



Board of Commissioners

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2026, 9:00 AM**

Present: Pat Malone, Chair; Gabe Shepherd, Vice Chair; Nancy Wyse, Commissioner; April Holland, Acting Interim County Administrator; Vance Croney, County Counsel

Staff: Rachel Bulder, Maura Kwiatkowski, Board staff; Laurel Byer, Dave Malone, Ian McGuire, Public Works; Sean McGuire, Sustainability; Erika Milo, Board Recorder; Anne Thwaites, Public Information

Guests: John Bosket, DKS Associates; Walter Chuck, Lincoln County; Cierra Dawson, Tatum Van Hawkins, Benton Soil and Water Conservation District; Christopher Jacobs, Corvallis-Benton Economic Development Office; Jan Kaplan, City of Newport; Brigetta Olson, City of Corvallis

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Malone called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM and introductions were made.

2. Review and Approve Agenda

The following item was added to the agenda:

6.2 Update on the Potential for an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detention Facility in Newport, Oregon - Jan Kaplan, Mayor, City of Newport; Walter Chuck, Commissioner, Lincoln County Board of Commissioners

3. Announcements

No announcements were made.

4. *Comments from the Public

Anna Magee, Philomath resident, commented that Dial-a-Bus (DAB) office staff and drivers are friendly, efficient, and good. DAB contributes to Magee's quality of life. The

County should retain DAB as the Benton Area Transit (BAT) provider.

Yigal Tolster, part-time DAB driver, Corvallis resident, described a State Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) Citizens Advisory Committee meeting on March 2, 2026. Over 50 BAT clients, family members, local business owners, and other stakeholders attended. All public comments opposed the Public Works Department's plan to build an in-house BAT program. The committee asked many questions, none of which were answered by County staff, who seemed unprepared. The County promised answers for attendees in the near future, but none have been provided yet. Most commenters asked why the County sought to replace DAB, a non-profit organization with 50 years of experience, success, and an extremely strong client base. Commenters also asked why the County was not responding to years of client requests for more and better service. Currently, the County pays DAB \$984,000 per year for services. The Kittelson Report on DAB proposes staffing costs at \$1.8 million per year. Tolster asked why the County would pay twice as much for the same service instead of using the funds to meet the demand.

At the same meeting, attendees learned that Public Works violated Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 184.761 and STIF Committee bylaws Article 9, Section 1 by not convening the STIF Committee in 2025. This meant that the community had no chance to advise on the project, including the costly funding analysis. Tolster described Public Works as using evasive tactics. After public comments at the STIF Committee meeting, the STIF Committee immediately passed a motion to spend no additional STIF funds on the in-house plan, yet Public Works has continued with the proposal. Tolster urged the Board to stop this irresponsible expenditure of County and taxpayers' funds and listen to constituents.

{Exhibit 1: Yigal Tolster Written Testimony}

{Exhibit 2: Yigal Tolster Letter to the Board}

Wyse noted that she received a personal update about the STIF Committee meeting in question, and others might have. Wyse felt that when staff are asked questions for which they lack the information, it is better to follow up with that information instead of speaking inaccurately. The Board will ensure staff follow up with individuals who provided contact information.

Kate Hunter Zaworski, Corvallis resident, STIF Committee member, and Oregon State University professor with 45 years of experience specializing in accessible transportation, remarked that she felt very disheartened by the BAT/DAB situation. Hunter Zaworski formerly worked with contractors Kittelson and Associates and supervised employees there. The contract between Kittelson and the County did not allow Kittelson to contact DAB in the initial part of the feasibility study. So, the report included limited data, and the peer-reviewed data in Kittelson's presentations did not

reflect the demographics or geography of Benton County. Paratransit capacity is extremely difficult to measure, particularly in Benton County, and there seems to be an erosion of providing that service. STIF members want the funding to go to the service and rides people deserve.

