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

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

Staff: Jen Ambuehl, Greg Munn, Debbie Sessions, Financial Services; Jen Brown, Sean McGuire, Sustainability; Shannon Bush, Community Development; Dawn Dale, Sheriff's Office; Marriah De La Vega, Maura Kwiatkowski, Board Staff; April Holland, Health Services; Erika Milo, Board Recorder; Don Rogers, Undersheriff

Guests: Julia Overton, Peggy Lynch, residents

Elected Officials: Ryan Joslin, District Attorney

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Vice Chair Malone 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 were made.

4. New Business

4.1 Consideration of Letter of Support for Funding for City of Adair Village Wastewater Infrastructure Capacity Expansion – Rick Crager, Assistant County Administrator

Crager explained that recently Adair Village City Manager Pat Hare requested a letter of support from the Board for the City of Adair Village to seek funding. During a previous City Manager meeting, Hare presented a recapitulation of Adair Village's development plan. Adair Village could elevate current opportunities if there was an adequate water treatment facility. The cost for a facility was estimated at $12 million, but that could change pending construction material prices. Crager believed this was an opportunity that would contribute to increasing housing for the region and for Benton County. Governor Kotek's office will be meeting with Hare to discuss this project.

Shepherd expressed support.

Malone had suggested to a Polk County Commissioner that the Polk County Board sign on to a similar letter because housing in Adair Village would affect the surrounding area.

Crager stated that Hare is working with the League of Oregon Cities; although there are alternative avenues to receive funding.

Wyse expressed support and noted two corrections for the letter: in the title, add 'the City of' [Adair Village], and in the first sentence, add 'the City of' [Adair Village].

MOTION: Shepherd moved to approve the letter of support with the changes suggested by Wyse. Malone seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

4.2 2025 Proclamations and Events Schedule – Maura Kwiatkowski, Board of Commissioners Office

Kwiatkowski stated in 2022, Board of Commissioners staff worked with the Public Information Officer to create a more meaningful community experience regarding proclamations. As a result, selected proclamations are read aloud during a Board Meeting, while others are acknowledged on an agenda's Consent Calendar on alternating schedules. Kwiatkowski asked the Board for direction regarding which proclamations will be read on the 2025 agenda, which proclamations will be added to the 2025 Consent Calendar, and if there were any proclamations Commissioners would want a community reception for. This will allow staff to appropriately allocate funding and engage with stakeholders to read the scheduled proclamations.

Wyse noted that a few months had more than one proclamation scheduled to be read and asked if the Board wanted to maintain one proclamation to be read a month or more.

Malone did not believe there was a set policy on the number of proclamations read per month. Malone suggested setting a limit of two proclamations read every month.

The Board and County staff deliberated and designated the following:

Occasion	**Benton County Observance**
Black History Month	Proclamation read
Japanese American Internment Day of Remembrance	Proclamation read
Women's History Month	Proclamation read
National Child Abuse Prevention Month	Proclamation on Consent Calendar
Library Week	Proclamation on Consent Calendar
Public Health Week	Chair to read Proclamation at Health Services event and on Consent Calendar
Public Safety Telecommunications Week	Proclamation read
Crime Victims' Rights Week	Proclamation read at District Attorney's Office event and on Consent Calendar
National Therapy Animal Week	Omit unless contacted by requesting agency
Wildfire Awareness Month	Proclamation read and potential Board event
Historic Preservation Month	Proclamation read at Historic Resources Commission Event and on Consent Calendar
Community Action Month	Omit unless requested
Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month	Proclamation read
Older Americans Month	Omit unless requested
Mental Health Awareness Month	Proclamation on Consent Calendar and read at a Crisis Center event
Public Works Week	Proclamation read at meeting and at Public Works event
Juneteenth	Proclamation read at meeting and read at NAACP event if organizers request
LGBTQIA+ Pride Month	Proclamation read and flag event
Americans with Disabilities Act Awareness Day	Proclamation read
Health Center Week	To be determined, pending Health Center's request to be read at an event
Suicide Prevention Month	Proclamation read and coordinate with District Attorney's Office
National Preparedness Month	Proclamation read
Great Shakeout Month	Proclamation on Consent Calendar
Constitution Day	To be determined
Labor Day	To be determined
Hispanic Heritage Month	Proclamation read
Veterans Day	Proclamation read and Board event
Native American Heritage Month	Proclamation read
National Rural Health Day/Month	Proclamation on Consent Calendar

Kwiatkowski will bring the finalized schedule back to the Board for approval.

Vice Chair Malone recessed the meeting at 10:01 a.m. and reconvened at 10:07 a.m.

5. Discussion Topics

5.1 2040 Initiative and 2025-27 Biennium Budget Priorities – Greg Munn, Chief Financial Officer; Sean McGuire, Sustainability Coordinator

Munn requested the Board's insight on priorities and direction in regard to the upcoming 2025-27 Biennium budget and in planning forward for the 2040 Initiative.

McGuire reviewed the background of the 2040 Initiative. In 2016, the County began a two-year phased public outreach process that engaged approximately 24,000 community members; no elected officials were part of the outreach initiative. The process identified the community's five core values that were predicated on health and equity. Next steps were to operationalize the targeted core values. In 2022, the Board identified the five priorities listed in the agenda packet. McGuire and Crager are working to align the budget request with the Board's core value goals. In addition, each Department Director identified three to five goals that align with the Board's priorities. McGuire discussed utilizing CivicPlus to identify core values and Board priorities on an agenda checklist.

Shepherd confirmed support for the five core values.

Malone suggested adding a segment under 'climate crisis' to express support for alternative forms of transportation, multiuse pathways, and public transit.

The Board agreed.

Munn added that the value statements will be discussed with County departments, and staff will then use those to build a requested budget. Munn provided an example of a request.

Wyse requested a strategic plan in the near future.

McEneny agreed.

Crager asked if the modification to the core values required a vote.

MOTION: Malone moved to add a bullet point under 'Community Resiliency and Climate Crisis', to add Board support for alternative forms of transportation including multi-use paths and transit. Shepherd seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

5.2 Leadership Policies and Practices Updates and Review – Rachel McEneny, County Administrator

McEneny discussed changes to the Leadership Policies and Practices and the agreements between the Board of Commissioners, the County Administrator, and County Counsel. Changes included an update to policy language and appointing the Assistant County Administrator to acting County Administrator when necessary. McEneny discussed the County Administrator's role in relation to the Board, staff, and the community. McEneny requested the Board's feedback on the updated policy document.

Wyse mentioned the governing statement on page 34 of the packet, which included an item in regard to maintaining and operating a county jail. Wyse asked for clarification if that item was the Sheriff's responsibility under State Statute.

McEneny stated that the management of a County facility, such as the jail, is in collaboration with the Sheriff. McEneny added that funds for jail repairs would more than likely be allocated from Facilities.

The Board discussed their interpretation.

McEneny is required to sign an approval for any type of emergency financial decision.

Counsel confirmed it was the Sheriff's statutory responsibility to provide a jail. The item listed in the governing statement regards funding and staffing.

Shepherd had a question regarding external communication protocols on page 52 of the packet. Shepherd believed the stated communication format should be maintained but not restricted in who can speak to one another.

McEneny agreed.

The Board discussed the appropriate chain of command for communication.

Crager suggested an edit on item 3.13, to include the wording "The County Administrator shall operate as the Budget Officer."

The Board agreed.

Wyse asked if there was a specified time limit stated in the policy regarding Commissioner and County Director communications.

McEneny reviewed the policy, which stated any request made by an individual Board member that may consume more than eight hours of staff time will be brought to the full Board for guidance. McEneny provided background information that guided the policy change.

Wyse believed eight hours was too much time and asked if the threshold should be lowered.

The Board agreed and discussed methods of tracking the time Board members request from staff.

McEneny suggested using a Goal-setting or Information Sharing meeting to discuss a topic of interest more in-depth. McEneny added that Commissioners can copy her in an email to a Department Director if there is uncertainty regarding the amount of time an item will take.

Malone asked if the policy should be modified.

Shepherd suggested reducing the amount to four hours.

The Board agreed.

Wyse confirmed adding McEnney and Crager to emails to Department Directors and asked if directors are aware that Commissioners have been asked to copy the County Administrator to emails.

McEneny confirmed.

