



Board of Commissioners

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2025, 9:00 AM**

- Present:** Nancy Wyse, Chair; Pat Malone, Commissioner; Gabe Shepherd, Commissioner; Vance Croney, County Counsel; Rachel McEneny, County Administrator
- Elected Officials:** Val Hoyle, United States Representative, Fourth Congressional District; Ryan Joslin, District Attorney; Jef Van Arsdall, Sheriff
- Staff:** Rachel Bulder, Maura Kwiatkowski, Board staff; Jeramie Martin, Financial Services; Sean McGuire, Sustainability; Lacey Mollel, Christine Mosbaugh, Community Health Centers; Erika Milo, Board Recorder
- Guests:** Dan Chapel, Nancy Chapel, Benton County residents; Marianne Gardner, Stephen Poole, Mary Beth Thompson, Princeton Heights Neighborhood (North Albany) residents; Ryan McCambridge, Linn-Benton Food Share; Grace Robinson, Community Health Centers Board

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

Item 7.2 was removed and forwarded to the August 12, 2025, Goal-Setting Meeting.

3. Announcements

No announcements were made.

4. Proclamations

4.1 Proclaiming August 3 through August 9, 2025, as Community Health Centers Week, Proclamation No. P2025-021 - Grace Robinson, Community Health Centers Patient Board Member; Lacey Mollel, Community Health Centers Director, Christine Mosbaugh, Strategy and Engagement Manager, Health Services

Mollel introduced Grace Robinson, a patient member of the Community Health Center (CHC) Board. CHCs are celebrating 60 years of existence. A consumer-driven Advisory Board is a key part of this model.

Robinson read the Proclamation aloud. One in 11 United States residents receives healthcare at a CHC, as does one in five rural residents.

MOTION: Malone moved to approve Proclamation #P2025-021, naming August 3 Through August 9, 2025, as Community Health Centers Week. Shepherd seconded the motion, which **carried 3-0**.

5. Comments from the Public

5.1 *North Albany Princeton Heights Neighborhood Petition Regarding Traffic Safety Issues at the Intersection of Northwest 25th Avenue and Scenic Drive Northwest - Mary Beth Thompson, Stephen Poole, Marianne Gardner, Princeton Heights Neighborhood residents

Thompson, Poole, and Gardner had previously submitted a petition to the Board regarding a dangerous intersection located at Northwest 25th Avenue and Scenic Drive Northwest in the Princeton Heights Neighborhood of the community of North Albany, Oregon. At least one member of every household in the neighborhood signed the petition, except three who were out of town at the time. The commenters detailed how the steep and curved street, traffic signage, speed limit, and limited visibility around this intersection present dangers to drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians, including school children, residents, and visitors.

Thompson noted that the only ingress/egress from the neighborhood is at the intersection in question. Every resident who signed the petition spoke to Thompson at length about fears, concerns, and frustrations regarding the intersection, mentioning multiple near misses, the potential for fatalities, and frequent speeding vehicles on Scenic. Due to a downhill curve and blind corner, drivers approaching the intersection cannot see each other. The distance from the blind corner to the stop sign is 60 yards. With cars coming around the corner at the posted speed limit of 45 miles per hour, drivers on 25th have only seconds to pull onto Scenic and accelerate enough to avoid a collision. A fence and utility pole currently interfere with the sightline, but even if those features were removed, there would still be only 75 yards of visibility.

Poole expressed support for the petition and Thompson's comments and submitted a map [exhibit 1] of the neighborhood. Poole shared concerns that drivers coming downhill risk hitting children who are waiting for the school bus, particularly because some drivers exceed the posted speed limit. A recent engineering study of the intersection concluded that the speed limit was adequate and there was no problem. Poole questioned this conclusion, and requested confirmation that the City, County, and other involved parties had taken all issues into consideration. Poole asked how the jurisdictions would address the situation.

Gardner described complaining multiple times to the City of Albany about the dangerous intersection, including requests for foliage trimming to improve visibility. In October 2024, Gardner spoke with Captain Buck Pearce, Albany Police Department. Pearce was already familiar with the area of concern, as were most others in the Police Department. Pearce forwarded Gardner's concerns to Albany Engineering Associate Andrew Monaco. The neighborhood is annexed by the City, but because Scenic is a County road, the City has no authority over it. Multiple hazards exist for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Community members would like safer access to North Albany Park, a nearby county park, because the only crosswalks on Scenic are close to Northwest Gibson Hill Road, which is further south. The City trimmed some foliage near the intersection, but there was no follow-up, so residents are approaching the County instead.