Christina Steiger, Corvallis resident, has ridden BAT three to five times per week since 2011. After two neurosurgeries, Steiger became a fully wheelchair-bound DAB rider, but is ambulatory today largely thanks to DAB, which provided consistent access to needed medical care. Steiger is also a caregiver for her mother, who is undergoing treatment for advanced cancer. DAB's transportation to medical visits and shopping supports the stability and treatment of Steiger's entire household. At the STIF Advisory Committee meeting on March 2, 2026, Steiger's impression was that staff were not prepared for such a strong turnout, so perhaps the County lacks knowledge of the importance of DAB's 50-year record. After public comment at the meeting, the STIF Committee voted not to recommend funding for the proposed model, yet Public Works has continued to work on the project. The system is working but is already stretched; Steiger has been bumped off rides to medical appointments because demand for rides exceeds supply. Riders already experience difficulty scheduling trips. Steiger emphasized that older riders in outlying areas have not been able to access transportation to appointments, which directly impacts riders' medical care. The problem is mainly with capacity, not structure. With the City of Corvallis promoting itself as a retirement destination, the population aged 65 and older will continue to grow, further increasing demand. Steiger encouraged the Board to focus on expanding transit capacity while preserving DAB institutional knowledge.

Diana Del Rio, Corvallis resident, has ridden DAB for seven years. Del Rio stated that DAB needs the County's help and does not need to be fixed. DAB has provided service very well for a long time. The County should learn what DAB does before changing it. Del Rio stated that DAB is her freedom and urged the Board to support DAB.

Tom Hendrix, resident, Dial-A-Bus Driver for 13 years, invited the Board or staff to meet with DAB staff to discuss the issues before moving to more costly in-house services. The County has never identified the issues with DAB. The term 'compliance issue' often arises, but the report does indicate which compliance points are in arrears. DAB wants to fix those items and help more people receive quality rides, not engage in confrontation with the County. Hendrix noted that DAB might have been at the fringe of compliance regarding curb-to-curb service. However, DAB drivers get to know clients very well and are not willing to stay in the vehicle while a client who has three bags of groceries, is returning from cancer treatment, or is visually impaired struggles to reach their front door.

***Jolyn Covey, Corvallis resident**, expressed concerns about lack of County transparency regarding DAB and BAT. The public is asking for more information, such as what the plan is and how the changes would improve service. The County is

doubling the transit budget. During the March 2, 2026 STIF Committee meeting, many questions were posed, but no answers have been given. Covey asked when the questions would be answered, as those answers would be greatly appreciated by the community.

Wyse asked whether there were public events in addition to the STIF Committee meeting where community members asked questions on this topic. Wyse had not seen many questions, so wanted to ensure the County was not missing other instances.

Covey replied that many people attended the STIF Committee meeting to get answers and were assured by the County that some answers would be given afterwards; that has not happened, so people are wondering why, and when the answers will be given.

Wyse stated that staff would follow up.

Arona Rosegold, Corvallis resident, shared that for her and many other community members, DAB service has been a necessity, not a luxury. In the past, when the County had DAB change to a computerized scheduling system, Rosegold had great difficulty using the system. To go back to that system would be going backwards. DAB staff are always compassionate and helpful, and have made Rosegold and many other riders more independent, greatly improving those riders' lives. Rosegold urged the Board to keep DAB as it is.

Ron Mason, Corvallis resident, shared that DAB is extremely important to him. If the County takes over this service, it will take staff many years to achieve DAB's level of competence with providing, scheduling, and arranging rides. Riders should not have to suffer through a long transition between services. DAB has 50 years of experience; the County does not. If the computer system Benton County imposed on DAB in the past indicates how the County would operate, the change would be a disaster. Mason asked how it was logical to spend \$1.8 million for in-house service instead of about \$1 million for DAB service. Mason urged the Board to stop this process, stop spending County money or time on it, and increase the payment to DAB so that DAB can better meet the need for services. Mason stated that the situation was disrupting many peoples' lives and was done in an unnecessary way, for no apparent benefit.

Malone responded that the County would answer and address these concerns. Several months ago, the Board viewed one presentation about the current system and proposed changes, so the Board needs to get up to date with recent information.

Mark Yeager, resident, attended the March 2, 2026 STIF Committee meeting. It was clear that County staff misjudged the importance of this service. The meeting was held in a very small room which many residents could not enter, and there was no sign-up sheet to share contact information with the County. Public Works Director Gary Stockhoff refused to answer questions about why the County is considering a change to

this program. It would be fair and helpful for clients who depend on this lifeline to understand if this is the Board's direction, because there has been no articulation of "issues" the County has with DAB service. When community members asked why the County was doing this, staff referred to the draft Kittelson report, which has not yet been shared with the community. Stockhoff said a decision had not been made. But other information shows that the County is moving ahead with this process, regardless of impacts on the service, volunteers, and the community. Yeager urged the Board to listen, understand the importance of this service, and work on fixing the issues rather than bringing BAT services in-house.

