in a different situation than Benton, because their landfill has a 70-year lifespan.

Payne stated if the CleanLane project moves forward, it will reduce the volume of garbage the landfill processes by 80% thus increasing the lifespan of the landfill. Payne added that Deschutes County is in a similar situation; Deschutes owns their landfill, but its lifespan is approximately six more years. Deschutes County considered building another landfill, but that agreement has failed. Additionally, Deschutes County is considering building a material recovery facility to avoid transporting recyclables to Portland.

Malone requested Deschutes' reuse and recovery rate and information regarding the type of facilities that improve a County's rate.

5.3 Discussion Regarding Benton Area Transit (BAT) Self-perform Analysis Information - Gary Stockhoff, Benton Public Works Director; Charlene Pech, Corvallis Special and Rural Transportation Coordinator; Nick Meltzer, Kittelson & Associates

With assistance from Kittelson and Associates, County staff have researched future operational alternatives for BAT. There will be multiple factors that are related to the analysis, such as timing for the next round of the State Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) in 2027-29 and a possible increase in the transit tax.

Benton County had requested information regarding methods of improvements or adjustments to the service delivery model for operating the transit system due to challenges with the current contractor, to address noncompliance and a lack of transparency in reporting, and to maximize the impact of recent increases in transit.

Meltzer discussed the aspects of transit service:

- Operations
- Fleet and Facilities
- Service and Capital Planning
- Administration
- Coordination

Current transit services provided by Benton County are contracted with Dial-A-Bus; fixed-route services and demand-response services are currently offered. Meltzer outlined the current structure and services: Dial-A-Bus is a non-profit contractor that provides operation services for BAT, Benton County owns and brands the vehicles and the contractor provides the drivers, dispatchers, and supervisors; drivers consist of paid and volunteer. BAT is mostly integrated with the City of Corvallis transit staffing through an Inter-governmental Agreement (IGA) with Benton County. If operating fixed-route transit in a city, that entity is required to provide paratransit, which supports seniors and people with disabilities. Paratransit is not required for inter-city transit, for example, the Coast to the Valley. Meltzer reviewed the ridership and budget. Fixed route ridership demand is slowly returning to pre-pandemic levels. BAT's annual operating revenues and expenses are approximately \$2.66 million; both fixed route and demand response service costs are below the market average. Meltzer shared a chart comparing BAT operating costs to peer agencies. Although costs averaging below market average could be considered good; BAT ridership per hour is lower compared to peer agencies. Meltzer reviewed the BAT funding sources, which is a combination of federal (5310, 5311, and DD 53) and local (STIF, City and County contributions). federal and state funding requirements include: grant receiving/administering, legal, financial, and technical capacity certification, continued control of equipment and facilities, Title VI Nondiscrimination program, Competitive procurement, triennial audit, and fleet management. Challenges with the current

delivery model include: during the federal audit completed in November 2023, there were eight compliance findings and one advisory recommendation. The findings were a result from the inability to track or measure contractor's actions to meet federal regulations and non-compliance must be reported on grant applications which could threaten funding. Meltzer reviewed key takeaways from Kittleson and Associates findings.

Malone stated an earlier audit was referenced during the 2023 audit and asked when that referenced audit was conducted.

Meltzer believed that audit was completed in November of 2020.

Malone expressed concern regarding repeat challenges from 2020 in 2023.

Wyse requested an example of a repeat challenge.

Meltzer responded that the audit does not distinguish the severity levels of each finding. One of the findings was ensuring compliance with reporting requirements. Kittleson and Associates reviewed Benton County's contract with Dial-A-Bus, which states Dial-A-Bus must follow all federal rules, but a reporting mechanism to back to County is not included, thus Dial-A-Bus is reporting to itself.

Pech stated repeat findings were mainly American Disabilities Act (ADA) and Title VI related.

Wyse asked if the County could improve at requesting the information from Dial-A-Bus.

