



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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

FOR RECORDING STAMP ONLY

BOCC MEETING MINUTES

9:00 AM

WEDNESDAY January 21, 2026

Barnes Sawyer Rooms
Live Streamed Video

Present were Commissioners Phil Chang, Anthony DeBone and Patti Adair. Also present were County Administrator Nick Lelack; 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 website www.deschutes.org/meetings.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CITIZEN INPUT:

- Ron Boozell said the country is in crisis, and as a result the BOCC will have to think about and do things it has never done before. Referring to his candidacy for the Board, he pledged, if elected, to ensure that ICE does not come to Deschutes County. He further asked that the current Commissioners and other candidates for the Board make the same commitment.

COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Commissioner Adair referred to reports on area reservoir levels and requested an updated presentation from Watermaster Jeremy Griffin as soon as possible.

Commissioner Chang added that, in addition to reservoir levels, which reflect the prior year's water conditions, it's also important to know the amounts of snowpack and projected snowpack as the latter numbers relate to the current water year outlook.

Commissioner DeBone announced a public town hall this evening hosted by him and State Representative Werner Reschke at 5:00 pm at the La Pine Senior Activity Center.

Commissioner Chang said Senator Anthony Broadman, Representative Emerson Levy, and Representative Jason Kropf will jointly host town halls this Sunday, first in Bend and then at the Redmond Senior Center later that same day.

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

1. Authorization to accept a Criminal Justice Commission Illegal Marijuana Market Enforcement grant
2. Approval to accept a grant from the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission for the Behavioral Health Deflection Program
3. Approval to accept a grant from the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission for the Jail-based Medications for Opioid Use Disorder Grant Program
4. Consideration of Board Signature on letter thanking Tina Ward for service on the Fall River Estates Special Road District Board
5. Consideration of Board Signature on letter thanking Julie McFarlane for service on the Deschutes County Behavioral Health Advisory Board
6. Approval of the minutes of the January 7, 2026 BOCC meeting

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

Commissioner DeBone acknowledged the receipt of grants from the Criminal Justice Commission. Commissioner Adair noted that the Illegal Marijuana Market Enforcement funding is approximately one-third of prior award levels.

ACTION ITEMS:

7. Continuation of Public Hearing - Commissioner District Draft Map

Chair Chang announced that all who wished to speak to this matter will have 2:30 minutes each to present their comments.

The public hearing was opened at 9:12 am.

- David Baker-Yuill said while he believed that districting could increase rural representation, the current proposal disproportionately favored rural conservative voters and would fail at the ballot. He encouraged pursuing an alternative approach that would be more balanced and more likely to succeed with voters.
- Lou Capozzi associated the districting proposal and Map C with Commissioner DeBone, alleged that the districting process was structured to favor a particular outcome, and urged rejection of the proposal.

Responding that the process was not initiated by him, Commissioner DeBone referenced a prior statement by Commissioner Chang that, following the expansion of the Board, districting would be a next logical step.

Commissioner Chang explained that while he supported the concept of districting, he did not support the proposed Map C and had not requested that districting be done at this time and in this manner.

- Michelle Martin said gerrymandering is partisan and she expected that the community would reject rigged maps. She referenced previous voter approval to expand the BOCC from three to five positions and stated concerns about reduced representation and potential legal and fiscal impacts.
- CB Foss shared that he had previously served on the COIC board and referenced COIC's district model. Saying that Map C appeared overthought, he suggested an alternative concept of districts emanating as spokes from a central hub and encouraged countywide collaboration.
- Mike Eisele requested that the Board scrap the proposed district map and not create districts, saying the current system works well and that County issues require cooperation rather than competition among districts.
- Joe Craig reminded that voters approved expanding the BOCC to five positions but did not approve districts. He asked that any district mapping occur after the 2030 census, advised not taking any action until five commissioners are seated, and urged starting any future process with public hearings on fundamental questions, including the basic question of whether districts should be established.

