Benton County
OREGON

Board of Commissioners
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MINUTES OF THE GOAL-SETTING MEETING
BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OCTOBER 14, 2025

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

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

Staff: Rachel Bulder, Maura Kwiatkowski, Board Staff; Jen Brown, Sean McGuire, Sustainability; Gary Stockhoff, Matt Wetherell, Public Works; Tracy Martineau, Tammy Webb, Human Resources; Jennifer Ferrer-Santa Ines, Financial Services

Guests:

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Wyse convened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and introductions were made.

2. Review and Approve Agenda

No changes were made to the agenda.

3. Announcements

No announcements were made.

4. Work Session

4.1 Osborn Aquatic Center Funding Request – Rick Crager, Assistant County Administrator; Jennifer Ferrer-Santa Ines, Chief Financial Officer

A request was made during a previous Board Meeting for funding support for the Osborn Aquatic Center (Osborn). One of the requests was for staff to engage in follow-up work with the Corvallis School District and the City of Corvallis (Corvallis; the City) regarding additional funding opportunities. Crager discussed an opportunity through

Business Oregon's Seismic Program. Crager added there are several programs within the Parks and Recreation Department; that information was provided to Corvallis School District Superintendent Ryan Noss. Crager discussed privately funded options and lottery-based programs, such as Business Oregon's Infrastructure Finance Authority, which offers zero percent interest loans.

Ferrer-Santa Ines stated the Corvallis School District had secured a majority of the required funding for facility improvements to Osborn but had a funding gap of $1 million. Noss had requested $500,000 from Benton County to help cover the funding gap. Ferrer-Santa Ines reviewed the type of grants the District could pursue. One source of revenue the County receives that could be viable are lottery funds; the funds are earmarked for economic development under Oregon State Statute. The estimated lottery revenue the County is expected to receive for the 2025-27 biennium is $650,000, and the County has a contingency for lottery funds that was adopted in the budget in the amount of $131,466. Due to transitions within the Economic Development Office that were made between the County and the City, $252,834 in funding has been freed up. Those funds, combined with the lottery contingency funds, is $384,300 in available funding for the Board to decide where to allocate. Ferrer-Santa Ines provided two funding options. Option A is a Gap grant to the City of Corvallis of up to $250,000 for Osborn improvements that is contingent on legal clearance. Option B discussed leveraging the Commercial Property Assessment Clean Energy program instead of contingency funds. Ferrer-Santa Ines mentioned that because Osborn does not qualify as an eligible entity for CPACE, the County would have to coordinate with County Counsel and the City in order to receive funding for renovation and improvements. Potential next steps were discussed. Ferrer-Santa Ines informed the Board that the first revenue distribution from lottery funds is expected in late October.

Wyse asked for more information regarding the $250,000 grant amount.

Ferrer-Santa Ines stated that amount was identified to ensure the County was not utilizing all of the lottery revenue funds towards the Osborn Aquatic Center.

Shepherd discussed attending a recent open house event held to receive community feedback on Osborne, and believed the School District needed a Project Manager.

Crager and Shepherd discussed the Intergovernmental Agreement between Benton County and Corvallis that the City would fund the Economic Development Office, while the County funded the Coordinated Homeless Response Office.

Shepherd asked if the County priorities listed under Option B are currently underfunded in the budget.

Crager stated those priorities were opportunities that could be funded by the County in place of the Osborn improvements.

Crager stated it was possible the expected lottery revenue could be lower than forecasted.

Crager and Wyse noted that if lottery revenue was used to fund a grant to the City, it would need to be contingent upon the actual amount of lottery funds received.

Malone expressed caution regarding Option A due to lottery revenue trending downward and questioned if the trend was a reflection of the current state of the economy. Malone was interested in continuing discussions for the Osborn Aquatic Center project, while waiting to see if the County will experience additional budget shortfalls. Malone was concerned about the routine repairs and maintenance required for the Philomath Community Pool and suggested delaying a contribution from the County until more insight regarding how Federal and State budget cuts could affect funding received by the County. Malone added that the Corvallis School Districts' request was not typical of the type of funding Benton County would significantly contribute to.

Wyse was also considering equity, because the entire County needs to be considered when making significant decisions. Wyse stated the difference between the issues at the Philomath Community Pool and the Osborn Aquatic Center is the latter is known to generate revenue and has a direct economic impact to the County; therefore, funding dedicated to economic development would be appropriately used if granted to the City for Osborn. Wyse acknowledged the trade-off between benefiting the community and potentially missing out on another opportunity for the County due to a funding shortfall. Wyse suggested granting half of the $250,000 but was open to further discussion if other Commissioners were interested in funding more than half, or up to $250,000.

Shepherd stated that Noss had discussed an idea to create a Pool Service District that would be administered by the Parks and Recreation District. Shepherd had discussed the viability and logistics of Noss's idea with Counsel; an issue with that idea was it potentially limiting the County from creating a future Parks and Recreation Service District. When reviewing Option B, Shepherd identified alternative opportunities for the County that seemed ideal, such as electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Shepherd expressed interest in funding the City up to $100,000; then once further into the biennial budget, discuss alternative economic development related projects to fund.

Wyse did not support the idea of a Pool Service District due to the additional taxes and fees that could be incurred by community members.

Malone was not interested in offering more than $100,000 until the County had more clarity on the budget and lottery revenue funds. Malone mentioned it not being uncommon for businesses or committees to capture multiple funding sources when requesting money.

Wyse believed the County should be one of the many funding sources for the Osborn Aquatic Center and supported granting at least $100,000.

Shepherd preferred starting at $100,000 and allowing for another sponsor to provide the additional funding required. The Corvallis School District planned to issue a Request for Proposals for facility repairs and to consolidate funding.

McEneny discussed the rising costs associated with construction projects.

Crager discussed the logistics involved in transferring the funding; whether the money should be granted to the School District or to the City, with a preference that the money is granted to the District. Crager requested the Board entertain a motion to approve a $100,000 grant.

Ferrer-Santa Ines asked if the Board was considering General Fund money; would the funding need to be worded as a grant or a County contribution?

Crager preferred labeling the funding as a grant.

MOTION: Shepherd moved to approve a grant up to $100,000 to the Corvallis School District in support of Osborn Aquatic Center, subject to final legal review. Malone seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

4.2 Benton County Facilities Assessment and Planning – Rick Crager, Assistant County Administrator; Sean McGuire, Sustainability Coordinator

Crager reviewed the Board's goal of a Comprehensive Facility plan for the County that was part of the adopted 2025-27 budget. Crager discussed the importance of the County's financial future and selling facilities to create space for potential revenue. The Board's agreement to offload selected County assets is desired.

McGuire reviewed the four phases of assessment and planning, with a focus on data aggregation and identification of facilities to liquidate. The methodology and data set focuses on staff-occupied buildings that maintain a large amount of unused space. The Historic Courthouse was not included in the assessment and planning. McGuire reviewed four spaces within four different facilities that are unused or underutilized; the spaces are located in the Avery, Humphrey-Hoyer, Kalapuya, and Sunset buildings. The total space that is unused/underutilized is approximately 10,500 square feet; the County can evaluate that space in terms of staffing, department shifts, and long-term planning.

Wyse did not believe the underutilized space located behind the Community Development Department was comparable to the unused space in the Avery Building.

Crager agreed and confirmed the current phase of the assessment is to identify active County-owned spaces that do not have everyday use.

McGuire discussed revenue the County receives from leased space and what spaces are leased to other entities through the County. A question considered throughout the facilities assessment was whether the current underutilized or unused space was better as leased space or used for staff.

Crager stated that one of the County's leases was ending soon and would result in a reduction in the lease revenue source. The space should be re-leased eventually but on a short-term lease so the County can maintain its options.

