



**Board of Commissioners**  
 Office: (541) 766-6800  
 Fax: (541) 766-6893  
 4500 SW Research Way  
 Corvallis, OR 97330  
 co.benton.or.us

## AGENDA

*(Chair May Alter the Agenda)*

### BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS Tuesday, January 24, 2023, 9 AM

How to Participate in the Board of Commissioners Meeting			
In-Person	Zoom Video	Zoom Phone Audio	Facebook LiveStream
Kalapuya Building 4500 Research Way Corvallis, OR	<a href="#"><u>Click for Zoom link</u></a>	Dial 1(253) 215-8782	<a href="#"><u>Click for Facebook LiveStream link</u></a>
	Zoom Meeting ID: 879 2106 1782		
	Zoom Passcode: 806863		

#### 1. Opening

- 1.1 Call to Order
- 1.2 Introductions
- 1.3 Announcements

#### 2. Review and Approve Agenda

#### 3. Work Session

- 3.1 20 minutes – Annual Report from the Marys River Watershed Council – *Holly Purpura, Marys River Watershed Council*
- 3.2 30 minutes – Update from the Corvallis-Benton County Economic Development Office (CBCEDO) – *Jerry Sorte, CBCEDO Supervisor*
- 3.3 20 minutes – Annual Report from the Linn-Benton Housing Authority – *Donna Holt, Linn-Benton Housing Authority Executive Director*
- 3.4 20 minutes – Report from the Oregon Water Resources Department Water District 22 Water Master – *Joel Plahn, State of Oregon Water Resources Department*

**The Board will take a brief recess between the Work Session and Business Meeting**

*The Board of Commissioners may call an executive session when necessary pursuant to ORS 192.660. The Board is not required to provide advance notice of an executive session. However, every effort will be made to give notice of an executive session. If an executive session is the only item on the agenda for the Board meeting, notice shall be given as for all public meetings (ORS 192.640(2)) and the notice shall state the specific reason for the executive session as required by ORS 192.660.*

The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. A request for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for other accommodations for persons with disabilities should be made at least 48 hours before the meeting to the Board of Commissioners Office, (541) 766-6800.

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**BUSINESS MEETING**

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**4. New Business**

- 4.1 Adoption of Resolution No. R2023-001, requesting the Governor add Benton County to the list of counties considered for inclusion in Executive Order 23-02 related to the State of Emergency caused by the epidemic of homelessness – *Xanthippe Augerot, Vice Chair, Board of Commissioners*
- 4.2 Approval of Board of Commissioners letter to the Governor requesting inclusion in Executive Order 23-02 Declaring a State of Emergency on Homelessness – *Xanthippe Augerot, Vice Chair, Board of Commissioners*

**5. Information Sharing (If time permits, the following section will be heard)**

- 5.1 Pat Malone, Chair
- 5.2 Xanthippe Augerot, Vice Chair
- 5.3 Nancy Wyse, Commissioner

**6. Other**

ORS 192.640(1)“ . . . notice shall include a list of the principal subjects anticipated to be considered at the meeting, but this requirement shall not limit the ability of a governing body to consider additional subjects.”

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**Tuesday, January 24, 2023**

**Zoom link:**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87921061782?pwd=MEUvNEhldDhVT3RCNzBYZnpOUFLQ09#success>

**Livestream:** <http://facebook.com/BentonCoGov>

**9:00 a.m.**

**Present:** **Pat Malone**, Chair; **Xanthippe Augerot**, Commissioner; **Nancy Wyse**, Commissioner; **Vance Croney**, County Counsel

**Excused:** **Joe Kerby**, County Administrator

**Staff:** **Julie Arena**, HOPE Program Administrator; **Cory Grogan**, Public Information Officer; **Suzanne Hoffman**, Health; **Amanda Makepeace**, BOC staff; **Sean McGuire**, Sustainability; **Erika Milo**, BOC Recorder; **Darren Nichols**, Community Development

**Guests:** **John Harris**, Horsepower Productions; **Donna Holt**, Linn-Benton Housing Authority; **Alex Powers**, Mid-Valley Media; **Holly Purpura**, Marys River Watershed Council; **Jerry Sorte**, Corvallis-Benton County Economic Development Office

**1. Opening**  
**1.1 Call to Order**

Chair Malone called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

**1.2 Introductions**  
**1.3 Announcements**

There were no announcements.

**2. Review and Approve Agenda**

No changes were made to the agenda.

