BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

1300 NW Wall Street, Bend, Oregon
(541) 388-6570

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BOCC MEETING MINUTES

9:00 AM	**WEDNESDAY July 15, 2026**	Barnes Sawyer Rooms Live Streamed Video

Present were Commissioners Phil Chang, Anthony DeBone and Patti Adair. Also present were County Administrator Nick Lelack; Legal Counsel Dave Doyle; and BOCC Executive Assistant Brenda Fritsvold.

This meeting was audio and video recorded and can be accessed at the Deschutes County Meeting Portal website www.deschutes.org/meetings.

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Chang called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

ADAIR: Move approval of the agenda as presented
DEBONE: Second

VOTE:	DEBONE:	Yes
	ADAIR:	Yes
	CHANG:	Chair votes yes. Motion Carried 3 – 0

CITIZEN INPUT:

Commissioner DeBone raised a point of order regarding accepting citizen input on agenda item #9, saying the Board had already held multiple public meetings

and voted to proceed with placing a proposed Commissioner district map on the ballot.

Commissioner Chang said public comment on the proposed district map would be allowed.

- James Thrower referred to decisions by the Board which have been challenged and overturned, resulting in taxpayers and others incurring large legal expenses. He opposed proceeding with the proposed districting measure and said it would likely be appealed.
- Jordan Baxter, speaking as a volunteer for Veterans for All Voters which advocates for voter reforms, expressed opposition to the establishment of Commissioner districts which he believed would result in votes not counting equally. Baxter additionally questioned the composition of the Districting Map Advisory Committee, saying it was not non-partisan as claimed.

  Commissioner DeBone said he viewed the district proposal as completing the conversation which began when voters approved expanding the Board from three to five members.

  Saying that he supports districting in principle, but only if done correctly, Commissioner Chang said Map C would inject partisan bias into Commissioner elections.

- Jim McAllister asked the Board not to place Map C before voters, saying it could result in high litigation costs as the State has warned it may violate ORS. Adding that the proposal would entail the future expense of redistricting after each Census, he said proposed Map C is gerrymandered according to an independent analysis and also allows for too much population difference between districts.
- Mary Fleishchmann said the process has been rushed and flawed. She asked the Board to pause the districting proposal until a new five-member Commission is seated.
- Amy Sabbadini asked the Board to pause the districting effort, saying the process had become divisive. She encouraged the County to instead focus on working collaboratively to solve various problems and address areas which need attention.
- Joe Craig opposed the proposed district map, saying that because it was based on registered voter counts rather than total population, it could expose the County to wasteful legal costs. He said voters approved having five at-large Commissioners and did not vote for districts.
- Michel Bayard opposed creating districts and said if districts are created, all five Commissioners should vote on matters affecting any district.

- Connie Peterson said she had followed the Districting Map Advisory Committee process and believed it was rushed, flawed and potentially illegal.
- Melinda Soules expressed concern that the proposed map would be challenged in court and thereby cost taxpayer money. She asked why the County could not wait until after the next Census to consider districting.
- Janet Stahl said the proposed district map was gerrymandered and unfair, and likely to cost the County money to defend if challenged.
- Therese Kollerer opposed districting and asked that Map C be pulled from the November ballot. Saying that the questions of whether and how to district should be revisited by the newly seated five-member Commission in 2027, she expressed her preference that all Commissioners be accountable countywide.
- Paul Lipscomb said it was not too late to table the district map proposal and said any districting must be based on population rather than registered voters.
- Matt Cyrus, who served on the Districting Map Advisory Committee, said the districting process included significant public comment and resulted in a map which he believed was fair and represented five distinct regions of the County. He supported placing the proposal before voters.
- Melanie Kebler, Mayor of Bend and a member of the Districting Map Advisory Committee, opposed placing the measure on the ballot. She disagreed that Map C represents distinct regions, and did not view it as fair. Saying that the process was not the correct way to create a map and that the proposal would divide Bend while limiting each voter to voting for only one Commissioner, she supported further discussion through a charter process.
- Donna Lipscomb said voters in 2024 approved expanding the Board to five members, not the creation of districts. She said the claim that something was left undone when the Board expansion was approved is very far from the truth.
- Wanda Sobiegraj said she found the map confusing and questioned whether voters would understand how the proposed districts would function. She said that the proposal of districts is a divisive issue.

