



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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

FOR RECORDING STAMP ONLY

BOCC MEETING MINUTES

9:00 AM

WEDNESDAY January 22, 2025

Barnes Sawyer Rooms
Live Streamed Video

Present were Commissioners Anthony DeBone and Phil Chang. Also present were Nick Lelack, County Administrator; Whitney Hale, Deputy County Administrator; Erik Kropp, Deputy County Administrator; Kim Riley, Senior Assistant County Counsel; and Brenda Fritsvold, BOCC Executive Assistant.

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 DeBone called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CITIZEN INPUT:

- Mark Dickens alleged that the County's building official has abused his authority, acted outside of the law, and conducted a campaign of harassment and intimidation towards him. Dickens asked that the Commissioners meet with him to review the body of documents related to his open Code compliance case.
- Al Shirk questioned the County's proposal to acquire 40 acres of land in the Deschutes National Forest from the federal government for the purpose of selling it on the open market. Saying that his company owns and operates a mine just 2.5

miles away on property leased at Spring Butte Rock, Shirk asked why the County is pushing to acquire and then sell this federally-owned land.

Commissioner Chang pointed out that he did not vote to send the letter of support for this proposal to Congressman Bentz, and did not sign that letter. He agreed that more information was needed and said he also questioned how fair it is to the taxpayers to hand over 40 acres of valuable resource land for zero compensation.

Saying that the supply of material which can be mined on the privately-owned property adjacent to these 40 acres has been exhausted, Commissioner DeBone shared that he has communicated information about this proposal to all of the area's road districts.

Shirk said no one but Findley Butte Aggregate would buy these 40 acres because the only way to access them is via property owned by that company.

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

1. Approval of an amendment to an agreement with the Criminal Justice Commission accepting additional grant funds to support the Emerging Adult Program and conduct a Statewide Restorative Justice Workshop
2. Approval of an amendment to an intergovernmental agreement with the Oregon Health Authority for the funding of Behavioral Health services
3. Approval of a Revocable License with BestCare Treatment Services for use of space at the South County Services Building in La Pine
4. Consideration of Board Signature on letter thanking Tom Emmons and appointing Eric Ness for service on the River Forest Acres Special Road District
5. Approval of the minutes of the January 8, 2025 BOCC meeting

CHANG: Move Board approval of Consent Agenda as presented

DEBONE: Second

VOTE: ADAIR: (absent)

CHANG: Yes

DEBONE: Chair votes yes. Motion Carried 2 - 0

The Board convened as the governing body for the Deschutes County 9-1-1 Service District.

ACTION ITEMS:

6. Consideration of Contract No. 2025-065, a Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Deschutes County 9-1-1 Service District and the Deschutes 9-1-1 Employees Association – 9-1-1 Supervisors

Whitney Hale, Deputy County Administrator, reviewed components of the proposed Collective Bargaining Agreement which was negotiated over preceding months and has now been ratified by the members of the union for a term from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026.

CHANG: Move Board approval of Contract No. 2025-065, a Collective Bargaining Agreement Between the Deschutes County 9-1-1 Service District and the Deschutes 9-1-1 Employees Association – 9-1-1 Supervisors

DEBONE: Second

VOTE: ADAIR: (absent)
CHANG: Yes
DEBONE: Chair votes yes. Motion Carried 2 - 0

The Board reconvened as the governing body of Deschutes County.

7. Consideration of extending the Deschutes County Rural Renewable Energy Development Zone

Erik Kropp, Deputy County Administrator, presented background on the County's decision in December of 2014 to create a Rural Renewable Energy Development (RRED) Zone which is scheduled to expire on June 30, 2025. Saying that EDCO has proposed that the County extend this for another ten years, Kropp reviewed options for the Board's consideration.

Patricia Lucas, executive director of Sunriver-La Pine Economic Development (SLED), explained that RRED designations offer a tax exemption incentive to encourage new investments in renewable energy. The incentive is a 100 percent (i.e., full) exemption from the property taxes normally assessed for the first three to five years of project operation. Lucas shared examples of other jurisdictions which have established these, including school and library districts, and said the zone would exclude the cities of Bend and Redmond and their UGBs.

Kelsey Lucas, EDCO director for Prineville/Crook County, said additional electrical generation is needed, and RRED zones can help incentivize that.

Commissioner Chang was excited to see more production of clean energy which reduces greenhouse gas emissions. He asked how much benefit other counties in eastern Oregon receive from the development of renewable energy projects and how Deschutes County can secure community investment benefit from these types of projects, pointing out that this kind of tax exemption has the potential to affect not just Deschutes County but also the other taxing districts.

In response to Commissioner Chang, Kelsey Lucas said a project built to generate 700 megawatts could be valued up to \$1.25 billion.

Referring to the tax exemption time period of three to five years, Commissioner Chang asked to know how much a facility could be expected to depreciate in value over that time. Steve Curley, executive director of REDI, agreed to pose that question to the Department of Revenue and follow up.

Commissioner Chang asked how the potential assessed valuation of a project is translated into community payment benefit or investment.

