

**CROOK COUNTY COURT MINUTES  
OF FEBRUARY 9, 2023 SPECIAL SESSION  
Open Portion**

**Be It Remembered** that the Crook County Court met in a Special Session on February 9, 2023, at 8:15 a.m. in the COCC Crook County Open Campus located at 510 SE Lynn Blvd, Prineville, OR, 97754.

Court Members Present: Judge Seth Crawford and Commissioner Brian Barney

Absentees: Commissioner Jerry Brummer

Others Present in Person or Via WebEx: Administration Executive Assistant Sarah Puerner; Assistant Finance Director Christina Haron; Budget Analyst Jamie Berger, Andy Parks; Larry Patterson; Sheriff John Gautney; Chief Administrative Deputy Stephanie Wilson; Commander Bill Elliott; Replacement Patrol Lieutenant Mitch Madden; Patrol Lieutenant Don Wagner; Director Erika Frickey; Health and Human Services Katie Plumb; Library Co-Managers Cindy York and Sean Briscoe; Clerk Cheryl Seely; Assessor Jon Soliz; Community Development Director Will VanVactor and Building Official Randy Davis; Road Department Shop Superintendent James Staniford and Administrative Clerk Rebecca Keegan; Landfill Manager Jeff Merwin; Fairgrounds Manager Casey Daly; Weed Master Kev Alexanian; County Counsel Eric Blaine; IT Director Sydney Chandler; Human Resources Director Kim Barber and Facilities Director Joe Viola.

**SPECIAL SESSION**

County Court met in a Special Session with individual departments to discuss budget and goal setting. Representatives from these departments discussed their department summary, resources and expenditures, any upcoming challenges, and any changes in their department from the previous year.

**Sheriff John Gautney** expressed challenges that the Sheriff's Office is currently experiencing. The Sheriff's Office is having difficulty with staffing and employee turnover specifically recruiting, retaining, and maintaining staff. In addition, Sheriff Gautney highlighted the importance of maintaining their fleet vehicles and the importance of safety for their employees.

**Juvenile Director Erika Frickey** reported that the Juvenile Department has experienced an increase in youth referrals in the last 12 weeks. This is a challenge the department is facing due to the number of youths entering the system and the level of additional care that is needed. The department would like to offer study hall for supervised youth that are failing classes and to connect with other organizations to offer services where youth can train and certify for programs such as First Aid Training, CPR Training, and Food Handlers.

**Health and Human Services Director Katie Plumb** is experiencing staff vacancies at the Health Department and would like to fill positions with certified and licensed professionals. A major focus for the department will be onboarding,

professional development, and support for ongoing staff certifications and licensures. Ms. Plumb would also like to implement an electronic health record system to ensure HIPAA compliance.

**Library Co-Managers Cindy York and Sean Briscoe** are experiencing staffing issues and expressed that the library needs technology updates and facility upgrades including ADA compliancy and safety measures. The library would like to increase their outreach throughout the county and to offer more educational opportunities for adults in the community. They would also like to expand services of the Crook County Law Library and to increase participation in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library reading program.

**Clerk Cheryl Seely** stated one of the biggest issues for the Clerk's Office is storage. The Clerk's Office has retention dates that must be met but unfortunately space is limited. Ms. Seely also expressed concern regarding the Presidential Election next year and handling the volume of ballots and voters in a timely manner. A possible solution is to purchase additional election equipment such as scanners or auto signature verification equipment.

**Assessor Jon Soliz** stated that the department's current challenges are the Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) software conversion and the learning curve on two new technology resources being integrated this year. The department is reappraising more properties on a consistent basis and is slowly outgrowing the office space that is currently available.

**Community Development Director Will VanVactor and Building Official Randy Davis** stated that trends impacting the Community Development Department are closely related to development/real estate market trends. The department is currently seeing a lower demand for services; however, if demand for services increases, the Community Development Department will need more office space for their staff. The department has also faced challenges with staffing, recruitment, and retention.

**Road Department Shop Superintendent James Staniford and Administrative Clerk Rebecca Keegan** stated that they will have staffing challenges as they are expecting to have numerous employees retire in the next 5-7 years. The department's major focus is on routine road maintenance, snow and ice control, and roadside vegetation. They would also like to focus on chip sealing gravel roads that are close to town.

**Landfill Manager Jeff Merwin** reported that they have seen a 7% growth rate over the last five years and a 24% increase in tonnage over the last year. Mr. Merwin also mentioned challenges regarding evolving environmental regulations, employee turnover, capital expenses, and aging infrastructure. Mr. Merwin would also like to increase the department's presence on social media.

**Fairgrounds Manager Casey Daly** reported that they were recently awarded \$2 million dollars from the State and are using these funds to update facilities at the

Fairgrounds. These funds will be used for deferred maintenance and capital projects, including sewer, water, power infrastructure for additional RV/horse camp sites, and funding for a new community hall. There is also a possibility to acquire additional property to increase space at the Fairgrounds for future events.

**Weed Master Kev Alexanian** reported that a majority of the department's revenue is from working for federal agencies. Some of the main projects within Crook County are home inspections and new development. The department is responsible for educating the community and public about weed control and prevention.

**County Counsel Eric Blaine** stated that some of their main duties include advising the County on all non-criminal aspects of the law, including public meeting laws, public records laws, contracts, employment and labor law, land use, litigation and defense, and interpretation of legal authorities. Mr. Blaine also commented that some of their current challenges are retaining staff, implementation of paid family leave law, and any anticipated legislative changes to local government administration.

**IT Director Sydney Chandler** reported that some of their challenges involve staffing availability and turnover, available supply of product, rising costs of equipment, and rising costs and complexity of Disaster Recovery and Cyber Security.

**Human Resources Director Kim Barber** presented that the HR department is interested in providing exit interviews to facilitate collection turnover data. This information will be beneficial to collect when hiring new staff, retaining current staff, and reducing employee turnover within the County.

**Facilities Director Joe Viola** mentioned that one of the challenges the Facilities department will be faced with is the new Justice Center building. This will add 40% more square footage of very technical systems and components. Furthermore, the old Courthouse will have an immediate need to renovate once it is vacated.

**Assistant Finance Director Christina Haron** reported that the Finance department will be moving to paperless and to a new ERP and associated integrated software. Ms. Haron mentioned that the department will need strong IT support for the transition to the new ERP and will provide education and training to help improve usage of financial information in departments.

There being no further business before the Court, the meeting was **adjourned at 4:50 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

**Sarah Puerner**