

**CROOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MINUTES
OF NOVEMBER 6, 2024, REGULAR MEETING
Open Portion**

Be It Remembered that the Crook County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on November 6, 2024, at 11:25 a.m. in the County meeting room located at 320 NE Court Street, Prineville, Oregon 97754.

Board Members Present: Commissioner Seth Crawford, Commissioner Brian Barney, and Commissioner Susan Hermreck

Absentees: None

Others Present in Person or Via Zoom: Legal Counsels Eric Blaine and John Eisler; Executive Administrative Assistant Sarah Puerner; Health and Human Services Director Katie Plumb; Finance Director Christina Haron; Extension Manager Rebecca Keegan; Airport Manager Kelly Coffelt; Landfill Manager Jacquie Davis; Library Director Sarah Beeler; Road Superintendent Brad Haynes; Assessor Jon Soliz; Interim Manager Will Van Vactor; Fairgrounds Manager Casey Daly; Legal Assistant Alex Solterbeck; Undersheriff Bill Elliott; Budget Manager Jamie Berger; Assessment Technician Elsie Ray; Assessment Technician Linda Pepper; Appraiser Stephanie West; Mike Ervin; Justin Alderman; Garth Finley; Jodie Fleck; Amy Warren; Dick Zimmerlee; and members of the public.

REGULAR SESSION

The meeting was **called to order at 11:25 a.m.**

Public Comment: None

Consent Agenda:

1. Approve Minutes
2. OHA 2023-2025 Intergovernmental Agreement Amendment 13
3. Airport - COAR Grant agreement/signature request

MOTION to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion seconded. No discussion. Motion carried 3-0.

Discussion item #4: Proclamation for #OperationGreenLight:

Requester: Seth Crawford

Details: Commissioner Crawford launched Operation Green Light during the Regular Session. He delivered a proclamation designating the period from November 4th to Veterans Day, November 11th, 2024, as a special time for Crook County to acknowledge and honor the service and sacrifices of veterans transitioning from active military duty. He urged all residents to show their support for these veterans by displaying green lights at their homes or places of business, symbolizing their gratitude and recognition for the veterans' profound contributions to preserving our freedom.

MOTION to adopt the proclamation of supporting Operation Greenlight for veterans. Motion seconded. No discussion. Motion carried 3-0.

Discussion item #5: Presentation of Solace at Iron Horse, affordable housing development presentation by Thistle & Nest:

Requester: Amy Warren

Details: Amy Warren, Board President of Thistle & Nest, attended the Regular Session to introduce their upcoming housing project in Iron Horse, Prineville. Thistle & Nest, a developer known for affordable housing projects in Bend, Madras, and now Prineville, plans to develop 20 homes. Scheduled to be ready by late 2025, these homes will cater to individuals earning less than 80% of the area's median income, with two homes designated for those earning less than 50%. The anticipated selling price, after receiving a subsidy from the state of Oregon, will range from \$185,000 to \$225,000. Construction is set to begin in March 2025 and is expected to be completed by June 2026.

Discussion item #6: Request to forgive Rental Fees:

Requester: Jodie Fleck

Details: PCP Chair Jodie Fleck appeared at the Regular Session to request a waiver for the venue fee for a Republican event scheduled on November 19th, where new officers will be elected. The participants eligible to vote are the elected PCPs, and the meeting is typically held at the Prineville Funeral Home. However, due to availability issues with alternate venues like the Bowman Museum and the Library, the event has been booked at Carey Foster Hall at the Fairgrounds. Given that this meeting is not a fundraiser or an income-generating event, and is open to all registered Republicans who have been registered for more than 160 days and may wish to run for office, the organization is requesting that the Crook County Commissioners waive the \$396.00 usage fee for the hall.

NO ACTION – During the discussion on waiving the fee for using Carey Foster Hall, Commissioners Hermreck and Barney expressed reservations about waiving fees for a partisan group. In contrast, Commissioner Crawford argued that the board has waived fees for other groups in the past, suggesting that this situation should be treated no differently.

Discussion item #7: Public Records Fee Waiver Request:

Requester: John Eisler

Details: Assistant County Counsel participated in the Regular Session to discuss a fee waiver request from Justin Alderman, a reporter with the Prineville Review. Alderman had submitted a public records request seeking data on meeting activity from the county's Zoom account for the period from June 1st, 2024, to November 1st, 2024. The IT Department estimated that fulfilling this request would require about 1.5 hours of staff time, costing \$172.50 at a rate of \$85 per hour. Alderman criticized the fee as "absolutely absurd" and has applied for a waiver. He argues that the information requested is essential for understanding government operations and public official conduct, particularly concerning matters of current public interest.

MOTION to reduce the estimated fee for Justin Alderman’s public records request to be capped at one hour of staff time and at the lowest rate in our fee schedule for public records production. Motion seconded. No discussion. Motion carried 2-1. Commissioner Crawford voted in opposition.

Interim Manager Report: None

Commissioner Updates: None

Public Comment:

Justin Alderman, Interim Managing Editor for the Prineville Review, clarified that county counsel had informed them about two Zoom accounts, of which they were previously aware of only one. His interest is specifically in information related to the Crook County Fair Board, although his initial request was broader, possibly leading to a misunderstanding by County Counsel. Alderman argues that the fees for his request should be waived, as the information pertains to public meetings and accessing it serves the public interest.

At 12:04 p.m. the Board of Commissioners convened into Executive Session under the following statute(s): ORS 192.660(2)(a) To consider the employment of a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At the conclusion of the Executive Session, the Board of Commissioners convened back into Open Session, inviting members of the public into the meeting room.

MOTION to delegate authority to Assistant County Counsel John Eisler to prepare and deliver an offer letter to the County Manager candidate as discussed in the Executive Session and to negotiate a contract for employment. Motion seconded. No discussion. Motion carried 3-0.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was **adjourned at 12:12 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Puerner / Breyanna Cupp