Wyse replied that the residents' concerns were understandable, and that they were not alone in these concerns. Wyse asked staff to collect contact information from Thompson, Poole, and Gardner; Wyse will follow up with more information.

Pearce mentioned that Benton County sent out a survey which highlighted Benton County roads in Albany and asked residents to comment, which Pearce did.

Wyse replied that the survey project was still underway.

{Exhibit 1: Princeton Heights Neighborhood map}

Dan and Nancy Chapel, owner-operators of Cardwell Hill Cellars winery, commented on zoning restrictions which prevent the Chapels from hosting food trucks at winery events. In March 2025, Benton County issued a document stating that the City of Philomath allowed Lumos Wine Company, 500 yards away from Cardwell, to host food trucks on the 77-acre Exclusive Farm Use (EFU)-zoned property at gatherings of up to 200 attendees. Cardwell has a 23.1-acre lot with two acres zoned Agricultural Industrial (AI) and the remainder zoned EFU. Cardwell holds gatherings of 40-75 people at up to eight events per year. Wineries are food processing facilities, not industrial plants; wine-making does not cause water or noise pollution. Cardwell is certified as sustainable agriculture by non-profit organization Low Impact Viticulture

and Enology, and is certified as promoting environmentally safe methods of pest and disease control by the International Organization of Biological Control, also a non-profit. At the July 1, 2025 Board Meeting, the Chapels were told that Benton County would provide a letter allowing food trucks to operate in Cardwell's EFU zone, but the Chapels have not yet received a letter. If allowed to host food trucks in the EFU zone, the Chapels would have to draw power from the AI area, and public consumption of food as well as garbage disposal would take place in the AI area, so it does not make sense to restrict this area. D. Chapel stated the situation is a restraint of the Chapels' trade, has damaged their business, and reflects poorly on Benton County's attitude towards small business. The Chapels requested a permanent waiver so that Cardwell can operate on the same economic basis as similarly sized neighboring wineries such as Lumos, Compton Family Wines, and Tyee Wine Cellars.

Wyse had discussed the matter with Assistant County Administrator Rick Crager, who was currently out of the office. Wyse offered to follow up with the Chapels via telephone call or in person.

{Exhibit 2: Dan and Nancy Chapel Written Public Comment}

6. Consent Calendar

6.1 Approval of the August 13, 2024 Board of Commissioners Goal-setting Meeting Minutes

6.2 Approval of the June 17, 2025 Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

6.3 Approval of the July 7, 2025 Board of Commissioners Committees and Commissions Applicant Interview Minutes

6.4 Approval of the July 23, 2025 Board of Commissioners Committees and Commissions Applicant Interviews Minutes

6.5 Approval of the July 29, 2025 Board of Commissioners Applicant Interview Meeting Minutes

6.6 Appointment of Alexandra Kirschbaum and Janet Nishihara to the Historic Resources Commission, Order No. D2025-059

6.7 Appointment of Therese O'Rourke to the Environment and Natural Resources Advisory Committee, Order No. D2025-060

6.8 Appointment of David Conca to the Natural Areas and Parks Advisory Board, Order No. D2025-061

6.9 Approval of the City of Corvallis and Benton County Intergovernmental Agreement for Staffing of Coordinated Offices

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

7. New Business

7.1 Approval of the Linn-Benton Food Share (LBFS) Grant Request - Jeramie Martin, Financial Services; Ryan McCambridge; Linn-Benton Food Share

Martin explained this funding is available through the Opportunity Fund. McCambridge was aware of current County budget constraints, but still wished to submit the application.

McCambridge thanked Benton County for longstanding support of LBFS baseline operations since the organization's beginnings in 1981. In 2024, LBFS provided over 1.6 million pounds of food to 29 major agencies in Benton County, including emergency food pantries, meal sites, supplemental agencies, and gleaning groups. For Fiscal Year 2025, ending June 30, LBFS provided 21,785 emergency food boxes, which fed a duplicated number of 54,961 individuals. This is an almost 13% increase over the number of food boxes in the previous year and is the highest number LBFS has ever delivered in Benton County. Those numbers will likely continue to increase in the next few years due to Federal- and State-level changes. To meet nutritional needs and demand, LBFS is purchasing more food than at any other time in its history. Since 2006, LBFS has delivered food to agencies weekly, including points in the Cities of Corvallis and Adair Village, and the Communities of Alsea and Blodgett.

