

MALHEUR COUNTY COURT MINUTES
January 25, 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. Staff present was Administrative Officer Lorinda DuBois. Members of the media, public, and staff had the opportunity to join the meeting electronically or in-person. 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 # 2023-232

PUBLIC HEARING - SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET

Judge Joyce opened the public hearing for consideration of Resolution R23-03. The public hearing was necessary in order to allocate additional opioid settlement funds that were not anticipated when the adopted budget was prepared; these funds will be used for opioid abatement strategies. The supplemental budget also allocates motor voter reimbursement funds in the Clerks' Fund. No public comments were received. Judge Joyce closed the hearing. Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve Resolution R23-03: In the Matter of Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Supplemental Budget by Resolution Under Local Budget Law ORS 294.471. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously. See instrument # 2023-233

HEALTH DEPARTMENT - UPDATE

Health Department Director Sarah Poe met with the Court to provide a department update and answered questions from the Court members.

Health Outcomes for Malheur county: 26% of adults rate themselves as having poor or fair health (as compared to 17% for Oregon and the United States); 77.4 years life expectancy which is slightly lower than the average for Oregon which is 79.7 (national is 78.5); diabetes prevalence is 12% of adults compared to an 8% Oregon average (9% national); higher rates of both physical and mental distress (self-reported); lower childhood mortality rate than the US (United States) average; and while there has been an increase in HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Viruses) cases, the county is still lower overall than the prevalence both in the state and nationally.

Health Behaviors: Highest concerns are the rates of sexually transmitted infections, teen pregnancy, high school and college graduation, and a lack of exercise access - only about 37% of our county reports that they have places where they can exercise compared to over 80% of other Oregonians. Only 4% of people with low incomes in our county don't live near a grocery store, so that means 96% of people who have lower income do have access to food; unemployment is lower than both the state and national average; the rate of excessive drinking and alcohol impaired driving deaths is lower than the state and national average; motor vehicle deaths and violent crime are also lower than average; and we have an above average number of social associations (civic, political religious, sports, and professional organizations).

Respiratory Viruses: Of the many diseases that are mandatory reported to public health, influenza, RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus), and COVID-19 are not among them. These viruses are common, contagious, and a low risk for most people. In November and December, a shortage of hospital beds was noted in both Idaho and Oregon, specifically for pediatrics, in-part because there is not a lot of ICU (Intensive Care Unit) beds for pediatrics and that overflowed into the general pediatric beds. The most severe cases of COVID-19 and flu are among people who are not vaccinated and have higher risk factors. There has been a steady decline in Ontario's wastewater sampling of SARS-CoV-2 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2). There is still a lot of virus circulating in the community but there are far, far fewer people really sick. Some of the reportable diseases include West Nile, syphilis, meningitis, rabies, STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections), and tuberculosis.

Recommendations: Health is Wealth is an incentive program to increase recommended surveillance testing, immunization, and awareness of public health services. Upon completion of the program, participants (age 18 and up) receive a \$100 give card. Participants receive baseline testing for HIV, syphilis, hepatitis C, chlamydia and gonorrhea. Immunizations must be up to date (including COVID); and participants must complete short educational sessions through 10 core programs. Another recommendation is to build a relationship with your healthcare provider so that you are getting recommended testing and being proactive to be as healthy as possible. Connecting with the people that you care about is also helpful, especially those with young children or older adults. Alertsense is a county-wide, opt-in, emergency notification program.

The Health Department has 12 programs and each program has measurable goals. Monthly public health learning labs will be held throughout 2023 at the Health Department; each month one Health Department program will be highlighted. Programs are: Vital Statistics, WIC (Women, Infants and Children), Communicable Disease, Family Planning, OHP (Oregon Health Plan) Application Assistance, Emergency Preparedness, Immunizations, Peer Support Services, Maternal and Child Health, Tobacco Prevention and Education, Community Partnerships, and Environmental Public Health.

Modernization funding through the State requires three plans: Climate Adaption Plan, All Hazards Plan and a Health Equity Plan. A firm has been contracted with to assist with creating these plans. A strategic Plan will also be drafted. The Department's Triennial Review through Oregon Health Authority is also this year.

The Health Department also works with the schools to run their immunization records to ensure all students are vaccinated; vaccine clinics are currently being held.

Ms. Poe also shared information on the modernized framework for governmental public health services. Public Health Modernization requires that foundational programs and capabilities are present at every health department. The goal is that public health is not different in the various counties. This is very difficult as workforces are different; needs are different, and capacity is limited. For smaller and more rural counties it is far more work than it is for large public health departments.

Commissioner Jacobs asked Ms. Poe about funding from Oregon Health Authority that is going to Community Based Organizations (CBOs) rather than public health departments. There is an effort at the State level to restructure public health; funding is being divided between local public health and Community Based Organizations. There are currently 7 organizations in Malheur county receiving tobacco prevention funding, in addition to the Health Department's program. The Health Department program is subject to extensive reporting requirements; CBOs have not been required to report. CBOs do not have the same metrics and work plans as local public health and are not required to work with local public health. Commissioner Jacobs noted that members of the Eastern Oregon Counties Association (EOCA) have expressed concern about this matter and are supportive of local public health departments.

CROSSING PERMIT

Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve Crossing Permit #02-23 to Idaho Power Company for work on Alameda Drive #869. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

COURT MINUTES

Commissioner Mendiola moved to approve Court Minutes of January 18, 2023 as written. Commissioner Jacobs seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

LPSCC

Judge Joyce moved to appoint Commissioner Mendiola to the Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (LPSCC) as the County Court representative. Commissioner Jacobs seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

CONTRACT - MARCUM

Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve Personal/Professional Services Contract - Table Top Exercises for Malheur County Local Emergency Planning Committee with Dean H. Marcum. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously. See instrument # 2023-234

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session was called in accordance with ORS 192.660(2)(e) Real Property Transactions with Judge Joyce presiding and Commissioner Jacobs and Commissioner Mendiola present. Also present were County Counsel Stephanie Williams and Administrative Officer Lorinda DuBois. No decisions were made during or following the session.

COURT ADJOURNMENT

Judge Joyce adjourned the meeting.