

MALHEUR COUNTY BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
April 23-24, 2024

The County Budget Committee continued its meeting on April 24, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. in the County Court Office of the Malheur County Courthouse to consider the 2024/2025 budget with Judge Dan Joyce, Commissioner Ron Jacobs, and Commissioner Jim Mendiola; Budget Committee Members Janice Belnap, Bob Skinner, and Lee Newman joined at approximately 9:05 a.m.; and Budget Officer Lorinda DuBois present. Those persons discussing the budget with the Budget Committee were present electronically or in-person, as was various staff members. Notice of the meeting was published in the Argus Observer and on the County website and emailed to the Argus Observer, Malheur Enterprise, and those persons who have requested notice. The meeting was audio recorded.

ROAD DEPARTMENT

Road Supervisor Dave Tiffany discussed and answered questions concerning Page 32 - Marine & Park; Pages 40-42 - Road Fund; Page 43 - Major Bridge Fund; Page 44 - Road Equipment Fund; and Page 45 - Road Improvement Fund.

Page 32 - Marine & Park: BOR (Bureau of Reclamation) Access Compliance line item was added to correct some ADA deficiencies at Bully Creek Park. Capital Outlay is to re-stripe the parking lot. The irrigation system needs to be replaced; Mr. Tiffany is working to obtain bids for the irrigation system. The Park was reseeded this Spring.

Pages 40-42 - Road Fund: The Exchange Fund program was continued and simplified, the Road Districts receive a portion of these funds; Shop Tools & Supplies was slightly increased; repeater work is needed on Cottonwood and funding is in the Communications line item; JV Asphalt was slightly increased for a crack-seal project.

Page 43 - Major Bridge Fund: \$50,000 was transferred from the Road Fund to the Major Bridge Fund.

Page 44 - Road Equipment Fund: \$300,000 was transferred from the Road Fund to the Road Equipment Fund.

Page 46 - Road Improvement Fund: There have been no landowner road improvement projects in many years.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

District Attorney Dave Goldthorpe and Management Assistant Sasha Goodell discussed and answered questions concerning Pages 9-10 - District Attorney; Page 11 - VOCA Grant/DA; Page 12 - CAMI Grant/DA; Page 14 - CFA/DA; and Page 52 - DA Enforcement. For over a year there have been one or more vacancies for attorney positions. There is a new opportunity to hire attorneys under the Oregon State Bar's provisional licensing program - it is a mentorship program in which the attorney can gain their bar license. The classification system for the attorney positions was restructured. A Summer Clerk position was added (student clerkship). Two of the grants recently went through the audit process. The Victims Services department is

funded approximately 70% by grant funds; victims services is a constitutional requirement. Mr. Goldthorpe requested an increase to his salary supplement; the Requested budget is \$20,000 and the Proposed budget is \$12,000. See instrument # [2024-1283](#) for the written correspondence. (VOCA – Victims of Crime Act; CAMI – Child Abuse Multi-disciplinary Intervention; CFA – Criminal Fine Account.)

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Building Official Adele Schaffeld discussed Pages 73-74 - Building Department. July will be Ms. Schaffeld's fifth year running the State's building code program in Malheur county. The program is completely self-funded. The Building Department covers all of the jurisdictions in Malheur county other than the City of Ontario; Ontario has its own building department and the County provides the plumbing and electrical programs for the City of Ontario. An average of 150 permits are issued per month. It is proposed to change Ms. Schaffeld's position to a 40 hour work week (Ms. Schaffeld is responsible for plan reviews and inspections (except for electrical and some plumbing). The Building Department will relocate to the Goodfellow building in Ontario as its lease with the City of Nyssa terminates December 2024.

LAW LIBRARY

Page 49 - Law Library was reviewed.

TAYLOR GRAZING FUND

Page 53 - Taylor Grazing Fund was reviewed; this is federal funding and is used for range improvement projects; the Taylor Grazing Board will not be contributing \$25,000 to the Weed Control fund as it has in the past.

SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION FUND

Page 58 - Special Transportation Fund was reviewed; revenue is ODOT grant funds for transportation purposes and the County subcontracts with MCOA&CS to provide the services. The "5311 Match" is in this budget. (ODOT – Oregon Department of Transportation; MCOA&CS – Malheur Council on Aging and Community Services)

MENTAL HEALTH FUND

Page 65 - Mental Health Fund was reviewed; funds are from the State and passed thru to Lifeways for mental health services.

TREASURER/TAX OFFICE

Treasurer/Tax Collector Jennifer Forsyth discussed Page 8 - County Treasurer/Tax. There was recent state legislation that puts a hold on next year's foreclosure sale so the Publication/Lien Costs line item will not be fully used. Bank Fees and Affiliation Dues were slightly increased.

SNAKE RIVER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE (SREDA)

SREDA Executive Director Kristen Nieskens requested funding to support SREDA. SREDA encompasses Payette and Washington Counties (Idaho) and Malheur County and markets the 3 counties in 2 states as 1 region; it is a public-private partnership. SREDA target industries are: Agriculture and Food Processing, Distribution and Transportation, Manufacturing, Internet Based Services, and Outdoor Recreational Businesses. Membership dues for public entities is

based on a \$1/population, but not to exceed \$10,000. Funds the County has contributed to SREDA in the past are paid out of the Technical Assistance line in the Economic Development budget. Commissioner Jacobs noted that the County has its own Economic Development director and while the County is supportive of SREDA's efforts it may not financially support SREDA the full \$10,000. See instrument # [2024-1284](#) for SREDA's 2023 Annual Report.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND

Economic & Community Development Director Taylor Rembowski discussed and answered questions concerning Pages 38-39 - Economic Development Fund. Malheur County Development Corporation (MCDC) Executive Director is paid for from the Contracted Services line item. The Technical Assistance line item has historically been used to contribute funding to SWCD, SREDA and Poverty to Prosperity (P2P). Mr. Rembowski proposed contributing \$5,000 to SREDA and \$5,000 to P2P. Transfers from this budget proposed are: \$20,000 to Extension Service, \$15,000 to Special Transportation Fund, \$10,000 to Ontario Community Library for Bookmobile services, and \$122,402 to the Reload /Industrial Park Project budget.

VETERANS SERVICE

Veterans Service Office Connie Tanaka discussed and answered questions concerning Page 31 - Veterans Service; and Page 66 - CVSO (County Veterans Service Officer) Expansion Fund. Mr. Tanaka introduced Mike and Jeanie Singleton; Mr. Singleton is an Air Force Vietnam War Veteran who Mr. Tanaka has assisted. Mr. Tanaka advocates for veterans and assists with the filing of claims and benefits.

POVERTY TO PROSPERITY (P2P)

Riley Hill with Poverty to Prosperity requested \$10,000 to support efforts of P2P. This past year 65 students obtained certifications through the welding program; 22 CNA certifications; and 12 phlebotomy certifications; and 1 early childhood development certification. Current efforts include trying to implement an apprenticeship program at the high school level for plumbers and electricians. Funding to support P2P is appropriated from the Technical Assistance line in the Economic Development budget. Consensus was to contribute \$10,000 to P2P.

SREDA

Consensus was to contribute \$5,000 to SREDA.

45TH PARALLEL FUND

Page 72 - 45th Parallel Fund was reviewed; funds can only be expended upon the agreement of the District Attorney and County Court. District Attorney Goldthorpe has previously indicated he would not object to transferring the funds out of this budget. Consensus was to transfer the funds to General fund and close the 45th Parallel Fund.

The meeting recessed for lunch.

RELOAD/INDUSTRIAL PARK PROJECT

Page 75 - Reload/Industrial Park Project was reviewed; the interest and principal payment for the Business Oregon Special Public Works Fund loan is budgeted in this fund. The funds are transferred from the Economic Development Fund.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

Page 76 - American Rescue Plan was reviewed. Funds must be expended per the requirements of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). \$3,512,022 has been expended; an additional \$842,674 is obligated for projects in progress but not completed; and several projects are planned but not yet obligated. The ARPA funds must be obligated by the end of 2024; and projects must be completed by 2026. Consensus was to include the irrigation system at Bully Creek and an E-ticket system for the Sheriff's Office as ARPA projects.

OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS

Page 77 - Opioid Settlement Fund was reviewed; these funds can only be used for specific purposes as stated in the settlement agreement.

LOCAL ASSIST LATCF

Page 78 - Local Assist LATCF (Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund) was reviewed; \$2,829,839 has been expended; approximately \$9 million remains in this fund. County projects are still being considered, such as building a facility for the Dispatch Center with additional County office space. These funds are to be used for services the County government provides. ARPA does not allow for purchasing or building of new facilities; but does allow for remodeling. LATCF does allow for the purchase or building of facilities that support the County government services it provides.

ONTARIO JUSTICE COURT

Justice of the Peace Margie Mahony discussed Page 13 - Ontario Justice Court. Materials & Services line items were slightly adjusted from last year. The Justice Court is on track to bring in over \$2 million this fiscal year (does not all go to the County).

INSURANCE RESERVE

Page 80 - Insurance Reserve was reviewed. The County is self-insured for unemployment; workers compensation and liability insurance is paid from this fund.

CAR POOL FUND

Page 81 - Car Pool Fund was reviewed. A vehicle will be assigned to the Economic Development department.

GENERAL COUNTY EQUIPMENT FUND

Pages 83-84 - General County Equipment Fund was reviewed. Saving for future projects is done in this fund (such as HVAC, phone system, election equipment). The courthouse central copy machine and county phone system is in this fund.

The County budget meeting was closed and the ASD budget meeting was opened.

AMBULANCE SERVICE DISTRICT (ASD)

Ms. DuBois reviewed the Ambulance Service District budget. Notice of the budget meeting was published in the Argus Observer. A new ASD Coordinator was hired; the position is .60 FTE

(Full Time Equivalent). Direct Payments to Providers was increased approximately \$24,000 from last year.

The ASD budget meeting was closed and the County budget meeting was reopened.

GENERAL COUNTY CONTINGENCY

Page 19 - General County Contingency was adjusted with the agreed upon changes to \$2,925,576. See instrument # [2024-1285](#) for the agreed upon changes.

NON PROGRAM

Page 20 - Non Program was reviewed. A new line item for Outside Legal Defense was added. Predatory Animal Control and Dog Control are in this fund. Union Agreements expire December 2024.

GENERAL FUND NON-DEPARTMENTAL REVENUES

Page 1 - General Fund Non-Departmental Revenues was reviewed; these are revenue sources not tied to a specific department.

EXTENSION SERVICE

The Office Manager position in the Extension Service was further discussed. Mr. Newman expressed support for continuing to contribute financial support to the Extension Service as agriculture is very important to our County. Ms. DuBois explained that the Extension taxing district receives over \$500,000 annually from the County taxpayers and that contributing County General funds is additional taxpayer monies supporting the Extension programs. The County Court is the governing body of the Extension Service District; and Ms. DuBois is the budget officer. Commissioner Jacobs expressed that he believes the County should show support for the Extension Service and have a County employee at the Extension office; Commissioner Mendiola agreed with the value of having a County employee in the Extension office. Judge Joyce noted that one of the reasons for efforts to form the taxing district was that OSU (Oregon State University) was reducing funding for research carried out on Extension projects. Further discussion and changes to the budget can be made by the County Court before budget adoption in June.

APPROVALS

Judge Joyce moved to approve the budget for the Malheur County Ambulance Service District for the 2024-2025 fiscal year in the amount of \$322,120. Mr. Newman seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Judge Joyce moved to approve the budget for the Malheur County Agricultural Educational Extension Service District for the 2024-2025 fiscal year in the amount of \$2,286,065. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Judge Joyce moved to approve property taxes for the 2024-2025 fiscal year at the rate of \$0.23 per \$1,000 of assessed value for operating purposes in the District Special Fund. Commissioner Jacobs seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Judge Joyce moved to approve the budget for Malheur County for the 2024-2025 fiscal year in the amount of \$64,414,087. Mr. Newman seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Judge Joyce moved to approve property taxes for the 2024-2025 fiscal year at the rate of \$2.5823 per \$1,000 of assessed value for operating purposes in the General Fund. Mr. Newman seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned.