



Board of Commissioners

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**MINUTES OF THE GOAL-SETTING MEETING
BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
APRIL 14, 2026**

Present: Pat Malone, Chair; Gabe Shepherd, Vice Chair; Nancy Wyse, Commissioner; Jane Vetto, County Counsel; Rick Crager, Interim County Administrator

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

Staff: Rachel Bulder, Maura Kwiatkowski, Board Staff; Cory Grogan; Anne Thwaits, Public Information Officers; Gary Stockhoff, Public Works; Sean McGuire, Sustainability; Bailey Payne, Community Development

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Malone 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

Malone announced public comment is not typically scheduled for the work session.

4. Work Session

4.1 Update on the State's Task Force on Municipal Solid Waste in the Willamette Valley – Pat Malone, Chair, Board of Commissioners; Sean McGuire, Sustainability Coordinator; Bailey Payne, Solid Waste Coordinator, Community Development

Malone reviewed the previous two phases of the Sustainable Materials Management Plan (SMMP) before it became the State's Task Force on Municipal Solid Waste under House Bill 3794. The topics discussed at the previous State task force meetings included information gathering, SMMP recommendations, and the creation of a regional

entity to address the recommendations. A plan that would address regional needs beyond the County level was a common item discussed during the task force's agenda planning. Malone discussed the status of the transfer station project in Rickreall and the Clean Lane facility project in Lane County. The next State task force meeting is scheduled for May 15.

Payne stated that both Polk and Lane Counties are experiencing issues in moving forward with their solid waste infrastructure investments because the counties lack control of the cities' oversight to redirect haulers. The task force is considering the possibility of regional partnerships that will promote future investments in solid waste movement.

Malone stated the current proposal is for the creation of a government entity that can control where regional waste goes. The proposal will require legislation to change the structure of how solid waste management works in Oregon. The task force is working on legislative concepts to propose during the 2027 legislative session.

McGuire discussed the importance of establishing next steps to begin answering how the region can overcome systemic barriers.

The next State task force meeting discussion will include examples of regional entities. Malone's role in the task force is to represent the counties within the Association of Oregon Counties.

Crager asked if the State task force must focus on creating policy change that will address regional oversight of waste management before Benton County can move forward with a solid waste management plan.

McGuire stated that 10 of the 13 recommendations from the SMMP require a regional approach. An entity should be created to centralize the current system and to deal with the systemic barrier involving waste management.

Crager asked about additional action items, aside from creating legislative concepts, that can be achieved in the near future.

McGuire stated the task force will begin its outreach to the cities within the region.

Malone discussed Clean Lane as an example of why it is important to create legislation that defines the region as the authority to determine where waste is sent.

4.2 Review of Benton County Advisory Committees and Boards – Rick Crager, Interim County Administrator, Board of Commissioners; Sean McGuire, Sustainability Coordinator, Board of Commissioners; Maura Kwiatkowski, Administrative Services Manager, Board of Commissioners

Staff reviewed the status, structure, requirements, and bylaws of all the County's Boards, Commissions, and Committees (BCC), and created questions that prompt decisions regarding BCC structures and standardization moving forward. The BCC's that are required by law were noted in the packet. Crager listed a few questions in the packet that require Board input.

Wyse requested that advisory boards and committees be tasked with giving an annual report to the Board, which will provide opportunities for learning and to provide feedback on the work the committee is engaged in.

Crager asked if Wyse was asking for consistency in reporting to the Board.

Wyse confirmed and believed more communication was necessary.

McGuire discussed previous issues with volunteer committee members not informing department directors before reporting to the Board, which created a climate of confusion. Some bylaws had to be rewritten to enforce departmental intermediaries.

Wyse mentioned issues with department directors not actively reporting up to the Board after that change was made.

McGuire suggested the Board appoint one staff representative per BCC, instead of multiple staff members.

Malone agreed that having too many staff members involved was not efficient and an annual report from each BCC would be beneficial. Malone wanted to renew the Annual Awards Dinner for BCC volunteers that was cancelled during COVID-19.

Shepherd also supported the annual report idea. Shepherd expressed interest in creating a centralized BCC volunteer application portal. Shepherd discussed BCCs that do not meet regularly, and stated that committees should only meet if there is something to discuss or work on. Shepherd requested centralized training in minutes, noticing, and public meeting laws for staff involved in BCCs. Shepherd wants to recruit more Budget Committee members for the County Service Districts before the next budget cycle.

