

MALHEUR COUNTY COURT MINUTES
December 6, 2023

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Court was called to order by Judge Dan Joyce at 9:00 a.m. in the County Court Office of the Malheur County Courthouse with Commissioner Ron Jacobs and Commissioner Jim Mendiola present. Members of the media, public and staff had the opportunity to join the meeting electronically or in-person. Present in the meeting room were Administrative Officer Lorinda DuBois and Pat Caldwell of the Malheur Enterprise. Notice of the meeting was posted on the County Website, Courthouse bulletin board and emailed to the Argus Observer, Malheur Enterprise, and those persons who have requested notice. The meeting was audio recorded. The agenda is recorded as instrument # 2023-3439

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS; LOCAL PROJECTS/STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY

Ariel Foster and Lindsay Grosvenor met with the Court. Ariel Foster is the Saint Alphonsus Community Health & Wellbeing Coordinator and Lindsay Grosvenor is the Strategic Partnerships Program Manager for Oregon Food Bank and Coordinator for the Western Treasure Valley Food System Partnership. Ms. Grosvenor and Ms. Foster reviewed the outcomes from the health-system wide community health needs assessment (CHNA) which was completed June 2023, provided information on the Western Treasure Valley Food System Partnership & Ontario Community Food Center project, and answered questions from the Court members. The CHNA is a requirement of the federal qualifications for nonprofit health systems and is done every three years. Data is gathered primarily from surveys, focus groups, and key informant interviews. Key priorities identified in Malheur County were: Safe, stable, affordable housing; access to affordable healthcare, including oral and vision; and safe, reliable transportation.

The availability of affordable food options was not identified as a key priority but it was identified as a high concern. (Food insecurity may be identified as a higher priority now that the EBT benefit extension has ended; the number of individuals accessing food pantries has increased since the EBT benefit extension ended.) Food insecurity for children ages 0-17 is higher in Malheur County than the rest of Oregon. Approximately 12,000-13,000 individuals are accessing food pantries monthly in Malheur county.

The Western Treasure Valley Food Systems Partnership is a collaboration of private and public partners working together to build capacity and further develop the community food system in the Western Treasure Valley Region. Long term goals include a community food hub and a shared-use kitchen co-located on a campus with River Bend Place affordable housing development and Valley Family Health Care's new clinic. The project is funded through a two-year USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) Regional Food Systems Planning Grant and match funds from local organizations. A public fundraising campaign will begin in 2024. \$3.6 million in

Congressional funding has been secured for the facility itself; the project is estimated to be approximately \$8 million; and a scaled-back version of the project is approximately \$6.5 million.

The Court was asked what role they could play in supporting the project, and other projects, that aim to improve community health and wellbeing. The Court expressed support for the project and a willingness to have future conversations to lend support to the project.

See instrument # 2023-3442 for the complete power-point presentation. The Community Health Needs Assessment is available at:

https://www.saintalphonsus.org/assets/documents/chna/ontario/2023-community-health-needs-assessment-for-saint-alphonsus-medical-center_ontario.pdf

ESD - EARLY LEARNING HUB

Meeting with the Court from Malheur Education Service District (ESD) were: Kelly Poe, Director of Early Learning; Marshall Hooker, Incoming Director of Early Learning; Rod Belknap, Incoming Assistant Director of Early Learning; Tanya Faughn, Administrative Assistant; and Mark Redmond, Superintendent. Ms. Poe explained that in 2013, Malheur, Baker and Wallowa counties supported a collaborative effort to focus on young children. (This was after the closing of the county Commission on Children and Families.) In the last ten years, the Malheur Home Visiting Network has expanded into home visiting system coordination and there are 28 different home visiting programs across the three counties. Literacy has been consistently supported. Rod Belknap leads committees in each of the three counties that focus on Kindergarten Transition. Preschool options and child care options have increased over the years. Theresa Martinez is the Child Care Resources Coordinator and leads the Eastern Oregon Child Care Resources team; the team is responsible for support to all child care programs. The ESD staff present introduced themselves. Mr. Redmond expressed appreciation for the accomplishments of Ms. Poe over the last ten years.

AUDIT

John Russell of Zwygart John & Associates, Certified Public Accountants, met with the Court and reviewed the County's 2022-2023 Audit. Zwygart John & Associates audited the modified cash basis financial statements of the government activities, the business-type activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of Malheur County for the year ended June 30, 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements. Funds with expenditures over appropriations were Juvenile Crime Prevention and Special Transportation. See instrument # 2023-3438 for the complete audit. The audit will also be placed on the County website. Commissioner Mendiola moved to approve the County's audit for the year ended June 30, 2023. Commissioner Jacobs seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

CROSSING PERMIT

Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve Crossing Permit #36-23 to Sparklight for work on NW 22nd Avenue #3096. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The original permit will be kept on file at the Road Department.

COURT MINUTES

Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve Court Minutes of November 29, 2023 as written. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

RELEASE OF CLAIMS

Commissioner Jacobs moved to execute Release of All Claims regarding Zaitz, et al. vs Malheur County, et al., Malheur County Circuit Court Case No. 22CV30754. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Malheur County accepts the sum of \$68,911.31 to be paid by the insurance carrier for Gregory Smith and Gregory Smith & Company, LLC (Limited Liability Company). See instrument # 2023-3443

CHECK REGISTER

Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve Accounts Payable Register for November 2023. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

ACCEPTANCE OF RESIGNATION - EVANS

Commissioner Jacobs moved to accept the resignation of Planning Director/Environmental Health Director Eric Evans. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

PROVIDER CONTRACT - BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve Provider Contract for Juvenile Crime Prevention Services 2023-2025 with Boys and Girls Club of the Western Treasure Valley. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously. See instrument# 2023-3441

UPDATED COUNTY POLICY 311

Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve revisions to County Policy 311 - Retirement/Employment of PERS (Public Employees Retirement System) Retirees. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Oregon law changed regarding employment of PERS retirees and the new law sunsets 2034. See instrument # 2023-3440

ONE-TIME PAYMENT TO COUNTY EMPLOYEES

The Court discussed that they have been wanting to increase the wages of County employees to be more competitive with surrounding jurisdictions throughout the state. Since it is midway through the fiscal year changing the salary schedules is cumbersome. Union agreements terminate December 2024 and negotiations will take place in 2024 with both Unions. The COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) in July 2023 was lower than other jurisdictions. Rather, it was suggested that a one-time payment of possibly \$1,500 could be made to staff through the January payroll process (pro-rated based on FTE (Full Time Equivalent) and calendar months employed in 2023). The payment could be made through a budget transfer from unappropriated cash on hand (County general funds) to the employee recognition line-item. Retention of staff is important to the Court as is recruitment. The Court took the matter under advisement.

COURT ADJOURNMENT

Judge Joyce adjourned the meeting.

Residential Lease Agreement with Malheur County Fair Board and Cody King, Zach Gerhards, and Jacob Temple recorded as instrument # 22023-3472