



Board of Commissioners

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**MINUTES OF THE GOAL-SETTING MEETING
BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MAY 12, 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; Julie Arena; Rebecca Taylor, Coordinated Homeless Response Office; April Holland, Health Services; Gary Stockhoff, Public Works; Shannon Bozigar; Toby Lewis; Bailey Payne; Bob Richardson, Community Development; Grace Lovell; Sean McGuire, Board of Commissioners

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

Item 7.1 Request from the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) to add the Benton County logo to a letter to the US Housing and Urban Development Department regarding Local Control of Homelessness Funding was added to 7. Other.

3. Announcements

No announcements were made.

4. Work Session

- 4.1 Coordinated Homeless Response Office Update** – Rebecca Taylor, Manager; Julie Arena, Program Coordinator, Coordinated Homeless Response Office

The County received an award for phase 1 of the Statewide Shelter Program (SSP) for the current fiscal year; under this phase, the State established shelter expectations for counties. The County received an award for phase 2, and the Coordinated Homeless Response Office's (CHRO) framework has shifted due to CHRO's formal designation as an entity of Benton County. This means Benton County is now responsible for developing a regional plan that identifies what level of shelter capacity can be sustained. Holland confirmed the sheltering need is currently larger than what the County can sustain. Holland reviewed the regional plan requirements: sheltering funded by SSP are in compliance with State shelter standards, an assessment of current shelter and homeless response conditions, an identified minimum shelter bed capacity target, and how funds and resources are distributed and coordinated to achieve plan objectives must be identified. Holland reviewed data points that will be utilized in the regional plan. The plan is meant to guide a broader response to homelessness. The actual SSP award is not sufficient to sustain current shelter need or meet the full shelter need in Benton County.

Home and Community-based Services (HCS) warned CHRO of significant reductions in funding for the 2028 fiscal year. Taylor stated the funding allocation that is based on good performance will not be reflective of actual performance metrics, because the allocation amount has decreased. CHRO's strategic plan includes a goal to achieve more with less resources, but it is critical that certain components within the homeless response system have adequate resources. CHRO's Rapid Rehousing programs rely heavily on the stability that is provided in the shelters. This means that if there is a decrease in availability in the shelters, there will be a decrease in outcomes in the Rapid Rehousing programs. Additionally, CHRO is having conversations with the City of Corvallis on how to provide a more service first related approach to encampment responses. Taylor stated that having adequate shelter space to refer people to when they need it is a critical component; and City partners rely heavily on these services. Over the last several years, CHRO has attempted to use resources from the State to ensure every part of the system is operating at a similar capacity.

Holland reviewed the current number of unsheltered and sheltered individuals, the shelter need, and the amount of current shelter beds. Holland shared the funding structure and sources for Benton County shelter operations. In addition to State funding, shelter providers rely on private healthcare partnerships, federal funding, and local government support.

Wyse asked if the shelter need figure includes individuals who do not want shelter resources.

Taylor stated the number reflects a snapshot of the current capacity need to reduce sheltered homelessness.

Holland shared that SSP Phase 2 is approximately \$2.46 million for the 2026-27 fiscal year; this represents a \$500,000 reduction from previous years. Holland reviewed what CHRO services do for the County and the community. CHRO is requesting from the Board an ongoing partnership to set policy direction on shelter and housing priorities, to align and prioritize local resources, and to consider future investments to sustain and expand capacity. Staff will return to the Board in the future with options and recommendations.

Malone asked if the formula previously used for calculating shelter beds has changed.

Crager stated the number of shelter beds will always be a moving target, but the formula was incorrect in what it was allowing to fund.

Taylor stated the Statewide program is changing and will require CHRO to identify the target bed count. The Phase 2 award is identical to the Phase 1 award; because although it is an award increase, it accommodates a decrease in funding.

Malone asked if State funding is the uncertain funding source.

Taylor confirmed. CHRO is administering two programs: Rapid Rehousing and Rental Assistance, and CHRO is overseeing statewide shelter program funds. The State has tasked CHRO to stand up to these programs, without providing certainty from to support the folks within the programs.

Shepherd asked for clarification regarding how CHRO defines sustainable funding, and whether the Board should consider what is sustainable without State funding or to consider what is sustainable with the inclusion of State funding.

Holland stated the funding sources and amounts are continually changing.

Wyse asked how the current planning process compares to the new plan that is due by June.

Taylor stated the new plan requires CHRO to define a bed target; whether that number is dictated by community need versus the resources that are available will have two different outcomes.

Wyse asked if there could be an explanation in the plan that differentiates between the community need amount and the current resources, which cannot accommodate the need.

Taylor discussed the potential of future challenges in requesting more resources if CHRO reports a community need that is larger than what can be sustained.