**3. Work Session**

**3.1 Annual Report from the Marys River Watershed Council (MRWC) – Holly Purpura, Executive Director, Marys River Watershed Council**

Purpura provided a staff update. MRWC is recruiting for an education project manager and a new restoration programming position. In fiscal year 2021-22, MRWC served 185 members, 72 volunteers, over 400 Kindergarten-12<sup>th</sup> Grade students, and engaged over 1,200 residents through education and restoration programming. Total fiscal year 2021-22 income was \$916,34 and expenses were \$431,019. MRWC received a large bequest which helped build sustainability in the organization and expand restoration programs. Purpura gave highlights of education programming, which has mostly resumed in-person engagement and has expanded. MRWC is working towards creating a dual-immersion English-Spanish Outdoor School. MRWC is a core member of the Confluence group; construction of a building is underway with Alan Ayres of Benton County Soil and Water Conservation District (BCSWCD). Other members are Greenbelt

Land Trust, Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation & Development, and Corvallis Environmental Center.

Malone asked when organizations might move into the Confluence building.

Purpura replied that the group is seeking funds to outfit the building interior, projected to cost \$1 million. BCSWCD still hopes to be part of the building, but is not a core member. The Institute for Applied Ecology purchased its own building, but is still involved in other ways.

Augerot noted the County will offer another round of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grants, contingent on the outcome of the Justice Systems Improvement Program (JSIP) bond measure. Funding leads are Rick Crager and Shurisa Steed, Finance. Supporting non-profits affected by COVID-19 is an ARPA funding focus.

Purpura described Mid-Valley River Connections (MVRC), a partnership of watershed councils on the mid-Willamette River. In 2022, the group collaborated on grant writing and restoration, seeking Federal funding from the Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure Bond. MVRC applied for a 2022 grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) for fish passage replacements; the project was not funded, but ranked high, and staff hope to resubmit. NOAA has \$98 million per year available for the next five years.

The Mid-Willamette Beaver Partnership (MWBP) surveyed 4,000 area stakeholders to understand limiting factors for beavers. Beavers do much of the same restoration work as watershed councils. MWBP provides technical assistance to evaluate opportunities for beaver dam building.

The Trout Friendly Landscapes Program for urban watersheds has held planning meetings. The County provided funding to convene a technical advisory team, working with Benton County Public Works and Community Development. Other MRWC projects include the invasive knotweed treatment program, installation of large woody debris in Woods Creek (to be completed in summer 2023), and Muddy Creek environmental DNA sampling and monitoring. Purpura noted that the emerald ash borer insect has now been found in Oregon, which is concerning due to the huge numbers of ash trees in riparian areas.

Augerot asked if MRWC was still involved in partnership with schools in Mexico.

Purpura replied that MRWC had paused involvement due to limited funding and staff capacity.

### **3.2 Update from the Corvallis-Benton County Economic Development Office (CBCEDO) – Jerry Sorte, CBCEDO Supervisor**

Sorte explained that the office has lost two of four employees; staff are focusing on funding deadlines and continue to be the point of contact for individuals looking to start a business. CBCEDO received two County ARPA grants, one for the South Corvallis Food Hub project; staff have assembled a work group, and next will hire a consultant. The other grant will create a business recovery funding program; Sorte to provide more detail at a February 2023 Board Meeting. Staff are also working on the Outdoor Dining in Corvallis program, which started during the pandemic. Corvallis City Manager Mark Shepard is planning next steps for the office. Responding to a question from Augerot, Sorte replied that work with partner organizations was going well.



Augerot asked about other projects that former employee Kate Porsche was working on with rural cities such as Adair Village and Philomath.

Sorte replied those projects were now on hold.

Augerot commented that CBCEDO is also working with Corvallis on climate action, and expressed concern about staff capacity.

Sorte noted that the Federal Inflation Reduction Act may provide funding for energy efficiency improvements relating to climate work.

Malone asked if the office would try to replace both open positions.

Sorte replied that depended on Shepard's direction, but the office was not currently recruiting.

Chair Malone recessed the meeting at 9:43 a.m. and reconvened at 9:51 a.m.

### **3.3 Annual Report from the Linn-Benton Housing Authority (LBHA) – Donna Holt, Linn-Benton Housing Authority Executive Director**

Holt explained that LBHA is a public developer of affordable housing with significant contracts from Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Programs include voucher assistance, Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing, Moderate Rehabilitation, Emergency Housing Vouchers (providing navigators for homeless families), and Mainstream Vouchers for non elderly, non-disabled clients. LBHA owns and manages 250 affordable housing units, supports the local economy with about \$24 million in Federal funding, and works with many community partners.

Holt provided details of the Housing Choice Voucher Program, or Section 8, a federally subsidized rent assistance program. There is a one-to-three year waiting list of about 3,000 people. Over 700 landlords currently participate. The voucher program has a less than 50% success (usage) rate in both counties, but the rate for January 2023 is almost 60%. If a recipient cannot find a residence in time, they must re-apply, although LBHA can make some exceptions.

