



Board of Commissioners

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

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

Elected Officials: Jef Van Arsdall, Sheriff

Staff: Rachel Bulder, Maura Kwiatkowski, Board Staff; Cory Grogan; Anne Thwaits, Public Affairs; Laurel Byer; Gary Stockhoff, Public Works; Bailey Payne; Bob Richardson, Community Development; Sean McGuire, Board of Commissioners

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Malone called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and introductions were made.

2. Review and Approve Agenda

Item 5.3, Appointment of Greg Dzessa-Gilham to the Oakwood Heights Road District, Order No. D2026-076, was added to the Consent Agenda.

3. Announcements

No announcements were made.

4. Discussion Topics

4.1 Benton Area Transit (BAT) Implementation Plan Monthly Update – Gary Stockhoff, Public Works Director; Rick Crager, County Administrator

Stockhoff stated that recent efforts have been focused on planning the first engagement meeting, which is scheduled for August 12 at the Benton County Fairgrounds. Stockhoff is coordinating with Financial Services, Information Technology, and Human Resources regarding personnel and software for the in-house option. For the enhanced contract

option, Stockhoff has reviewed items in the current contract that must be addressed, such as including new oversight regulations and requirements from the Federal government. Lastly, staff is processing several applications for the next funding cycle.

Crager stated that the selected service delivery model must be the highest level of service to the community. The engagement process was scheduled at the Fairgrounds to accommodate more community members. There will be a second engagement opportunity scheduled in September. The final options will be presented to the Board in the fall.

Malone asked if there were deadlines the Board should be aware of.

Crager stated that staff will need direction from the Board in late October or early November to allow staff time to include the Board's decision in the 2027-29 budget process.

Malone asked about available funding.

Stockhoff is hopeful the County will receive \$4.8 to \$5 million. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) will confirm the funding amount in late August.

Malone asked if an increase in expenses will result in less funding to work with.

Stockhoff agreed and discussed the County's work with Corvallis on paratransit fees and confirmed recent fee increases for rides through a Developmental Diversity program.

Malone asked for more information regarding changes to federal oversight.

Stockhoff stated that there will be more oversight than before.

Van Arsdall confirmed future financial impacts to the Sheriff's Office.

Crager stated staff in Financial Services will review and list the impacts to each department in the upcoming biennium. More requirements will result in a need for increased monitoring.

Stockhoff discussed how the BAT Implementation Plan and enhanced contract review are related to changes in monitoring at the federal level and how it could position the County to be more competitive for future grant opportunities.

4.2 Roads Overview Presentation – Laurel Byer, County Engineer, Public Works

Byer reviewed the types of roads and road surfaces within the County. Local Access Roads, also known as Public Roads, are the roads that County gas tax cannot be spent on, unless the Board declares an emergency. The County has several road districts; and many of those districts will ask Public Works for advice regarding maintenance and will sometimes contract work, such as sign replacements out to Public Works. Byer suggested that community members with questions regarding road maintenance and jurisdictional responsibility should call Public Works. Additionally, there are maps on the department's website that show which jurisdiction is responsible for a selected road within the County. The County website also has forms community members can submit to report a road-related issue.

Stockhoff stated that certain types of road maintenance projects are categorized by the season and reviewed the seasonal maintenance schedule. Stockhoff discussed the decision to buy a new paint truck for street painting and how it has been beneficial. Crews are currently working on summer projects but will soon transition to projects that prepare for snow, ice, and flooding. Gravel and paved roads can only be worked on during certain times of the year.

Crager asked how roads are assessed and prioritized for maintenance projects.

Byer discussed immediate priorities versus long-term priorities. Public Works receives crash reports and will repair issues on the road that contributed to an accident, such as improper lighting. Long-term priorities typically require staff to identify funding, analyze data, and prioritize on classification. Public Works will group maintenance projects by area and try to add safety improvements onto those projects if applicable. Byer reviewed maintenance strategies and a chart of the historical network condition trends. Public Works is doing overlays (asphalt) this year and chip seals (oil and rock cover) next year. Overlays are more expensive than chip seals.

Stockhoff discussed the Pavement Condition Index (PCI) charts. A PCI of 70 or above is considered good; the County's current PCI is 62.

Wyse asked what the County's target PCI is.

Stockhoff believed it was 70.

Wyse asked about the feasibility and planning for an ideal PCI.

Byer stated a consultant is creating a report regarding the County's PCI goal; how much it will cost and what will be involved to achieve that goal. Byer will bring that discussion to a future Board of Commissioners meeting.

Malone discussed the news regarding ODOT's current financial climate, the overall funding issues for road maintenance, and communities not in favor of paying extra for the roads.

Stockhoff mentioned that cities have more options than counties to raise funding revenue for items such as road work.

Shepherd agreed on setting a goal PCI and establishing the associated costs.