Martin noted that the County awarded \$75,000 to LBFS in the previous biennium. For this biennium, LBFS initially requested \$125,000, then reduced the request to \$60,000, and then to \$50,000 on Martin's recommendation.

Responding to a question from Malone, McCambridge replied that LBFS had connections with Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments and is a department of Community Services Consortium. The LBFS annual budget is 70% locally donated, showing strong community support. The County's support funds operations (a type of funding that is difficult to acquire through grants) including warehouse operations and food delivery to pantries and meal sites.

Shepherd thanked LBFS staff for a recent tour of the group's warehouse. Shepherd

asked if Linn County also provides a baseline grant.

McCambridge confirmed.

Shepherd disliked reducing the funding given upcoming cuts to Federal aid programs, especially when the need is great, but acknowledged that local government lacks the capacity to compensate for all the cuts.

Wyse concurred with Shepherd. Benton County had to cut \$11.8 million from its current budget. Nonetheless, Wyse was happy to support this work. Wyse asked if the funding was already budgeted.

Martin confirmed that the funding was budgeted up to \$75,000.

Shepherd asked if increasing the funding amount would take funding away from a different opportunity.

Martin replied the Opportunity Fund is designed to make impacts in the community, so increasing the amount might or might not impact other projects that arise in future.

MOTION: Shepherd moved to approve a grant allocation to LBFS for the 2025-27 biennium in the amount of \$60,000, \$30,000 each for fiscal years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027. Malone seconded the motion, which **carried 3-0**.

7.2 Approval of Economic Development Office Agreements with Linn Benton Community College and the Regional Accelerator & Innovation Network - Christopher Jacobs, Economic Development Officer Manager and Gabby Fecteau, Contracts and Procurement Analyst

This item was forwarded to the August 12, 2025 Board Meeting.

7.3 Consideration of a Philomath Community Services (PCS) Request for Sponsorship for 50th Anniversary Celebration Event - Nancy Wyse, Board Chair

Kwiatkowski shared that according to a PCS staff person, event tickets were now sold out.

Wyse asked if the Board would like to issue a donation without attending. This is not an event the Board has supported before.

Malone had already purchased a ticket.

Shepherd had also purchased a ticket, and noted that PCS provides food aid in Benton County, a need the Board discussed earlier. Shepherd would support a donation of \$250.

Wyse stated that although she supported the organization, it appeared that the organizers had reached the attendance goal.

Malone noted the Board would have future opportunities to support PCS, which Malone would prefer. McEneny had suggested that the Board discuss sponsorships in general during a Goal Setting Meeting and examine a list of organizations the Board previously supported, in the light of budget allocation.

The Board decided not to sponsor the event this year.

Chair Wyse recessed the meeting at 9:46 AM and reconvened at 10:30 AM.

8. Special Presentation

8.1 Flag Presentation and Federal Legislative Update - The Honorable United States Representative Val Hoyle

Representative Hoyle presented the Benton County Board of Commissioners with an American flag that had previously flown over the United States Capitol in appreciation for all the Board's work. Hoyle shared that she was very proud to be able to bring this flag to the people of Benton County and the Board.

Hoyle presented the flag to Chair Wyse.

Wyse thanked Hoyle and shared that Benton County was honored to receive this flag, which had flown above the nation's capital. To some, this flag represents hope, freedom, and patriotism, but it is worth acknowledging that to others, it represents political divide, colonization, and historical controversy. To Wyse it represents the aspirational goals of liberty and freedom for all, using the term 'aspirational' because Wyse believes this country has not yet reached that place of liberty and justice for all. But when Wyse sees this flag, she is reminded of the ideals we all fight for. Wyse thanked Hoyle for the flag and for fighting for liberty and justice.

Hoyle provided a Federal legislative update.

- Hoyle is a member of the Transportation Infrastructure Committee, which operates in a bi-partisan way, as government should. This year a surface transportation package is in the works, so Hoyle encouraged the Board to tell legislators about County needs in that area. In the committee's community grant process, Hoyle

prioritized first responder communication and infrastructure investment. Water and sewer infrastructure is a priority everywhere in this district.

