

Columbia County Board of Commissioners
June 10, 2025, Special Board Meeting
Hybrid from the
John Gumm Building and Civic Center
St. Helens, OR. 97051.

Present: Commissioner Kellie Jo Smith, Commissioner Margaret Magruder, Commissioner Casey Garrett, Sarah Hanson, County Counsel, Jacyn Normine, Board Office Administrator, and Budget Committee Members Paul Langner, Dan Garrison, and Kathy Engel.

CALL TO ORDER/FLAG SALUTE

Commissioner Smith called this meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

APPROVE AGENDA

Commissioner Magruder moved to approve the agenda as presented. Kathy Engel seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

- **Vote:** MM/CG/KJS/PL/KE/DG all in favor. Motion approved.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Commissioner Magruder explained the rules for this discussion. No personnel names or specific positions will be referenced in today's meeting. In today's meeting, we will discuss ideas to achieve long-term financial stability for Columbia County.

Paul Langner commented that in FY 2025/2026, we have a solution to make it through this fiscal year, resulting in nineteen (19) furlough days. This will not be sustainable in FY 2026/2027 or the following years. From 2019 to the current year, we have increased our personnel by 11.5%, accompanied by a 78% salary increase. Unfortunately, by September 2025, this Board of Commissioners will need to make some difficult decisions, which may include merging, eliminating, or returning certain county services to the State of Oregon.

A discussion was held on a list of ideas that were brought to the table today, which includes the following:

- a) What is the volume of rock supply available?
- b) Can the Assessor or GIS create a spreadsheet of county-owned orphan lots that could be added back to the tax rolls?
- c) When was the last time entities like PGE, US Gypsum, Dyno Nobel, and others, who are assessed by DOR, been reassessed?
- d) Is there a source that collects and shares information on the volume of timber harvested in Columbia County timberlands?
- e) Are leases for projects such as natural Gas Storage recently reviewed, and are lease rates indexed to the regional CPI?
- f) BPA and PGE have power transmission lines that bisect the county. Is there a method to collect a fraction of the power transmission fee? More directly, while BPA generates power for the grid, PGE generates power from Port Westward to its customers through transmission corridors that impact many residents of the county.
- g) With all the broadband discussions, is the county collecting franchise fees from the broadband providers serving the county?

- h) Is Columbia County receiving the correct vehicle registration fees for vehicles domiciled in Columbia County, but owned by out-of-county entities such as Knife River, NW Natural, PGE, and others?
- i) Is there a count of businesses operating in Columbia County, outside City limits, and what are they paying in business license fees?
- j) Can a percentage of the sanitation tipping fee for transports that move throughout the county go to the general fund?
- k) Is there a stormwater fee that the county could put into place?
- l) Combine the Sheriff and Jail Levy into one and make it into a service district.
- m) Commercial vessel moorage fee, dedicated to marine patrol?
- n) Payroll tax for transit.
- o) Rental registration fees outside city limits.
- p) Proposing a Gas tax.
- q) Reducing seven (7) positions at a minimum.
- r) Contracting out services.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Commissioner Magruder thanked everyone for attending and encouraged them to share their ideas to help make Columbia County sustainable in the long term. We will be setting up meetings with our department heads soon for continued discussion.

Commissioner Smith announced that the Board of Commissioners will hold budget hearings tomorrow at 9:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. at the John Gumm Building and Civic Center.

ADJOURN

With nothing further to come before this Board, the meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

The recording of this meeting is posted at www.columbiacountyor.gov/meetings

The next regular scheduled meeting is on June 11, 2025.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

By: _____
Kellie Jo Smith, Chair

By: _____
Casey Garrett, Commissioner

By: _____
Jacyn Normine, Board Office Administrator,

By: _____
Margaret Magruder, Commissioner