Crager confirmed the regional plan will identify a sustainable funding structure and asked how the Board priorities fit into the plan implementation.

Taylor discussed how Board priorities have been taken into consideration over the past few years, including the Home, Opportunity, Planning, and Equity Board.

Crager asked about advanced conversations with all local partners to avoid a significant decrease in capacity.

Holland agreed and suggested meeting with Crager to discuss a leadership plan.

4.2 Benton Area Transit (BAT) Implementation Plan Monthly Update – Gary Stockhoff, Public Works Director

Stockhoff stated Dial-A-Bus (DAB) has agreed to a contract extension and will provide services through June 30, 2028. As a part of the contract extension, in April 2027, the County will adjust the fee based on the Consumer Price Index. Stockhoff met with Human Resources, Information Technology, Financial Services, and the Public Information Officer regarding the components required for the implementation plan and community engagement. Additionally, staff will review the advanced contract option with County Counsel; the final draft of the plan is expected by October 2026. Staff is meeting with DAB representatives regarding an option to expand services and additional data points. Any expansion of services would be budgeted as a State Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) project for the County.

Crager stated the community engagement process will begin in August 2026. Crager discussed the components of the implementation plan that will be presented to the community. Additionally, staff will be developing components of a service expansion option with the DAB Board that would be a part of STIF.

Malone asked about the upcoming amount of available STIF funding.

Stockhoff will know soon, but the funding amount will be similar or less than prior.

Wyse asked if information regarding the differences between DAB and BAT services are easily available for the community and discussed the verbiage on DAB's website regarding Public Works review of transit data.

Stockhoff discussed the difficulties with staffing shortages that affected the STIF Advisory Committee's ability to meet.

Thwaits is working on a distinction between the two services; the information does not include information on DAB beyond the Dial-A-Bus services it provides for the County.

Thwaites recommended creating a visual graph or chart to better explain services to the community.

Chair Malone recessed the meeting at 10:11 a.m. and reconvened at 10:20 a.m.

4.3 Accessory Dwelling Units Discussion – Bob Richardson, Director; Toby Lewis, Senior Planner; Shannon Bozigar, Program Coordinator, Community Development

An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is a smaller secondary dwelling unit that is associated with a Primary Dwelling Unit on the same parcel of land. Benton County currently allows one ADU per property within an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and within an Urban Residential Zone (URZ). An ADU cannot be larger than 900 square feet; and it must comply with all other local and State regulations regarding sewer, water, and building codes. In 2021, the State passed legislation that provided counties the option to revise their development code to allow ADUs in Rural Residential Zones (RRZ), which are located outside of a UGB. Richardson stated that Lane, Linn, Marion, Clackamas, Deschutes, and Jackson Counties updated their development codes to allow ADUs in RRZs. The legislation passed in 2021 included a list of standards and requirements, such as one ADU per parcel, the ADU cannot be located within an Urban Reserve Area, a minimum parcel size of two acres, the ADU must be located within 100 feet of the Primary Dwelling Unit, and once an ADU is built, it cannot be partitioned onto a separate lot. Counties that permitted ADUs in RRZs applied the State standards, and there is opportunity for participating counties to apply additional standards. Richardson stated approximately 91% of the County is within a resource land designation area. The current ADU allowance in Benton County is approximately 1% of land area; if the County were to permit ADUs in RRZs, the allowance would increase the land area to approximately 4%.

Lewis mentioned additional constraints associated with building an ADU such as water availability, slopes, and riparian setbacks.

Bozigar added that the County cannot change the designation of resource zone land, because it is determined by the State. However, the County can potentially make changes within the RRZ designations. The level of demand is difficult to engage, because when individuals express interest in acquiring permits for ADUs, if the individual is in a zone that does not currently allow ADUs, the inquiry typically ends. Community Development has issued less than 20 ADU permits in the past eight years.

Crager asked if any of the counties that had adopted the State standards also added additional standards.

Richardson was not aware whether any of the counties adopted additional standards; however, Marion County specified a height restriction in their standards.

Shepherd discussed community concerns, such as detriments to natural resources, land, and enforcing an ordinance. Community members in Alsea and north Benton County have expressed interest in allowing ADUs. Shepherd was in favor of adopting the State standards but also engaging in future conversations regarding areas where the County should be more restrictive.

Lewis discussed how Medical Hardship Dwellings (MHD) are different from ADUs; MHDs are intended to be temporary units and must be removed when the person experiencing a medical hardship is no longer living in the unit.

Bozigar discussed a build-out analysis, which would identify how many ADU units can be built within Benton County that take into consideration a set of conditions and standards, such as zoning, floodplains, or wetlands. Community Development currently does not have the resources to provide a build-out analysis and it is not a required approach.

