

**CROOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MINUTES
OF OCTOBER 01, 2025, REGULAR MEETING
Open Portion**

Be It Remembered that the Crook County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular meeting on October 01, 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, Commissioner Susan Hermreck, and Commissioner Seth Crawford

Absentees:

Others Present in Person or Via Zoom: County Counsel Eric Blaine; Assistant County Counsel Bryan Libel; County Manager Will Van Vactor; Executive Assistant Breyanna Cupp; HR Director Meghan McKee; Legal Assistant Alex Solterbeck; Natural Resources Manager Tim Deboodt; Triangle; Assessment Technician Elise Ray; County Clerk Cheryl Seely; Crook County Community Development John Eisler; Finance Director Christina Haron; Administrative Assistant Mona Glade; Senior Planner Katie McDonald; Emergency Manager AJ Crawford; Undersheriff Bill Elliott; Patrol Lieutenant Mitch Madden; Sheriff John Gautney; Administrative Division Manager Stephanie Wilson; Fairgrounds Manager Casey Daly; Public Health Modernization Manager Stephanie O'Neal; JC; Community Health Worker Shelby Fisher; Julie Thompson; Leean; Mike Ervin; Dick Zimmerlee; Justin Alderman; Russ Deboodt; Duane Porter; Tawndy Byrd; 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:

1. Approval of OHA IGA No. 050110, Choice Model program services
2. Approval of OHA 2025-2027 Intergovernmental Agreement Amendment 2
3. Approval of Community Health Advisory Council (CHAC) Bylaws

MOTION to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Crawford. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

Discussion item #4: Letter of Appreciation:

Requester: Mitch Madden

Details: Patrol Lieutenant Mitch Madden attended the Regular Session to show his appreciation for the Road Department. The Crook County Road Department has assisted the Sheriff's Office on many incidents over the summer. A letter of appreciation was publicly read on behalf of the Crook County Sheriff's Office, recognizing the Crook County Road Department for their outstanding support during multiple incidents in the summer of 2025. Their teamwork, professionalism, and quick response, especially during the Highland Fire in Juniper Canyon—played a key role in public safety and allowed law enforcement to focus on critical tasks. The Sheriff's Office highlighted the strong interagency collaboration and expressed deep gratitude for the Road Department's dedication, even amid their already demanding workload.

Discussion item #5: IGA with Multnomah Education Service District (MESD) for Medicaid Administrative Claiming:

Requester: Katie Plumb

Details: Commissioner Hermreck, speaking on behalf of Katie Plumb during the Regular Session, explained that Crook County Health Department staff provide Title XIX Medicaid administrative services and seek reimbursement from the Oregon Health Authority. These claims are processed by MESD under the terms outlined in the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA). MESD has added a 6% COLA and a 10% administrative fee this year. Although concerns about these cost increases have been raised with MESD and the Oregon Health Authority, no alternative provider is available at this time. Despite the added expense, the partnership remains worthwhile to secure the \$150,000 in budgeted reimbursement, and alternative options are being explored for the future.

MOTION to approve the IGA with Multnomah Education Service District for Medicaid administrative claiming. Motion seconded by Commissioner Crawford. During the discussion, commissioners acknowledged that Katie had already reviewed the issue in a previous work session and agreed they are in a difficult position with limited options. While they feel somewhat "held hostage" by the current arrangement, they recognized it as the best available solution for now. They appreciated that Katie is actively seeking better alternatives and emphasized the importance of continuing to care for the community in the meantime. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

Discussion item #6: First Hearing of Ordinance 354: Transportation System Plan:

Requester: John Eisler

Details:

Crook County Board of Commissioners convened on Wednesday, October 1, 2025, at 9:07 a.m. to hold the first of two scheduled public hearings on Ordinance 354. This ordinance proposes an update to the Crook County Comprehensive Plan, specifically the Transportation System Plan (TSP), and declares an emergency. The legislative amendment, tied to Land Use Application 217-25-000289-PLNG, aims to replace the existing 2017 TSP in accordance with the state's Transportation Planning Rule.

Community Development Director John Eisler attended the Regular Session to present the 2025 Transportation System Plan (TSP) Update, which has been in development since early 2024. The TSP is a 20-year, data-driven, and community-informed roadmap aimed at improving Crook County's transportation system by addressing safety, congestion, and access needs. Adopting the plan is a crucial step toward securing grant funding and establishing dedicated revenue sources for high-priority projects.

MOTION to read by title only. Motion seconded by Commissioner Crawford. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

Ryan Farncomb of Parametrix presented a PowerPoint covering the Transportation System Plan (TSP), including its purpose, goals, and community engagement efforts. He outlined key issues identified during the planning process, reviewed project costs, and discussed future funding opportunities. The presentation also included an overview of how the TSP aligns with city planning efforts.

Commissioner Crawford raised concerns about challenges rural communities, like Powell Butte, face with farming equipment on roads during certain times. He suggested adding language to the TSP to provide safeguards for active farming areas. Ryan responded that signage is the simplest solution, though not always very effective, but it helps warn drivers of agricultural vehicles. He also mentioned warning beacons as a more advanced option used in some areas, which could be considered for inclusion in the TSP.

