



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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

FOR RECORDING STAMP ONLY

BOCC MEETING MINUTES

1:00 PM

MONDAY October 21, 2024

Allen Room
Live Streamed Video

Present were Commissioners Patti Adair and Tony DeBone. Also present were County Administrator Nick Lelack; Deputy County Administrator Whitney Hale; ; Senior Assistant Legal Counsel Kim Riley; and BOCC Executive Assistant Brenda Fritsvold.

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

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Adair called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

CITIZEN INPUT:

- Bend Mayor Melanie Kebler asked for collaboration to establish a Temporary Safe Stay Area (TSSA) at Juniper Ridge, urging the Board to take action as the City is facing a deadline to allocate the ARPA funds it plans to utilize for this purpose. Saying that a legal foundation is needed for this work, she said the City is open to designating "up to 170" acres for a TSSA instead of specifying a total area of 170 acres, and stressed that the City requires a joint resolution to move forward on this.

Commissioner Adair expected that the Board will take this matter up at its meeting this coming Wednesday.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Update from NeighborImpact on Childcare Resources, Programming and Funding

Karen Prow, Childcare Resources Director for NeighborImpact, introduced an update on the use of funding provided by the County for childcare resources and programming. Prow first shared information on the Pathways Navigator Project, saying this involves both recruitment and retention efforts.

Commissioner DeBone expressed his appreciation to NeighborImpact for coordinating and managing this investment, which was intended to add childcare capacity across Deschutes County.

Prow spoke to the high cost of childcare in Central Oregon, saying that subsidies can help but are hard to access for people at or above 200% of the federal poverty level. At the same time, it's difficult for people to be able to afford to live in this area on less than that.

Prow next provided an update on the Fast Track Program which works to place new teacher candidates in programs, saying 51 new teachers have been minted thus far. Each candidate benefits from 92 hours of training and one-on-one coaching.

Noting that 13 new teacher candidates graduated in the first cohort of this program, Commissioner Adair asked how many of them are still working in the field. Prow responded that the program has a greater than 85% retention rate. In response to Commissioner Adair, Prow said this program is currently funded by Deschutes County.

Noting that NeighborImpact received \$8.2 million from the State for childcare resources and programming, Commissioner Adair asked how those funds are being used.

Hannah Kuehl, Associate Director of Grants Management for NeighborImpact, said of the \$500,000 awarded from the County for the small center facilities project, \$295,000 has been spent and \$180,000 is pending distribution of decided awards, leaving \$25,000 still available for awarding. Kuehl said this program has made 224 childcare slots available to parents.

Regarding the \$8.2 million from the State to expand childcare availability and create more childcare slots, Kuehl said this funding was provided for all of Central Oregon, not just Deschutes County. NeighborImpact has thus far expended

\$3,724,000, which has created 707 new childcare slots in Deschutes County and 950 total across Central Oregon. Individual grants range from \$5,000 to \$525,000, and between ten and 16 children can be cared for in a home-based facility at a lower cost than a commercial facility.

In response to Commissioner Adair, Kuehl said Warm Springs has two home-based programs at this time.

Responding to Commissioner Adair, Kuehl said the deadline for spending the State funding is 2026 or possibly 2027, if the program is extended.

Commissioner Adair asked to know how many childcare spots have been added in Sisters. Kuehl said five so far, although 42 slots are in the process of being added.

Commissioner Adair noted that the OSU Cascades childcare facility was down to two employees before closing due to insufficient staffing. She asked to know the going wage for childcare workers these days. Prow said this averages about \$24.90/hour for entry level workers, but some facilities are paying closer to \$30/hour. She noted that the programs which pay lower see much more turnover.

2. Dark Skies / Project Direction

Tanya Saltzman, Senior Planner, presented a memo which outlined the history of the Dark Skies project, which is being reactivated at the Board's direction. Saltzman reviewed that in November of 2021, both the Board and the Planning Commission expressed support for updating Chapter 15.10 of Deschutes County Code which relates to outdoor lighting controls. Work since then has included panel discussions and the consideration of educational outreach efforts.

Saltzman summarized the existing outdoor lighting regulations which were adopted in 1994 and listed proposed updates to County Code to reduce light pollution and preserve the ability of residents and visitors to view the night sky—one example is requiring that all outdoor lighting be shielded so the light is directed downward. Noting that a possible legislative approach raises concerns about how to inspect and enforce violations, Saltzman said one option is to develop an educational campaign about dark skies best practices. Suggested ways to distribute such information are: via building permits and partnering with Visit Central Oregon.

Saying that everyone appreciates dark skies, Commissioner DeBone encouraged making this value a part of Central Oregon's culture. While he was leery of requirements becoming an enforcement issue, he supported having the Planning Commission review a proposed package of amendments and suggested a large-

scale educational effort that would challenge the community with a shared collaborative opportunity that poses the question "How Dark Can We Go?".

Commissioner Adair also supported educational efforts. Noting the presence of coyotes and wolves near her residence, she wanted to be sure of her safety when walking from her garage to her barn after dark.

County Administrator Nick Lelack read an email from Commissioner Chang into the record wherein Commissioner Chang stated his support for updating the County's Code related to Dark Skies, focusing on shielding of lighting and providing appropriate exceptions to those requirements while seeking to minimize public and private costs for implementation and enforcement.

