MINUTES OF THE MEETING
BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Tuesday, August 20, 2024
9:00 a.m.

Present: Xanthippe Augerot, Chair; Nancy Wyse, Vice Chair; Pat Malone, Commissioner; Vance Croney, County Counsel; Rick Crager, Assistant County Administrator; McEneny, County Administrator

Elected Official: Jef Van Arsdall, Benton County Sheriff

Staff: April Holland, Julia Clymer, Michelle Bangs, Miquel Wolgamott, Samantha Bailey, Sarah Siddiqui, Kailee Olson, Chris McFarland, Sara Hartstein, Rocío Muñoz; Amy Young, Health Services; Tim O'Sullivan, Lew Walund, D'Anne Hammond, Shea Steingass, David Malone, Cody Bindrim, David Shreve, Joseph Moore, Crystal McGuire, William Nelson, Cody McGuire, Gary Stockhoff, Public Works; Jenn Ambuehl, Debbie Sessions, Gabby Dibble, Financial Services; Kim Lovik, Dawn Dale; Amelia Sanguino, Sheriff's Office; Toby Lewis, Community Development; Rick Cleveland, Benton County resident; Patty Cleveland, Benton County resident; Rolando Figueroa, Association of Federal, State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) representative; Sean McGuire, Jenn Brown, Sustainability; Marriah de la Vega, BOC Office; Cory Grogan, Public Information Officer; Amanda Makepeace, Recorder

Online: Ken Eklund, resident; George Waldbusser, resident; Vincent Drew, Association of Federal, State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); Philipp Schmidt-Pathmann, Institute for Energy and Resource Management; Jamie Olson, Kristin Holly Juvenile Services; Dianna Bagenski, Robert Baker, Trisha Franklin, Rocío Buendía, Health Services; Bailey Payne, Morgan Driggs, James Wright, Petra Schuetz, Community Development; Summer Smallwood, Katie Bateman, Doug Seirup; Christopher Dale, Chelsea Chytka, Benton County Sheriff's Office; Lindsey Goodman, Financial Services; Leanna Buck, Natural Areas, Parks, and Events; Ray Woothtakewahbitty, Human Resources

Guests: Brigetta Olson, City of Corvallis; John Harris, Horsepower Productions

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Augerot called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Introductions were made.

2. Review and Approve Agenda

No changes were made to the agenda.

3. Special Report

3.1 Affordable and Supportive Housing Projects Update – Brigetta Olson, Corvallis Housing and Neighborhood Services Manager

Olson referred to the slide deck to discuss national trends related to the housing crisis with limited housing stock. Though mortgage rates are beginning to decrease, allowing for more buying power, there is insufficient housing supply. Investor home ownership has risen from ten percent in 2010 to the current 20%. Corvallis has been addressing the lack of supply via public policies, code changes, and amendments in recent years to streamline housing development. The governor has issued an Executive Order with strategic, long-term goals of increasing Oregon's housing supply; Corvallis needs to produce 500 housing units annually. Olson explained the cost burden on extremely low-income renter households as compared to middle income households, noting Corvallis as the top rent-burdened community in Oregon, with 39% of renting households severely rent burdened. The city works in partnership with affordable developers to increase housing supply. 274 duplexes and 66 multifamily units and single family units were added locally in 2023. The vacancy rate is between one and two percent, making housing expensive. Over 400 units of new, affordable housing at different phases of development will be coming online under phased occupancy, meaning renters can move into completed buildings while remaining buildings are completed; 47 units of permanent, supportive, low-income housing is under construction with a projected completion date of late 2025 or early 2026. Corvallis has financing tools used for these developments to help leverage state and federal resources. Olson compared Corvallis' housing to affordable development other Oregon cities; Corvallis' funding is 60 years' affordability, meaning renters will have to earn at or below the agreement made with the developer, usually 60% area median income. The Housing Toolbox has adopted regulations and state mandates, increasing the number of higher density properties, ADUs, and cottage clusters. There are a number of financial components for low- and middle-income housing, as well as urban renewal for south Corvallis for future development. A Housing Dashboard provides data associated with what is happening in the community and progress on projects.

Augerot was pleased to see an upswing of housing development, particularly in the affordable housing range and recognized that housing is needed at all income levels. She wondered if the low income rental housing property tax exemption (LIRPTE) and the multi-unit property tax exemption (MUPTE) have attracted additional developers at this time.

Olson said the Corvallis-Benton Economic Development Office handles the MUPTE exemptions but believed no one had yet applied for the LIRPTE exemption. There are ongoing discussions with developers about future affordable properties as the housing continuum should include affordable starter homes in addition to affordable rental units.

Olson partly serves as a liaison to the development community and also works with the county's Health Department and the Coordinated Homeless Response Office.
Malone wondered where to locate information on what is going on outside of Corvallis, within the county.

Olson replied the Oregon Housing and Community Services has useful dashboards of information about production and demographic information, and Olson has previously reached out to some city managers around partnerships to develop affordable units, offering assistance with the numerous organizations, public policies, and input from partners. There are financial resources at the state level and local resources to promote these changes.

Crager wondered in terms of the capacity of affordable housing if there has been an uptick in new developers coming to the community to develop, their biggest challenges, and how those challenges are being addressed.

Olson explained there are state resources never seen before in her career. She is working with five different developers, some local and some national, and is taking calls from national firms as Corvallis has been identified as a community needing development. Affordable housing is complex between the financing and the development process.

Crager asked if there have been new opportunities with state resources and programs such as the Local Innovation and Fast Track (LIFT) shown in the presentation.

Olson said developers want to go quickly in a thoughtful way, using as few tools as possible to begin building. Some firms have replicated and perfected this process across Oregon and the nation, building in an abbreviated period of time.

Crager followed up with Commissioner Malone's query about development outside of Corvallis, explaining the work done with the Planning Commission in terms of regional housing. There are opportunities to share data and information with other communities; BC is working on a comprehensive housing plan update, and that includes a partnership with Corvallis to leverage the existing resources and knowledge. OSU is also involved in these discussions.

Augerot appreciated the update on the Housing subcommittee of the Planning Commission.

4. Comments from the Public

Dawn Dale
Dale works in the Sheriff's Office as a Business Analyst 2, is President of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 2064, and has worked for BC for 13 years. The contract is important to many of the approximately 334 employees. Good-faith bargaining has occurred over the last 150 days, with little movement since March 14, 2024, the date of the most recent tentative agreement, with items in the economic package and the Safety Language article yet to be resolved. The

Board of Commissioners (BOC) can authorize additional funding for a contract, including taking reserves below policy if the need is justified. The Human Resources (HR) director has spoken about the compensation philosophy using phrasing such as high quality, fair, transparent, and competitive compensation. On the BC website's Careers page is the stated goal to attract top talent by offering competitive pay and benefits, and providing fair, equitable, and sustainable compensation, benefits, and retirement plans. The HR mission states a desire to become the employer of choice. Dale asked about the veracity of the statements when the bargaining team continues to ask for a fair compensation package for AFSCME member employees that mirrors the package for non-represented employees, based on the same concept and theory. AFSCME-represented employees who are doing the same or similar jobs as non-represented employees should receive the same pay. Dale noted the HR proposals in comparison to AFSCME proposals show the C band paid $12k less annually, a misalignment of 18 percent. The difference has been compiling since 2015-16, when AFCSME and non-represented salary schedules were the same. That analysis was completed and sent to commissioners on July 19, 2024. It is time to recognize retention pay for employees with ten or more years of employment. BC is a revolving door where employees gain experience and knowledge, then move on to better wages, benefits, and work conditions with different employers. Longevity retention pay is considered a norm and is awarded to employees in Josephine, Polk, Tillamook, Umatilla, Yamhill, Linn, and Mount Hood counties.