Stockhoff confirmed that had been a part of the issue. During that time-frame the Coordinator position had been vacant for eight months; follow ups were conducted to the best of staff's ability. Stockhoff stated a few items have been resolved, and the procurement policy is in progress. The policy is expected to be updated before next audit during the summer of 2026.

Wyse asked if Counsel is assisting.

Stockhoff stated that Counsel has provided direction, but many factors are dependent on collaborations with Pech and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). Stockhoff discussed reviewing the sole source contract.

Malone asked if many of the findings from the 2023 audit have been resolved in the interim.

Stockhoff confirmed, stating a few findings were easy to resolve.

Kittleson and Associates conducted peer agency interviews; using the National Transit Database and assistance from Stockhoff and Pech to find similar agencies. Meltzer

discussed the peer agency interview questions, such as type of service, service expansion, financial tracking, reporting, training, and liability. Some agencies switched from using a contractor to in-house, or changed contractor services. Meltzer discussed the interview themes: challenges associated with service expansion, staffing levels, fleet and facility arrangements varied, budget consistency, and a limited capacity for service planning. Driver shortages persist in both models, but it is improving. Meltzer stated that one of the County's interviewed, Mesa County had to re-bid and find a less expensive contractor to maintain a budget and service. If the County is self-providing, there is a better expectation of annual overhead costs. Services offered and decision-making processes were consistent among both models; County leadership is the common approval method. Meltzer shared a chart that conveyed required elements to operate a transit system and how the elements differentiate between varying service models. A contractor could be used to offset costs or liability, but with transit; because Benton County is a responsible entity, there are fewer options available with that model. Value alignments were rated from low, medium, to high depending on the service model chosen; the alignments included: effort to maintain compliance, operations control, ability to increase services, and annual cost variability. Meltzer concluded that any chosen service model should be aligned with County values, additional County staffing is required in any model used. Costs will increase if anything changes, but most revenue is already at risk with noncompliance findings, and the non-profit's contractor's service cost is below market value.

Shepherd asked how long the noncompliance findings stay on the County's record.

Meltzer stated it lasts until the next audit.

Meltzer examined the future of transit in Benton County: what the County wants to achieve, what tools can be used, and making the best decision based on an evaluation. Meltzer stated there is no mandate to provide transit; however, providing transit aligns with the County's goals and the County receives funding to operate transit. Alternatively, Benton County could provide demand response services to portions of the County. Additionally, Benton County is not required to provide paratransit services for the Corvallis Transit System. Meltzer continued to discuss possible tradeoffs in Benton County's transit services, such as changing service hours. Meltzer shared how other agencies address limited funding: improve efficiency of demand response services, combine trips, reduce service hours and/or self-perform service, operate services for outlying communities on limited days per week, and focus on required offerings only. Meltzer stated the County could scale back services to create cost efficiencies but still meet Federal and State requirements.

Meltzer discussed instances when a contractor could be used. BAT is responsible for many elements of service delivery whether a contractor is used or not. The use of a service contractor is ideal when flexibility in staffing is needed. Meltzer shared a proposed vision, for the Board to provide input on. The vision stated: provide public transit service to Benton County residents that is fiscally sustainable, efficient, and maintains State and Federal compliance.

Stockhoff mentioned if any changes in BAT services were to occur, it would not happen until July 2027, which is the beginning of the new STIF period and the new budget. Providing enough time to project the County's revenue will be useful in the Board's decision-making process.

Wyse was in favor of the proposed vision and asked if a professional or positive qualifier could be added to the vision.

Malone asked if there were any aspects regarding the proposed transportation legislative framework that would directly affect the BAT program, increase funding for transportation, or any information on the proposed bill that the Board is not privy to.

Stockhoff stated the Transit Association is proposing an increase to the transit payroll tax, which would increase revenue. Benton County could receive more transit funding based on population.

Wyse stated the proposed vision does not mention convenience for transit users.

Shepherd asked if the County has a current vision regarding BAT.

Meltzer said no.

Shepherd asked what the purpose is to develop a vision.