- Connie Norman expressed disappointment with regard to personal attacks of those who worked on Map C. She supported districts and having a single commissioner representative she could contact for issues.
- Dennis Tower said voters had approved having five commissioners but did not vote for five districts. He questioned the motive for advancing a district map before the new commissioners are elected and seated.
- Pete Shepherd raised concerns about legal risk and stressed that population variance should not be assumed to eliminate legal exposure. He referenced the Oregon constitution and said Map C would give votes in less-populated areas more weight than votes in more-populated areas.
- Connie Peterson said the expansion of the BOCC was intended to improve representation and effectiveness. She urged against proceeding without updated census figures and asked the Board not to advance Map C to the ballot.
- Amy Sabbadini urged the Board not to advance Map C, saying that legal precedent and case history indicated legal challenge risk. She encouraged waiting for updated census information and first asking the public whether districts are desired.
- Peter Borden said the proposed district map has a strong appearance of bias and risks instituting a “winner takes all” dynamic. He urged the Board not to advance Map C to the voters.
- Eva Eagle said the proposal to create districts seemed sudden and premature. She urged stepping back from debating the map and instead addressing the basic question of whether districts are desired.
- Carla Phillips said voters supported expanding the BOCC for broader, fairer representation. Urging respect for communities of interest and existing community connections, she raised concerns about the process and timing and requested a transparent approach towards prioritizing equal populations, communities of interest, and voter clarity.
- Karen Costello saw no need for a district map and said the process has contributed to distrust of county government. She urged proceeding with five at-large Commissioner positions as approved by voters.
- Bruce Bowen referred to his support for community collaboration and urged first seating the new commissioners and then addressing whether districts should exist and if so, how district elections should be conducted. He stated his preference for either fully at-large elections or districts with countywide voting.
- Rob Garvie said district boundaries should not be based on voter registration numbers but rather on total population figures, noting that the BOCC represents not just voting adults but also youth and others who cannot or do not vote.
- Emily Brown said while districting has historically been used to preserve representation of marginalized communities, the direction given by the BOCC to the DMAC was too narrow. Citing Oregon statutes, she said Map C directly benefited Commissioner DeBone and could expose the County to litigation costs.

- Becky Kliewel spoke to the duty of the Commissioners to uphold the U.S. and Oregon constitutions and represent the public's interests. Adding that districts can facilitate local issue knowledge and reduce campaign costs, she asked that Map C be advanced to the ballot so voters can decide whether or not to approve it.
- Amanda Page said while she personally supported democracy and fairness, Map C undermines those values. She referenced perceived conflicts in the process and urged the Board to restore public trust by not proceeding with the map.
- Tawny Howlett stated support for increasing voter choice and power, and suggested ranked choice voting as a means to improve representation.
- Peter Fox said Map C would make some votes count more than others.
- Phil Henderson said while he contributed to Commissioner DeBone's current re-election campaign, Commissioner DeBone did not appoint him to the DMAC. Henderson supported creating five districts and asked the Board to place Map C on the ballot, saying that districting would improve representation and allow Commissioners to better focus on region-specific concerns such as water issues.
- Samantha Smith asked the Board to not advance Map C to the ballot, saying the districting process moved too quickly and needs more time and intent.
- Susan Fox said the community faces significant shared issues, including fire safety and water availability, and stated her support for the community remaining united and collaborative to address those issues. She believed that many residents do not feel represented by Map C and asked the Board to reconsider it.
- Casey Roscoe said at-large representation does not adequately represent rural residents and framed the issue as a rural/urban divide rather than partisan politics. Saying that rural residents should have direct representation by commissioners familiar with rural issues, he asked Bend-area residents to support ensuring rural representation.
- Rob Imhoff noted he had opposed expanding the BOCC and said he viewed Map C as balanced and fair. Saying that different areas of the county have different interests, he urged advancing Map C to the ballot.
- Abby Kellner-Rode stated opposition to Map C and asked that it be set aside. Saying that the community needs to work on issues collectively, she urged allowing the expanded BOCC to decide whether to pursue districts.
- Andrew Kaza stated his support for nonpartisan commissioner positions and noted that partisanship had been high in the current districting process. He said Map C is flawed and would fail at the ballot.
- Rodney Cooper urged Commissioners DeBone and Adair not to be intimidated and said placing Map C on the ballot would provide sufficient public decision-making. He said if the measure fails it could be redone, and if it passes, its legality could then be addressed.
- Bryce Kellogg referenced an analysis of Map C and shared his conclusion that it shows partisan bias that could violate state law. He said sending the map to the ballot would represent an assertion that it complies with legal requirements despite anticipated legal challenges.

- Michael Tripp said that the DMAC did not reach consensus on a district map which meets state guidelines. He urged tabling action on Map C and first addressing whether districts should be created.
- Bill Schertzinger referenced rural/urban population divisions and historical perspectives on resolving conflicts. He encouraged approaches that reduce division.
- Therese Kollerer spoke to the importance of educating voters—beyond the information conveyed in the voter’s pamphlet--when any new issue goes to the ballot. She supported waiting until all five commissioners are seated before proceeding with districts.
- John Gilbert said while Map C did not appear unreasonable, districts are not needed. He urged continuing with at-large Commissioner elections while maintaining rural representation.
- Jim Barnett encouraged careful consideration of whether districts would create an “us versus them” dynamic and said if districts are created, Commissioners could still be elected at-large by all County voters.
- Jim Dunn said ranked choice voting is not the answer. He did not want Bend voters to over-influence the County’s rural residents.
- Freddy Finney-Jordet said Map C was unfair and would discourage civic engagement. He urged rejecting Map C and going back to the drawing board.
- Michi Sato said the proposed district map has compelled participation from even minimally involved persons. She urged the Board to stop and rethink the process, wait for the new commissioners, and ensure a more open public process.
- Helen Guerrero-Randall supported having districts but not Map C. She said Bend residents care about the whole county and are not “Bend-centric.”
- Keith Rockow said it has not been proven that Map C is gerrymandered and that political affiliation was not considered in drafting the map. Rockow referenced constitutional and voting rights considerations and urged allowing voters to decide on Map C.
- Nunzie Gould said voters approved expanding the BOCC but did not vote to create districts. She supported ranked choice voting and allowing voters to choose boundaries if those are desired, and reminded that many Bend addresses are assigned to properties outside of city limits.