<u>Michelle Bangs</u>
Bangs is the lead housing coordinator for BC Behavioral Health (BH) and AFSCME Local 2064 Vice President. Bangs has worked ten years for BC, starting at $11.75/hour but has been capped out for the last two years, including a five percent wage increase for lead role, and will receive only cost of living adjustments (COLA) increases for the difficult and public-facing work with homeless individuals and community landlords. Bangs urged the county to provide better for its employees via fair contract negotiations. She stepped away from negotiations while undergoing cancer treatment. Bangs felt management treated represented employees as having lesser value. While on medical leave, Bangs thought donated leave could be used to cover the income not received from Paid Leave Oregon, which pays about 60 percent of wages. After taking time off, she found out she was unable to request donated time to make up that 30 percent loss. HR told Bangs utilizing donated leave was unlawful if added to paid leave. Bangs chose to take paid leave as it was guaranteed income but received penny checks from BC until returning to work. As a single mother of two small children, she had to prioritize bills to maintain housing, utilized food banks, and received a water shutoff notice. Bangs felt if donated leave is allowed for critical illnesses, it can be allowed to promote recovery and health when an individual opts for paid leave. 30% of a represented employee's wage versus 100% of the wage seems like a financial win-win for everyone. Bangs urged the commissioners to take care of BC employees so they can take care of the county. During her career, Bangs has visited the homes of many people in crisis who had family members who wished to help but vicariously harmed them. Each Oregon county is required to have a mobile crisis response team of two people upon the initial encounter, which is an Oregon Revised Statute (ORS). This BH team is to be available 24 hours per day, seven days a week. The AFSCME team attempted to bargain and was told their daytime jobs are no more dangerous than the evening

response situations. AFSCME is asking for safety in numbers and to be treated with equality.

Joseph Moore
Moore has worked for BC five years as an engineering and surveying technician for BC Public Works (PW), has bargained for AFSCME twice in that time, and is the Chief Steward for BC. Moore has experienced struggles at the bargaining table, from safety language to holiday pay issues, and most importantly inequity of wages offered to AFSCME members from management. In March 2024, 112 non-represented positions received $1.8m in raises; the top 63 of those positions accounted for $1.6m of that amount. Moore explained the highest raise that was given to one of those non-represented positions could fund a 30% raise for five A-12 Step 3 AFSCME employees each and still have funds left over for the budget. As chief steward, he could address the erosion of trust, morale, and fear of retaliation AFSCME members feel from and towards management; how there are departments that suffer from high turnover burning members with management's failures, but management is never the problem and ironically still has not found the solution to the blatant failures he has witnessed with regard to grievances and unfair labor practices. It is Moore's opinion that the root problem of all of this is the systematic separation of commissioners from employees and their current struggles; commissioners are told only what those who wish to protect their positions and egregious pay raises feel needs to be told. The appointed county administrator (CA), the newly appointed assistant county administrator (ACA), and commissioners have been removed from key committees and roles on which someone with the power to affect change, right wrongs, and protect BC employees should sit, only to be given a one-sided recommendation of what needs to be done, connect with your members. AFSCME Local 2064 makes up 65% of the county's employees, he ones who directly and indirectly interacting with residents of the county most often. I urge you to personally reconnect with your members and the committees that affect their lives.

Nikki Marr
Marr has lived and studied in BC the majority of her life, beginning with BC in 2013 with a role as a Qualified Mental Health Practitioner (QMHP). Burnout is real, time off is limited, and the pay is meager in light of the high demand for her skillset. Marr purchased a home in June 2024, but it was outside of BC. She realized she is a professional county employee with a Master's degree who makes less than $5k more pre-tax than what is considered low income for BC, and also learned she is making $100k less than what it would take to purchase a home in BC. A stated county goal is to reduce the carbon footprint, which is a challenge when county employees are forced to commute nearly 200 miles per week because they cannot afford to live in BC, and Marr is not the only employee affected by these circumstances. Employees cannot afford to live sustainably in BC. Marr previously worked for a rural community mental health organization that offered flexible work schedules allowing for self-care, more earned time off, and additional county-sponsored holidays, allowing for more free time to be able to flex her work schedule. She receives eight hours of vacation time off per month; meaning it takes five months to be able to accrue enough time to be able to take off one week of vacation, which is a fast track to burnout. The previous position offered more flexibility in our schedules, working four ten-hour shifts with more paid time off; there

was no burnout. Marr is experiencing real burnout with the requirement of six months of work prior to accruing a week of paid time off, not being allowed to take any kind of vacation for the initial six months, and then only getting eight hours of vacation time per month. She is grateful to be working here and hopes to continue serving the community, but she is asking for a little bit of support for herself and coworkers with a competitive wage, time off, and flexibility to be able to take care of herself so that she in turn can support the community and be at their service every day.

Dave Malone
Malone has worked in PW since 2010. In 2011, a classification study was conducted, and the A,B, and C pay bands were put into place for all BC employees, irrespective of department or representation. Malone will use a C band, Step 41, that includes titles of Business Analyst 1, Healthcare Professional 1, Program Coordinator 1, Technical Analyst 1. The purpose was to bring parity across the county employee structure. A Financial Analyst 1 would make the same wage at the Sheriff's Office or in the Health Department, whether union represented or not. July 1 of 2015 the non-represented salary schedule versus the AFSCME represented salary schedule shows the parity, as the AFSCME represented employee as Step 1 of C-41made $7/year more than a non-represented employee, less than a dollar a month difference. One problem with that was that the AFSCME employee was held to a maximum of Step 6 on the salary structure during the negotiation discussion about the pay for performance. The non-represented employee could go all the way through Step 11, meaning employees started at Step 1 with the same pay, but the ending point was not the same. July 1 of 2023 the non-represented employee is Step 1 of C-41 makes $7,462 a year more than an AFSCME represented employee at the same Step 1 of C-41; that is at the minimum starting end of the salary schedule. At the maximum end of the pay scale, in 2023, the non-represented employee in C-41 could make $19,889 more than an AFSCME represented employee in the same position. Malone noted this was before last year's pay increases. On January 1 of 2024, the non-represented employee at Step 1 of C-41 makes $10,808 more than an AFSCME represented employee at Step 1 of C-41; at the maximum end, the non-represented employee can make $24,917 more than an AFSCME represented employee. We are asking for parity in the pay structure for doing the same jobs.

Sarah Siddiqui
Siddiqui is a member of the bargaining team and is currently serving as the Health Equity coordinator and is attending today on her personal time. After beginning work for BC, Siddiqui learned about the union's work and the need for their presence. Siddiqui began witnessing and experiencing inequities that exist in the workforce and stated BC's treatment of its employees is one of the worst she has seen. For a county that boasts so much about equity to its partners and the public, it consistently falls short when it comes to the treatment of their employees. There is nothing equitable about paying certain members of your workforce less than other doing the same job or pushing back on safety concerns and the ability to resolve safety issues or dismissing concerns for employee well-being in the workplace. There is nothing equitable about paying some employees so little that they cannot afford the rent to live in the community they serve and must take out a personal loan to be able to afford moving to a new residence. Siddiqui has spoken with a number of colleagues and includes herself

among those who live paycheck to paycheck while taking care of families, extended families, and their own health needs; most employees are just getting by. The reason BC struggles with hiring new staff and retaining employees is the lack of adequate compensation and lack of fair treatment. Siddiqui is interested to know how members of leadership, including HR, can justify raises that equal an entire year's salary for some of our most valuable and important staff members who work hard for our community on a daily basis, such as our CSRs, Health Navigators, and PW employees who clear roads of snow and ice to keep communities safe by putting their own well-being at risk, ensuring community members can get what they need. It is a privilege to work alongside some of the hardest workers Siddiqui knows, and a privilege to work for the community she cares about. BC employees know who they are serving, and it will always be the community. It is the right thing to adequately compensate the workforce who serve our community and build our internal capacity to do so. Siddiqui urged the commissioners to support AFSCME members not only as employees, but also as members of the community the commissioners were elected to serve.

Kailee Olson
Olson is the current Communications Coordinator for BC Health Services and has worked for BC for six years in Health Services and Community Health Centers, worked at Joint Information Center during the COVID-19 pandemic, and held various AFSCME roles. Olson spoke about BC's 2040 Thriving Communities initiative which centers equity, health, and resource efficiency at the heart of all of its core values, which include supporting a prosperous, balanced, equitable, and sustainable economy, and striving for access to affordable, safe, and stable housing for all. There are AFSCME-represented employees at BC who currently experience or are at risk of experiencing homelessness. The majority of staff who represent historically marginalized communities work in some of the lowest-paid positions, those in the A and B bands, a lesser wage than that of fast food restaurants. These are the staff who embody the true meaning of public service and the values BC claims to hold. These employees are every bit a part of this community, yet they are being treated by BC leadership as if they are less than. BC has the highest rent burden in Oregon, yet when negotiating wages AFSCME-represented employees are compared to employees in counties like Umatilla and Josephine with similar populations but lower costs of living. When HR conducts a wage study for non-represented staff, they compare themselves to Multnomah County with a much larger population but a more comparable cost of living. BC spent $1.8m in raises for non-represented staff with $1.6m of that going to those who already made six-figure salaries. Meanwhile, represented staff struggle to make ends meet. Some department directors received raises that are worth more than our lowest paid positions make all year; I ask where is the equity in that action. BC is where I work, reside, and contribute to my community. Olson's husband works for Linn-Benton Food Share; we are both public servants working for the greater good of our community, yet neither of us could afford to live here on a single salary alone. If things do not change, we will never be able to afford a house nor children in BC. I am a taxpayer here; are my taxes keeping the 1% on top and the 99% on the bottom? Olson is not asking for a lot, she is asking commissioners to remember the values you promised to uphold as an elected official of this community, and to apply those values to all of your employees.

Gabby Dibble

Dibble works in Financial Services and has been an employee with BC for three years and testified at the last BOC meeting as a new employee where similar testimony was heard. It is frustrating when individuals sitting at the bargaining table say BC employees and coworkers do not deserve a fair wage to keep up with the skyrocketing inflation of the last few years. However, others at the bargaining table have given themselves the raise being denied to represented employees. Four of the management bargaining team members received raises that totaled over $100k. This is more than the annual salary of two customer service representatives combined. Just one of those four raises totaled over $50k alone. Of the 115 non-represented employees at BC, nearly 16% received an average pay increase in one year. This did not include whether they were qualified for a step increase in the same year. AFSCME employees are only being offered four percent if they an A or B band and 8.4 percent if they are a C band. Dibble asked about the equity of that action. She believed BC wanted to be an employer of choice; at least that is what is on the HR recruiting page. Dibble believes BC's management may have forgotten with whom they are bargaining. We are the employees staffing front desks, responding to crisis calls, maintaining parks, roads, water and sewer systems, putting on the yearly BC Fair and Rodeo, greeting patients, and generally taking care of the county that pays our wages. Instead, one of the largest salary increases went to an internal-facing department head, who already has the support of a deputy director, an executive assistant, and almost no part in any community-facing programs or services. We know you, the Board, are not in the dark about how bargaining has progressed. You receive monthly updates from HR, and our very own union president has shared emails and spreadsheets with your from our bargaining sessions. You have the information from both sides, and nothing has changed. Dibble wondered why must AFSCME come to the Board directly each time a new contract is needed. Consider the impression your bargaining team is leaving on the employees and the people of this county. These patterns define how this government is viewed by the community it is governing, a track record of denying fair holiday leave, double standards for donating to sick employees, failing to provide livable wages, failing to abide by the state laws for our crisis teams, and a shameful turnover rate. Dibble does not want to call out people with whom she works, potentially upsetting a pleasant work environment and carefully cultivated relationships but cannot stand by as fellow hardworking union siblings get brushed aside every bargaining session. AFSCME will not ratify a contract that leaves anyone behind. Members of Local 2064 just want to do their jobs and not fight with their employer every few years. Commissioners, with all due respect, please start taking care of your employees so we can take care of our county.

Ken Eklund

Eklund, a North BC resident, shared a presentation and provided a brief walkthrough of how Republic Services (RS) has misrepresented the landfill gas emissions at Coffin Butte (CB) landfill. In 2021, during a meeting with the Planning Commission, Ian Macnab was asked about this directly: his answer was 'a very minimal amount'. He also promised to get the Commission the estimate they were looking for, but he never did. Without that information, the Planning Commission was unable to say there will be no significant impacts from landfill gas, and they denied the application. About seven months later, an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) inspection uncovered many large leaks of landfill gas at the landfill. RS failed to mention that report to BC. Five months later, during Benton County Talks Trash (BCTT), questions arose about landfill gas, especially its methane pollution component. RS immediately pressed for all these questions not only to be ignored, but to be stricken from the record of BCTT. RS proposed this drastic action to delete the information entirely that had been brought forward and pretend it never happened while it was sitting on an EPA report and under an EPA investigation about this very issue. Currently technology enables us to see landfill gas leaks at CB landfill directly; they are huge. Eklund sent the Commissioners an in-depth explainer about carbon mapper. The technology shows that one leak at CB landfill put it in the top ten of climate-damaging point sources in the state; that is one leak. It is clear why Oregon's US Congresspeople are urging action on CB landfill and why, going forward, BC government needs to question all the received wisdom and independently verify all the representations of fact that RS makes. Eklund also sent commissioners a video clip of Ian Macnab saying that the methane leakage at CB landfill is a very minimal amount and urged the commissioners to watch it. Eklund will submit the materials mentioned here to coffinbuttefacts.org for reference.