The success rate improvement is due to a change in LBHA's financial structure. Because funds must sometimes be expended before HUD funding is received, LBHA usually maintains reserves. Instead, LBHA has decided to spend down its reserves, which HUD also recommended, due to increasing rents in the area. If LBHA spends more than it receives from HUD, it would be necessary to use administrative funding; however, Holt did not anticipate that happening in the next few years. This approach is proving successful.

Benton County has historically had a 25% utilization of regular housing choice vouchers; the rate is now 32%. The presence of Oregon State University limits housing availability and increases costs. If families cannot find a rental in Benton, they often live in Linn and commute. Mainstream vouchers are 44% utilized in Benton. LBHA has the third highest rate of success in Oregon for emergency housing vouchers (60% in Benton, 40% in Linn) due to partnership with CSC and others, outreach, and navigation. LBHA is seeking resources to retain the navigator after this program is fully leased. Success rates in are increasing in Benton County.

Augerot asked if LBHA would lose the navigator when the emergency vouchers lapse.

Holt replied that those funds end this year. LBHA will retain the navigator but may not be able to expand duties. Hopefully HUD will roll the emergency vouchers into regular vouchers.

Augerot asked if LBHA had talked to Governor Tina Kotek's office about investing in navigators for HUD vouchers.

Holt replied that staff discussed this with Kotek.

Augerot noted that Speaker Dan Rayfield dedicated some State ARPA funding to LBHA for housing in Benton, and asked the status of that.

Holt replied that LBHA has the funding targeted for projects and is waiting to receive funds. The main focus is \$750,000 for the Turnkey 2.0 project.

Augerot asked how partnership with DevNW was going; DevNW has been quiet in this area.

Holt agreed there had not much activity or communication. DevNW experienced high staff turnover. Collaboration still exists, such as the Camas Commons project. When the Commons has year-end cash flow, some funds go to DevNW to provide family resources; LBHA is trying to determine how DevNW is using the funds. LBHA delivers the services as property manager. LBHA needs to develop relationships with the new staff at DevNW.

Malone asked about possible opportunities with Kotek, given Kotek's emphasis on housing.

Holt replied that Kotek's Declaration of a State of Emergency for Homelessness and Affordable Housing provides funding opportunities. Holt worked with Kotek in the past, and Rayfield is on the LBHA board of directors, so there is close communication. Responding to a question from Malone, Holt replied that LBHA has about 35 employees.

Malone asked if the increase in HUD funding from \$17 million to \$24 million would allow LBHA to keep even with price increases.

Holt replied that HUD has historically funded housing authorities at less than 100% of need; however, this year is close to 90%. The voucher program has been cut in the past, but in the last few years, funding has been 99-100%, which has allowed LBHA to increase voucher amounts, hire staff, update software, and be more productive and resilient.

Augerot asked if the portability of vouchers results in much leakage of clients out of state, or if that is counterbalanced by people coming in.

Holt replied the movement is counterbalanced. When clients enter the area, LBHA decides whether to provide a local voucher or bill the other housing authority. Billing is a challenge, so most housing authorities are absorbing vouchers now. Lease rates need to go up.

### **{Exhibit 1: Linn-Benton Housing Authority Presentation}**

#### **3.4 Report from the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) Water District 22 Water Master – Joel Plahn, State of Oregon Water Resources Department**

Plahn explained that District 22 mainly covers Benton, Yamhill, and Polk Counties. Plahn distributes water among water users during the summer. Water rights are based on a priority date. In a time of shortage, users call to request water; if there is not enough water present, users inform the water master, who measures stream flow and, if necessary, regulates the most junior users on the system. Benton County has over 80,000 acres of irrigation. District 22 has over 6,100 water rights and over 9,000 access points. 2022 was the best water year in Plahn's seven-year experience due to early summer rainfall.

Augerot asked about additional funding received by OWRD.

Plahn shared that funding provided five more staff to regulate cannabis-related growth sites between Lane and Clackamas counties. In Benton County in 2022, staff researched 22 cannabis sites and found eight groundwater violations (irrigating without a water right).

Augerot noted that Benton has been providing District 22 with \$10,000 per biennium and asked if that is still needed.

Plahn replied that would be very beneficial. All three counties provide funding which is used to hire a temporary employee to immediately take measurements when a user runs out of water. Plahn will request Benton funding again. Yamhill built \$5,000 per year into its recurrent budget.

Augerot asked if more violations are occurring at the end of irrigation season due to climate change.

Plahn replied that there are significant climate change impacts, and more people want to irrigate later in the year. There is a need to educate people about the Marys River water season; many users were not aware. Most users comply, and the district enforces when necessary. Many older water rights do not list a season, which adds to the confusion. Staff sent reminders to Marys River users.