  Commissioner Chang said the measure would create five districts with none of the positions being at-large, and voters would vote only for the Commissioner position in the district where they live.

- Phil Henderson supported proceeding with the ballot title and measure text, saying that many residents want the opportunity to vote on districts. Adding that 30% of the County's residents live in unincorporated areas outside of the four cities, he said districts would ensure representation for rural areas.

  Commissioner Adair read from the 2024 voter's pamphlet, referring to statements by Commissioner Chang that assigning Commissioners to geographic districts would be a logical next step following an expansion of the Board from three to five positions.

Commissioner Chang reiterated that he supports districting in principle, but not through what he viewed as an unfair, imbalanced or gerrymandered process.

Commissioner DeBone said it is not everyone's view that Map C is gerrymandered.

Commissioner Chang referred to an analysis by Bryce Kellogg which showed that of 20,000 possible iterations of a district map for Deschutes County, just 8% of the total provided as much partisan bias as Map C, and 92% of all possible maps were more fair and balanced than Map C.

- Dorinne Tye described noise and pollution impacts from flight schools which operate at the Bend Airport and expressed concerns regarding aircraft operations, lead pollution, and impacts on East Bend residents, small farms, livestock, wildlife corridors and farmland. She alleged that Commissioners DeBone and Adair have helped to expand the wealth gap in Central Oregon.
- Michelle Martin said Map C represents an attempt at a politically partisan power grab.

COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Commissioner DeBone said he would be traveling the following Monday and would be remote for the Wednesday meeting.
- Commissioner Adair announced the Made in Sisters economic development tour.
- Commissioner Chang reported on the Bend Climate Collective series of events and said he participated in a wildfire discussion earlier in the week.
- Commissioner Adair shared that Sisters Coffee had 15,000 visitors during the recent quilt festival.
- Commissioner Adair reported having contacted Oregon Health Authority director Sejal Hathi regarding Rural Health Transformation funding and how Deschutes County applicants could be successful in future grant allocations.

CONSENT AGENDA: Before the Board was consideration of the Consent Agenda.

1. Approval of an amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding for the Workforce Housing Program for Median-Income Earners (HOME Fund)

2. Approval of an amendment to the grant from the Oregon Health Authority (#185808-10) for Public Health services

3. Approval of Amendment No. 10 to Service Contract with NeighborImpact, and approval of Resolution No. 2026-038 adopting a Supplemental Budget and transferring appropriations within the Community Development Fund

4. Authorize a renewal of a policy for excess General Liability and Cyber Security Insurance

5. Authorization to grant a public access easement to the City of Bend adjacent to the Courthouse Expansion project at NW Harriman Street

6. Authorize a lease with Thomas Hughes of Lonesome Water Books for space in County-owned property at 703 N. Larch Street, Sisters

7. Consideration of appointment of Ryan Howard to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

ADAIR: Move Board approval of the Consent Agenda as presented
DEBONE: Second

VOTE:	DEBONE:	Yes
	ADAIR:	Yes
	CHANG:	Chair votes yes. Motion Carried 3 – 0

ACTION ITEMS:

8. **Consideration of first reading of Ordinance 2026-013 for the Cinder Butte Plan Amendment and Zone Change request**

Haleigh King, Senior Planner, presented Ordinance No. 2026-013 which would effect the requested Comprehensive Plan amendment and zone change of approximately 38 acres north of Redmond's Urban Growth Boundary from Surface Mine to Rural Industrial.

Saying that Cinder Butte Rock Products has exhausted the mining resources on the property, King explained that a companion intent-to-rezone request affecting approximately 3.58 acres would return with the second reading of the ordinance so the two pieces of legislation can be adopted concurrently.

