



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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

FOR RECORDING STAMP ONLY

BOCC MEETING MINUTES

1:00 PM

MONDAY April 15, 2024

Allen Room
Live Streamed Video

Present were Commissioners Patti Adair, Tony DeBone and Phil Chang. Also present were County Administrator Nick Lelack; Legal Counsel Dave Doyle; 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 p.m.

Commissioner Adair announced Environmental Health Specialists and Wastewater Specialists Day and spoke to the critical services these staff provide to the County.

Commissioner DeBone added that the Oregon Water Operators Association had its annual conference in Sunriver last week.

CITIZEN INPUT: None

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Property Tax Work-off Programs

Robert Tintle, Chief Financial Officer/Tax Collector, said the State allows certain entities to establish a program whereby qualified persons can work off the value of their property taxes rather than pay them. Tintle stressed this is not a funded

program and, if established, would have to include a funding source so the owed property taxes are paid in full.

Jason Brockie, Property Tax Section Manager, Oregon Department of Revenue (DOR), said the State is not aware of any jurisdiction which has decided to implement this program since it was authorized in 1993. Under the legislation, eligible persons can work off their property tax bills instead of paying them. Although there is no minimum income threshold, an applicant must be at least 60 years of age and the property must be the applicant's primary owner-occupied residence. Brockie said the work done in lieu of paying property taxes could be done by someone other than the applicant/property owner.

Following discussion, Scot Langton, County Assessor, said all of the taxing districts in the county must be kept whole in terms of taxes owed and paid, thus any property tax worked off would still have to be remitted by another source.

Tittle agreed that because property taxes cannot be abated, the taxing districts must be paid all of the taxes owed to them.

In response to a question, County Counsel David Doyle said a fire district could not implement this program, which is restricted to counties and municipalities. He added that any property taxes worked off would constitute taxable income to the taxpayer.

Brockie said that while DOR has the authority to determine and issue rules for this program, it has not done so as no entity has implemented the program.

Tittle noted that the County's property tax deferral program allows for taxes to be deferred and paid after a property is sold.

Langton spoke to the residency requirement of the tax deferral program, which currently has approximately 150 participants.

Commissioner Adair encouraged that this program be more widely promoted as some eligible property owners may not be aware of it.

Commissioner Chang said the State's work-off program appears to offer a small amount of tax relief for a great deal of administrative work.

2. **Volunteer E-Mail Policy Discussion**

Whitney Hale, Deputy County Administrator, sought feedback from the Board on a potential new policy which would require that certain volunteers be assigned

and use a County email address in the course of their volunteer work. Hale said many volunteer members of boards and committees do work on behalf of the County, and requiring them to utilize County email addresses for communications associated with that work would facilitate the gathering of public records if and when necessary. Staff proposes that initially, the policy apply to the Audit Committee, Budget Committee, Dog Control Board of Supervisors, Facility Project Review Committee, Fair Board, Planning Commission, Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund Advisory Committee, and the Wolf Depredation Compensation and Financial Assistance Committee.

Hale concluded that the cost of providing and managing these email accounts is estimated to be about \$14 per month per volunteer, or a total annual cost of about \$10,000.

Stephanie Marshall, Assistant Legal Counsel, expanded on the difficulty of gathering public records from personal email accounts. She noted that under State law, the County is responsible for producing those records, however hard it may be to access them. She added that this change would relieve volunteers from having to search their personal email accounts for responsive records in the event of a records request.

Commissioner Adair stated her agreement with the eight groups selected for the initial implementation of this policy.

Commissioner Chang asked if the County could send emails to the new County-managed email addresses and simultaneously to personal email addresses, if requested, as some volunteers may not want to check the assigned County email address solely for the purpose of receiving notifications.

Hale confirmed this is possible, although any response made would have to be sent through the County-owned email address.

Hale said if the Board approves this policy, staff will develop a training video for affected volunteers that would explain the reason for the requirement and also provide public records, open meetings and cybersecurity training as appropriate. She concluded that staff will add the policy to an upcoming Board meeting agenda for consideration of adoption.

OTHER ITEMS:

- Commissioner DeBone shared that he served as auctioneer for an event which raised funds for La Pine High School's graduation night celebration.
- Commissioner DeBone attended Redmond High School's Career Day.

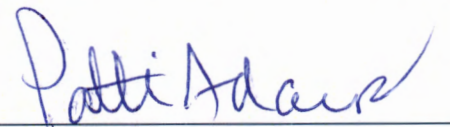
- Commissioner DeBone reported on the annual FAN luncheon last Friday.
- Commissioner DeBone reported on last Thursday's meeting of FEMA's Region 10 Emergency Communications Committee where information was shared about the impacts from last January's ice storm, which resulted in significant power and communications outages.
- Commissioner Chang reported that the public land steward clean-up event on China Hat Road on Saturday was very well-attended.
- Commissioner Chang also attended the COCC meal of the year event on Saturday.
- Commissioner Adair reported on the Sunriver Chamber meeting on Thursday.
- Commissioner Adair spoke at the recent COHC meeting on the safe parking program in Redmond, which is experiencing a funding gap due to new insurance rules.
- Commissioner Adair attended the recent COACT meeting where concern was expressed regarding ODOT's decision to hire someone as director for Region 4 who has no transportation experience instead of a candidate who is very well-qualified for this position.
- Commissioner Adair reported on anti-trafficking efforts by Saving Grace.
- County Administrator Nick Lelack noted the full Board will not be in attendance at this Wednesday's meeting. The Board was in consensus to move the DSL land exchange item to the meeting of Monday, April 22nd.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

ADJOURN:

Being no further items to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 2:12 pm.

DATED this 8th day of May, 2024 for the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners.



PATTI ADAIR, CHAIR

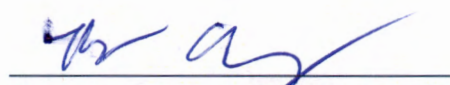
ATTEST:



RECORDING SECRETARY



ANTHONY DEBONE, VICE CHAIR



PHIL CHANG, COMMISSIONER