Wyse asked if Community Development staff have spoken with Environmental Health staff regarding potential areas of concern with sewer and sceptic if ADU development was permitted.

Lewis stated that staff have not yet engaged in an official conversation, but it will happen in the near future, especially if a build-out analysis is done.

Wyse asked how the County will enforce a no short-term rental rule on ADUs permitted in RRZs.

Richardson stated the current County code has similar requirements.

Lewis added that in terms of enforcement, it would require individuals to notify the County.

Malone stated that with the Transient Lodging Tax, the State is supposed to assist with short-term rental compliance enforcement.

Bozigar discussed a tool that gives staff access to information, including the location of short-term rentals and whether the units are ADUs. The data is not sourced directly from the State; it comes from an Artificial Intelligence tool that pulls data from Airbnb, VRBO, and other short-term rental websites.

Wyse asked if ADUs would be allowed outside a designated fire district.

Richardson believed the State law requires units within RRZs to be provided resources by a fire service provider.

Wyse asked about an urbanization plan.

Lewis stated the goal of an urbanization plan is to ensure that when a house is added onto a property, it is done in a manner that allows the property to be developed to city standards if it was annexed to the city in the future.

Malone asked how many MHDs are in the County.

Lewis stated approximately three to five units are approved each year.

Malone requested a single page informational pamphlet on ADU rules in Benton County.

Richardson confirmed.

Wyse asked about a chance for the community to provide input.

Richardson mentioned the engagement opportunities tied in with the Comprehensive Plan.

Shepherd expressed concerns with using the Comprehensive Plan to update ADU standards, because the process is taking longer than anticipated.

Richardson will return with options for the Board to discuss.

4.4 Rethinking Benton County's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Goal – Sean McGuire, Sustainability Coordinator; Grace Lovell, Climate Action Intern, Board of Commissioners

McGuire stated that although the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Reduction Goal's level of feasibility will be discussed, there is no request to change the current goal. McGuire reviewed Benton County's goal to reduce GHG emissions by 50% of the 2010 levels by 2030 and to be net-zero by 2050. McGuire discussed differences in the amount of tons the County is over its goal; 1,601 tons versus 2,861 tons. Indirect factors that contribute include purchasing, commuting, travel, and waste. A hidden factor that is helping the County's goal is its decrease in operations. McGuire summarized how the County and its operations have changed since 2010.

Lovell researched how other jurisdictions and organizations are setting their GHG emissions goals and how close those entities are to achieving their goals. Similar to Benton County, many of the jurisdictions are not close to reaching their goal.

McGuire reviewed the industry standard GHG emissions by category: operational and indirect; and by the category's source. A challenge associated with the data of indirect sources is that it is based on assumptions and averages. Assumptions that are used for the 2030 projections include added and subtracted facilities; electricity reductions; added purchasing; carbon sequestration from Natural Areas, Parks, and Events; and full-time equivalents (FTE). The projected net difference from 2010 to 2030 is minus 729 tons for operational and plus 947 tons for indirect. If the assumptions are correct, the County is 358 tons away from its goal in the operational category.

Crager asked if there will be a significant impact if the BAT buses are replaced with Electric Vehicle buses.

McGuire confirmed and reviewed next steps for the Board to consider and provide direction.

Wyse expressed caution regarding the messaging of the County's goals. Wyse asked if any of the researched jurisdictions are on track to meeting their goals.

Lovell believed the City of Gresham is on track and the City of Bellevue, Washington could be meeting some of their goals.

Shepherd favored separating operational goals from indirect goals and providing as much detail as possible to the community.

Malone asked if any progress had been made with law enforcement's fleet usage and how the data has affected the County's goals.

McGuire stated there was a decline in propane usage, because the Sheriff's Office stopped using propane as fuel.

Malone discussed electric vehicles and fleet progress.

4.5 County Administrator Vacancy Discussion – Pat Malone, Chair, Board of Commissioners

Crager was recently appointed Interim County Administrator; Webb is looking for direction from the Board on establishing Crager's position and how the Board would like Human Resources to proceed.

Malone was pleased with current operations and believed one FTE instead of two was not sustainable long-term.

Shepherd mentioned Crager's implementation plan that will target the Board of Commissioners Office's staff operations moving forward. Shepherd is ready to direct staff to begin contract negotiations to appoint Crager as County Administrator.

The Board and Counsel discussed whether an executive session should be scheduled and what can and cannot be discussed.

Wyse was ready to move forward with an implementation plan and asked about a timeline.

Webb stated if the Board wants the Interim position to extend beyond June 30, the Board needs to provide staff that direction.