There being no one else who wished to speak, the public hearing was closed at 11:13 am.

8. Commissioner District Draft Map Next Steps

Jen Patterson, Strategic Initiatives Manager, reviewed the recommendations to the Board from the District Mapping Advisory Committee (DMAC), as follows:

- Forward Map C to a ballot for consideration by the voters;

- Utilize a random process to number districts (Patterson noted that this had already occurred during the Board's annual retreat on January 15th); and
- If the voters approve a map, redistrict after the 2030 census.

Patterson said if the Board decides to forward Map C to voters, it must also decide whether to place that on the May 2026 or November 2026 ballot.

Commissioner DeBone thanked participants for engaging and commented on his perspective regarding the process and the range of viewpoints expressed.

Commissioner Adair referenced the DMAC's ten meetings and stated she wanted additional time to review what had been shared through written and oral comments. She further wanted to conduct additional research regarding assertions about partisan impacts, particularly by reviewing voter registration numbers with County Clerk Steve Dennison. She noted that the DMAC had been instructed not to consider the political affiliations of voters when drafting a map.

Noting that the Board has received numerous emails on this subject, Commissioner Chang said the majority who have commented oppose Map C. He listed concerns including the potential for legal challenge and suggested tabling a decision and allowing the future five-member BOCC to determine next steps.

Discussion ensued relating to comments made regarding the Board's approval of the Thornburgh Destination Resort, the fact that the original approval of this development predated the service of all three current Commissioners, and how land use decisions affect water resources.

Commissioner Chang noted the consensus of a majority of the Board to bring this matter back on February 4th for a decision. Noting that this matter was legislative rather than quasi-judicial, he encouraged continued public communication during the intervening period.

A break was announced at 11:38 am. The meeting resumed at 11:48 am.

9. Intergovernmental Agreement with the Oregon Health Authority for the financing of Community Mental Health Programs through June 30, 2027

Cheryl Smallman, Health Services Business Officer, presented a proposed intergovernmental agreement with the Oregon Health Authority for the financing of community mental health programs. Smallman noted the agreement amount of \$12,681,197 represented an increase of approximately \$785,000 in base

funding over the last IGA, and said the contract term is 18 months starting January 1, 2026.

Smallman described the revised County Financial Assistance Agreement (CFAA) structure and summarized three main negotiated changes:

- (1) Oregon DOJ/OHA “held harmless” language is tied to implementing the required local plan;
- (2) Several contract language adjustments were presented as equal-priority bullet points rather than a numbered hierarchy; and
- (3) New language addressing “substantial compliance” standards to reduce compliance risk based on discretionary interpretation.

Smallman noted that the language “subject to availability of funds” remains a point of concern, and the County would seek additional protections in future contracts.

Holly Harris, Health Services Director, added that the CFAA revision process had been an exercise in trust with the negotiated agreement representing forward movement.

Discussion included questions about how prior CFAAs were structured, with Harris stating that previous agreements tied numerous service elements to specific reporting requirements. The revised approach allows for increased allocation flexibility and potentially reduced reporting.

ADAIR: Move approval of Document No. 2025-1054, an intergovernmental agreement with the Oregon Health Authority for the financing of Community Mental Health Programs

DEBONE: Second

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

OTHER ITEMS:

- Commissioner Chang relayed that the Circuit Court requested use of County facilities to support a youth mock trial event. As this request was within the Chair’s discretion to respond, he shared that he had granted permission for this use.
- Commissioner Adair reported that the scheduled Central Oregon Health Council meeting had again been cancelled at the last minute.

- Commissioner Chang stated he would travel to Salem today for tomorrow's meeting of the Oregon Transportation Commission.
- Commissioner DeBone reported attending the Behavioral Health Advisory Board meeting and said the BHAB is engaged and up to speed on the CFAA agreement.
- Commissioner Adair announced that the number of Firewise communities in Deschutes County has increased from 35 in 2019 to 101 currently.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

ADJOURN:

Being no further items to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 12:02 pm.

DATED this 26th day of February 2026 for the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners.



PHIL CHANG, CHAIR

ATTEST:



**BRENNE FITZBOLD
RECORDING SECRETARY**



ANTHONY DEBONE, VICE CHAIR



PATTI ADAIR, COMMISSIONER