

**CROOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MINUTES
OF SEPTEMBER 17, 2025, REGULAR MEETING
Open Portion**

Be It Remembered that the Crook County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular meeting on September 17, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in the County meeting room located at 320 NE Court Street, Prineville, Oregon 97754.

Board Members Present: Commissioner Brian Barney and Commissioner Susan Hermreck

Absentees: Commissioner Seth Crawford

Others Present in Person or Via Zoom: County Counsel Eric Blaine; Assistant County Counsel Bryan Libel; Manager Will Van Vactor; Executive Assistant Breyanna Cupp; Legal Assistant Alex Solterbeck; Landfill Manager Jacquie Davis; Administrative Assistant Mona Glade; Assessment Technician Elise Ray; Emergency Manager AJ Crawford; Public Health Modernization Manager Stephanie O’Neal; Finance Director Christina Haron; Fairgrounds Manager Casey Daly; Undersheriff Bill Elliott; District Attorney Kari Hathorn; Assessor Jon Soliz; County Clerk Cheryl Seely; Natural Resources Manager Tim Deboodt; Prineville Review; Triangle; Victim Assistance Supervisor Cate Duke; Joe Merrill, Julie Thompson; Ashley McCormick; Dick Zimmerlee; and members of the public.

REGULAR SESSION

The meeting was **called to order at 9:00 a.m.**

Public Comment: None

Additions/Removals: None

Consent Agenda: None

Discussion item #1: Traffic Control Plan Approval in Existing Road Crossings:

Requester: Joe Merrill

Details: Joe Merrill with King of the Kastle attended the Regular Session to request approval of a traffic control plan for existing road crossings related to two upcoming events in the Millican OHV trail system, under an SRP from BLM. He outlined four road crossings—two on George Millican Road and two on Reservoir Road—which are part of a 45-mile race loop. Event staging will take place on Joe’s property in Deschutes County.

MOTION to basically traffic control plan approval and existing road crossings for King of the Kastle. Motion seconded by Commissioner Barney. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye and Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 2-0.

Discussion item #2: Axon (Body Camera) Contract:

Requester: Stephanie Wilson

Details: Undersheriff Bill Elliott and Axon representative Alex Aguilar presented information to the Board regarding a new body camera system for the Sheriff's Office. The current camera system will become unserviceable at the end of the year, prompting the department to switch to Axon for upgraded body-worn cameras, vehicle cameras, and video retention/redaction tools. Alex explained that with the cost, Axon installs equipment on site and that cost is included. Christina Haron noted that the annual cost of \$89,604 on a 5-year contract will be covered by savings from unfilled vacancies, with funding for FY26 already accounted for in the current budget.

MOTION to approve it subject to legal counsel reviewing the documents and ascertain if the notification has been served properly and sign out of court. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hermreck. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye and Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 2-0.

Discussion item #3: Treasurer's Report for August 2025:

Requester: Christina Haron

Details: Finance Director Christina Haron attended the Regular Session to provide the board with the treasurer's report for August 2025. The report included details on the county's cash on hand, bank deposit amounts and locations, security provided by each bank, interest rates on deposits, and the status of outstanding warrant indebtedness, including the date through which warrant indebtedness have been redeemed.

Discussion item #4: Landfill Organization Structure Change:

Requester: Jacquie Davis

Details: County Manager Will Van Vactor and Landfill Manager Jacquie Davis attended the Regular Session to present a proposed restructuring of the Landfill. The plan includes creating two new positions: Solid Waste Director and Landfill Operations Manager. This change would shift daily operations and staff supervision to the Operations Manager, while the Director focuses on regulatory compliance and reporting. The existing Recycle Technician and Landfill Manager positions would be removed. There is no change to the total FTEs approved during the budget process, and landfill funds are available to cover the updated personnel costs.

Discussion item #5: Update re: VOCA Grant Funding:

Requester: Kari Hathorn

Details: District Attorney Kari Hathorn attended the Regular Session to update the board on VOCA funding. The DA's Victim Assistance Program is primarily funded through this federal grant, which comes from criminal fines—not taxpayer dollars. For the 2023–2025 grant cycle, the office received \$191,620 (\$95,810 per year). Initially, a 20% reduction was expected for FY26, and \$76,000 was budgeted. However, in August, they were advised to prepare for an 80% reduction, and Crook County has now been allotted just \$37,796 for FY26. Kari emphasized the long-term impact of this defunding on her office and requested the Board's support in advocating for funding at the state level.

Discussion item #6: Sheriff's Office Monthly Update:

Requester: Bill Elliott

Details: Undersheriff Bill Elliott attended the Regular Session to provide an update on Sheriff's Office statistics for July and August 2025, with comparisons to the same months in 2024. His report covered arrest data, jail statistics, calls for service, and Justice Center activity. In July 2025, felony arrests increased by 58% compared to July 2024, while misdemeanor arrests saw a minor increase of 3%. There were no juvenile arrests reported. Total calls for service for the month were 1,656, representing a 5% increase from the previous year. Additionally, 3,578 individuals were scanned in at the Justice Center during July. In August 2025, there was a significant drop in felony arrests, with only one recorded—an 800% decrease from August 2024. There were again no juvenile arrests. The Sheriff's Office responded to 1,586 calls for service in August, reflecting a 7% decrease from the prior year. Justice Center activity for the month included 3,006 individuals scanned in and 63 knives recovered during the screening process.

Discussion item #7: Consider approval of Amendment 2 to County / Parks and Rec District RV Park operating agreement:

Requester: Eric Blaine

Details: County Counsel Eric Blaine attended the Regular Session to present an updated version of Amendment 2 and request the Board's consideration for approval. The amendment relates to an intergovernmental agreement between the County and the local Parks and Recreation District regarding management of the Main Street RV Park. The agreement outlines how the RV park may be used, how its revenue is managed, and limitations on potentially competitive operations. The proposed amendment includes several changes: increasing the maximum value of the reserve fund from \$250,000 to \$750,000; modifying the District's contribution to the reserve fund from 10% of gross revenue or \$10,000 (whichever is less), to a flexible range between \$10,000 and \$25,000, at the District's discretion; updating the permitted uses of the reserve fund; and allowing the County to offer RV spaces at other locations.

Will Van Vactor has reviewed the proposed changes and sent questions to Eric. He feels it would be best to table the matter until the next meeting to allow for further discussion and clarification. Commissioner Barney agreed, recommending the issue be postponed as he wants to speak more with Casey and has concerns about how the changes could impact the county. Commissioner Hermreck also concurred, having already discussed her concerns with Will. Susan expressed a desire to wait until the next meeting before making any decisions.

Manager Report:

Will VanVactor announced that the adopted budget is now available on the county website and thanked Christina and her team for their efforts. He shared updates on the start of County College, encouraging remaining enrollments, and highlighted the first session, which included a courthouse tour and an overview of the Administration Department. Will recognized AJ Crawford for his contributions during fire season and,

along with Susan, expressed appreciation to all agencies involved in emergency preparedness. He also thanked Mona for organizing the 9/11 memorial and acknowledged the strong community support.

Commissioner Updates:

Commissioner Barney expressed gratitude to fire and emergency service personnel, as well as to the State Department of Forestry for their efforts. He congratulated Casey Daly on a successful fair and shared several highlights, including record-breaking youth sale numbers, 27 new vendors, 25,000 corn dogs sold, the veterans' breakfast, and notable volunteer contributions.

Commissioner Hermreck reported on a recent trip to Washington, D.C., where she and other commissioners met in teams to advocate for PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes), a vital funding source for counties with federal lands. She noted that Crook County receives \$2.3 million annually from PILT and SRS (Secure Rural Schools) funds, emphasizing the importance of PILT while expressing concern over the uncertain future of SRS funding.

Public Comment:

Julie Thompson stated an email was sent this morning with the sampling plan. Julie apologized for a previous message to Eric, stating it was not intended to be disrespectful. Susan shared that she met a woman named Hayley at yesterday's emergency meeting and is working to schedule a follow-up meeting to discuss potential solutions. Julie also requested clarification on whether there is one or two Conditional Use Permits (CUPs), and Will Van Vactor confirmed that, to his recollection, there is only one CUP.

Dick Zimmerlee raised a question about whether the existing Conditional Use Permit (CUP) includes the settling ponds located on EFU land, noting that significant work is being done there. There was also concern about whether reclamation can be completed without a testing site. It was mentioned that DEQ is also frustrated with the situation and is expecting answers from DOGAMI in the next few days. Additionally, a letter was sent to the White House, and a response was received from the Director of the EPA, indicating that the water issue is being investigated.

MOTION to close. Motion seconded by Commissioner Hermreck. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye and Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 2-0.

There being no further business before the Board of Commissioners, the meeting was **adjourned at 1042AM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Breyanna Cupp