

MALHEUR COUNTY COURT MINUTES
November 6, 2024

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 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 # 2024-3057

TREASURE VALLEY PARAMEDICS (TVP) - QUARTERLY REPORT

TVP, Inc. President Steve Patterson and Vice-President Heather Land met with the Court and provided a quarterly update per the terms of the personal services contract amendment. Ms. Land explained that things are starting to improve on the billing/reimbursement process. The Nyssa ambulance now has a load system which is helping employee's backs when loading patients. Needed repairs on frontline vehicles were completed. Staffing is excellent; excellent people that work great together and are committed. Ambulance services were kept out of the Federal government's No Surprise Act; a committee was formed that came out with recommendations for ambulance service that was passed in August. It is hoped that treat and releases will be paid again by Medicare and Medicaid.

BLM - UPDATE

Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Vale District, District Manager Shane DeForest met with the Court. Mr. DeForest shared the Vale BLM Quarterly Report, July-September 2024 with the Court and provided an overview of some of the District projects.

A notice to proceed has been drafted for the Boardman to Hemingway (B2H) Transmission Line Project; it is in final stages of internal review and will be issued as a conditional notice to proceed that authorizes nonground disturbing work that will allow work towards ground disturbing activity. The proposed transmission line involves multiple federal and state permitting requirements. The cultural and archaeological review process is extensive.

Malheur Field Manager Jonah Blustain is moving to another position and location in January 2025. It is hoped to fill the position as quickly as possible. Additionally, there are two vacant geologist positions (one position may be filled soon). The District also hopes have a tribal liaison position.

It is anticipated that the Louse Canyon Geographic Management Area Rangeland Health Manager Actions Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be released for public comment by the end of 2024.

In March 2025, there will be a competitive geothermal lease sale. There are two parcels along Lytle Blvd. involved in the lease sale. The lease sale does not authorize ground disturbance. A draft Environmental Assessment to analyze the impacts of the lease sale is anticipated to be out for public comment in January 2025.

Work on the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the HiTech Minerals exploration project continues; the project involves consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service due to Lahontan cutthroat trout in the area as well as the cultural analysis. The EA may be available for public comment late December 2024 or early January 2025.

The Grassy Mountain Mine Project continues to move forward. An alternative access route has been identified. A briefing on the Environmental Impact Statement may be done in January 2025; public comment on the draft EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) may be in the second quarter of 2025.

Eleven new Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ESR) plans have been developed following the 2024 fire season. The Vale District had 57 fires; approximately 366,000 acres of BLM ground was burned; 327,000 acres of private land burned; and total acres burned within the District's boundaries was approximately 760,000 acres. The fires have affected 143 BLM grazing allotments and 395 permittees. Commissioner Jacobs asked if the BLM recognizes that potential grazing practices could mitigate some of the fire activity. Mr. DeForest explained that several years ago BLM started a targeted grazing initiative; the Vale District had one in the southern part of the County. The five-year analysis showed that the off-season grazing was able to reduce the thatch on the ground (dead annual grass). Reducing the thatch exposes the soil and creates an opportunity for the native plants to survive, thrive or establish; and from a fire behavior standpoint it makes the fuel bed less continuous. There are challenges as there are not enough cows to be able to affect that kind of change on a landscape scale. Prioritization is necessary - how to use the livestock as a tool to get needed results to prove fire behavior changes and where to place those treatments; this lines up well with the Tri-State Fuel Breaks Environmental Impact Statement.

Rangelands have to be rested for a period of time sufficient to allow for adequate recovery; the resting period is defined differently in different states and districts. The Court stressed the importance that the permittees be allowed back on the ground as soon as possible.

See instrument # 2024-3059 for the Vale BLM Quarterly Report July-September 2024.

CROSSING PERMITS

Commissioner Mendiola moved to approve the following Crossing Permits: Crossing Permit #77-24 to Idaho Power for maintenance work on Grove Road #920; Crossing Permit #78-24 to Idaho Power for maintenance work on Holly Road #1022; Crossing Permit #79-24 to Idaho Power for maintenance work on Hyline Road #1077; Crossing Permit #80-24 to Idaho Power for maintenance work on Ivy Road #918; Crossing Permit #81-24 to Idaho Power for maintenance work on Juniper Road #1012; Crossing Permit #82-24 to Idaho Power for maintenance work on

Lansing Road #1020; Crossing Permit #83-24 to Idaho Power for maintenance work on Sperling Road #1019; and Crossing Permit #84-24 to Idaho Power for maintenance work on Vine Road #970. Commissioner Jacobs 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 October 30, 2024 as written. Judge Joyce seconded and the motion passed. (Commissioner Jacobs was absent on October 30, 2024.)

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session was called in accordance with ORS (Oregon Revised Statutes) 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, Administrative Officer Lorinda DuBois and Economic and Community Development Coordinator Taylor Rembowski. No decisions were made during or following the meeting.

COURT ADJOURNMENT

Judge Joyce adjourned the meeting.