McGuire listed three buildings recommended for liquidation; the Annex, the former Board of Commissioners building, and the former Alsea Health Clinic (AHC) building. Adjacent parking was identified to address the parking issue for employees and visitors at the new Crisis Center. McGuire reviewed the estimated sale values, annual tax income, annual reduced costs, and the annual greenhouse gas emissions of each building that staff recommends the County liquidate. Due to the uncertainty regarding the AHC, the annual tax income was not supplied for that building.

Crager discussed the importance of the Board reviewing the estimated sales value of the AHC. Crager discussed annual reduced costs in relation to the County's collaboration with community stakeholders with the AHC. Crager recommended the Board consider the benefits of leasing the building to the AHC versus alleviating the County of additional cost burdens.

Wyse asked if the County could impose the maintenance costs of the AHC onto the tenant.

Crager indicated yes and discussed owner responsibilities in terms of maintenance and risk reduction; such as a roof replacement.

McGuire requested that the Board agree staff should proceed with the process of liquidating recommended facilities. An official motion was not provided because each facility will require its own process, thus requiring individual motions once staff has completed the assessment.

Crager stated that the former Board of Commissioners building is the better equipped building to liquidate first. The Annex will require additional time, partly due to record relocation. The AHC building will be discussed in a future Board meeting.

Wyse asked about the current conditions of the Annex building and the progress of the records relocation project.

McEneny discussed the progress of relocating records that are stored in the Annex. More than 50% of the building is empty; with some remaining records from Assessments, the Board of Commissioners, and the Circuit Courts. There is a substantial amount of space in the Kalapuya Building to store documents from the Annex. McEneny added that the annex is in good shape and could potentially be developed as a storefront.

Wyse agreed the Annex is not best used as a storage unit in regard to the revitalization of the Downtown area.

The Board discussed the County's obligation for providing suitable space for Court records and the digitization of records to minimize the amount of storage space needed.

Shepherd asked if there was opportunity for the Commissioners to visit the Annex.

McEneny confirmed staff could arrange a visit.

McGuire stated the Annex is the only County facility that is not Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant.

Wyse asked about the current location of the Law Library.

Crager stated the Law Library is in the Humphrey-Hoyer Building, which is not recommended for liquidation. The Humphrey-Hoyer Building and Cascade Apartments are not a part of Phase 1 and will be included in future discussions.

The Board discussed Cascade Apartments.

Wyse asked for clarification on what staff needed from the Board to move forward.

Crager responded that staff needed Board approval to begin the liquidation process.

The Board was in agreement that staff move forward with the process.

McGuire reviewed next steps.

Crager discussed ideas to best maximize County space.

Shepherd and McEneny discussed the potential of hiring an archivist to digitize County records and the State's minimum retention requirements for counties.

Malone asked for examples of addressing long-range opportunities, which is Phase 4 of the project.

McEneny stated that it is a demonstration to the community that the County is opening opportunities for economic development.

4.3 Discussion Regarding 2026 Proclamations and Board of Commissioners Events – Maura Kwiatkowski, Administrative Services Manager

Kwiatkowski will return to the Board in November with the projected 2026 meetings and proclamations schedule. Kwiatkowski shared the 2023-2025 proclamations schedule and provided information on past events hosted outside of the regular meeting schedule for budgetary purposes.

Wyse mentioned the ability for the Board to be flexible throughout the year regarding the proclamation schedule.

Shepherd stated the Association of Counties (AOC) District 5 meeting should be listed on the calendar because it is Benton County's turn to host in 2026. Shepherd was in favor of supplying the election workers and volunteers with dinner and wanted to schedule another roundtable for Wildfire Awareness Month in 2026.

Malone agreed that a Wildfire Awareness Month roundtable was a good meeting for the community and the County and was in favor of alternating which proclamations are celebrated each year.

Kwiatkowski mentioned that the pre-meeting events have a modest budget and the Board's budget can handle approximately four of those events per year.

Shepherd asked if the Board needs to review the proclamation and pre-meeting events schedule during the meeting.

Kwiatkowski said the discussion could continue in November.

Malone would like to continue the discussion in November for additional adjustments.

Kwiatkowski stated it would be most helpful if the Board provided direction on the first quarter of 2026 proclamations in November.