Augerot suggested that the watershed council event might be able to help get the word out.

#### 4. New Business

##### 4.1 **Adoption of Resolution No. R2023-001, Requesting the Governor add Benton County to the List of Counties Considered for Inclusion in Executive Order 23-02 Related to the State of Emergency Caused by the Epidemic of Homelessness** – *Xanthippe Augerot, Vice-Chair, Board of Commissioners; Julie Arena, Home, Opportunity, Planning, & Equity (HOPE) Coordinator*

Augerot explained that many people working on housing issues were excited that Governor Kotek intended to pursue housing and homelessness efforts. Kotek made an Emergency Declaration on Homelessness, but it did not include Benton County. The data used to determine eligibility was from HUD point-in-time counts based on a geographic region called a continuum of care. Benton, Linn, Lincoln, and 26 other Counties are part of the Rural Oregon Continuum of Care. The counties' data was combined, diluting Benton's numbers and making it hard to see local trends. Thus Benton did not meet Kotek's threshold for increase in homelessness. Working with staff, Augerot produced a letter (item 4.2) and a resolution. Lincoln County is also sending a letter. The Boards of Linn and Lincoln Counties are presenting resolutions petitioning Kotek to be covered under the Emergency Declaration. Benton's resolution presents the County's general argument and asks to have the opportunity to be covered under Executive Order #23-02 based on Benton's data, rather than simply asking to be included. This is because it is not completely clear

what the Emergency Order will require in addressing homelessness; it may provide more funds, but may require an Emergency Operations Center activation, which adds staffing requirements and slows down decision-making in this case, given that Benton has a pilot program and a strong regional office addressing homelessness. It is also unclear what kind of emergency land use regulations will be involved; Benton wants to be able to consult with its cities before opting in to the Declaration. The letter will be copied to State Director of Emergency Management Andrew Phelps, Senator Sara Gelser-Blouin, Speaker Dan Rayfield, and Representative David Gomberg. Augerot has consulted each of those officials and will keep them updated.

**MOTION:** Wyse moved to adopt Resolution No. R2023-001. Augerot seconded the motion, which **carried 3-0.**

**4.2 Approval of Board of Commissioners Letter to the Governor Requesting Inclusion in Executive Order 23-02 Declaring a State of Emergency on Homelessness – Xanthippe Augerot, Vice-Chair, Board of Commissioners**

Malone thanked Augerot for taking the lead on this item. Malone was appalled by the inaccuracy of the Governor’s map, in which Benton was combined with rural eastern Oregon counties with different population needs, industry, et cetera.

Augerot thanked Arena, HOPE Project Manager Rebecca Taylor, and Pegge McGuire of Community Services Consortium for assistance with the letter and resolution.

**MOTION:** Augerot moved to approve the letter to Governor Kotek requesting the opportunity to be included in Kotek’s Emergency Order on Housing and Homelessness. Wyse seconded the motion, which **carried 3-0.**

**5. Information Sharing**

**5.1 Pat Malone, Chair**

Malone praised a chart of Benton’s main legislative efforts which was prepared by Chief Financial Officer Rick Crager and staff. Malone emphasized the advantages of having retained government relations firm CFM Advocates to help secure legislative funding for important projects. Benton County’s first legislative breakfast of the year to be held February 4, 2023.

**5.2 Xanthippe Augerot, Commissioner**

Augerot attended the Community Health Centers (CHCs) Board Meeting. Staff are working on a strategic plan, which will go to the CHC Board, then to the Board of Commissioners. Augerot noted that the CHC Board is struggling and needs more directors. The mandate that at least 51% of board members be clinic users is challenging. There are now two board members from Linn County.

Augerot reported working on the housing resolution (item 4.1) and background for recent and upcoming JSIP presentations, including today’s “Joe with Joe” staff discussion with Kerby.

**5.3 Nancy Wyse, Commissioner**

Wyse chairs the Local Officials Advisory Committee, which has some openings for City Councilors or Commissioners. Interested applicants can contact Wyse.

At the recent meeting of the Historic Courthouse Advisory Committee, members narrowed down to two subcommittees, Culture & Arts and Government Civic. The Committee hopes to present an update to the Board in the next few months before presenting a formal draft document, and plans to perform public outreach to help guide the draft. The document target date is the end of June 2023. Committee Chair Chris Westfall noted that public engagement should be robust.


Wyse mentioned that the most recent Zoom meeting of the Benton County Talks Trash Work Group was hacked, and thanked staff for quick thinking and working together on a solution.

**6. Other**

No other business was discussed.

**7. Adjournment**

Chair Malone adjourned the meeting at 11:06 a.m.