Patricia Lucas distributed copies of a handout which described the RRED Zone program as well as the Strategic Investment Program (SIP) and the PILOT Nameplate program, all of which have been authorized by the State. Kelsey Lucas explained the parameters of these programs and how they work.

In response to Commissioner Chang, Kelsey Lucas estimated that 13 counties across Oregon have established a RRED Zone, but she was unsure how many of those have resulted in developed projects. Lucas confirmed that under State law, the County Assessor has the authority to administratively approve a three-year RRED tax abatement.

Kropp said he will work with EDCO to get answers to the Board's questions and follow up at a later date.

Commissioner DeBone said energy projects can drive future economic activity.

Commissioner Chang suggested that Deschutes County look to the experience of other counties such as Umatilla, Lake and Sherman insofar as what community benefits they have negotiated for these kinds of projects.

8. Special Project Grants - Mid-Year Updates

Jen Patterson, Strategic Initiatives Manager, introduced updates from the Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project and Friends of the Children. Deschutes Basin Water Collaborative will present its update to the Board next week instead of today.

Jacob Fritz, program manager for the Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project, provided an overview of the DCFP and shared updates on its work to monitor public health issues related to smoke from prescribed burns. In addition, the Collaborative has engaged in efforts to map core habitat, biodiversity, recreation and access values with the goal of balancing these to reduce community conflict. Fritz concluded that work has also been done to reach out to community members by hosting speaker events and other activities to build and maintain engagement.

In response to Commissioner DeBone, Fritz said the Collaborative has not developed an opinion on biomass but acknowledges the need for more investment in the forest industry with the goal of reducing fuels.

Discussion ensued of the DCFO's work to promote restoration of forests and the involvement of the recreational community. Topics touched on included: fire resiliency, forest health, vegetation management, the elimination of unnecessary trails and roads, and problems associated with unauthorized long-term camping although camping in one location is limited to two weeks on federally-owned land.

Rachel Cardwell, executive director of Friends of the Children, shared copies of the organization's 2023-24 Gratitude Report which summarized revenue and expenses, enrollment numbers, programs and services, and plans for the future of the organization. Cardwell said the goals for each youth enrolled in the program are to: graduate from high school with a plan for the future; remain uninvolved with the juvenile justice system; and wait until adult years to become a parent.

Commissioner Chang expressed his appreciation for the critical support provided by Friends of the Children to many youth during their formative years. Commissioner DeBone appreciated the focus on serving children who have multiple ACE factors, since negative experiences in early childhood can stunt development.

9. Treasury Report for December 2024

Bill Kuhn, County Treasurer, presented the Treasury Report for December 2024, noting a correction to the "Five-Year Maturity Distribution Schedule" graph to reflect that the investments showing to mature in September of 2027 will actually mature in August of 2027, with the subsequent columns shifting one month earlier in the same manner.

10. Finance Report for December 2024

Robert Tintle, Chief Financial Officer, presented the Finance Report for December 2024.

In response to a question, County Administrator Nick Lelack confirmed that the 1.0 FTE for Coordinated Houseless Response Office will not be filled.

Commissioner Chang added that it remains to be determined who will manage the CHRO going forward.

OTHER ITEMS:

- Commissioner DeBone noted the receipt of a letter from Deschutes County Circuit Court Presiding Judge Wells Ashby asking to use the Courthouse on March 1st for a student mock trial event.
- Strategic Initiatives Manager Jen Patterson communicated a request from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for a letter supporting HB 2168 which would appropriate funds to aid households which use septic systems for wastewater disposal and/or which rely on wells for drinking water.

Commissioner Chang shared that he was asked to testify at a hearing this morning on this bill.

Commissioner DeBone noted that some privately-owned wells will, over time, fill with sediment or experience other natural collapses.

Commissioner Chang said 200 wells went dry in 2022 and 2023. Commissioner DeBone said in that same period, 100 wells could be expected to fail naturally as they age.

Commissioner Chang said some wells are going dry due to groundwater level declines.

CHANG: Move approval of a letter to the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resource expressing the County's support for HB 2168

DEBONE: Second

VOTE: ADAIR: (absent)
CHANG: Yes
DEBONE: Chair votes yes. Motion Carried 2 - 0

Commissioner DeBone thanked Commissioner Chang for testifying on this matter.

- Commissioner Chang attended yesterday's ribbon-cutting for the NOVA apartments in Redmond, saying Hayden Homes did an amazing job refurbishing the former Squire motel and converting it into 24 micro-units.
- Commissioner DeBone attended the 9-1-1 user board meeting yesterday where the subject of radio tower projects was taken up.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS:

At 11:24 am, the Board entered executive session under ORS 192.660 (2) (e) Real Property Negotiations.

At 11:42 am, 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 11:42 am.

DATED this 12th Day of Feb. 2025 for the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners.


ANTHONY DEBONE, CHAIR

ATTEST:


RECORDING SECRETARY


PATTI ADAIR, VICE CHAIR


PHIL CHANG, COMMISSIONER