5. Consent Calendar

5.1 Approval of the September 9, 2025 Board of Commissioners Goal-setting Meeting Minutes

Shepherd noted a word difference in the minutes; on page 12, the word “not” was missing from a sentence to accurately reflect Shepherd’s position on the topic.

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

6. New Business

6.1 Management and Confidential Employee Compensation – Tracy Martineau, Director; Tammy Webb, Assistant Director, Human Resources

Martineau stated that Human Resources (HR) has recommended a proposal of adjustment to Confidential B-band employees; the lowest paid employees within the Management Confidential structure. One of the reasons for the adjustment is the current gap in pay between American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) positions that are similar to the positions held by the Confidential B-band employees.

Webb discussed the non-represented compensation market study HR conducted. When compared to similar counties, Benton County was drastically behind on at minimum 50% of the market; the adjustment will bring the County closer to the 50th percentile. The second recommendation is to remove the sub-grades for B-band Supervisory staff, because the positions are similar; any employees classified as Supervisor 1 would move into the Supervisor 2 classification and salary range.

Martineau stated that the compensation adjustment would establish parity between AFSCME B-band and Confidential B-band positions.

Shepherd asked if a table showing current pay of Confidential B-band employees was in the packet.

Martineau confirmed it was not.

Wyse asked how much the budget would increase and how the County would pay for the increase if the adjustments were approved.

Crager believed the cost increase could be absorbed within existing budgets and the fiscal impact could be managed. Ferrer-Santa Ines will review the budget impact closely and if a supplemental budget is required, it will be brought forth.

Wyse asked if the adjustments would be absorbed out of each affected department’s budget.

Crager confirmed.

McEneny added that the adjustments would be retroactive to July 2025.

MOTION: Shepherd moved to approve the implementation of the non-represented employee B-band salary ranges as illustrated in the proposed B-band salary ranges attachment, retroactively effective July 1, 2025. Malone seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

7. County Administrator Updates

Rachel McEneny, County Administrator:

- Health Resources and Services Administration visited the County.
- Attended the AOC District 5 meeting.
- Attended the Corvallis-Benton Leadership meeting.
- Testimonials at the Crisis Center.
- Visited the Annex.
- Discussed County revenue generating events, including Dogpawlooza and the upcoming Boo You Marry Me.
- Attended the PRIDE Event at the Benton County Fairgrounds.
- Walked for Breast Cancer Awareness.
- Attended Legislative Breakfast.
- Attended Respectful Workplace Training with Crager.

8. County Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Malone:

- Attended Pawpalooza
- The County is repairing the Cardwell Hill evacuation route.
- Attended Fall Festival.
- Attended the Oregon Coast Economic Summit.
- Toured a section of the Coos Bay Railroad.
- Attended Legislative Breakfast.
- Discussed House Bill 3991. Malone asked if a Letter of Support could be added to a future agenda.

Commissioner Shepherd:

- Attended the Timber Tour.
- Attended the Alsea Blackberry Festival.
- Attended a 9/11 Service Event.
- Attended the Chili Cookoff.
- Attended the Tillamook Working Lands Tour.
- Attended the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed Summit.

- Finished touring all of Community Services Consortium's facilities.
- Attended the PRIDE Event.
- Attended AOC day.
- Attended an Election Protection class.
- Will visit the Kings Valley Charter School to give a presentation on local government to students.
- Will attend the Workforce Investment meeting in Columbia County.

Commissioner Wyse:

- Wyse asked who would attend the AOC Oregon Justice Department Court Facilities Taskforce meeting; the Board discussed the meeting and McEneny plans to attend.
- Wyse will follow up with Public Works regarding the road hazard concern on the corner of Scenic Drive and 25th Street in North Albany brought to the Board's attention by community members.
- Will not attend the Department Head meeting with Justice and Law Enforcement.

9. Other

No other business was discussed.

10. Adjournment

Chair Wyse adjourned the meeting at 11:48 a.m.

Nancy Wyse, Chair

Rachel Bulder, Recorder

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