Meltzer responded a purpose will guide the scenarios Kittleson and Associates develop for different service alternatives that would best serve Benton County.

Shepherd stated the provided language on the vision is utilitarian, benefitting mainly staff and requirements, and does not mention a service aspect. Shepherd discussed the importance on emphasizing BAT as a community program; the current vision does not contain the fact that the Board is in favor of the program because it ensures community members get to and from a destination. Shepherd agreed that it was equally important for the County to maintain compliance.

Wyse suggested adding a sentence to the end of the vision regarding customer service or serving the community.

Meltzer agreed with adding a value statement to the vision.

Stockhoff suggested "To provide customer-focused public transit service to Benton County."

Pech discussed the importance of the County having a service or operational plan to leverage the funding received from the State and Federal government.

Wyse agreed.

Meltzer stated a formal policy regarding transit had never been in place, and one of the reasons for the transit study was to analyze the current system and discuss alternatives to what has always been in place.

Malone agreed that it is important to provide an efficient transit service. Malone discussed how the fixed-route ridership has recovered since the COVID-19 pandemic, but the optional service is in need of improvement.

Meltzer confirmed that Kittleson and Associates will incorporate the Board's feedback regarding the proposed vision, and begin to develop different service alternatives.

Chair Wyse recessed the meeting at 10:32 a.m. and reconvened at 10:39 a.m.

6. County Updates

6.1 County Administrator Updates – Rachel McEneny, County Administrator

- Job shadowed Chris MacFarlane in Behavioral Health, visiting encampments in Corvallis, the jail, and Samaritan Health Services.
- Continuing to work with the County's collective bargaining units.
- Attended County Budget meetings with Crager.
- Attended Benton Breakfast.
- CFO recruitment.
- Board and Information Technology staff assisted Community Development launch the Conditional Use Permit Public Hearing meetings for CBL.
- Participated in Courageous Conversations training with Shepherd and Wyse.
- Attended the joint Benton County Board of Commissioners and City of Albany meeting.
- Attended the New Courthouse ground-breaking event on Friday.
- Planted a linden tree in North Albany Park on Arbor Day.
- Will tour the Law Enforcement Building with Sheriff Van Arsdall to examine building issues.
- Attending professional organization webinars when possible.

6.2 Assistant County Administrator Updates – Rick Crager, Assistant County Administrator

- Working on the next biennium's budget.
- The Budget Hearing notice will be posted in the Gazette Times next week, and translated into Spanish, as required.
- Will post the notice on the County's Financial Services website.
- Budget document will be published on May 19.

- Final presentations will be posted to the website by May 22.

Malone asked for the timeline on the CFO recruitment process.

McEneny has received eight applicants and the process will likely extend into July. The first round of interviews is scheduled for mid-June; August 1 is the projected start date.

6.3 Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Shepherd:

- Toured the St Vincent De Paul Shelter system in Eugene.
- Attended the New Courthouse ground-breaking event.
- Spent a day at the District Attorney's Office and the Historic Courthouse.
- Will attend County College on Thursday through Saturday.
- Observed the Elections Office process for the upcoming ballot election.
- Participated in the Fire Chief round table session at the previous Information Sharing Meeting.

Malone agreed that the Fire Department meeting was informative, adding that many of the agencies have mutual aid agreements and work together.

Shepherd mentioned an article in the Gazette Times regarding Unity Shelter. The shelter acknowledged the possibility of laying off 80% of its staff and end overnight operations effective July 1. Shepherd has engaged in conversations with Sean Collins and April Holland; one of the main issues is the disbursement of funds that are in a bill that has not yet passed; State bill 5311. Staff will be discussing funding options. Shepherd also called Representative Sarah Finger McDonald's office and Governor Tina Kotek's Regional Solutions office.

McEneny stated the article mentioned Federal funding and asked if Unity Shelter receives Federal funding. Unity Shelter receives two direct lines of State funding through the County, which adds up to approximately \$2.1 million. McEneny stated if Unity Shelter is looking for Federal funding, according to the Gazette Times article, outreach should be conducted at the Federal level.