Byer reviewed the County's current and upcoming road projects. The Dodge Island Bridge project is beginning next week. The Midge Cramer and Bald Hill Path rehabilitation has expanded into a joint project between the City and County; this project is expected to begin in the late summer. The Southwest 53rd Street and County Club Drive Roundabout project has been pushed to summer 2027. The Irish Bend Bridge project is also scheduled for summer 2027. The South Fork Road Corridor improvements are funded and administered through the Federal Lands Access program. The Williams Road Culvert Replacement project is scheduled for 2027. ODOT is leading the Elliott Circle Bridge replacement project, and it is scheduled for 2028.

Crager asked if grant funding is what has allowed many of the listed projects to move forward instead of other projects.

Byer confirmed that most of the listed projects, excluding the Midge Cramer and Ball Hill Path, involve grant funding. Many of Public Works' projects cannot be completed without grant funding. The Roads Fund typically goes toward grant match funding requirements. Notices are submitted through the Public Affairs team regarding ongoing projects.

Malone asked if the smaller County bridges can handle the weight of the newer and larger dump trucks and if larger dump trucks are increasing the rate of bridge deterioration.

Byer was not sure if that was a contributing factor, but critical weight restrictions are posted. The County does not have a weighmaster and cannot enforce weight restrictions.

Crager asked about an existing list of the County's projects and priorities.

Byer stated that Public Works has its own Capital Improvement Program projects list that forecasts approximately three to five years ahead.

Crager discussed the upcoming changes in oversight to Federal grant recipients and how it could impact Public Works' projects.

Byer agreed, adding that the County could save money on some projects if ODOT was not involved; however, ODOT does handle the federal liability.

Malone asked about the West Hills Corridor study.

Byer stated the study was done in response to potential development, but the development has not moved forward. The plan has been adopted into the City's Transportation Plan, because it will be a City road eventually.

Malone asked about using leftover asphalt for the Fairgrounds parking lot.

Stockhoff stated the road funds cannot be used for the Fairgrounds lot paving or rehabilitation; but if Natural Areas, Parks, and Events sets aside funds to pay Public Works to do the work, it could be coordinated onto the maintenance schedule.

Chair Malone recessed the meeting at 10:07 a.m. and reconvened at 10:18 a.m.

4.3 State Municipal Solid Waste in the Willamette Valley Task Force – Pat Malone, Board Chair; Sean McGuire, Sustainability Coordinator; Bailey Payne, Solid Waste Coordinator

Malone reviewed the function of the State Task Force and its participants. The task force is working on legislative concepts needed to advance current efforts and its recommendations moving forward. Counties involved in the task force include Tillamook, Lincoln, Benton, Linn, Marion, Polk, and Yamhill. Malone has been engaging the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) in the process as its representative in the task force. The task force will continue to work on the Waste Infrastructure Partnership Act (WIPA), which addresses the varying degrees of waste infrastructure between all of the counties involved in the task force. Malone discussed why Marion County had a better recovery rate than other counties.

McGuire considered WIPA to be the fourth phase of the initiative. If WIPA is passed and there is funding available for jurisdictions, there will still be limiting factors on how governments are going to aggregate, who is going to do it, and how it will happen. McGuire stated that surrounding cities need to be involved with the task force, because County authority is limited.

Payne stated that Marion County and Metro both have flow control to direct where all waste goes within their jurisdictions.

Crager asked about how that type of agreement works.

Payne stated that the City of Salem has their own franchise agreements with the haulers, but Marion County dictates where Salem's waste is hauled to.

Shepherd asked how Marion County managed that agreement.

Counsel stated it is a statutory requirement.

Malone stated that approximately 40 years ago, that requirement was passed to ensure enough tons of waste would be directed to the incinerator that required funding to be built.

Crager summarized that if the task force is voluntary, there is no guarantee that all jurisdictions will participate. However, private entity partnerships will likely require a form of guarantee to invest in a solution such as a transfer station. Crager asked if it would be most effective to impose a statutory requirement similar to Marion County.

Counsel stated that if the task force developed into a regional solution, it could operate similarly to Metro, which also has flow control.

McGuire stated that flow control will be included in a future proposal, because the current system is decentralized. The details that need to be worked on include how flow control can be organized and how partnerships can be formed.

Wyse asked about the origin-based system benefit fee.

Payne provided an example on how it could work; Benton County would have to pay a per ton fee through Republic Services to have waste railed to a set location. Alternatively, Benton County could collaborate with its cities to set a system benefit fee.

Wyse asked if the fees are added to residential garbage bills.

Payne confirmed the fee system and costs passed onto residents would be determined by each entity.

Wyse asked if this system works well in other places.

Payne confirmed it works in other states and in Deschutes County and Metro.

McGuire discussed funding mechanisms; rates will go up and jurisdictions must prepare for the next decade.

Wyse asked if Benton County will be competitive with other jurisdictions in regard to potential State bonding assistance.

McGuire stated the State cannot guarantee assistance but is thinking of Benton County and other neighboring counties.

Malone mentioned that potential funding sources are being explored.

