



## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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

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# BOCC MEETING MINUTES

1:00 PM

**MONDAY August 21, 2023**

Allen Room  
Live Streamed Video

Present were Commissioners Anthony DeBone, Patti Adair and Phil Chang. Also present were Deputy County Administrator Erik Kropp; Deputy County Administrator Whitney Hale; Assistant County 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 website [www.deschutes.org/meetings](http://www.deschutes.org/meetings).

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chair DeBone called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

### **CITIZEN INPUT:**

- Don Senecal suggested the use of C-17 Globemaster planes owned and operated by the US Coast Guard to combat wildfires, saying this could significantly reduce tragedies as well as costs incurred to contract for such services.

### **AGENDA ITEMS:**

#### **1. Upcoming Oregon Department of Forestry Wildfire Hazard Map Meeting**

Will Groves, Planning Manager, said the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) have scheduled a meeting in Klamath Falls on September 21<sup>st</sup> to present and take comments on the draft Wildfire Hazard Maps, which are expected to be released two weeks beforehand. Groves reviewed the multi-year process to develop these maps, which will assign classifications of

low, medium and high risk to all properties across the state based on weather, climate, topography, and vegetation.

Commissioner Chang clarified that the areas designated as “high hazard” will identify a large risk of ignition, not necessarily that significant damage would be incurred post-ignition. He said development may not be curtailed if defensible space requirements are met, and supported these efforts as acceptable government intrusion to protect communities.

Commissioner DeBone said less fuel and less understory would decrease the threat of fires.

Commissioner Adair supported the removal of juniper, which is an invasive and easily ignitable species that consumes water while crowding out bitterbrush which is a food source for mule deer.

Commissioner Chang shared the goal of restoring the sage steppe and the forests to make the landscape more fire resilient. Adding that houses, fences and accessory structures are also potential fuel for fire, he said the built environment must be addressed as well as the natural one, for example by requiring fire-resistant building materials under certain circumstances.

County Forester Kevin Moriarty was hesitant to tie wildfire risk statuses to a map, noting the potential for inaccuracies.

Commissioner Adair said the State must improve its fire insurance plan to protect property owners.

Commissioner Chang questioned how property owners will be credited for work done to harden their properties against fire risk.

Groves said staff will return on September 18<sup>th</sup> to update the Board on this matter prior to the meeting in Klamath Falls.

## **2. Update from Northwest Policy Advocates**

Doug Riggs, lobbyist from Northwest Policy Advocates, recapped the 2023 legislative session which left several large bills unaddressed. He said the short 35-day session scheduled to begin in February will be preceded by interim hearings in September, November and January. The 2024 session bill filing deadline is in November; each legislator will be limited to two bills. Riggs suggested that the County work to coordinate a summit next spring instead of this October.

Responding to Commissioner DeBone and Community Development Director Peter Gutowsky, Riggs anticipated that more discussions will take place regarding the need to implement clear and objective housing development standards and procedures.

In response to Commissioner Chang, Riggs agreed it would be beneficial to invite Representative Tawna Sanchez to tour St. Charles before February.

Responding to Commissioner Adair, Riggs agreed to research how the State's homeowners insurance plan can be improved. Commissioner Adair also advocated for more funding to manage juniper and to establish, deepen or relocate wells.

Other topics raised were: funding for housing infrastructure and for an outdoor, sanctioned and managed shelter; exempting bonuses from pay equity considerations; funding for the Terrebonne Water District; and the need to allocate more resources for Medical Examiner services.

### **3. Treasury Report for July 2023**

Bill Kuhn, County Treasurer, provided the Treasury Report for July 2023, noting that inflationary pressures remain for many in regards to food and housing costs.

### **4. Finance Report for July 2023**

Robert Tintle, Chief Financial Officer, provided the Finance Report for July 2023.

Community Development Director (CDD) Peter Gutowsky provided an update on current permit volumes and how these are impacting the department's revenues. Gutowsky said although building permit activity in June was robust, in the last few weeks numbers have dropped to levels experienced in 2014—2016. He said while the department continues to have significant reserve funds, it cannot rely extensively on those.

In response to Commissioner DeBone, Sherri Pinner, Senior Management Analyst, said commercial permits are down and the department has experienced a 30% decrease in single family permits year-over-year. As these numbers are continuing to decline, CDD will adjust its year-end projections accordingly.

Gutowsky added that it appears this kind of volatility is occurring across the state. He emphasized that the department is committed to maintaining its operational integrity and is carefully monitoring permit volumes and revenue.

Responding to Commissioner Adair, Gutowsky confirmed that CDD is not planning to fill its three-plus vacant positions at this time.

Commissioner Chang said the department will need adequate capacity to provide pre-application services to persons interested in adding an ADU to their property. Gutowsky agreed that if and when the Board adopts an ordinance allowing ADUs, CDD will embark on a public outreach campaign and be ready to respond to inquiries.

Commissioner Adair spoke to the potential marketing opportunity for vacant lots that become eligible to build both a primary residence and an ADU.

**OTHER ITEMS:**

- Commissioner DeBone reported his attendance at last Thursday's Coordinated Houseless Response Office meeting where he shared a report that had been produced under contract by a consultant to the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office (DCSO) regarding homeless persons and encampments.

Commissioner Chang said while he had not yet had a chance to read the report, he was concerned about a product that would result from the very limited scope of work described in the contract. He wished that the DCSO had coordinated with other entities before entering into this contract for services.

Commissioner Adair said Anthony Broadman has stated his support for the proposal to utilize the privately-owned Gales property for a managed campground. She referred to an upcoming meeting on Wednesday, after which she expected to hear from the State as to the availability of any property it owns which may be suitable for this use.

- Deputy County Administrator Whitney Hale announced that County College will begin its new session a week from tomorrow; Stephanie Robinson will share information at the Board's meeting this Wednesday.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None

**ADJOURN:**

Being no further items to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 3:24 p.m.

DATED this 20<sup>th</sup> Day of Sept 2023 for the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners.

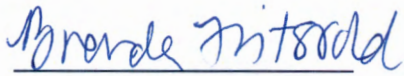


**ANTHONY DEBONE, CHAIR**

**ATTEST:**



**PATTI ADAIR, VICE CHAIR**



**RECORDING SECRETARY**



**PHIL CHANG, COMMISSIONER**