Wyse also wants to receive feedback from each BCC regarding this process.

Crager and McGuire will refine the questions based on the Board's feedback, collect the relevant information, and bring back answers to the Board.

Kwiatkowski stated a centralized application is not yet created, but there is an embedded online form on the BCC webpage that is sent to the Board of Commissioners Office, then routed out to the corresponding department. Board staff is currently working on a project regarding meeting management of BCCs. Kwiatkowski agreed there is opportunity to standardize the process.

Malone asked if it was possible for Communications staff to provide BCC related highlights or news that can be reported out to the community.

Chair Malone recessed the meeting at 10:15 a.m. and reconvened at 10:25 a.m.

4.3 *Benton Area Transit (BAT) Implementation Plan and Monthly Update –
Gary Stockhoff, Director, Public Works; Anne Thwaites, Public Information
Officer, Board of Commissioners

The two objectives are to broaden on what is already known and to discuss the current contract with Dial-A-Bus (DAB) that expires on June 30 2026. The contract with DAB is pending renewal and discussions are taking place. Crager requested Board input for the second objective. Crager stated the implementation plan is expected to be presented to the Board in the fall; this plan will also address the feasibility for the upcoming budget. There is no change in services currently provided by DAB and Benton Area Transit (BAT). Crager reviewed the consultant's evaluation and recommendations, which identified a self-perform model as the best option for the County. An alternative option to the self-perform model would be an improved version of what is currently being done, and contracting out the work to a private organization. Crager mentioned in the past, when a Request for Proposals (RFP) had been issued for a contract provider, DAB was the only contractor to apply for the RFP. Crager suggested reviewing an enhanced contract model, and ensuring the questions asked confirm the contractor is complying with federal requirements. Crager discussed data points within the contractor's report, such as the amount of reported trips per hour in comparison to similar organizations. Crager discussed the importance of developing the self-perform model as a contingency plan for the County; and stated the expectation for reporting, best practices, and enforcement must be addressed within a future contract. Crager will present the two options to the Board in fall 2026.

Stockhoff confirmed that a change is necessary or the County risks losing its federal funding. Stockhoff discussed components of the previous DAB contract, and how systems have evolved. Stockhoff agreed on reviewing the self-perform model versus the enhanced contractor model.

Malone discussed previous issues with receiving accurate reporting information and agreed that having an alternative option ready to compare with the current provider system is necessary.

Wyse addressed the community's confusion regarding the County's relationship with DAB; the County does not fund DAB, it is a contract agreement. Wyse discussed the disconnect between the reasons the County is considering a change and the reasons the community, which relies on DAB services, are upset about the possibility of moving to a different system. Wyse stressed the importance of the County's ability to continue the same level of service, but to also address the current concerns regarding accountability and reporting. If a change is made, Wyse requested a seamless transition that does not negatively impact the people who rely on DAB services.

Stockhoff discussed the importance of maintaining positive customer service interactions with the community.

Shepherd agreed that the County should continue its process for a self-perform model, and also wants staff to explore an enhanced contract model option for the Board to consider. Shepherd stated the most important aspect to consider is service users ability to get from point A to point B. Shepherd mentioned the difference between door-to-door and curb-to-curb services, and the importance of ensuring the client is taken to their destination, within Federal Transit Administration guidelines. Shepherd asked if the Board defines the paratransit service areas.

Crager confirmed it is a policy and budget decision made by the Board.

Shepherd requested the inclusion of a proposal and the associated costs to expand services for North Albany residents who need a ride into the City of Albany in the next budget cycle. Shepherd is not interested in providing transportation in Linn County, but is interested in transporting North Albany residents to places in Linn County, such as the hospital or grocery stores, that service their needs.

Stockhoff mentioned an option to contract with Albany's Dial-A-Ride regarding arrangements for transporting North Albany residents within Albany City limits.

Shepherd expressed interest in that idea. If Benton County contracted with the City of Albany, the Benton County services could focus more on area-based transit within Corvallis City limits and Benton County, but allow the North Albany residents of Benton County options to travel into Albany proper.

Crager stated that the final proposal will be based on the upcoming 2027-29 budget cycle revenue, not the current 2025-27 cycle. This proposal will require additional resources, including from the State Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF). The current contractor does not want to renew the contract that expires on June 30, unless

the County provides additional provisions, such as a review of the current fixed payment. The County is willing to provide resources for the current scope of services; however, DAB is interested in resources that will fund an expansion of services. Crager stated the STIF plan does not have the resources to accommodate an expansion of DAB services. Crager added that the current contract stated the expansion of services is a decision made by the County, not the contractor.