MOTION: Shepherd moved to approve the leadership policies and practices as amended. Wyse seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

5.3 Discussion of Procedure for Board of Commissioners Response to Community Members – Board of Commissioners

Wyse stated in previous years, if an email is sent to the entire Board, the Chair is the designated responder. Wyse approved the previous policy and added that any Commissioner could respond to an email if included in it.

The Board discussed emails, tracking, and preferences.

Shepherd asked if Wyse would copy the other Commissioners in responses to emails from community members.

Wyse will copy the other Commissioners when possible but acknowledged concerns regarding serial meetings or a potential quorum if doing so. If the email is in regard to an issue the Board may vote on, Wyse will not copy everyone on the response. Wyse added if the email is a staff response, it can be forwarded to Malone and Shepherd.

Shepherd asked if the Chair can acknowledge that the email was received and will be responded to.

Wyse agreed and offered to involve another Commissioner if the topic is relevant to that Commissioner's purview.

Crager and the Board discussed coordinating a process in a situation where all three Commissioners are emailed the same question or asked about the same topic, but in separate emails.

5.4 Commissioners' 2025 Committee Assignments, Discussion 2 – Board of Commissioners

Wyse asked if the remaining committee assignments that require confirmation were the Sustainable Materials Management Plan (SMMP) Task Force and the Corvallis Urban Renewal agency.

Shepherd stated the Housing Alliance requested a County Board member provide input to their committee.

Crager stated the County's membership with the Housing Alliance has typically been assigned to the Health Department and HOPE Program Coordinator Julie Arena. The Housing Alliance is working on a legislative agenda, which will require a vote by all members. The Housing Alliance is asking whether Arena and the Health Department or the Board of Commissioners vote on the agenda.

Wyse believed the Health Department should handle the vote.

Crager suggested if the Housing Alliance were voting on a policy related item, the Board should be consulted.

The Board agreed.

Malone added that any items with a connection to legislation or potential legislation should be on the Board's agenda. Malone requested the SMMP Task Force assignment.

The Board agreed.

Shepherd stated that Community Development staff requested a Commissioner join the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Group.

Wyse expressed interest in that role.

The Board agreed.

Shepherd was assigned to the Corvallis Urban Renewal agency.

Shepherd asked if the Board appoints a Commissioner to the NACo Public Lands and the Western Interstate Region Public Lands committees.

Wyse stated that the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) will appoint a commissioner to many of the committees.

Malone was uncertain of the current representation, although Benton County does not have a significant amount of public lands. Malone asked if the Board wanted to be an active member with the NACo Public Lands.

The Board agreed not to participate.

Malone asked about the NACo Western Interstate Region Public Lands subcommittee.

Wyse has attended the annual conference in May and a number of virtual meetings. Wyse is not formally appointed to the subcommittee, but can continue participation or ask AOC for a formal appointment.

Malone agreed.

Shepherd will be assigned to the Northwest Oregon Works Workforce Investment Board.

Crager asked if the finalized list will be sent to Department Directors.

McEneny confirmed and stated the information should be added to the County website as well.

Malone asked if a Commissioner was assigned to the AOC Governance Steering Committee.

The Board will decide who attends at a later date because it does not require an appointment to attend the meetings.

MOTION: Shepherd moved to approve the committee assignments as presented with the following changes:
Comprehensive Plan Advisory Group - Wyse
South Corvallis Urban Renewal Agency - Shepherd
Northwest Oregon Works Workforce Investment Board - Shepherd
SMMP - Malone
Housing Alliance – Staff
Wyse seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

5.5 Discussion Regarding Board of Commissioners Meeting Protocols – Gabe Shepherd, Commissioner

Shepherd requested a discussion to review ideas for future Board meetings. At a previous Leadership Team meeting, staff discussed professionalizing and identifying people during meetings. Shepherd suggested that staff are provided nameplates when presenting to the Board and are addressed by title to increase professionalism.

Shepherd asked if there was a formal process for community members to sign up for public comment before a meeting.

Kwiatkowski confirmed there was not a formal process.

Shepherd asked if there was a policy regarding public comment.

Wyse stated the process was normally decided by the Board Chair. Wyse's preferred process is to limit comment to three minutes per person, but previous Chairs have had different preferences, which is why the process has not been formalized.

Shepherd expressed a preference for a formal policy.

Wyse requested the language discussing the public comment time limits be listed on the agenda.

Shepherd discussed public records law regarding the required retention of chat messages made on Zoom during a public meeting. Additionally the County is required to retain direct messages between individuals on Zoom chat, which is not possible if it a direct message between two or more constituents. To prevent noncompliance, Shepherd suggested muting the chat feature.

Wyse agreed that Zoom chats were similar to in person comments interrupting a meeting but acknowledged instances when the chat feature has been useful.

Shepherd discussed the possibility of utilizing Zoom webinar for meetings to balance the chat options.

Kwiatkowski discussed Zoom chat options, such as disabling the one-on-one chat feature. The Board had previously authorized staff to transition to the Zoom webinar format; Information Technology staff recommended that Board staff maintain the current Zoom meeting format and implement the waiting room feature. Kwiatkowski discussed additional measures staff have taken to enhance Zoom meeting security while maintaining accessibility.

Shepherd discussed the possibility to schedule one evening Board meeting a month to accommodate community members that cannot attend the morning meetings. Shepherd acknowledged the logistics that must be considered if the Board is to conduct an evening meeting. Many community members have expressed the desire to attend a Board meeting; but due to scheduling conflicts, cannot attend meetings scheduled during the daytime.

Wyse agreed that expanding community access was important. Wyse discussed potential conflicts with the idea but was willing to hold quarterly evening meetings instead of monthly to balance any conflicts. This suggestion is contingent on staff returning with an evening meetings memorandum for Board review.

Malone discussed whether the evening meetings should be on a set schedule or dependent on upcoming topics that garnered a large amount of community interest. Malone requested McEneny provide the Board with a cost-benefit analysis on evening meetings and increased participation. Malone added that the union's contract will need to be taken into consideration.

McEneny suggested a Countywide survey to collect public feedback on evening meetings, along with internal polling with County staff. McEneny discussed work-life balance, increased accessibility, venues, and potential topics of community interest. McEneny will bring a memorandum back to the Board that considers many aspects to moving a few Board meetings to the evening.

The Board supported the survey.

Malone mentioned the Public Works meetings regarding the multiuse pathway and other transportation topics.

6. County Updates

6.1 County Administrator Updates

Rachel McEneny, County Administrator:

- Toured the District Attorney's Office.
- Attended a meeting with CFM consultants.
- Interviewed the Communication Coordinator position applicants.
- Working on budget and departmental goals.
- Met with Marge Popp and other community members.
- Attended the Valley City Managers and County Administrators lunch meeting.
- Attended events surrounding Commissioner Xan Augerot's retirement.

Rick Crager, Assistant County Administrator:

- January 21 is the beginning of the State Legislative session.
- CFM consultants will update the Board next week.
- Reopened the Community Development Director recruitment.
- Will follow up on housing committee discussion at an upcoming Goal-setting meeting.
- Beginning Phase 2 of the Enterprise Permitting Project.
- Crager provided a Swick House update.

6.2 **Commissioner Updates –** Benton County Commissioners

Commissioner Shepherd:

- Attended swearing-in events.
- Meeting with Crager to discuss Aid and Assist funding.

- Met with the Oregon Justice Department and Judge Donohue regarding Aid and Assist and available funding.
- Will attend AOC County College.

Commissioner Wyse:

- Attended the AOC Transportation and Community Development Steering Committee. Wyse discussed House Bill 3209.

Commissioner Malone:

- Attended the AOC Transportation and Community Development Steering Committee.
- Attended the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.
- Attended the opening of the legislative session and Governor Kotek's state address.
- Toured the Jackson-Frazier Wetland Boardwalk with staff members from both Representative Val Hoyle's and Senator Ron Wyden's office.
  Attended Governor Kotek's meet-and-greet event and discussed the Crisis Center grand opening.

7. Other

No other business was discussed.

8. Adjournment

Vice Chair Malone adjourned the meeting at 12:40 p.m.

Pat Malone

Pat Malone, 2025 Vice Chair

Erika Milo

Erika Milo, Recorder

Rachel Bulder

Rachel Bulder, Transcriptionist

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