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Pat Malone, Chair

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736E4FEB0B0496...  
Erika Milo, Recorder

*\* NOTE: Items denoted with an asterisk do NOT have accompanying written materials in the meeting packet.*

# **WORK SESSION**





Inspire

Connect

Restore





# Council Staff



**Holly Purpura**  
Executive Director



**Kathleen Westly**  
E&R Project Manager



**Aubrey Cloud**  
Assistant Project Manager



**Jazmin Garcia**  
Project Coordinator



**Suzanna Mast**  
Accounting Clerk



**Camille Shokrian**  
Intern



**Corey De La Cruz**  
Intern



# Marys River WC Board of Directors



Bill Blakney,  
Chair



Merrilee Buchanan,  
Vice-Chair



Pete Nelson,  
Treasurer



Tessa Artruc,  
Secretary



Zach Pike-Urlacher



Molly Monroe



Lisa Bean



Matt Kellam



Nick Colter



# Meet Marys River WC



MRWC was established in 1996

Became a 501(c)3 Nonprofit Corporation in 2002

In FY 2021-2022, MRWC served:

- 185 members and 72 volunteers
- Over 400 K-12 students
- Over 1200 Benton County residents engaged through in person and remote programming.





# Our Watershed

- Coastal cutthroat trout stream
- No major dams
- Drinking water for Philomath and Corvallis
- Land Use:
  - 66% Forested
  - 22% Agriculture
  - 1% Urban
  - 11% Rural Residential



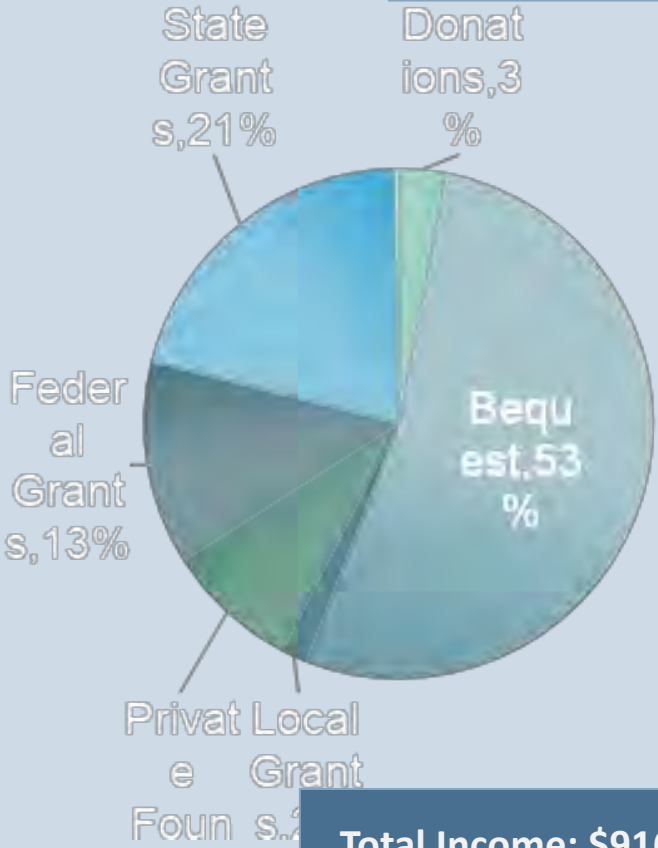


**EXPENSES**



**Total Expense: \$431,019**

**INCOME**



**Total Income: \$916,349**

# 2022 Financial Report

For Fiscal Year ending in 06/30/2022





*Inspire*

Connect

Restore





# In Person Engagement



Field Trips with High School students expanded to three schools in Benton County



Expanded our High School Peer Mentor program into a Youth Watershed Council



Field trips with third grade to resumed Spring 2022



# On the horizon...







Inspire

*Connect*

Restore



# The Confluence



## Confluence Updates



Cascade Pacific  
Resource Conservation + Development





# Mid-Valley River Connections

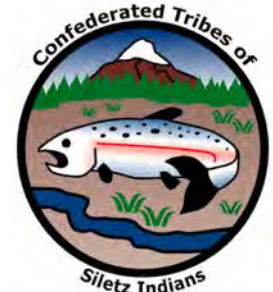
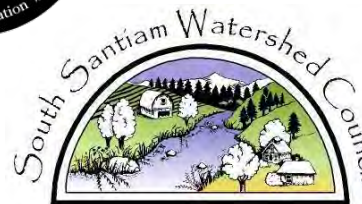


Connecting and empowering Mid-Valley Communities





# Mid-Willamette Beaver Partnership





# Trout Friendly Landscapes Program



## Urban Waters – Green Infrastructure

- Thanks to the Benton County Commission for our seed funding to convene a technical advisory team
- Planning meetings held and participating in Benton County Storm Water Implementation Group (SWIG).
- Working to leverage funds by applying to other grants