<u>Shea Steingass</u>
Steingass works in Environmental Projects for PW, coordinating several programs including agriculture and wildlife protection program. Steingass loves her job at the county and stated that she has never met coworkers so kind, hardworking, or engaged. Steingass did not ask for a salary above Step 2 because requesting BOC approval seemed risky, instead creating a strict budget down to the dollar to be able to take the job opportunity and quickly realized it was not enough. Steingass used the food bank for a significant period after starting here because she could not afford to eat without going into debt. She has endured an elevated level of financial stress the last few years. Last summer Steingass traded farm and gardening labor for food last summer. Despite thinking about every dollar, Steingass would have lost her house if not for financial support from her family. Her mortgage is the same cost as an apartment today. New county employees do not even have these same opportunities. As an organization that values a diverse, vibrant workforce, Steingass has doubts about achieving either if taking a county job requires a two-income household or outside financial support. While Steingass deeply appreciates being able to own a home, there are many other things she does not have. She rarely travels as she cannot afford to stay at a hotel; rarely goes out with friends; cannot buy name brand food nor even shop at a preferred store; cannot afford salon services, landscaping. Steingass watches life go by as she misses holidays with her family back home, including every Thanksgiving and Christmas since beginning employment with the county. As an individual with a chronic illness, she wonders if her health will hold out long enough to make it to year ten, when leave accruals are finally enough to be able to travel. Steingass loves government; what makes it great is a workplace of people who live and thrive in their community and want to make it better because they have a stake in it. The cost of living here will not decline anytime soon. As an employer you can choose to minimize salaries and leave and save a fraction of funds, but you will lose workers with institutional knowledge and people who want to be here, the people who make this organization so special. She has seen many people depart in her two and a half years with the county. Leadership has an important choice to make to acknowledge and improve systemic issues or act as if they do not exist. In the long run, one is more costly than the other.

<u>Miquel Wolgamott</u>

Wolgamott is the Supported Employment and Education Specialist Qualified Mental Health Associate (QMHA) for BC Behavioral Services. Wolgamott is attending today on unpaid time because she feels this time is worth using her voice. Wolgamott lives in work in and works for BC and her children go to school here. Wolgamott cannot afford to live in BC any long to the point she took a second job working as a bartender for the Corvallis Knights to give her children a summer. The union is asking that our pay bands be matched to what non-represented make and bring us up to market rate, including the Employment Cost Index (ECI) pay bands, so that she does not have to work to make ends meeting in one of the most expensive counties in Oregon. Wolgamott has been employed since 2015 for BC and has given this county everything she has because she believed it was the best county to work for and the best place to raise a family. Wolgamott worked on her bachelor's degree while working part time for BC in order to qualify for a full-time position. After accepting a 2021 promotion to her current position, she was told by the deputy director that everyone starts at step one, even if the position is considered a promotion. She now makes less than most coworkers because of the pay equity, and her previous years with BC being counted as a lower level of service. She did everything She was supposed to do in order to better her life and better the services being giving to BC residents because she takes her position seriously, and she strives to be the best steward possible. Part of the negotiations is longevity pay the county is declining. It does not make sense to not want to keep people employed, especially those who have worked over ten years. She wants to be able to buy a house in BC where her children attend school. She wants to be able to say she worked for the county until she retired, that the county cares about its employees and their families as much as it cares about its management. At the end of the day, Wolgamott wants her children to say their mom works for BC, and to know that is the best place they could have been raised.

Julia Clymer
Clymer is a medical records clerk in the deputy vital statistics registrar with Health Services. Next month will mark five years since Clymer started with BC Health Services as an on-call Client Services Representative. Clymer was excited when offered for job because she wanted to work somewhere to make a difference in her community and because she grew up hearing how wonderful it is to work for local government because they are supposed to take care of their people. Upon hiring, Clymer was assured that BC strives, at minimum, to pay a living wage, yet Clymer is not making a living wage. Despite having moved up a pay band and earning a degree, she is still struggling, having to spend more than 30% of her income to be able to rent any place here in BC. Take-home pay has to be 2.5 to 3 times more than the rent payment and she does not have that. She considers herself lucky to have lived in her current apartment for so long, as there is no way she could qualify to live anywhere else in BC with current rent amounts. She and her growing children are trapped in a place they outgrew long ago. The recommendation of placing 20% of a paycheck into saving is unattainable; similar to her coworkers, missing one paycheck or experiencing just a couple of unpaid days could cause serious problems. A single parent coworker with no savings recently experienced a recurrence of cancer. As a cancer survivor herself, Clymer understands that in itself is serious. Cancer treatment targets the cancer but causes a number of other issues, leading Clymer to have to see specialists to monitor the long-term side

effects of her treatment, including substantial increase in the risk of secondary cancers such as leukemia. Clymer explained this recurrence of secondary cancer as a matter of when rather than an ‘if’ scenario. She has nothing saved because there is not enough left over to do so and deals with the stress of daily fight or flight survival mode. This month Clymer has counted pennies at the grocery store, has been unable to purchase small items for her children, has found herself with less than a dollar in the bank account after purchasing the bare essentials, and walks a thin line until the next paycheck. To hear during the bargaining process that the HR director, who benefited from the recent management raises, does not view employees as human beings and has no regard for people in the lower pay bands who work face to face with community members every day. Considering what the role of HR is supposed to be, and how poorly it is performing its function, I am unsure how it is still able to function. Clymer could share stories from coworkers who could not attend today. No one is asking for a lotter-sized payout, simply asking to be shown that they as employees matter, are valued, their contributions to BC matter, and that employees are able to put food on the table that is not instant noodles. Clymer does not understand why it is such a big ask to be treated as humans.

D’Anne Hammond
Hammond works in Engineering Survey in PW. Hammond stated management cannot do their jobs without employees. There is no way they could function and perform and do everything required without employees. It is a slap in the face when they base their wages on actual cost of living but refuse to do the same for employees. Hammond has been working in a specialized discipline for over six years and continues to live paycheck to paycheck. Management does not adhere to the better business practice of fostering worker retention. Without living wages based on actual cost of living, and in the absence of retention pay, there is no reason for any of us to stay. I stay because this is my home, and being exploited in one’s own home is the worst kind of abuse. Hammond is disheartened and disgusted by this abuse and would like it to stop. Stop feeding the machine that further separates the working class from the middles class. Management cannot do their jobs without employees; if we have to strike to prove it, we will.