Wyse assured commenters that staff were preparing answers, had collected contact information, and would respond by the end of the week.

Malone noted that the Kittelson report was discussed at a previous Board Meeting. A recording of that meeting can be found on the County website.

Yeager replied that the December 3, 2025 Board Meeting included a presentation on the report, but not the report itself.

Malone commented that staff had been working on this information. The transit service would not change until well into 2027. The County is undertaking appropriate due diligence to ensure DAB is operating correctly. Federal funding restricts allowable expenditures. Compliance is an important component of receiving Federal funding for transit. Malone noted that if individuals wished to discuss these matters further, he would hold a drop-in conversation opportunity in the Kalapuya Building lobby later that day for community members and staff. Malone will offer drop-in hours on a regular basis.

Later in the meeting, Malone added that the County had only received the full Kittelson Report recently, and the report would soon be posted on the County website.

5. New Business

5.1 In the Matter of Imposing Traffic Control on Northwest Somerset Drive, County Road No. 15301, Order No. D2026-050 - Ian McGuire, Civil Engineer, Public Works

I. McGuire explained that the speed limit on Somerset Drive is currently 25 miles per hour (mph), but the speed limit is not posted. There may be some public confusion about standard speed limits, which new signs should help clarify.

Responding to questions from Malone, I. McGuire shared that the County investigates all community requests for slower speed on the resident's street. In Oregon, speed limits can be designated or statutory. For designated limits, the Oregon Department of

Transportation (ODOT) performs a speed study and recommends a speed limit. Statutory limits follow the basic rule: 55 mph on rural highways, 25 mph in residence districts, and 20 mph in business districts. Only ODOT has the authority to change designated limits, whereas the County can post statutory limits.

Malone noted community members often do not understand that in many cases, only ODOT has the authority to change speed limits. The City or County does not necessarily have that authority, even on a City or County road.

MOTION: Shepherd moved to approve Order #D2026-050, imposing traffic control on Northwest Somerset Drive, County Road No. 15301, and direct staff to erect the traffic devices necessary to post speed limits in accordance with Oregon Revised Statutes, the State speed zone order, and the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Wyse seconded the motion, which **carried 3-0.**

5.2 In the Matter of Imposing Traffic Control on South 13th Street, County Road No. 26250A, Order No. D2026-051 - Ian McGuire, Civil Engineer, Public Works

I. McGuire explained that this signage establishes a transition zone on South 13th Street in the City of Philomath, where a 25-mph zone suddenly changes to 55 mph at Chapel Drive. ODOT approved a quarter-mile zone at 40 mph to keep drivers from accelerating too fast when leaving town.

MOTION: Shepherd moved to adopt Order #D2026-051, imposing traffic control on South 13th Street, County Road #26250A, and direct staff to erect the traffic devices necessary to post speed limits in accordance with Oregon Revised Statutes, the State speed zone order, and the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Wyse seconded the motion, which **carried 3-0.**

5.3 Acceptance of Easements from Mary Elizabeth Pitcher Revocable Living Trust for Dodge Island Road Bridge, County Road No. 55701 - Dave Malone, County Surveyor, Public Works

D. Malone explained that the County had purchased two easements from one neighboring landowner. The easements relate to the upcoming Dodge Island Road Bridge replacement.

MOTION: Shepherd moved to accept the easements from the Mary Elizabeth Pitcher Revocable Living Trust for a bridge replacement project for Dodge Island Road Bridge, County Road #55701. Wyse seconded the motion, which **carried 3-0.**

5.4 Safe Streets and Roads for All: Establish a Goal and Approve the Transportation Safety Action Plan (TSAP), Resolution No. R2026-002
- Laurel Byer, County Engineer, Public Works; John Bosket, Senior Vice President, DKS and Associates

Bosket explained that the TSAP was funded by a Federal grant from the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program. The County is required to follow the Safe System Approach, examining transportation safety issues and solutions rather than focusing solely on engineering systems. This includes examining speeds at which people travel and educating the public about safety and post-crash care to improve survivability.