*Photo: OSU-Benton County Green Stormwater Infrastructure Research Facility, photo credit: OSU Engineering*





Inspire

Connect

*Restore*



# Plantings with Benton County ongoing



Plant Establishment ongoing at Skunk/Alder Creek and Bull Run with Benton County Public Works



**Benton  
County**  
OREGON



# Knotweed Treatment Program



Invasive species monitoring and treatment:

- Knotweed and Yellow Archangel with herbicide

- Other species treated with mechanical means

- Expanded knotweed treatment to all of the Marys



# Woods Creek



Provide new infusion of large wood to retain gains.  
Completed in Summer 2023.



# Muddy Creek eDNA and other monitoring



eDNA Sampling to determine presence/absence of Pacific lamprey & freshwater mussels



- Upper Muddy Strategic Implementation Area Monitoring (e.Coli and more).



# Reese Creek Aquatic Habitat Restoration



Restoration planned for Reese Creek, including bank pull-backs, road decommissions, large woody debris, and an extensive riparian planting.







MARYS  
RIVER  
WATERSHED  
COUNCIL

Learn More



[@MarysRiverWC](#)

*Marys River Watershed Council*

| [www.mrwc.org](http://www.mrwc.org)






# Linn-Benton Housing Authority

- A public agency
- Developer of Affordable Housing
- Contracts with HUD
- Is NOT HUD

# Linn-Benton Housing Authority

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- In operation since 1971
- Provides various forms of affordable housing programs and services.
  - Voucher Assistance (2,549 households)
  - VASH Housing for homeless Veterans (89 households)
  - Moderate Rehabilitation - Julian (35 units)
  - Emergency Housing Vouchers (178)
  - Mainstream Vouchers (153)
  - Affordable Housing (250 units) own and manage



# A Stable Home and a Path to Success

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The mission of the Linn-Benton Housing Authority is  
“Improving the Quality of Life in Linn and Benton Counties  
Through Affordable Housing.”

- Helping Families Succeed
- Providing Essential Community Resources
- Supporting Our Local Economy with federal dollars
- Working in collaboration with community partners to address homelessness and affordable housing shortage

# What is the Housing Choice Voucher Program?

- A federally subsidized rent assistance program commonly called Section 8
- Most rent assistance is tenant-based
- Participants “choose” their own home
- Participants must be low-income to qualify
- An essential tool to help provide stability to low-income families.
- Provides a steppingstone towards self sufficiency.





# Waiting List

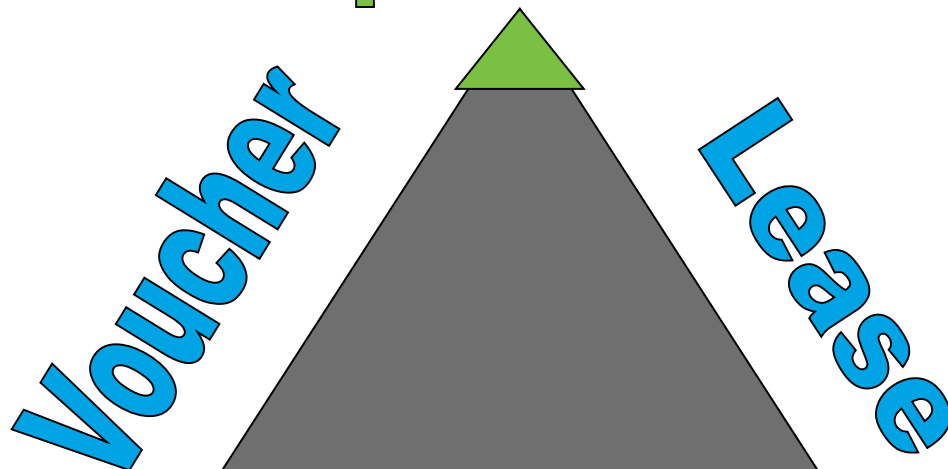
- There are approximately 3,000 families on the waiting list
- Applicants generally wait 1-3 years for assistance
- There is a preference for applicants that are seniors and/or people with disabilities, as well as families with minor children in the household.
- A person with a terminal illness gets an expedited preference.



# How We Work Together

## Three Point Connection

**Participant / Tenant**



**LBHA**

**Landlord**

**Housing Assistance Payment  
(HAP) Contract**

# Partnerships with Landlords

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- \$24 million in federal dollars annually distributed in rental payments to landlords.
- Over 700 landlords currently participate.
- LBHA pays the landlord a percentage of the rent.
- The tenant rent portion is based upon household income. 30% to 40% of the household's gross monthly income is paid toward rent and utilities.
- The Housing Choice Voucher program does not cover application fees or Security Deposits.