Samantha Bailey
Bailey works in Health Services. Bailey spoke about the pathway that led her to BC; the end of an abusive marriage and the end of ties to Idaho, where her status as a bisexual person and LGBTQ advocate put her job and housing in danger repeatedly. In 2016 when circumstances emboldened the loudest voices of hate in Idaho, Bailey spent a year saving up to move, choosing a room in a quad apartment sharing a bathroom with three strangers and still went into debt. After starting with BC, she found herself surrounded for the first time who showed her she could be safe. They were living their values, serving their community, and making people’s lives better. Bailey is proud to be here. Over the course of bargaining discussions, she has been hearing numbers and percentages thrown around as if they are disconnected from the truth of how people live their lives. In 2018 she was finally able to afford her own apartment, a studio. In 2023, her landlord informed her the rent would be increasing by 14.6%. Placed up against the wage increases from the previous 5 years in the one to three percent range. That meant I could not afford to live there anymore. The place she scrimped and saved for

became too expensive. After four years of rent increases in the nine to ten percent range because of Oregon’s rent controls. She did not have savings to put a deposit down on a new place. She is one of the lucky ones in that her partner’s family lives out past Alsea and Bailey lives in the guest room but hopes to finish an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) on the property. Bailey went from having a private bathroom to sharing one with a child. While the number talk is necessary, the numbers are tied to real lives. The difference between 3 percent and 15% for Bailey could mean homelessness, and the difference between four percent and 17% can decimate a family’s food budget. Stating one segment of your workforce deserves to be paid in line with the market while the remainder does not feels like building a less deserving second class into the organization. Bailey quoted HR: ‘pay for positions represented by a union is established through contract negotiations’ but fails to grapple with the fact that in those negotiations someone is telling employees they cannot have a living wage, and cannot have the same cost of living considerations, and even for the same positions cannot have the same wages non-represented counterparts make. For some of us that is bound to mean being unable to continue living and working here. Bailey is hopeful the commissioners will find some way to make it right to show staff they are valued, seen, and honored for their humanity by granting the percentage they are asking for. We want to know that you think we all deserve to be able to afford to survive.

<u>Chris McFarland</u>
McFarland may need to respond to a crisis call and offered apologies in advance in case his testimony is interrupted. McFarland thanked the commissioners for the opportunity to share his concerns as a BC public servant working for a fair and equitable contract. He is a substance use disorder counselor, a Master’s degree clinician for BH and is on the two-person 24-hour crisis response team. McFarland is speaking about wages and the cost of living. He is the sole financial provider for the family; his wife is on a small, fixed income because of a military disability and cannot work. As a result of the continued increase in the cost of living in general and within BC, we can no longer afford to live here where I work and have begun to look elsewhere that is more affordable, as he does not make enough in wages to offset the increases in living. McFarland has been a dedicated county employee since 2015 and loves his job working with the most vulnerable population in this community that no one else wants to work with. The high acuity severely mentally ill homeless battling addictions and struggling with every other social determinant of life are those to whom he gives his passion, time, and energy every day. McFarland and his wife talk about being one paycheck away from joining his clients camping down by the river. As county management has continually declined fair and equitable wages, unless it is for them. He is not asking to be the highest paid employee; he is asking to make the same amount of wages and benefits as the BC non-represented employees make, cost of living increases to coincide with inflation, and a 4.5 to five percent cost of living increase yearly. McFarland’s rent was increased nine percent this year. This yearly rental increase is not sustainable for his family and what the county management deems as fair and equitable pay for its represented employees. He is not asking for the same wage increases in the thousands of dollars received by some county managers; he is asking for fair market wages that allow him to continue to live in the very county in which he serves and in which he hopes to retire.

Dylan Hansen

Hansen works full time in the Crisis Department and also serves as the jail and forensics liaison,. Hansen serves the most vulnerable people in this community daily and does it because he believes he can help them to help themselves. His ability to act as a change agent has been significantly inhibited over the past eight months on the crisis team. BC is in direct violation of Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) 309-72-0140. BC does have a 24-hour crisis response; it is not staffed by the two professions legally mandated by the OAR and BC is breaking the law. At some point, Oregon Health Authority (OHA) will not be forgiving, and BC will not receive funds for these services, and the contract may be taken over by another agency. In early December, BC fulfilled this requirement for all of three days until it was taken away from the most vulnerable people in our community because the bargaining team for the county had no interest in negotiating over a change in working conditions. Oregon is 48th in the nation in mental health treatment and will maintain that ranking with these actions; this is unacceptable. One of Hansen's clients completed suicide; the team members knew they did everything possible. Hansen cannot help but wonder what would have happened that weekend with a true two-person response team, if Oregon was not 48th in mental health, and if BC truly cared and supported clients to the best extent possible. Hansen spoke about the difficulties of paying for mental health care related to his work activities and expressed frustration with HR showing blatant disregard for the things county employees experience as evidenced by the unfair labor practices (ULPs) that have been filed; some have been founded. A BH manager continues to argue and over the safety language that keeps crisis team members safe. The Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team has been chased or assaulted by clients. BC employees are put in an unconscionable ethical bind. Some employees have social work licenses and ethical obligations that allow the choice to put themselves first and take care of themselves with a labor strike or they choose to continue serving clients. Hansen is here as a government employee who pulled himself out of poverty with his community, hard work, and dedication. Hansen received Section 8 benefits and food stamps two years ago that he is now making the choice between serving the most vulnerable people in the community. He is now making the choice between serving the most vulnerable people in the community or returning home daily to his loved ones, taking care of himself, and not overdrafting his bank account for therapy in order be good at his job. Hansen felt strongly this is an unacceptable situation and urged the commissioners to ensure accountability now and for the next contract, otherwise many BC social workers and 1.4 million AFSCME members will be angry. BC commissioners are our represented officials, and BC employees will do something about it.

5. Work Session

5.1 Regional Community Health Improvement Plan Update – Sara Hartstein, Amy Young; Health Services

Hartstein is the Interim Deputy Director of Public Health for BC and introduced Young, who is the project manager for the new regional partnership for Community Health. Lincoln County manages the finances for this position, but it is a truly regional shared position. Young is the full-time project manager for the partnership for community health on the Regional Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) and Assessment and is in BC a couple of times a week. Kate Marsi is a newly hired epidemiologist. Young and Marsi are learning how best to support partners in their work and advancing individual and collective goals and needs. Regional CHIP is funded through the modernization grant from Orgon Health Authority (OHA) shared with Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties and financial supports from Samaritan Health Services, InterCommunity Health Network Coordinated Care Organization (IHN-CCO) and others. The CHIP County Health Assessment (CHA) timeline takes into account the regulatory and internal needs of partners and is a five-year cycle for accreditation purposes; Samaritan's community benefit plan has reporting and regulatory requirements which are being integrated. A common website for CHIP and CHA is under development, with a target of 2025 for the second development phase of data components, a narrative format, and qualitative indicators of change that set the direction for priority needs and strategies. The implementation includes a focus on developing SMARTIE (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely, inclusive, and equitable) goals around the strategies to refine objectives. The priority areas are based on input from work groups, planning groups, and community feedback with three strategies per goal area. Progress measure outputs are the activities stemming from goals and strategies. Young explained logic models for affordable housing, access to quality care, behavioral health, and inclusion, diversity, anti-racism, and equity (IDARE), noting the coordination between agencies. Action planning next steps will be based on the SMARTIE objectives around priorities. Marsi will play a significant role in the evaluation and quality improvement. Annual progress reports are required to the state and community-based organizations (CBOs) to adjust the plan and account for emerging health issues that may arise. Augerot wondered about the reallocation of resources if there was a sudden pressing issue that affected all county members

Hartstein said there is a steering committee established to discuss new issues or potential pivots but hopes to stay as nimble as possible.