The Board of Commissioners discussed with Ryan the importance of including the widening of Juniper Canyon Road in the Transportation System Plan (TSP), agreeing it should be added as a third preferred route to support the area's growth and improve connectivity. Commissioner Crawford questioned any downside to having three route options, and the board agreed it would provide flexibility for future planning and funding. Commissioner Hermreck also raised a citizen's concerns about proposed routes through a gated community, noting the points were valid and should be considered. The letter was shared with John Eisler and Will Van Vactor for review.

Ryan discussed with the board the City of Prineville's TSP projects that relate to county issues. He highlighted key concerns such as congestion at West Y and safety challenges at the 3rd Street and O'Neill Highway intersection with Highway 126, emphasizing how these city projects connect with broader county transportation goals.

John Eisler presented survey response statistics related to the Transportation System Plan (TSP) and addressed planning challenges and citizen concerns, particularly around Juniper Canyon. He explained that the funding process will begin once the capital projects are established, enabling the county to apply for funding.

Commissioner Hermreck emphasized the importance of adopting the Transportation System Plan (TSP), noting that delaying it could lead to further issues. All commissioners agreed the plan is necessary and reflects the need to move forward. Commissioner Barney added that a funding opportunity was missed 20 years ago and stressed the importance of pursuing alternative funding sources now.

Public Testimony:

Tim Deboodt expressed a neutral stance but emphasized support for Commissioner Crawford's points about transportation's impact on agriculture and commerce in the county. He criticized ODOT and the City of Prineville for narrowing roads and designing infrastructure that hinders the movement of agricultural equipment, especially citing smaller-than-planned roundabouts and barriers in Prineville's downtown. He contrasted Prineville with Redmond, noting Redmond's bypass makes narrow streets workable, but Prineville lacks this and needs to maintain its wide streets for easy access. Tim urged that future projects respect the local culture and the vital role of agriculture and commerce and avoid further narrowing roads that impede these industries.

Duane Porter initially came to oppose the plan but now takes a more neutral stance after seeing the thorough vetting process. He thanked the commissioners for their due diligence and expressed concerns about the proposed access between Lower Davis Loop and Highway 20, near his home. He referenced letters from neighbors raising safety and traffic flow issues, especially around the congested fairgrounds area with many youth activities, schools, and parks. Residents fear increased congestion poses safety risks. Duane noted that at a prior Planning Commission meeting, concerns about this access were largely deferred to the city or residents, and he hasn't seen the city address this in their plans. He worries about steep grades and cliffside construction making the route unsafe, particularly in winter. He also highlighted concerns about the gated community and appreciates some acknowledgement of that issue. While recognizing the importance of the Transportation System Plan (TSP) for securing funding and future projects, Duane feels there hasn't been enough vetting or data on this access route to fully move forward. He acknowledged survey results showing community support for additional or alternative routes through Juniper Canyon and appreciated the commissioners' careful consideration of these options. Duane cautioned against labeling access as an emergency route since that may not be accurate. He values transparency and plans to continue following the process, supporting the plan's approval while urging careful evaluation of all concerns.

Manager Report:

Will Van Vactor provided several updates during the regular session. First, he announced the promotion of Jacquie Davis to Landfill Director, effective immediately, recognizing her outstanding leadership and expertise in solid waste operations. He expressed confidence in her continued contributions to this critical area for the County. Will also informed the Board and the public about a series of upcoming special meetings with various County departments. These meetings, to be held over the next few months, will focus on reviewing each department's core services to ensure organizational

alignment and help guide budget decisions. They will also serve as an opportunity to highlight the valuable services provided to the community. Lastly, the Manager noted that staff are actively monitoring the potential for a federal government shutdown and are working to anticipate and minimize any potential impacts on county operations.

Commissioner Updates:

Brian Barney announced that the Justice Center is being honored with the Build a Better Oregon Award, and both Will and Commissioner Barney will be attending the event. The award recognizes the contributions of the business center, and a video highlighting the project has been created and shared. KTBZ also contributed to the award, which is presented by Morgan Realtors.

Susan Hermreck- None

Commissioner Crawford announced that the County will participate in this year's Candy Crawl organized by the Chamber. County departments will gather in the second-floor lobby—where the tile design resembles the outline of the county—to hand out candy. He noted that he and Breyanna estimated the cost of candy at approximately \$750. Commissioners Hermreck and Commissioner Barney each offered to donate \$200 worth of candy for the Candy Crawl event, reducing the remaining amount needed from the community fund to \$350.

MOTION to do the community fund for \$350.00 for the candy crawl on Halloween. Motion seconded by Commissioner Crawford. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

Public Comment: None

At 10:25AM the Board of Commissioners convened into Executive Session under the following statute(s): ORS 192.660(2)(f) To consider information or records that are exempt by law from public inspection.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

7. ORS 192.660(2)(f) To consider information or records that are exempt by law from public inspection

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 direct the county's legal counsel to correspond with the counterparties as discussed in the executive session. Motion seconded by Commissioner Crawford. No discussion. Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye, Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

MOTION to adjourn. Motion seconded by Commissioner Crawford. No discussion. Commissioner Hermreck votes Aye, Commissioner Crawford votes Aye, Commissioner Barney votes Aye. Motion carried 3-0.

There being no further business before the Board of Commissioners, the meeting was **adjourned at 1052AM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Breyanna Cupp