Bosket reviewed SS4A requirements and project goals and phases [see presentation]. The goal is to eliminate serious injuries and fatalities on County roads by 2040 and achieve a 50% reduction by 2035. Community engagement and equity considerations are part of the process. The project started in late 2024. The first phase involved understanding crash trends, collecting public input on places where drivers feel unsafe, and analyzing that data. The second phase focused on locations with the most severe crashes and finding trends the County can target to reduce fatal/serious injuries. The third phase will refine ideas with the community and the Task Force to create the TSAP. The process is coordinated with the City of Corvallis, which is making its own TSAP. This will include coordinated resources and schedules, combined engagements, linked websites, and shared comment mapping.

Bosket described Task Force roles and responsibilities. Task Force members helped develop the prioritization criteria the County is using to identify high priority projects. The Task Force also helped refine draft solutions and recommended ways to better engage the community. Bosket discussed the details of community engagement so far. First-round open houses were held in the Cities of Adair Village, Monroe, and Corvallis. The second round sought better participation for areas outside Corvallis through pop-up booths at community events. The online comment map had considerable activity. Interested party interviews about multi-modal corridors were conducted. Bicycle/truck conflicts on rural corridors were examined. All project materials are provided in English and Spanish. There was significant community participation at events.

Key themes from the input included strong support for widening shoulders, especially on rural highways; concerns about rumble strips and profiled edge lines pushing cyclists into travel lanes; visibility issues; and a preference for design-based safety solutions that encourage people to slow speeds by changing the environment. Participants were skeptical that radar and signs alone could change behavior and were interested in more enforcement and education.

Staff focused improvements on two parallel corridors: Independence Highway and Springhill Drive, and Bellfountain Road. Feedback indicated support for radar-activated signs warning drivers of bicyclists on the roadway and routing trucks away from high

bicycle activity sections of roads.

Bosket reviewed the contents of the TSAP report, including safety analyses, multi-modal corridors, solutions, and high priority projects. Strategies could include both infrastructure-based examples (such as chevron signs on curbs) and non-infrastructure-based examples (such as education campaigns). ODOT has many educational resources the County can use. High priority projects are designated in nine locations.

The report also provides an implementation guide with design standards and operating procedures, a funding source discussion, and a list of target grants. SS4A requires performance measures and monitoring of progress on implementation and the goal of zero fatal/serious injuries. All this will be included in the annual report. Results must be publicly accessible and will probably be posted on the County website.

Shepherd asked about the lifespan of the TSAP.

Bosket replied a 20-year horizon is typical, but the emphasis is on making the changes as quickly as possible within resource limitations.

Shepherd asked why the fatal/serious injuries data covers 2018-2022.

Bosket replied those are the most recent five years of crash data from ODOT. Data for 2023 just became available and showed similar trends.

Shepherd expressed surprise that Scenic Drive, often mentioned by the neighborhood near 25th Street and others in the Community of North Albany, was not included. A fatality occurred there in 2025.

Byer noted the TSAP is a living document. If Scenic Drive comes up in the crash data, staff will revisit the plan.

Malone praised the comprehensive approach. The Task Force membership represented a good sample of community interests, including cyclists, Law Enforcement, and a Health Services representative. Transportation does impact health.

MOTION: Wyse moved to adopt Resolution #R2026-022 to establish a zero goal to eliminate serious injuries and fatalities on County roads by 2040 and achieve a 50% reduction by 2035, and to approve the Transportation Safety Action Plan. Shepherd seconded the motion, which **carried 3-0**.

Chair Malone recessed the meeting at 10:21 AM and reconvened at 10:33 AM.

6. Work Session

6.1 Benton Soil and Water Conservation District 2025 Annual Report -
Cierra Dawson, Plant Program Coordinator, Tatum Van Hawkins, Habitat
Conservationist, Benton Soil & Water Conservation District

This item was heard after 6.2

Dawson explained that she and Van Hawkins are the current points of contact for these projects.