Commissioner Chang added that regulations alone will not accomplish much, and significant outreach and education efforts—and potentially incentives—will be needed to motivate property owners to change their lighting. He encouraged stepped-up education efforts in partnership with other organizations to effect meaningful results.

Saltzman said at the Board's direction, staff will initiate a legislative process with the Planning Commission as described and simultaneously begin work on an educational campaign.

Commissioner DeBone said this subject came up at a recent COIC meeting, where strong support was expressed for dark sky tourism. He viewed the Dark Skies project as positive for everyone and said along with established best practices, staff should be on the lookout for additional opportunities to further this effort.

Commissioner Adair said any legislation must allow people who own livestock to have lighting to guard against predators.

3. Treasury Report for September 2024

Bill Kuhn, County Treasurer, presented the Treasury Report for September 2024.

4. Finance Report for September 2024

Robert Tittle, Chief Financial Officer, presented the Finance Report for September 2024.

Commissioner DeBone expected that Transient Room Tax revenues will be flat this year, but said Deschutes County is still growing in population. He said the cost of doing business is likely rising faster than the tax base is growing.

The subject of vacant positions was discussed, with Commissioner DeBone noting that the vacancy rate in 9-1-1 appears to be more stable than previously. Commissioner Adair pointed out that the Sheriff's Office still has more than 40 FTE vacancies.

Commissioner Adair questioned the \$1.65 million entry adjustment for jail staffing. Tintle explained this was a forecasting entry made by DCSO, which Finance will appropriately edit to show across various line items including patrol.

Turning to the Health Benefits Fund, Tintle said employee premium cost shares have changed incrementally over the years from \$35 to \$90, which was charged beginning in 2014 until the most recent increase this year.

Commissioner Adair asked if people who are on Humira are being made to switch to the bio-identical prescription, which is much less expensive. Deputy County Administrator Hale confirmed that Human Resources is encouraging this transition. Commissioner Adair asked to know the expected fiscal impact of these switches from this point forward.

Tintle estimated that 90% of those on Humira will transition to the bio-identical prescription. Reminding that the health care plan year is a calendar year as contrasted with the County's fiscal year, which starts on July 1st, he said Finance is projecting a 12% increase in health care costs for 2026 and 2027.

5. La Pine Park & Rec Board Recruitment Update

Whitney Hale, Deputy County Administrator, reminded that the Board will conduct interviews this Wednesday for the La Pine Parks & Recreation District Board following the resignation of all LPPRD Board members. Hale reported that 16 people have applied.

The Board was in consensus to interview all persons who applied.

Commissioner DeBone shared that he was provided keys to the building and the procedures for opening it.

Commissioner DeBone noted that the persons appointed to the LPPRD by the Board may or may not run for election to the LPPRD next May.

OTHER ITEMS:

- County Administrator Nick Lelack introduced the subject of the proposed resolution to establish a Temporary Safe Stay Area at Juniper Ridge in cooperation with the City of Bend. The Commissioners concurred to add this proposal to the agenda for its meeting this coming Wednesday.
- County Administrator Lelack asked if the Board is interested to sponsor the upcoming St. Charles gala event in February, or sponsor a table. County Treasurer Bill Kuhn said if the Board is willing to half-sponsor a table, I will sponsor the other half. Each full table sponsorship is \$1,250.
- Commissioner Adair shared her preference to purchase an individual ticket.

Following discussion, the Board was supportive of sponsoring part of the cost of a table at this event, which is a fundraiser for St. Charles, with Commissioner Adair offering to personally contribute \$250 towards the cost of this sponsorship.

- Commissioner DeBone reported on a Fair Association meeting last Thursday.
- Commissioner DeBone shared that he met with Governor Kotek on Friday along with other commissioners from counties in eastern Oregon, saying he brought up the potential collaboration with the City of Bend to establish a Temporary Safe Stay Area at Juniper Ridge.
- Commissioner DeBone shared information on the Redmond Airport Committee meeting which featured an update on the development plan for the airport's proposed expansion.
- Commissioner Adair reported on last Friday's Behavioral Health Advisory Board meeting, sharing that Jackson House has indicated it is available for two projects—the 16-bed Secure Residential Treatment Facility in Redmond as well as another, separate one for youth.
- Commissioner Adair shared that she received a call from someone who claimed that local service providers will not sign on for a project between the County and Redmond which involves offering services to homeless persons on County-owned land and said it's possible that Cascadia Clusters out of Portland may be interested.
- Commissioner Adair announced that the Sisters Rodeo Circuit Finals event has already sold out for Saturday next summer.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 2:55 pm, the Board entered executive session under ORS 192.660 (2)(d) Labor Negotiations.

At 3:40 pm, the executive session concluded and the public was invited to return to the room. The Board then directed staff to proceed as discussed during the executive session.

ADJOURN:

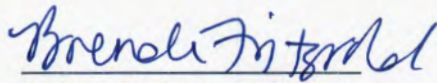
Being no further items to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 3:41 pm.

DATED this 2/12 day of December 2024 for the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners.

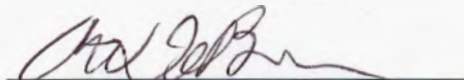


PATTI ADAIR, CHAIR

ATTEST:



RECORDING SECRETARY



ANTHONY DEBONE, VICE CHAIR



PHIL CHANG, COMMISSIONER