

MALHEUR COUNTY COURT MINUTES
April 16, 2025

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Court was called to order by Judge Dan Joyce at 9:00 a.m. 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 was Administrative Officer Lorinda DuBois and Economic and Community Development Coordinator Taylor Rembowski. 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 #2025-1089

BULLY CREEK PARK

Raymond Hage met with the Court regarding Bully Creek Park. Also present were Vic Hinrich, Jessica Vialpando, and Karlene Keller. Maintenance Supervisor Don Dalton was present for a portion of the session. Sergeant Greg Romans also joined the session. Numerous public members were present electronically. Mr. Hage explained he was representing the concerns of many residents who have witnessed the decline of Bully Creek Park and are eager to see it restored to its former glory; they do not want to see the park closed. Mr. Hage expressed concern with issues such as dead trees, limbs, and mole hills. Mr. Hage shared a packet with the Court members; the packet contained written questions from Mr. Hage, a list of people with concerns and their phone numbers, photos, potential solutions, and written correspondence from Ron Smith and Angela Smith. (County staff provided Mr. Hage with answers to his questions prior to the meeting.) Mr. Hage read a handwritten letter from Jerry Baker: I am not able to attend the meeting this morning regarding Bully Creek Park. I have voiced my concerns about the state of the park for many years, but was not able to have anyone take action. I was involved with the building of Bully Creek Dam and it was built at the time that the park was developed. For many years, the park was so beautiful, such a beautiful place to go, green grass, lots of large trees and was very well maintained. The last few years the park has deteriorated into a place that I don't even recognize anymore compared to how beautiful it was and to look at it today - the green lawn that has turned into weeds and mostly all of the large beautiful trees have died and/or are dying all because of the lack of water and care and maintenance. It is sad to see it now. There are a few places around here for people to go to enjoy camping, fishing, and enjoy the outdoors. Something must be done to bring this park back to the beautiful place that it once was and am willing to help and make this happen in any way that I can.

Mr. Hage explained he had provided a bullet point list to Senator Merkley's office regarding Bully Creek Park (included in the packet given to the Court). Included in that list was a request for funding assistance as the property is owned by Bureau of Reclamation. Funding assistance was requested for projects such as replacement of the irrigation system, replacement of the collapsed well system, and tree removal/trimming. Mr. Hage also contacted Lynn Findley about possible grants; Mr. Findley indicated there are park grants but a Master Plan is required to gain approval. Possible solutions suggested by Mr. Hage included: grants, BOR (Bureau of Reclamation) funding

assistance, organizing fun events and activities at the park to help boost revenue and build clientele, provide internet at the park and increase camping fees, and promoting Serve Day projects and Earth Day clean-up events.

Mr. Hage inquired if the Court members would attend a question and answer town hall; the Court members agreed to attend (schedules need to be coordinated).

Mr. Hinrich explained he had brought up concerns about the park in 2022.

Judge Joyce noted that he did miss Senator Merkley's recent town hall due to personal obligations, however, he works with Jessica Keys from Senator Merkley's office all the time.

Commissioner Jacobs stated that the Court recognizes that the park needs to be brought back up to the standard where it should be. The Road Supervisor oversees Bully Creek park and the Court oversees the Road Supervisor. Commissioner Jacobs and Road Supervisor Dave Tiffany have been working extensively on the park the last several days.

Jessica Vialpando explained that she believes that part of the issue that people are asking about is if the Court is managing the manager of the manager of the park and what is being done to make progress for the park to be a place that people want to continue to go to.

Sgt. Romans noted that the park does get used by people outside the area also; last season he drove through the park numerous times and estimated that 90% of the vehicles were Idaho plates.

Information Services Director Joshua Kreger noted that there is Starlink at the park. Mr. Hage suggested providing access to Wi-Fi and increasing the camping fee.

Mr. Hinrich expressed appreciation to the Court for their help. Ms. Keller expressed that the community wants answers to their questions and wants to see action; and that the community is willing to help. Ms. Keller is also involved with Serve Day through the Vale Community Coalition.