Malone asked about a previous issue regarding transportation services for community members to events outside of the County.

Stockhoff stated the issue was addressed, but the County does not have the budget to accommodate that. Stockhoff discussed a pilot project DAB had done; the contract required data points from the project in order to justify the expansion of services that DAB did not provide to the County.

Malone asked about an estimate for the upcoming STIF budget.

Stockhoff stated the next STIF cycle estimates will be available in May.

MOTION 1: Shepherd moved to direct staff to expand BAT project work to include an enhanced contract out model with provisions related to payment terms, routine reporting, performance metrics, and audits/reviews. Wyse seconded the motion, then asked a question regarding next steps if DAB did not agree with the contract terms.

The Board discussed the wording in the motion. Shepherd withdrew the first motion and made a second motion.

MOTION 2: Shepherd moved to direct staff to continue developing a self-perform model for BAT and expand BAT project scope to include an enhanced contract out model with provisions related to payment terms, routine reporting, performance metrics, and audits/reviews. Wyse seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

Wyse was not currently interested in a plan that would involve increasing the tax burden on Benton County residents.

Stockhoff provided an update on the Self-perform Implementation project.

Thwaits provided a communication update regarding BAT. A project landing page was added to the County's homepage that is easy to find. The webpage will be updated frequently throughout the process. All of the reports, documents, and frequently asked questions were added to the project webpage. The mailing list currently has 75 subscribers who will receive monthly updates on the project. Thwaits stated that the

Communications Team's top priority is to address misinformation regarding services and County staff is listening to community concerns.

{Exhibit 1: Benton Area Transit Project Scope Adjustment}

5. Consent Calendar

5.1 Approval of the March 10, 2026 Board of Commissioners Goal-setting Meeting Minutes

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

6. Interim County Administrator Updates

Rick Crager, Interim County Administrator:

- Introduced Jane Vetto, Benton County's new County Counsel.
- Darla Rush was appointed as Benton County's new County Clerk.
- Bob Richardson begins as Community Development's Director on April 17.
- Juvenile Services Director search is almost complete.

7. Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Wyse:

- Attended Celebrate Corvallis.
- Attended the Transportation Service Area Plan Committee meeting.
- Attended the Third Street Commons groundbreaking.
- Attended Celebrate Hope.
- Toured the Knife River training facility.
- Ride-along with the Oregon State Police.
- Attended the Linn-Benton Mobility Hub ribbon cutting.
- Attended the Monroe Rural Fire District Meeting.
- Attended the Philomath City Council Meeting.
- Attended a Mid-Willamette Valley Chamber of Commerce event.
- Attended the Home Opportunity, Planning, and Equity Board meeting and discussed participant buy-in.
- Will attend the Monroe City Council meeting.
- Will attend the NACo Western Interstate Region Conference.

Commissioner Shepherd:

- Provided updates regarding the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC), including an ongoing conversation on a membership dues structure.

- Attended an AOC in-person meetings day.
- Attended Sheltering Unhoused, a community conversation hosted by the League of Women Voters.
- Governor Kotek signed the Transient Lodging Tax bill and two of three Oregon Government Ethics Commission bills. Governor Kotek had announced an intent to potentially veto House Bill (HB) 4177, regarding Public Meetings Law reform. Shepherd discussed the importance of HB 4177.
- The Corvallis Downtown Vitality Strategic Task Force will present on ideas of vitalization to the Corvallis City Council.
- Will speak to an Oregon State University class.
- Historic Preservation Month event at the Corvallis Museum on May 30.
- Will not attend the Salmon and Jazz fundraiser event.
- Will be out of office May 30 through June 9.

Commissioner Malone:

- Attended the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition annual meeting.
- Attended the Forestry Steering Committee meeting.
- Attended the 911 Service District Steering Committee quarterly meeting.
- Attended the Oregon Metropolitan Planning Organization Consortium meeting.
- Attended the Linn-Benton Mobility Hub ribbon cutting event.
- Interviewed with KLCC radio program.
- Will attend the Salmon and Jazz fundraiser event.

8. Other

9. Adjournment

Chair Malone adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.


Pat Malone, Chair


Rachel Bulder, Recorder

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