



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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

FOR RECORDING STAMP ONLY

BOCC MEETING MINUTES

1:00 PM

MONDAY December 2, 2024

Allen Room
Live Streamed Video

Present were Commissioners Patti Adair, Anthony DeBone and Phil Chang. Also present were Deputy County Administrator Whitney Hale; Deputy County Administrator Erik Kropp; 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 1:01 pm.

CITIZEN INPUT: None

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Oregon State Fire Marshal Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant

Kevin Moriarty, County Forester, sought authorization to accept grant funds for the removal of ladder fuels and small trees on approximately 50 acres located in the Juniper Ridge area on property owned by the City of Bend. The purpose of this work is to establish a 3.5 mile, 200-foot-wide shaded fuel break to help protect against wildfires.

Moriarty said although the Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM) rejected the original application for this work, it allowed the County to submit a revised application which was subsequently approved, with \$75,000 being awarded.

In response to Commissioner Chang, Moriarty said the original proposal was not accepted because it risked displacing homeless encampments. Moriarty added that the project is intended to reduce the risk of fires for encampments and surrounding residential areas such as JD Estates.

Commissioner Adair asked if the project will preserve bitterbrush, which is a food source for mule deer. Moriarty said the work will aim to reduce all vegetation in the defined fuel break area, but the bitterbrush will not be completely eradicated. He presumed this area contains sufficient bitterbrush for wildlife.

Responding to Commissioner Chang, Moriarty said the grant does not allow removing any tree over eight inches in diameter, but larger junipers which remain will be limbed to reduce available fire fuels.

DEBONE: Move approval to accept \$75,000 in grant funding from the Oregon Department of the State Fire Marshal for Community Wildfire Risk Reduction efforts, and authorize the County Administrator to sign Document No. 2024-902 accepting the grant

CHANG: Second

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

Commissioner Adair stated her interest in learning more about the eight-inch rule.

Commissioner Chang knew of no prohibition on removing the larger junipers in this area, although it appears that cannot be done with these grant funds.

2. FY 2026 Preliminary General Fund Budget Discussion

Cam Sparks, Budget & Financial Planning Manager, said because the General Fund is structurally imbalanced with the result that a budget deficit is anticipated by 2027, Finance and Admin have proposed limiting departmental expenditure growth to 3.3% in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 in addition to other strategies for focused savings in the interest of assuring sustainability.

Sparks sought direction from the Board on six specific proposals which together would generate approximately \$967,000 in annual savings, as follows:

1. Shift two Behavioral Health positions from the General Fund to Behavioral Health's budget and use this department's reserve if needed to cover costs (approximately \$334,000 annually).

Commissioner Chang expressed concern that these two positions provide crisis level services, saying the County must demonstrate a commitment to allocate General Fund revenues to such services, especially when seeking funding from the State or other sources for the Stabilization Center.

Noting that Behavioral Health has a large reserve, Commissioner Adair said if it is possible to fund these positions with Behavioral Health dollars, that should be done.

Commissioner DeBone supported this proposal at this time.

2. Remove the \$100,000 General Fund transfer to the Community Development Department for Hearings Officer services, with CDD absorbing this cost and incorporating it into existing fees.

A majority of the Commissioners supported this proposal.

3. As was done in 2024, again utilize some Video Lottery funds in support of core County services. Specifically, pay \$480,000 of debt service for a) the jail expansion project (\$260,000/year) and b) the Jamison Property (\$220,000/year) from video lottery funds.

Commissioner Chang said while this proposal makes sense, the County may receive other requests for Video Lottery Funds, including from Environmental Health.

Commissioner DeBone wanted to defend video lottery funds for economic development.

In response to Commissioner DeBone, Deputy County Administrator Whitney Hale said the Jamison property will be paid off in 2028.

A majority of the Commissioners supported this proposal.

4. Move the \$12,500/year Eastern Oregon County (EOCA) membership to the BOCC budget.

A majority of the Commissioners supported this proposal.

Commissioner Chang stated his preference to not continue this membership.

5. Reduce or eliminate the annual \$120,000 transfer from the General Fund to the Assessor/Clerk/Tax Reserve Fund, the purpose of which is to save funds for the eventual replacement of the County's assessment and taxation software. The reserve fund has a current balance of \$2 million.

In response to questions, Chief Financial Officer Robert Tintle said a new software system could cost between \$5 million and \$10 million.

A majority of the Commissioners supported transferring \$60,000 annually from the General Fund to this reserve fund. Commissioner Adair noted that the County is earning interest on the \$2 million in the reserve fund.

6. No external commitments of General Fund.

DEBONE: Move approval to accept the proposed changes to achieve savings in the General Fund for FY 2026 as presented and continue the annual transfer from the General Fund to the Assessor/Clerk/Tax Reserve Fund at the reduced amount of \$60,000/year

CHANG: Second

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

OTHER ITEMS:

- Commissioner DeBone reported that COIC received a presentation from the Citizen's Assembly regarding the project undertaken on youth homelessness. He sought input in deciding an action item for Deschutes County.

The Commissioners accepted Deputy County Administrator Erik Kropp's offer to coordinate with the Citizen's Assembly to bring this matter before the Board.

- Commissioner Chang said he will not be able to attend the Board's meeting this Wednesday as he will be at an all-day meeting of the Oregon Transportation Commission. He expressed disappointment regarding several important things on the Board's meeting agenda which he will miss and spoke to three in particular: 1. He stated his support for offering curbside recycling as a subscription service for rural residents; 2. He supported adding a wastewater specialist to keep up with inspections and protect groundwater quality; and 3. With regard to the Rural Housing Profile, he referred to a number of things he wanted to see included in this,

said the growth of housing in Deschutes County is projected to be small, and said it is not necessary to leave lands open for possible new destination resorts.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

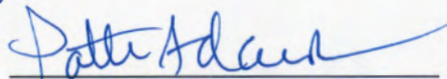
At 1:52 pm, the Board entered executive session under ORS 192.660 (2) (e) Real Property Negotiations.

At 2:42 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:

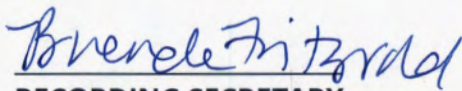
Being no further items to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 2:43 pm.

DATED this 8th day of January 2025 for the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners.

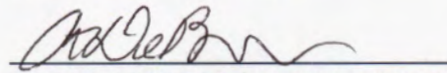


PATTI ADAIR, CHAIR

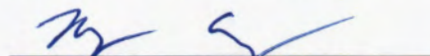
ATTEST:



RECORDING SECRETARY



ANTHONY DEBONE, VICE CHAIR



PHIL CHANG, COMMISSIONER