Crager believed Unity Shelter receives mainly State funding, adding that Federal funding for shelters is typically limited.

Shepherd stated the referenced Federal funding was from the American Rescue Plan Act. Shepherd does not think the County and the City of Corvallis could absorb an additional 120 people living on the streets. Shepherd stressed the importance of preventing that from happening between the start of the Fiscal Year and when the State funds are disbursed.

Commissioner Malone:

- The current work group for the SMMP process completes in June. Representative Finger McDonald's HB 3794 is in Ways & Means for a \$150,000 request. Malone is uncertain how the process will move forward, but interested partners have been identified, such as Linn, Marion, and Polk Counties. Malone discussed CBL within the SMMP scope and asked if the County has budgeted an amount of funding to continue the SMMP discussion.

Crager stated the proposed budget has some funding allotted for SMMP. Crager recommended a small cut to the budget, and McGuire confirmed the SMMP can operate within the proposed funding.

- Transportation Reinvestment Plan (TRIP) framework.

Wyse confirmed the Board voted to support the plan.

Crager agreed.

Malone discussed the importance of raising funds and ensuring a bipartisan effort. Malone believes a bill has not yet been proposed due to ongoing negotiations. Malone asked if a letter has been drafted yet.

Crager stated it has not, the Board discussed waiting for the bill to be released before sending a letter of support.

Malone agreed to wait until the Board knows the details in the bill; Malone believes the bill will request increased funding to local jurisdictions. Byer emailed the Board last week requesting support for the proposal as it is critical to Benton County to not drop further behind on road maintenance. Malone suggested the Board sends an email to Byer that confirms support, and then send a letter of support when the bill is issued. Benton County receives approximately \$7.1 million annually, and if the TRIP framework package was enacted, the County would receive an additional \$5.9 million annually; the bill would not be completely implemented until 2032. The proposed 20 cent increase in the gas tax would start at an eight cent increase in the first year, incrementally adding more until the gas tax reached the 20 cent increase.

- Attended a Town Hall in April for Attorney General Dan Rayfield and a local State Representative that mainly discussed concerns regarding the Federal government.
- Attended the Oregon Non-profit Organizations quarterly meeting; discussed transportation challenges.

- Attended the Statewide Area Commission on Transportation meeting in Keizer in late April.
- Met with Michael Skipper from CFM Advocates.
- Attended the Area Committee on Transportation meeting then toured the Philomath Streetscapes.
- Was invited by OSU Extension Services to testify to Ways and Means Committee on May 1 regarding OSU Extension budget process.
- Discussed funding for Jackson-Frazier Wetland Boardwalk with Senate President Robert Wagner.

Commissioner Wyse:

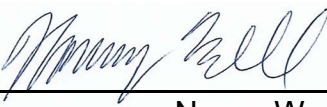
- Attended the tree planting Arbor Day event at North Albany Park.
- Attended various meetings with City Mayors, City Councilors, District Attorney, and the Sheriff.
- Went to Salem to attend the Community Development and Transportation AOC Steering Committee and the legislative meeting.
- Participated in Courageous Conversations training.
- Hoffman Construction offered another tour of the New Courthouse site.
- Attended the Benton Breakfast.
- Attended Legislative Breakfast.
- Attended the Salmon and Jazz Rotary event.
- Will attend the Western Interstate Region Conference, which advocates public policy issues affecting the counties of the Western States

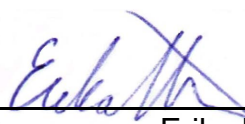
7. Other

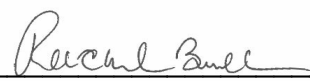
No other business was discussed

8. Adjournment

Chair Wyse adjourned the meeting at 11:32 a.m.


Nancy Wyse, Chair


Erika Milo, Recorder


Rachel Bulder, Transcriptionist

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