Dawson described the work BSWCD performs for the County to eradicate aquatic and terrestrial invasive weeds. Through an Inter-governmental Agreement with Benton County Public Works, the County provides about \$5,000 per biennium for weed control. Every year, BSWCD gives about five presentations to the County Road Crew highlighting terrestrial weeds. The fall 2025 training highlighted Roundleaf bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) and garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*). BSWCD is working with the Oregon Department of Agriculture and Greenbelt Land Trust (GLT) to treat garlic mustard areas. The next Special Management Area weed pull event, usually targeting meadow knapweed, will be held in April 2026.

BSWCD also uses Benton funding for the “Weed of the Month” project in the BSWCD monthly newsletter, which shows the community how to identify and manage the weed. Staff partner with the Oregon State University Agricultural Extension Service on “Weed Watchers” workshops; the next one will take place in May 2026. May 2026 will also have the next “Let's Pull Together” event, when various organizations partner to host volunteers who remove weeds from natural areas.

Van Hawkins reported that in 2025, BSWCD held two “Paddle and Pull” events, removing aquatic weeds such as water primrose (*Ludwigia*) and yellow floating heart (*Nymphoides peltata*) from waterways. More events will be held in spring 2026. BSWCD surveyed the 22 miles of Willamette River that flow through Benton County and found no new sites of yellow floating heart, only historic sites, which were treated. BSWCD has funding for another round of “Paddle and Pull” events, plus more surveying and spraying.

Malone asked about emerald ash borer identification.

Dawson replied that the organization receives community member questions about the emerald ash borer and the Mediterranean oak borer. Staff work closely with the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF). BSWCD is part of the Cooperative Weed Management Area, which has meetings where ODF staff present updates including the movement of those insects. However, BSWCD does not have any direct grant funding to work on those species. The insects were included in previous presentations to the Road Crew.

MOTION: Shepherd moved to accept the 2025 Annual Report from the Benton County Soil and Water Conservation District. Wyse seconded the motion, which **carried 3-0**.

6.2 *Update on the Potential for an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detention Facility in Newport, Oregon - The Honorable Jan Kaplan, Mayor, City of Newport; The Honorable Walter Chuck, Commissioner, Lincoln County Board of Commissioners

This item was heard after 5.4.

Kaplan described a series of actions by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/ICE in the City of Newport (the City) and Lincoln County. In late October 2025, Newport residents noticed that the Coast Guard search-and-rescue helicopter usually housed at Newport Airport was no longer present. The City received a Letter of Intent from an unnamed Federal agency about leasing four acres of land next to the helicopter hangar. The City began receiving reports from individuals and businesspeople that Federal agencies were inquiring about substantial septic services for what sounded like a large number of people. However, officials could not confirm any of this information. Senator Ron Wyden, Senator Jeff Merkley, and Congresswoman Val Hoyle all tried to contact DHS, ICE, and the Coast Guard, but could not obtain confirmation. The City decided to release the unconfirmed information to the community at a special town hall meeting that was attended by 800 people, with hundreds more attending online. The City Council adopted a resolution that the City and the community adamantly opposed a Federal facility being sited in Newport and would do everything possible to prevent such a facility and secure the return of the helicopter.

Lincoln County partnered with the Newport Fishermen's Wives (NFW), a local non-profit organization, to file a lawsuit to return the helicopter. The City also retained legal counsel and filed an amicus brief supporting the helicopter lawsuit, while maintaining a separate lawsuit challenging the siting of a detention facility in Newport. Both lawsuits are still active.

Chuck emphasized that local officials, not Federal ones, were informing the community. It was difficult for the City, Lincoln County, and the State to decide what to release to the public, because the information still could not be confirmed, but was solid enough that officials felt the need to inform constituents. Representative David Gombert and Chuck met with the Coast Guard commanding officer of Yaquina Bay, but did not receive information, which was very unusual. NFW met with the officer a few days later, but still did not receive information, even though the Coast Guard facility in the City of Coos Bay had previously updated NFW monthly on helicopter status and operations. Community concerns grew.

Kaplan showed a timeline of initial actions and escalation [Exhibit 3 pages 13-14]. The

community has been very supportive of local government in this matter, although not unanimous. The City is not challenging immigration policy, but rather DHS/ICE actions and community impacts. The Oregon Department of Justice has joined the lawsuits filed with the State Attorney General's Office. On November 24, 2025, NFW and Lincoln County received a temporary injunction from United States District Judge Ann Aiken requiring the helicopter's return on a temporary basis until a further hearing. The City engaged Stoll Berne law firm to challenge the illegal siting. At the same time, the City began to hear reports of local hotels being contacted by Federal contractors trying to rent up to 200 hotel rooms for a year. Later, similar calls were reported in the Cities of Waldport and Yachats.

Shepherd asked whether the Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) would be paid on those rentals.

Kaplan replied that the Federal government does not pay TLT. Also, if a stay exceeds 30 days, it is not considered transient. The revenue loss would have been enormous, and there would not be hotel rooms available to other visitors or commuters, which would affect all neighboring cities and counties, including Benton. Periodically, officials would see internet advertisements recruiting detention workers and medical staff in Newport; then the advertisement would be removed, but soon would reappear.

In early December 2025, Merkley met with the Coast Guard Adjutant, who informed Merkley that the helicopter would be returned permanently. A few days later, attorneys from the Federal Department of Justice stated that the helicopter would remain in Newport only through spring 2026, pending a later seasonal resource assessment (a phrase that was unclear to local officials). Around December 16, 2025, local hotels reported additional inquiries from Federal contractors about renting large blocks of rooms. But in a later note filed with the court, DHS/ICE claimed to have ceased planning any facility in Newport on December 4, 2025. On December 22, 2025, Judge Aiken ruled again and continued the injunction maintaining the helicopter, rejecting DHS's position that temporary relocation with periodic landings did not amount to a closure of the helicopter base or a major reduction in operations.

Chuck explained that local officials continued to monitor events at Newport Airport. Even with the injunction to cease and desist, DHS/ICE continued to remove large shipping boxes of stored equipment from the helicopter base, yet also stated they would not take any action. Lawyers for Lincoln County and NFW found prior legislation indicating that DHS/ICE was not supposed to decrease helicopter flights and usage without a 180-day notification period, which would include public hearings. Judge Aiken found that DHS/ICE had decreased services and capabilities to the point of being in violation of these requirements. Once the injunction was filed and upheld, the Coast Guard helicopter returned. DHS/ICE had removed so many personnel from the base that crew from Yaquina Bay were needed to help push the helicopter into the hangar. The base had not been used for a while. Judge Aiken was very concerned about the

manner in which the base had been emptied.

Kaplan commented that the helicopter is a very specific issue, but there are Federal requirements for siting a detention facility, such as notifying the State. The siting process takes about 18 months if done legally. As a result of the County and NFW challenging DHS/ICE in court and filing for discovery, ICE finally acknowledged on January 28, 2026 that the agency had been trying to establish a detention center, which was the first official notice on the matter.

Lincoln County and the City have spent considerable funds on this effort. The City Council believes this is an existential issue for Newport, the central Oregon coast, and potentially beyond. A detention facility in Newport would have tremendous impacts on commerce, tourism, the economy, and the community. People would not want to stay that close to a detention facility. Newport would lose a great deal of its workforce. The City has committed emergency funds to fight these actions and has spent about \$300,000 so far in legal fees, which continue to rise. The City is beginning to accept financial contributions for legal fees. The community's protection lies in continuing litigation and the fight for transparency.

Chuck added that Lincoln County continues to monitor local DHS/ICE activities, hoping for a final ruling from Judge Aiken on the helicopter suit. NFW are still fundraising. In late November 2025, the Department of Land Conservation and Development was contacted by DHS about a possible Federal compliance ruling according to the Coastal Zone Management Association (CZMA), which is involved in coastal development. There was no follow-up, but that inquiry greatly concerned local officials. If anything were built, officials might get some advance notice through CZMA.

Malone commented that he went to Wyden's mid-November 2025 town hall in Newport, which was very well attended. NFW are organized and know the helicopter is a life-or-death matter. The helicopter also rescues injured loggers and accident victims. In the past, when there was a proposal to cut funding for the Newport helicopter, some senators thought a rescue by a helicopter within two hours would suffice. That is not true in the north Pacific Ocean, where 15 minutes can make the difference in survival.

Shepherd noted that he and Chuck had asked Governor Tina Kotek to take action. Kotek immediately issued a statement opposing the facility. Shepherd wanted Benton County to support the opposition effort in any way possible. Shepherd noted a comment that ICE "has no plan to begin construction or open an ICE facility . . . between now and until May 1, 2026."** The agency did not mention what might happen after that date. Agencies should not be able to dismiss a lawsuit simply because they do not intend to build. If detainees were transported to a facility in Newport, they would likely be taken through Benton County along Interstate-5 and Highway 20. Some people already commute from Benton County to Newport. Benton County hotels might also be solicited

by contractors. Shepherd expressed his personal support for Newport and Lincoln County.

[**Recorder's note: the above quotation originated from an ICE declaration filed with the United States District Court.]

Wyse commented that when government overreach occurs, it has to be the people who organize and exercise their rights and involve the courts. Otherwise, overreach will continue. Wyse thanked everyone involved for coming together. Fighting back early is the best way to gain traction and provide a good example for other communities.

Kaplan responded that lessons learned included fighting back and acting early, and engaging the community. The City and Lincoln County have also received support from the State Attorney General's Office and the Governor's Office. Working together makes this coalition formidable.

Malone observed that in 2014-2015, Federal legislation passed requiring a process to close a Coast Guard facility. Congress must approve such a closure. In this case, the Federal government ignored the law, with very serious consequences. Vigilance is needed. The region must stand together on the position that these actions are not right. Malone expressed appreciation for the heroic efforts of those involved.

Chuck added that Hoyle was trying to convince the Coast Guard Commandant to visit Newport. Merkley and Wyden had also been supportive, and Chuck thanked the Benton County Board for its support.

Shepherd asked how to contribute to the City of Newport/Lincoln County legal fund.

Kaplan replied that other local governments can make direct contributions to the City through an Inter-governmental Agreement. Officials are working with a non-profit entity on potentially accepting donations from the public.

Malone commented that donations to NFW on the helicopter issue were possible.

{Exhibit 3: Kaplan Presentation: Potential ICE Detention Center in Newport}

7. Consent Calendar

7.1 Ratification of Letter of Support for the City of Monroe's Request for Community Project Funding for the Wastewater System Resilience and River Crossing Redundancy Project

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

8. Old Business

8.1 In the Matter of a Resolution Supporting the City of Corvallis Low Income Rental Property Tax Exemption (LIRPTE) Policy, Resolution No. R2026-003 - Christopher Jacobs, Manager, Economic Development Officer; Brigetta Olson, Housing and Neighborhood Services Manager, City of Corvallis

Jacobs explained the staff report was written for this item and Item 8.2. The Board has been very supportive of LIRPTE and the Multiple-Unit Property Tax Exemption (MUPTE) as tools to increase multi-unit and low-income rental housing production. While accepting applications, the Economic Development Office found several issues with how the programs were adopted. A public hearing was never held, which staff corrected on March 2, 2026. Resolutions were not secured from the other taxing jurisdictions. Therefore, this resolution adopts the policy of providing MUPTEs, including low-income rental housing, property tax, and multi-unit property tax exemption. This will establish whether these programs are broadly supported by the other taxing jurisdictions. For the sake of transparency, Jacobs presented this item under Old Business rather than on a Consent Calendar. There are currently two approved MUPTE projects, which will more than double the number of housing units downtown.

Olson added that LIRPTE has no applications yet. Staff are examining ways to attract applications.

MOTION: Shepherd moved to approve Resolution #2026-003 in the matter of supporting the City of Corvallis' Low Income Property Tax Exemption policy. Wyse seconded the motion, which **carried 3-0**.

8.2 In the Matter of a Resolution Supporting the City of Corvallis Multiple-Unit Property Tax Exemption (MUPTE) Policy, Resolution No. R2026-004 - Christopher Jacobs, Economic Development Manager; Brigetta Olson, Housing and Neighborhood Services Manager, City of Corvallis

MOTION: Shepherd moved to adopt Resolution #R2026-004 in the matter of supporting the City of Corvallis' Multi-Unite Property Tax Exemption policy. Wyse seconded the motion, which **carried 3-0**.

9. Other

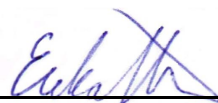
No other business was discussed.

10. Adjournment

Chair Malone adjourned the meeting at 11:21 AM.



Pat Malone, Chair



Erika Milo, Recorder

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