# Success Rates

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- Less than 50% success rate in both counties
- High rental rates
- Fees and other move-in costs
- Often already have barriers (*credit or criminal history, eviction records*)
- Families that are unable to find a place in their timeline may have to reapply to be on the waiting list.



# Linn-Benton Welcomes Partnership



- We value our partnerships and collaborations
- If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact us.

## **Linn-Benton Housing Authority**

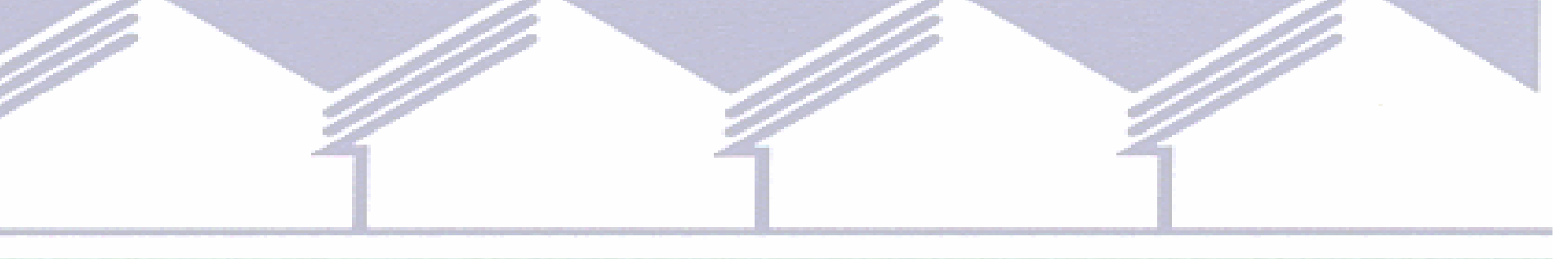
1250 Queen Ave SE

Albany, OR 97322

[Donna@L-bha.org](mailto:Donna@L-bha.org)

Donna Holt, Executive Director

541-918-7314



# **Time for Questions and Discussion**

# **NEW BUSINESS**



**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
FOR THE STATE OF OREGON, FOR THE COUNTY OF BENTON**

**In the Matter of requesting the Governor )  
add Benton County to the list of counties )  
considered for inclusion in Executive )  
Order 23-02 related to the State of )  
Emergency caused by the epidemic )  
of homelessness )**

**RESOLUTION #2023-001**

Over the past six years (2017 through 2022), the incidence of homelessness in Benton County, as evidenced by the number of individuals on the Coordinated Entry List, has increased by 89 percent.

The homeless Point in Time Count process is controlled by the 26-county Rural Oregon Continuum of Care; made up of 26 disparate counties across Oregon and represents a substantially undercounted number of unhoused individuals in Benton County.

The data utilized by the Governor’s Office in determining which counties are included in Executive Order 23-02 reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of homelessness in Benton County.

Local jurisdictions and businesses have spent and continue to spend significant resources to address the impact of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

Grievous numbers of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness have perished and others continue to experience life threatening conditions due to our inability to offer sufficient shelter and other housing options.

This issue impacts the sanitation, health, and security of our community and its residents.

Benton County was excluded from the provisions of Executive Order 23-02 in what we perceive to be an error of omission due to a lack of awareness of our current state of homelessness.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Benton County Board of Commissioners considers the state of homelessness in our county to have reached emergency proportions and formally requests the opportunity to be covered by Executive Order 23-02.

Adopted this 24<sup>th</sup> day of January 2023.

Signed this 24<sup>th</sup> day of January 2023.

BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Pat Malone, Chair

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Xanthippe Augerot, Vice Chair

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Nancy Wyse, Commissioner

Approved as to Form:

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Vance M. Croney, Counsel



**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
FOR THE STATE OF OREGON, FOR THE COUNTY OF BENTON**

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of homelessness )**

**RESOLUTION #2023-001**

Over the past six years (2017 through 2022), the incidence of homelessness in Benton County, as evidenced by the number of individuals on the Coordinated Entry List, has increased by 89 percent.

The homeless Point in Time Count process is controlled by the 26-county Rural Oregon Continuum of Care; made up of 26 disparate counties across Oregon and represents a substantially undercounted number of unhoused individuals in Benton County.

The data utilized by the Governor’s Office in determining which counties are included in Executive Order 23-02 reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of homelessness in Benton County.

Local jurisdictions and businesses have spent and continue to spend significant resources to address the impact of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

Grievous numbers of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness have perished and others continue to experience life threatening conditions due to our inability to offer sufficient shelter and other housing options.

This issue impacts the sanitation, health, and security of our community and its residents.

Benton County was excluded from the provisions of Executive Order 23-02 in what we perceive to be an error of omission due to a lack of awareness of our current state of homelessness.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Benton County Board of Commissioners considers the state of homelessness in our county to have reached emergency proportions and formally requests the opportunity to be covered by Executive Order 23-02.

Adopted this 24<sup>th</sup> day of January 2023.

Signed this 24<sup>th</sup> day of January 2023.

BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Pat Malone, Chair



Xanthippe Augerof, Vice Chair



Nancy Wyse, Commissioner

Approved as to Form:



Vance M. Croney, Counsel



Board of Commissioners

Office: (541) 766-6800

Fax: (541) 766-6893

4500 SW Research Way  
Corvallis, OR 97333

[co.benton.or.us](http://co.benton.or.us)

January 24, 2023

The Honorable Tina Kotek, Governor  
State of Oregon  
900 Court Street, Suite 254  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Governor Kotek:

Thank you for your bold and immediate action to prioritize solutions to the homelessness crisis across our state. The Benton County Board of Commissioners would like to request the opportunity to be included in your Executive Order 23-02 Declaring a State of Emergency on Homelessness. To this end, we have adopted the attached Resolution R2023-001.

Our staff have been working with community partners to address homelessness and housing supply for several years; and with recent investments under House Bill (HB) 4123 are coming ever closer to having a clear, regional coordinating structure and plan of action. While we believe we can demonstrate the scope of the homelessness emergency in Benton County based on the five-year increase in homelessness and its associated costs to our communities, *we need to fully understand the local implications of an emergency declaration before formally opting in.* Based on our extensive COVID experience, an Emergency Operations Center structure may be counterproductive to addressing our immediate needs for long-term dedicated staff coordination and investment across all elements of the housing continuum. Having the right local capacity to implement state investments is critical to the success of these emergency declarations and cost-effective, long-term solutions.

Directing critical resources only to certain Oregon counties may have the unintended effect of further burdening high-resource areas with an influx of people from counties that are excluded from the emergency declaration. Without state leadership to disburse equitable resources to every county in Oregon, we will continue to see people migrate toward communities where they can find support when they are in crisis. We need a funded mandate to improve housing in Oregon with statewide requirements for shelter and housing based on population, not inaccurate and inequitable point in time counts. HB 4123 provides a template that recognizes the need for coordinated action designed locally based on statewide standards. We believe it should be expanded to all Oregon counties to provide capacity for all areas to respond to our housing crisis.



The Honorable Tina Kotek, Governor

**Re: Executive Order 23-02 Declaring a State of Emergency on Homelessness**

January 20, 2023

Page 2

Based on the growth of our Benton County Coordinated Entry list over the past five years, local homelessness has increased by 89 percent. We greatly appreciate your emphasis on crafting data-informed policy and programs; however, the majority of counties have little to no capacity to collect accurate and meaningful data. Benton County's Point-in-Time Count data is artificially low due to decisions made by the overall 26-member Rural Oregon Continuum of Care (ROCC) and to the withdrawal of Marion and Polk Counties from the ROCC during the 2017-2022 time window.

Lastly, our county seat, Corvallis, is *the most severely rent burdened city in the entire state of Oregon* with 37.1 percent of households spending more than 50 percent of their income on rent.<sup>1</sup> More than a third of our neighbors are at risk of homelessness and in great need of homelessness prevention solutions.

Benton County greatly appreciates your prioritization of homelessness and housing solutions and requests the opportunity to be included in this emergency declaration after learning more about its potential impact on our emerging HB 4123 regional decision-making system.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Pat Malone  
Chair

Xanthippe Augerot  
Vice Chair

Nancy Wyse  
Commissioner

BOC/mjk

c: Andrew Phelps, Director, Oregon Department of Emergency Management  
3930 Fairview Industrial Drive SE, Salem, Oregon 97302

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<sup>1</sup> 2022 Severe Rent Burden in Oregon (ACS 2020),

[https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/UP/Documents/Annual\\_Severe\\_Rent\\_Burden\\_Announcement.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/UP/Documents/Annual_Severe_Rent_Burden_Announcement.pdf)



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January 24, 2023

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The Honorable Tina Kotek, Governor

**Re: Executive Order 23-02 Declaring a State of Emergency on Homelessness**

January 24, 2023

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Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Pat Malone  
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BOC/mjk

Enclosure

c: Andrew Phelps, Director, Oregon Department of Emergency Management  
3930 Fairview Industrial Drive SE, Salem, Oregon 97302

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<sup>1</sup> 2022 Severe Rent Burden in Oregon (ACS 2020),

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