- Hoyle is also a member of the Natural Resources Committee (NRC), and is the ranking member of the Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries Committee. The current bi-partisan project is potential Tribal co-management of Federal lands. The HR1 One Big Beautiful Bill Act originally included a provision allowing the sale of public lands, which drew bi-partisan opposition. But with the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) firing so much of the Federal workforce, it is important to avoid a Federal official saying that a jurisdiction cannot manage its public lands due to low staff, so the lands should be sold. The challenge is to determine how to use extant Federal resources, work with Tribes, who have millennia of experience managing natural resources for future generations, and work with local communities.
- Wildfire is one of Hoyle's greatest concerns. Hoyle is working on the issue with the Oregon State Fire Marshal, Democratic members of the NRC, and Oregon's two senators, who are very concerned about wildfire preparedness. Hoyle has built a good working relationship with Montana Representative Tim Sheehy, who has done wildland fire fighting, including in Oregon. Sheehy understands that bringing crews from distant states, which can take two to three days, causes lethal delays. Oregon needs resources from the Pacific Northwest, because firefighting here is different from other places. Hoyle, Sheehy, and others are working on solutions as the administration attempts to bring all wildland firefighting under one agency. One of Hoyle's priorities is to make sure the Federal workforce is not wiped out. There are certain things government should do, which should not be outsourced to private industry, such as the Federal Aviation Administration (which Hoyle is working on through the Transportation Committee) and managing Federal lands and wildland firefighting. There is a place for contracted firefighting, but also for a Federal level of response.
- Everyone should stand up against some changes at the Federal level, such as what is happening with Immigration Control and Enforcement. This does not refer to deporting people who have committed crimes; Hoyle wants communities to be safe. But immigrants who are here legally, American citizens, are also being deported. For instance, Afghani people who worked as translators for the US government, and were granted US citizenship as a result, are being sent back to Afghanistan, where they risk Taliban retaliation. Such individuals are here legally, and everyone needs to stand up against that overreach. It is important to protect vulnerable communities, whether that is the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer Plus community, or people who are homeless or have mental illness. Everyone should also protect healthcare outreach in rural and urban communities. These principles will not be compromised. Hoyle will work with anyone to achieve goals and make sure the government is delivering services, through Social Security, the Internal Revenue Service, veterans' benefits, and student loans. There have been delays in services because Federal employees have been fired. Democratic legislators are getting work done while also speaking out against wrongs.

- The current administration wants to dismantle the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA plays a very important role, which includes providing expertise. Legislators are working in a bi-partisan way to show that dismantling FEMA and telling states to handle these matters by themselves is not appropriate and will not work.
- Hoyle asked the Board to inform her of ways to improve systems and highlight problems, so that legislators can fight to bring taxpayer funds back to Oregon.

Shepherd thanked Hoyle's office for an earlier tour of the Capitol building in Washington, District of Columbia (DC). Shepherd shared an anecdote of meeting a DC cab driver who was a former translator in Afghanistan but had just been laid off by DOGE cuts. Many constituents are concerned about deportations and people being held unconstitutionally. Benton needs a great deal of water and wastewater work, especially in small communities which do not have a sufficient tax base to rebuild. Oregon Governor Tina Kotek has sought funding for infrastructure to create capacity for new housing, but while the legislature promised \$100 million in funding, only \$10 million was allocated, so the Board will seek Federal help. A water and sewer project for the Community of Adair Village was not funded due to State cuts. The potential selling of public lands due to HR1 provoked the largest and broadest bi-partisan Shepherd had experienced locally. Shepherd was glad that item was not included in the final Bill. Parts of Marys Peak would have been subject to development; the peak is sacred to the Kalapuya people and a popular recreation site. Shepherd shared that FEMA wildfire response is one of his biggest concerns, that if the next Cascadia subduction zone earthquake or massive wildfire happens in Oregon, the state will not receive Federal funding because Oregonians largely voted against the current president. Shepherd expressed concern about budget cuts, defunding FEMA, and potential politicization of a necessary agency. The County cannot replace those cuts at the local level; that is the reason for a Federal government.

Hoyle met with Senator Tim Sheehy regarding wildfire, sharing her frustration that officials keep offering to have another meeting and talk about policy. There is no time left to talk about policy. Hotter weather due to climate change is harming trees, yet Oregonians still approach our wildfire and forest management in an outdated way. The historical approach was fire suppression, followed by clearcutting. Officials should stop approaching forest management with the "timber wars" mentality of "cut it all or don't cut any of it." Oregonians must find a sustainable way to approach this before it is too late. The 2020 wildfires came right up to Marys Peak. Hoyle engaged with Sheehy because wildfire does not stop at political lines or county lines; it must be addressed aggressively. Hoyle told Sheehy that the HR1 provisions for selling public lands needed to be stopped. Sheehy agreed and shared that Montana residents did not want that. Sheehy held back his vote on HR1 until that item was removed. However, due to the bill, the State will have over a billion-dollar shortfall. Corresponding State and

County budget cuts will be needed; states cannot rely on Federal help in the same way as in the past.

Hoyle also prioritizes workforce housing, making sure that the people working in Benton County (such as teachers, doctors, firefighters, nurses, first responders, and police officers) can afford to live here. Another priority is emergency communication, the ability to communicate in a natural disaster, and to communicate with the public about the need for emergency preparedness. Because resources are being reduced, Hoyle is looking for more efficient ways to provide essential services. Hoyle plans to talk to Kotek about how Oregon is delivering healthcare. Hoyle and US Senator Jeff Merkley are talking to Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy, Junior about ways to lower pharmaceutical costs and make more agencies eligible for the national 340B Drug Pricing Program, but the situation will get worse before it gets better, so residents need to determine priorities.

Malone praised Hoyle's down-to-earth, practical approach of looking for opportunities and possibilities. Letting the states handle emergency response by themselves is a terrible idea. State governments have capabilities, while the Federal government has resources and expertise that cannot be duplicated. Such a proposal shows a complete ignorance of how disasters work. Often the scale of an event is much greater than State and local jurisdictions' resources. Malone mentioned receiving Hoyle's wildfire awareness mailer yesterday. A few years ago, Federal, State, and private firefighters were battling a small fire on Marys Peak. As it began to get dark, the Federal firefighters went home for the night, even though the fire continued to burn. Malone was glad that Hoyle met health clinic staff and received information on what is needed to maintain County service levels for vulnerable community members. Malone thanked Hoyle and staff for supporting the County through community project funding. Such funds are critical to infrastructure and other projects which help keep the community safe. Malone encouraged Hoyle to tell the Board how to help Hoyle's work and keep lines of communication open.

Hoyle related that people are frustrated with government in general; for many people, the system is not working. Often people feel disconnected from government and tired of receiving bureaucratic responses to concerns. Community project funding brings taxpayer funds back to local jurisdictions. Oregonians pay more to the Federal government than they receive back. To be a good steward of taxpayer funds, Hoyle is careful to promote projects that are shovel-ready and will benefit the community into the future. Hoyle emphasized the importance of taking wildfire seriously. Since 2020, Oregon has developed one of the best systems of cooperation between Federal, State, local, and contracted firefighting resources, led by the Oregon Department of Forestry. Hoyle encouraged the Board to share local stories of how to help communities, because that is what government should do.

Wyse echoed her colleagues' sentiments. Wyse acknowledged Hoyle's practicality and honesty, her willingness to dive into solving a problem, and her ability to set reasonable expectations.

McEneny thanked Hoyle for help with funding and for coming to the Crisis Center opening ceremony. McEneny praised Benton County Public Health and Behavioral Health, as well as the County's emergency management team, led by Van Arsdall. The County will continue to do the hard work to collect those arguments and get the voiceless heard.

Van Arsdall thanked Hoyle for visiting, providing the flag, and supporting the Benton County Sheriff's Office; staff are starting to work with radio equipment which was funded through Hoyle's advocacy.

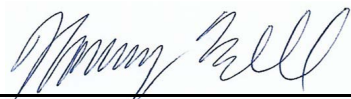
Hoyle commented that since the Sheriff and other officers put their lives on the line to protect and serve the community, the least legislators can do is to support that work.

9. Other

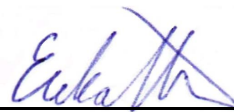
No other business was discussed.

10. Adjournment

Chair Wyse adjourned the meeting at 11:04 AM.



Nancy Wyse, Chair



Erika Milo, Recorder

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