King then called attention to revisions made to the ordinance since it was published in last week's meeting packet, explaining that staff, in coordination with legal counsel, added references to the site-specific ESEE analysis.

Stephanie Marshall, Senior Assistant Legal Counsel, explained that the revisions are intended to make the ordinance more complete in light of a recent LUBA decision. No new information was added.

Noting the property's proximity to Redmond's Urban Growth Boundary and referencing area transportation concerns, Commissioner Chang asked whether the City of Redmond provided input on this application. King said the City was notified of the application and the Board's decision to approve it, but did not submit any comments.

DEBONE: Move approval of first reading of Ordinance No. 2026-013 by title only, using the revised ordinance as distributed by staff at the meeting
ADAIR: Second
VOTE:

DEBONE:	Yes
ADAIR:	Yes
CHANG:	Chair votes yes. Motion Carried 3 – 0

Chair Chang read the title of the ordinance into the record

9. Review of draft SEL 805: Ballot Title and Measure Text regarding the proposed establishment of Commissioner Districts

County Counsel Dave Doyle reminded that the Board had previously voted 2-1 to direct staff to move forward with preparing documents to refer the proposed establishment of Commissioner districts to the November 2026 ballot. County Clerk Steve Dennison confirmed that August 14, 2026 was the deadline to place a measure on the November ballot.

Commissioner DeBone proposed several wording changes to the draft SEL 805 ballot title and measure text, including using "establishes" instead of "adopts" in the caption. Doyle advised that the term "mode" should remain in the summary because it conforms with the applicable statute.

Discussion ensued of language describing the five proposed districts, including correcting the descriptions of Districts 1 and 2, adding references to Southeast Bend and Sunriver for District 4, and adding a reference to Terrebonne for District 5. The Commissioners agreed not to include language stating that the measure would provide localized representation.

Noting that some of the proposed changes were substantive, Commissioner Chang said the ballot language should be as accurate and simple as possible and

expressed concern that geographic descriptions of the districts might be inaccurate or oversimplified.

During deliberations, Commissioner Chang said he did not support proceeding with the ballot measure. Instead of putting this particular district map to the voters, he said democracy would be more fully honored by clearly communicating all of the available choices to the electorate.

In response to a question from Commissioner Chang about the likelihood of legal challenges to the map, Doyle said a number of persons have indicated their intent to challenge the measure, and he expected possible challenges to the ballot title under ORS Chapter 250 and, if the measure passes, possible post-election challenges under ORS Chapter 258.

Commissioner DeBone stated that the Board had previously decided to place the proposed map on the ballot.

Saying he believed it remained appropriate to ask whether the Board should proceed with placing this map on the ballot, Commissioner Chang said he viewed the Districting Map Advisory Committee process as flawed. He reiterated that the approved map would provide a disproportionate partisan advantage.

DEBONE: Move approval of the SEL 805 text for the proposed Commissioner district map
ADAIR: Second

VOTE:	DEBONE:	Yes
	ADAIR:	Yes
	CHANG:	Chair votes no. Motion Carried 2 – 1

Commissioner Adair asked about the explanatory statement. Doyle said staff had a working draft and would bring it to the Board in the next few weeks. Doyle added that the County Clerk will confirm the word count for the SEL 805 language and the item would return to the Board only if further revisions were needed to meet the word limit.

OTHER ITEMS:

- Commissioner DeBone reported on the Sunriver-La Pine Economic Development meeting and said an incubator building and speculative building are under construction in La Pine to provide space for startups and small businesses.

Commissioner DeBone also reported that a certificate of occupancy was issued on July 1st for the La Pine clinic building.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

ADJOURN:

Being no further items to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:54 am.

DATED this 7th day of October 2026 for the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners.

PHIL CHANG, CHAIR

ATTEST:

ANTHONY DEBONE, VICE CHAIR

RECORDING SECRETARY

PATTI ADAIR, COMMISSIONER