Young commented the goals and strategies are intentionally broad to apply in any context. The organizational partners are well poised to react to shifts in community health.

Malone would appreciate periodic updates on challenges and progress being made, rather than a final report as it is a lot of information.

Young wants to consider this a useful, living document for public health and is placing a high priority on accessibility from a language and literacy standpoint and preferences for consuming information.

Augerot appreciated the presentation and the work and asked for an annual report.

5.2 Sustainable Materials Management Plan Task Force Update – Sean McGuire, Sustainability; Bailey Payne, Community Development

McGuire noted the rapid pace of information-sharing and changeability on this and mentioned that everything discussed is on record and will appear in the archived minutes. There was a conversation with David Allaway of DEQ to revisit obligations and promises made months ago. McGuire has met with solid waste staff from every county in western Oregon and is scheduling a meeting with Lane County which will be a larger conversation because of population. Meetings have already been held with Steve Kramer, Wasco Commissioner, arranged with Commissioner Cameron in Marion County, and looking at Lincoln County for the perspectives of their elected officials. DEQ involvement is expected to increase along with input from nonprofit organizations, agencies, and OSU staff. McGuire noted a disconnect between traditional materials management and solid waste/recycling staff. The focus is not on Coffin Butte but on addressing upstream materials management. This situation is seen as an opportunity to use the process as a catalyst for broader changes, impacting five counties that rely entirely on this system. The goal is to move away from end-of-life solutions and discuss beginning of life with regards to materials management, a truly sustainable way to de-construct materials for recycling and diverting pollutants from landfills.

Payne explained when looking upstream at product manufacturing, transportation, use, and disposal, most environmental impact happens during raw materials extraction and manufacturing of the consumer product. Very little environmental impact shows up as an environment issue in a landfill.

McGuire said the question now is how to start looking at solid waste and materials management in a fundamentally different way from beginning to end. Crager was optimist there is an opportunity to try a different approach in Portland and along the Willamette Valley, using BC's progressive qualities and how best to leverage that going forward. The timeline to the kickoff is still applicable. An agenda is under development with topics, attendees, an overview of materials management, giving DEQ an opportunity to speak, provide materials to Resource Recycling Systems (RRS) consultants. The timeline is on target. There is a spending plan on the reverse of the document just handed to commissioners* with $400k budgeted, $176k of that for RRS. Three large meetings are scheduled for winter 2024 and spring 2025 leading to the end of the biennial budget in July 2025. A report with recommendations moving forward is targeted for summer 2025.

McEneny asked McGuire to confirm that BC has engaged 14 separate counties and if they all will participate in the SMMP leading up to an October 2024 panel of counties.

McGuire replied every county contacted said yes, they will participate.

McEneny said county commissioners who would like to attend the event in October will be invited.

McGuire noted that it would be ideal to have representatives from the entire region as it might signal unity to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and to the federal government.

McEneny asked McGuire to develop a draft Agenda with speakers and roles for commissioners to consider and any state participation.

McGuire confirmed that is under development and will be ready by the next SMMP Task Force update.

Augerot asked if McGuire's vision of four large group meetings would include elected officials and other folks who are not participating in the more granular meetings, and if the six smaller group meetings would be Work Sessions.

McGuire noted a question continually asked of elected officials and the state regards drivers and market signals. The City of Portland required deconstruction of residential solid waste and food compost, which sends market signals. These deconstruction policies are the conversations across an entire set of issues that need to occur as there are legislative ripple effects. McGuire is felt enthusiastic after speaking with Allaway. It will be important to get the right group of individuals at the table with the right questions investigating what a region can do to affect the upstream process of solid waste, rather than focusing on recycling or waste. There are examples of where decisions made at a local level have a ripple effect on a national level. Marin County in California required low-carbon concrete which got the attention of the concrete industry very quickly; McGuire hopes to achieve similar results here.

Augerot was grateful there are consultants to help identify policy levers to make significant change to locate the balance of low cost and high potential outcome.

Malone asked for background information on the consultants, Resource Recycling Systems (RRS).

Payne explained RRS has an established reputation in the Northwest and bring experience from other states and programs. They are working with Recycling Modernization Act by surveying cities and counties throughout Oregon to assess recycling infrastructure needs and have a broad context on which to rely.

Crager concurred on moving the focus from waste disposal to sustainable management. He appreciated that there was a positive response from the state and noted participation as well as political strength were crucial and recommended commissioner engagement across counties, noting Commissioner Cameron from Marion County was on board. CFM Consultants recommended Oregon state senator Janeen Sollman of District 15 from the Hillsboro area as a potential champion. Crager is confident if elected officials, program runners, and innovators were to meet, they could develop a good plan. Crager noted McGuire and Payne were on schedule for the mid-October kickoff meeting with a site inventory, a cost benefit of the strategic work, as well as a draft Agenda to share at the next update.

McEneny said the hope is that BC will get buy-in from other counties and possibly receive state resources, with the goal that this budget would be also shared with other interested parties.

Crager explained this funding would be the seed with the next step to get to a regional place to leverage other funding and support while exploring different ideas and dealing with policy challenges. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is an important partner in this effort; it is one thing to introduce state policy, but it is a challenge to get it passed.

Augerot was looking forward to seeing the agenda, the composition of the large and small group, and noted there is funding for mediation and for technical writing facilitation.

5.3 Update on the National Flood Insurance Program and Endangered Species Act Compliance – Toby Lewis, Community Development

Lewis explained the purpose of today's item was an overview of comments on FEMA's pre-decision draft documents that were shared with cooperating agencies, created as part of the part of FEMA's environmental impact statement creation review process. BC's Community Development, as a cooperating agency, is allowed to review and make comments, but ultimately it is FEMA's decision what information is included in the impact statement. The most recent documents provided to cooperating agencies are the Path C guidance document and Table 1, No Net Loss Standards. The secondary item for today is an update to flag new developments in FEMA's plan for integrating the National Flood Insurance Program in Oregon with the Federal Endangered Species Act requirements.

Under the final implementation plan, the Path C guidance document is one of four choices that is available to communities to demonstrate that they are not causing take to protected habitat and mapped special flood hazard areas. Path C allows communities to design a customized community plan to apply to all or part of a community, or to apply to all or a few of the key floodplain and habitat functions this project is meant to protect. The three key functions and their measurements are:

1. flood storage: the amount of unoccupied space in a flood hazard area;
2. water quality: the amount of impervious surface in that area;
3. riparian vegetation: the amount of tree removal that occurs.

Lewis believes this document will be a helpful guide for communities, intending to provide ideas about what types of opportunities there are to modify the standard requirements that are options through Paths A and B. The Path C document identified options the communities can use for community-specific things that include existing or proposed community programs that plan for or mitigate development in flood hazard areas; it could address adjustment of ratios that apply to development in floodplains if it is affecting flood storage, water quality, or riparian vegetation, or it could address floodplain function protection. The document also proposes options for adjusting the riparian buffer zone, which is currently set to a standard 170 feet from a waterway and steps to evaluate whether that standard is appropriate, based on existing development and how the land is used in a flood hazard area, and existing tree height, as the standard 170 setback is based on a general tree height. The document explains how those modifications should be documented and could be implemented at a variety of levels. General recommendations from Lewis and her team are to consider rephrasing some wording that might lead communities to approach their local Community Development and ask for help, which may or may not be available; a reminder that some local jurisdictions might lack capacity to analyze and prepare a customized community plan; and encouragement to FEMA to continue identifying ways to support communities through technical assistance grants or other methods.

Table 1, No Net Loss Standards, is a matrix of the mitigation ratios proposed by FEMA, which were based on the biological opinion that was issued for Oregon. This document is expected to be used with the model ordinance, the Path C guidance document, and with the habitat assessment guidance document. Table 1 defines the amount of mitigation required when development causes a reduction of each floodplain function; flood storage, water quality and riparian vegetation. The mitigation ratios range from 1:1 affecting the amount of impervious surface; 2:1 for affecting the amount of flood storage available on a property; and 3:1 to 6:1 for tree removal, dependent on the diameter at breast height so the size of the tree being removed could be 3:1, 5:1, or 6:1. It also includes an additional multiplier for mitigation if the activities are occurring in a different waterway.

Overall, there are departmental concerns about the clarity of the contents of Table 1:

1. the assumed survival rate or natural mortality of the plantings with regard to the mitigation ratios;
2. the requirements for the sizing of the replacement trees, because it does identify a ratio but does not specify if the replacement trees need to be the same size as the trees being removed, nor a specific quantity;
3. preventative tree removal for fire hazard, in this area, the emerald ash borer;
4. the ratios for tree replacement, which seem high;
5. feasibility of community ability to implement monitoring and enforcement of mitigation requirements; and
6. ability to identify viable on-site and/or off-site mitigation locations.

The best Lewis and team can determine from the table is that the ratios refer to the number of trees that must be replaced. A disturbance to an impervious surface, such as digging up a section of lawn to replace with a house addition of 50 square feet, the 1:1 mitigation requirement is to develop a method on 50 square feet of the property that will improve floodplain storage without causing a situation that would trap protected fish species on the property.

Augerot said the technical assistance question is interesting and wondered if the League of Oregon Cities (LOC) was involved in this process.

Lewis explained LOC is not a cooperating agency, but there will be an opportunity to provide comments on the final draft environmental impact statement documents, and that will be opened up to everybody in Oregon.

Augerot felt it interesting that FEMA is looking to the counties to provide that long-term technical assistance in recognition of the skills and abilities of the counties but had doubts as to how realistic that is in terms of capacity.

Lewis noted the long-term technical assistance was listed as a potential option, but the hope is that the wording will be adjusted, though it is clear it may not always be the realistic option.
Lewis spoke about the update on FEMA's implementation of the Endangered Species Act as it relates to the national flood insurance program in Oregon. Last month FEMA sent out a pre-implementation compliance measures letter, which was an unexpected development and likely a response to a lawsuit indicating that FEMA has taken too long to implement new requirements for the Endangered Species Act and the flood hazards Each community falling into the implementation area to choose one of three options:

1. adopt and implement an interim model ordinance;
2. require a habitat assessment permit by permit; or
3. prohibit all development in mapped special flood hazard areas until the final implementation requirements are put in place.

For Option 1, if a community adopts this option, it would need to adopt the interim model ordinance and then, once the final ordinances are ready for adoption, they need to revisit the adoption process and adopt the final ordinance or pick Option 2 or 3.

For Option 2, the habitat assessment would be prepared by a biologist. A habitat assessment guidance document and a draft model ordinance were released last week. For any project in the special flood hazard area, an applicant would need to hire a biologist to complete the habitat assessment of their project and any effects on the floodplain functions and submit to the jurisdiction, which would review and approve or deny.

The expectation identified in the letter is that the decision will be conveyed from local communities to FEMA by December 1, 2024, and that communities will be begin reporting their decisions with relation to those key floodplain functions and the effects of development on their flood plains beginning January 31, 2025.

If a community does not choose one of the three options, the expectation is that communities will by default be using the permit-by-permit habitat assessment option. Failure to implement the interim procedures will result in FEMA having a conversation with the community. If the community still does not implement the interim measures in the way that is deemed appropriate, then a community assistance visit would be implemented FEMA and the community; essentially an audit of the floodplain program. Lewis will be presenting more information on this topic at the Quarterly Floodplain Program Update scheduled for September 17, 2024. It is an evolving topic; FEMA has done three informational outreach sessions for local communities with a fourth session on August 21, 2024.

Augerot said it sounds like Community Development is not close to choosing option at this point in time and will be the subject of a future conversation and asked if FEMA has given any indication for their timeline for the regular regulatory process, and when we might expect to have a final model implementation.

Lewis replied the current goal is to have communities implementing the final requirement by 2026 to 2027.

Augerot responded it makes sense to have a process in place from this point to 2027.

Lewis said the idea of interim measures was investigated several years ago, but there was community pushback from communities concerned about twice undergoing temporary program changes with one final program change; FEMA allowed a three-year extension to develop the final and skip the interim measure. BC has run through the three-year extension. Lewis believes this might be the driver behind the lawsuit and the new requirements.

Augerot recognized this as a complex matter and would like to know more about the costs and benefits of choosing one option over another, in terms of BC staff time and in terms of community members, in light of how much area is in the special flood hazard zone, how much potential building demand is there, and what it might cost land owners if habitat assessment permit-by-permit option were chosen. Augerot hoped FEMA might produce more graphic materials to use in explanations to help community members' understanding of the topic.

6. Consent Calendar

6.1 Application for New Outlet, Primary Location for a Winery for Willamette Cider Works, dba Waldbusser Cider Works

6.2 Approval of the June 4, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes

6.3 Approval of the June 18, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Wyse moved to approve the Consent Calendar of August 20, 2024. Malone seconded the motion, which **carried 3-0.**

7. New Business

7.1 External Fleet Program - 2023-25 Budget Note Report – Gary Stockhoff, Public Works

Stockhoff noted addressing issues with the budget with regard to fleet but felt there is a sustainable plan moving forward into the next biennium.