Judge Joyce explained that the County has been the recipient of Marine Board grants for the boat ramp and restrooms. An ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) project for the park was in progress with BOR; the County provided the engineered drawings and BOR was to provide the construction; as of this time BOR has not done the construction.

See instrument # 2025-1098 for the written documents from Mr. Hage.

CROSSING PERMITS

Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve the following Crossing Permits to Probst Electric, Inc.: Permit #18-25 for work on King Avenue #866; Permit #19-25 for work on Alameda Drive #863; Permit #20-25 for work on Alberta Avenue #768; Permit #21-25 for work on Clark Boulevard #857; Permit # 22-25 for work on Clark Boulevard #857; Permit # 23-25 for work on Columbia

Avenue #860; Permit #24-25 for work on Eureka Avenue #862; and Permit # 25-25 for work on Gem Avenue #865. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Original permits will be kept on file at the Road Department.

COURT MINUTES

Commissioner Mendiola moved to approve Court Minutes of April 9, 2025 as written. Commissioner Jacobs seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

AMENDMENT - IGA #180022

Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve Fifteenth Amendment to Oregon Health Authority 2023-2025 Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) for the Financing of Public Health Services, Agreement #180022. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The Financial Assistance Award is amended. See instrument #2025-1182

EARLY LEARNING HUB BOARD

Commissioner Mendiola moved to appoint Betty Gonzales, Oregon Child Development Coalition, to the Eastern Oregon Early Learning Hub Board. Commissioner Jacobs seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Ms. Gonzales replaces Mayra Pelayo on the board.

GOODFELLOW GATE PROJECT

The Goodfellow building gate project was discussed. One quote for the project was received. The contractor that submitted a quote for the project has not submitted a Unique Entity ID (UEI) Number. The property is fenced and the gate has remained open for some time now; no concerns have been reported. Commissioner Mendiola moved to award the project to the Vern's Custom Ranch Construction (the contractor who submitted a quote). Commissioner Jacobs requested the project be put on hold until the 2025/2026 Fiscal Year budget process is completed. The gate from the southside may need to be removed and new fencing installed, but it may not be necessary to replace the gate on the westside of the building. Consensus was to reevaluate the project after the budget process. Commissioner Mendiola will follow-up with the contractor in obtaining an UEI.

VALE CITY PROPERTIES

Mr. Rembowski visited with the Court about the old Vale city hall property and old fire hall property. The County placed an offer with the City of Vale for the properties in December 2023; the City of Vale did not respond to the offer in any timely fashion. The County placed another offer in the spring of 2024 asking for a first right of refusal; after some time, the City's attorney responded with some different negotiation on the first right of refusal and the Court decided to scratch that offer. In February 2025 the County placed a formal offer to the City to purchase the two properties; the offer was extended to the end of March 2025 as there had been no response from the City; and the offer expired March 28, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. Mr. Rembowski did notify the realtor and Vale City Manager that the offer was going to expire. On April 9, 2025 the City said it would accept the County's offer. However, the County's offer has expired. Mr. Rembowski provided three options for the Court to consider: extend the offer and go into a due diligence period on the properties; renegotiate a new offer; or, not move forward at all and remain status quo.

Commissioner Jacobs inquired if the due diligence process required any earnest money or money down; Mr. Rembowski did not have the contract with him but thought it wasn't more than a couple thousand dollars. Judge Joyce noted that budget meetings are next week. Commissioner Jacobs requested the matter be tabled until after budget meetings. Consensus was to table the matter until after budget meetings.

CONTRACT - BLUE SOLUTIONS

Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve Professional Service Contract for Weed Spraying with Blue Solutions LLC (Limited Liability Company). Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The contract expires June 30, 2026. See instrument #2025-1090

Judge Joyce noted that Weed Inspector Amanda Zander recently sprayed the road rights-of-way at Bully Creek Park.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Judge Joyce asked for comments from the public; there were none.

COURT ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Jacobs moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously.