



MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

# Work Session Summary Minutes

OREGON

## Resilient Headwaters Presentation & Economic Development Program Update

January 16, 2024. 1:30 PM

Courthouse Square, 555 Court St. NE, Salem  
5th Floor, Suite 5232, Commissioners Board Room

### ATTENDANCE:

**Commissioners:** Kevin Cameron, and Colm Willis.

**Board's Office:** Matt Lawyer, Alvin Klausen, and Trevor Lane.

**Legal Counsel:** Steve Elzinga.

**Community Services:** Sarah Coutley, and Kelli Weese.

**Resilient Headwaters Coalition:** Mark Wig, Greg Hannigan and Jon-Paul Bowles

**Travel Salem:** Kara Kuh.

**Friends of the Breitenbush Cascades:** Woody Jackson.

**Detroit City Council:** Michele Tesdal.

**SEDCOR:** Kip Morris.

**Public Works:** Carl Lund.

Commissioner Colm Willis called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

### **Summary**

The meeting focused on the Resilient Headwaters Coalition's efforts to reimagine outdoor recreation in the canyon post-2020 fires. Key points included the need for better infrastructure, such as trails and rail trails, to enhance local access and economic benefits. The coalition highlighted the importance of community engagement and market demand research, noting a significant increase in outdoor recreationists post-COVID. Challenges discussed included funding constraints, seasonal access issues, and the need for coordination among land managers. Emphasized the importance of community input and potential long-term partnerships to support these initiatives.

### **Resilient Headwaters Presentation**

- Concept plan for outdoor recreation in the canyon:
  - Developed with a \$2 million Economic Opportunity Grant from the county.
- The 2020 fires destroyed many popular recreation sites in the area.
- Conducted extensive research and outreach to identify community and visitor needs:
  - Showed strong demand for more trails close to home.
  - Identified 28 opportunities.
- Aims to coordinate among the different land managers (US Forest Service, Bureau Land Management (BLM), private timber companies, etc.) to create cohesive recreation experiences.:

- Develop new trail systems, enhance river access, and improve connectivity between communities and recreation areas.
- Need for sensitivity around community perceptions:
  - Historical tensions between rural communities and outsiders benefiting from public lands.
- Collaboration with local stakeholders is needed to avoid rural communities becoming "ghost towns" of second homes and short-term rentals.
- Focus on increasing visitor spending and overnight stays in the local communities.

### **GK Machine – Rural Industrial Property Tax Exemption Application**

- Local manufacturing company.
- Submitted second application for a rural tax exemption on \$5.4 million in new machinery and equipment investments.
- The estimated annual tax savings from the exemption would be around \$76,000.
- The application includes a commitment to create 18 new jobs by the end of 2026.

### **Other**

- Minto Park Trail:
  - The \$2 million segment of the larger rail to trail effort funded through a grant from the Forest Service and Business Oregon.
  - Coordination between the two funding agencies caused delays, as Business Oregon has placed additional requirements on the grant, such as capping engineering and permitting costs until an easement is secured with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT).
  - The board emphasized moving forward with design work for the entire rail trail corridor, not just the Minto Park segment, to ensure a cohesive and connected trail system.
- Grant Simonton Letter of Support:
  - Who is now working for a nonprofit environmental organization in Eugene.
  - The board praised Mr. Simonton's work and positive attitude during his time at the county.
- FY 25-26 Economic Development Program Budget:
  - Request input from the board on priorities and projects to include.
  - The board asked for a detailed spreadsheet outlining the county's ongoing economic development projects, including information on current spending, timelines, and future funding needs.
- Detroit Marina Bid:
  - The Commissioners discussed the status of the Detroit Marina bid, which came in \$700,000 over the \$5 million budget.
- Community Services Facilities Update:
  - Timeline for staff to return to the third floor of the Courthouse Square building.
  - Staff have been assured the project will begin in FY 2025, but no specific timeline for staff to return has been given.
  - The board expressed a desire to see staff return to the third floor as soon as possible, as the current temporary workspace is not ideal.

### **Next Steps**

- Staff to provide the requested spreadsheet detailing ongoing economic development projects and the information on the Detroit Marina bid.

- Commissioners to review the GK Machine tax exemption application further at the January 29th board session.
- Staff to continue working on the Minto Park trail project and coordinate with Business Oregon and the US Forest Service.
- Staff to provide an update on the timeline for staff to return to the third floor of the Courthouse Square building.

**Adjourned** – time: 2:35 p.m.

**Minutes by:** Mary Vityukova

**Reviewed by:** Gary L. White