Malone expressed preference that a permanent County Administrator be in place by July 1.

Webb stated that was possible if the Board made a direct appointment.

Counsel provided motion direction.

MOTION: Shepherd moved to direct County Counsel's Office to move forward with negotiating a contract with Rick Crager for the position of County Administrator, effective July 1, 2026. Wyse seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

Wyse expressed a preference for the stabilization plan in Crager's staffing structure recommendations.

Malone asked when discussions regarding staffing structure changes will take place.

Crager stated the plan is ready for implementation discussions.

Chair Malone recessed meeting at 12:11 p.m. and reconvened at 12:20 p.m.

4.6 Republic Services 2024 Annual Report: Additional Information to be Requested – Pat Malone, Chair, Board of Commissioners; Bailey Payne, Solid Waste Coordinator, Community Development

Payne created a list of items that could be added to the Board's questions and included in a letter to Republic Services.

Shepherd requested data on fire concerns, risks, reported fires, and how Republic Services dealt with the fires and concerns added in their 2024 Annual Report.

Payne noted that the amount of solid waste accepted in the 2024 report was nearly identical to the numbers in the 2023 report. Payne discussed additional questions that can be added to a memorandum.

Malone and Payne discussed how to minimize excess organic materials going into the landfill.

Wyse believed all references to 2025 in the 2024 report should be moved to the 2025 Annual Report.

Shepherd preferred all references to 2026 be up to date. Shepherd agreed that the 2025 timeline did not make sense in a 2024 report but appreciated the context from that information.

Malone asked about a project Pacific Northwest Generating Cooperative (PNGC) presented to the Board regarding the reutilization of the reusable gas produced at Coffin Butte Landfill.

Payne expressed uncertainty whether PNGC wants to make that investment.

Payne and Richardson will develop a draft memorandum and review it at the May 19 Board of Commissioners Meeting.

4.7 Potential Board Events for June 2026 Commemoration of PRIDE Month and Juneteenth – Maura Kwiatkowski, Administrative Services Manager, Board of Commissioners

Kwiatkowski asked the Board for direction regarding the scheduling of pre-meeting events for PRIDE month and Juneteenth.

The Board was in favor of a flag raising pre-meeting event for PRIDE month.

Shepherd suggested inviting a representative from Albany PRIDE to read the Proclamation and to invite John Phillips IV, President of the Linn-Benton NAACP, to read the proclamation for Juneteenth.

Wyse asked if the Board has held a pre-meeting event for Juneteenth last year.

Shepherd suggested the Board defer to the NAACP regarding their Juneteenth events.

Kwiatkoski confirmed staff will invite Phillips IV to read the Juneteenth proclamation at the June 16 Board meeting and to organize a pre-meeting PRIDE flag raising and reception prior to the June 2 Board meeting.

5. Consent Agenda

5.1 Approval of the April 14, 2026 Board of Commissioners Goal-setting Meeting Minutes

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

6. Interim County Administrator and Commissioner Updates

Rick Crager, Interim County Administrator:

- Discussed the funding issue for the Statewide Shelter Program.
- Planning the National Institute of Corrections site visit.
- Benton County has been selected by Senators Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden to move the Monroe Health Project forward.
- Every department head position is currently filled.

Commissioner Shepherd:

- Will be out of office May 30 through June 9.
- The Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) Board concluded on a proposal to allow counties to defer some rate increases over a certain amount of time to accommodate budget constraints.
- The Willamette Criminal Justice Council is hosting a roundtable meeting with the local school districts and Juvenile Services on May 27.

Commissioner Wyse:

- Attended the Western Interstate Regional Conference.

Commissioner Malone:

- Attended the Salmon and Jazz Rotary event.
- Attended the Cascades West Area Commission on Transportation meeting and discussed the smart signals project on Philomath Boulevard.
- Attended the Van Buren Street bridge ribbon cutting.
- Attended Secretary of State Tobias Read's Town Hall event.
- Will attend a robotics tour at Oregon State University.
- Will attend a Solid Waste State Task Force meeting.

7. Other

***7.1 Request from the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) to add the Benton County logo to a letter to the US Housing and Urban Development Department regarding Local Control of Homelessness Funding**

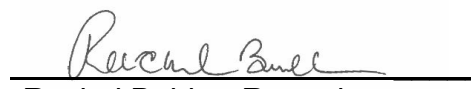
Crager summarized the request from AOC.

MOTION: Shepherd moved to support and authorize the inclusion of the Benton County logo on the local government letter to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regarding local control of homelessness funding. Wyse seconded the motion, which carried 3-0.

8. Adjournment

Chair Malone adjourned the meeting at 1:13 p.m.


Pat Malone, Chair


Rachel Bulder, Recorder

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