Crager explained the external fleet program has been an on-going conversation over the last several budget periods. BC has both internal and external fleet programs. Internal fleet costs are an annual assessment embedded into the biennial budget at a fixed rate; the external fleet program is dependent on actual billing which has not balanced over the years. During the COVID pandemic BC experienced a $465k deficit which was balanced with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The 2021-2023 biennium cycle implementation of the Mercury model provided external fleet cost information showing a deficit of $600k which was brought to the Board as a concern in October 2023 and is part of today's discussion. Crager's estimates trended towards a possible $650k deficit for the 2023-2025 budget cycle. Analysis of private sector pricing is done yearly to compare against BC billing amounts. Currently the broader private market bills out at $183 per hour while BC was billing at $143 per hour. Cost analysis showed a methodology error involving the split between internal and external billing and costs; adjustments have since been made. The external fleet program is a community effort to assist local organizations with very small budgets. Raising the hourly rate to $183 from $143 would have a negative impact on the budgets of local jurisdictions and organizations. A seven percent increase was implemented July 1, 2024 to a rate of $153 per hour. Crager felt this will make a difference in the budget deficit. Contractually, the city of Corvallis will be billed a $143 hourly rate for the remainder of the 2023-2025 budget cycle. The current deficit estimate for the fiscal year ending on June 2024 is $205k; a reduction of about 44 percent savings from the $650k deficit discussed in October of 2023. $150k of budget reserve funds were applied, reducing the deficit to $215k in this biennium. The 2021-2023 budget has to be balanced and the 2023-2025 budget has an estimated deficit of $365k, less the $150k reserve and insurance savings of approximately $600k, leaving a deficit of $215k Crager mentioned earlier. The recommendation today is to increase external fleet billing rates in July 2025 to $200 per hour in order to mitigate that deficit. Notifying current external fleet customers would provide enough time for them to prepare by adjusting their own budgets or exploring alternatives.

Stockhoff contacted customers in July 2024 about the rate increase to $153 per hour and mentioned the significant increase for July 2025. A separate letter went to Corvallis to inform them BC was honoring the $143 per hour rate. Stockhoff commented that no comments were received after the letter.

Crager's second recommendation is Board approval of a general fund transfer of $811k, which includes a $365k estimation from this biennium, to cover the total deficit to balance the budget and provide financial stability moving into July 2025. The third recommendation is a quarterly report from both Public Works and Financial Services to watch this matter for unexpected factors affecting the intended outcome.

Wyse asked for further explanation of the request to transfer up to $811k when the estimate appears to be a little more than $209k.

Crager referred to the Financial Impact slide of the presentation. The deficit for 2021-2023 biennium was $595k. The estimated deficit for 2023-2025 biennium is approximately $365k, which brings the total deficit to nearly $1m. Minus the budgeted reserve of $150k, that brings the deficit down to the $811k mentioned earlier. Crager explained there is an unplanned revenue source, the insurance savings, that came to the general fund that was not built into the budget. While it is an $811k general fund transfer, there was also $601k of unanticipated revenues that came into the general fund, causing less of a fiscal impact to the general fund.

Wyse asked for clarification that the approval is for an $811k transfer, $601k of which would be insurance savings from the General Fund.

Crager confirmed the statement.

Wyse asked Crager to speak about the advantages, disadvantages, and impacts to smaller jurisdictions and staff retention of moving forward with the significant rate hike or possibly discontinuing external fleet service in the future.

Crager believed there could be a continued, fiscally sound program if the rates charged cover the actual costs of providing this good service to the local jurisdictions with few other options and if the customers choose to pay the increased rate. There will be an impact on their budgets whether they choose to stay with external fleet or pay private sector hourly rates. Stockhoff has considered factors such as attrition and possible opportunities; quarterly reports would be important to monitor trends. More will be known after communicating with partners and customers, receiving feedback, and seeing the quarterly report.

Wyse had heard from constituents who expressed concerns about the external fleet program's budget issues and wanted to be able to explain why BC would follow the path of positive community impacts at the expense of the program with the overarching goal of positive balance sheet after some budget adjustments.

Crager explained one option could be discontinuation of the program now, which would affect current partners and deny them the opportunity to adjust their own budgets to be able to afford these services.

Stockhoff noted the current path forward brings BC into line with what local automotive repair companies charge. The last six or seven years has been the external fleet program moving away from charging the very low hourly rate into the new reality of higher labor costs. Quarterly updates would allow BC to monitor the process and adjust staffing as needed to meet the goal of a balanced budget sheet. BC needs to become proactive in this matter.

Wyse asked if a sliding scale or grant funding was a feasible approach.

Crager said those are options to consider but Stockhoff and he had not yet gone down to that level of detail. $200 per hour on average is what BC thinks it will have to charge to break even. This situation came to light around 2019 when the CFO previous to Crager started the push to separate the internal and external fleet accounting.

Wyse asked if the internal service charge will stay the same or remain at a similar level?

Crager replied the internal service charge is fixed for this biennium but could change for the 2025-2027 biennium budget, but BC has not yet started that calculation.

Malone asked if the $601k from worker's comp was a one-time event that might change anything going forward?

Crager explained it is a one-time savings that can be used to mitigate the budgeted general fund.

Malone was hopeful to stay current with competitive rates and multi-year contracts and wondered if inclusion of a Consumer Price Index (CPI) or other factor might be warranted, as the information was accurate when the biennium started but then the calculation rates were off after two years.

Stockhoff explained the city of Corvallis is the only service-level agreement, which will end in June 2025. Public Works will also implement annual increases to the rate as opposed to a two-year rate to avoid the surprise of a significant rate increase for external fleet customers.

Malone asked how often comparisons are performed.

Stockhoff replied the service rates are scrutinized in January.

Augerot was grateful for the analysis that was completed. BC has subsidized many other small municipalities with fire engine maintenance and other critical emergency response vehicles. While BC was glad to do it, it cannot be at the expense of BC taxpayers and hoped not to encounter this situation moving forward. Augerot was also pleased with the timing of this action, getting it synchronized with budget processes so other municipalities can factor in rate increases in their respective budget development.

MOTION: Wyse moved to approve the transfer of $811,000, including over $601,000 of insurance savings of General Fund in the 2023-25 Budget to offset the past and forecasted deficit of the external fleet program. This action will be codified in the next supplement budget. Malone seconded the motion, which **carried 3-0.**

7.2 Grant Approval for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations – Gary Stockhoff, Public Works

Stockhoff requested formal approval for the CFI charging and fueling infrastructure grant program through the Federal Highway Administration as discussed on August 12, 2024. Stockhoff is pursuing up to six charging stations with a budget of $500k to $700k, dependent upon the sites chosen. Monroe City Administrator Martinenko suggested the library or the city park, depending on the decision of that council. Stockhoff is working on the grant application with the assistance of the Finance Department.

Malone asked about the matching funds that BC was expected to provide and if BC was able to provide that amount.

Stockhoff replied the match is 20 percent and BC is ready; this will be a Capital Improvement Project (CIP) request for the next biennium.

Wyse noted the minimum grant amount was $500k and asked if that amount would be requested by BC.

Stockhoff explained that $500k is the minimum grant amount. The cost of installing all six desired charging stations would be closer to $700k which moves the BC match to approximately $140k.

Augerot supported asking for the full amount possible and then scale if requested.

MOTION: Malone moved to authorize staff to submit an application for a Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Program Grant. Wyse seconded the motion, which **carried 3-0.**

8. Other

No other business was discussed.

9. Announcements

No announcements were made.

10. Adjournment

Chair Augerot recessed the regular meeting session at 12:08 PM and announced a five-minute break.

Chair Augerot entered into Executive Session under ORS 192.660 [2][d] at 12:13 PM.

Chair Augerot resumed the Board Meeting at 1:32 PM, adjourning at 1:32 PM.

Xanthippe Augerot, Chair

Amanda Makepeace

Amanda Makepeace, Recorder

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