Wyse requested more information on what other jurisdictions are doing successfully or unsuccessfully in solid waste infrastructure and that planning be brought to the Board when this topic is next discussed.

McGuire discussed the idea of an intermodal facility with multiple counties and cities.

Payne expects the curbside waste pickup rate will increase when Coffin Butte Landfill is no longer receiving waste, but not by a significant amount.

Crager asked how the bonding programs work; who issues the bonds and who repays the bonds.

McGuire stated those decisions have not yet been made.

Malone stated that once a plan is decided, it can take approximately 10 years for creation and implementation. The Rickreall Transfer Station has been an ongoing process for approximately eight years.

4.4 Board of Commissioners Proclamation Procedure – Gabe Shepherd, Commissioner

Shepherd asked about the proclamation schedule and the current process for adding proclamations. Shepherd mentioned that a proclamation was added to a previous meeting agenda that was not listed on the Board approved proclamation schedule.

Kwiatkowski reviewed the process. The proclamation in question had been requested by a community member after the Board approved the 2026 schedule. A formal process regarding proclamations requested by the community has not been established.

Wyse's preference has been to remain flexible and to allow additional proclamations at the Chair's discretion.

Crager suggested that anytime a revision is made to the proclamation list, it could be brought to the Board for reapproval.

The Board discussed that option.

Shepherd requested that if anyone wants to add a proclamation that was not on the Board approved list, to bring that request to a Goal-setting Meeting for discussion before adding it to an agenda.

Crager directed Kwiatkowski to send the most recent proclamation list to the Board to reference when future amendment requests are brought forward.

5. Consent Agenda

- 5.1 Approval of the May 12, 2026 Board of Commissioners Goal-setting Meeting Minutes**
- 5.2 In the Matter of Reappointment of Todd Nystrom to the Corvallis-Benton Economic Development Coalition, Order No. D2026-075**
- *5.3 Appointment of Greg Dzessa-Gilham to the Oakwood Heights Road District, Order No. D2026-076**

Item 5.3 was removed from the Consent Agenda by Commissioner Shepherd for discussion.

Shepherd asked if the Board of Commissioners has the authority to make an appointment for the Oakwood Heights Road District.

Ferrer-Santa Ines discussed the reasoning for Item 5.3 and mentioned ORS 371.338, which specifies who appoints for a special road district.

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

{Exhibit 1: Order No. D2026-076, Appointment of Greg Dzessa-Gilham to the Oakwood Heights Road District}

6. County Administrator Updates

Rick Crager, County Administrator:

- Discussions are taking place regarding the potential impact from updates to the Code of Federal Regulations.
- Staff is beginning to work on the 2027-29 biennium budget and budget priorities.
- Benton Area Transit community feedback work is beginning in August.
- Cascade View County Service District update: the reservoir threshold is lower than what is considered ideal. Public Works staff suggested water usage restrictions. There is community concern over whether a new well needs to be dug to address the issue.
- Working on County Administrator goals to bring forward to the Board for adoption.

- Thwaits provided an update on the ballots that were not collected by the United States Postal Service on election day.

7. Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Shepherd:

- Held a Town Hall event in Corvallis on July 1 and one in Alsea on July 11.
- Attended the AOC Legislative Retreat; AOC priorities were established at the retreat.
- Will attend the National Association of Counties (NACo) conference in New Orleans; on the Justice and Public Safety steering committee.
- The Courthouse Preservation Committee has been successful in its Request for Proposals in services for public engagement regarding the Historic Courthouse.
- Northwest Oregon Works Workforce Investment Board Consortium update: the main priority of the Board is investing in the maritime and tourism economy. There are discussions regarding a potential reorganization of these Boards; Benton County potentially moving to be a part of the Willamette Workforce Partnership.

Commissioner Wyse:

- Will attend the NACo conference in New Orleans; on the Transportation Policy steering committee.
- Cannot attend the Community Services Consortium Governing Board meeting and the Samaritan and MultiCare reception.
- Attended the AOC Legislative Retreat.
- Participated in a nonpartisan community reading of the Declaration of Independence on July 3.
- Attended Juneteenth and PRIDE Month celebrations.
- Attended the Philomath Frolic.
- Attended an unprotected lands and fire tour with the Oregon Department of Forestry.

Commissioner Malone:

- ODOT is collecting community input on plans for presenting parts from the old Van Buren Street Bridge.
- Crager received the draft report from the National Institute of Corrections. The draft will be presented at a future Goal-setting meeting.
- Working on AOC involvement with the State Task Force on Solid Waste in the Willamette Valley.
- Attended a Philomath Chamber of Commerce event.
- Met with Crager, Corvallis City Council, the Corvallis Mayor, and City Manager Mark Shepard for a quarterly meeting.

- Working on County relationships with Oregon State University.

8. Other

No other business was discussed.

9. Adjournment

Chair Malone adjourned the meeting at 12:09 p.m.



Pat Malone, Chair



Rachel Bulder, Recorder

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