

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY MEETING MINUTES
October 12, 2021

1. At 9:00 a.m., Commissioner Pope declared the Tuesday meeting of the Polk County Board of Commissioners in session and led the Board and attending audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner Gordon and Commissioner Mordhorst were present.

2. MINUTES: **COMMISSIONER MORDHORST MOVED, COMMISSIONER GORDON
SECONDED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 5, 2021**

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. COVID UPDATE

Ms. Umstead reviewed the most recent data on Covid cases and deaths in Polk County and in Oregon. The week of October 3rd there were 9,153 Covid cases reported in Oregon. In Polk County there were 298 and 5 deaths. Ms. Umstead also reviewed the others graphs provided in her handout regarding case rates per 100,000 and case positivity rate in Oregon and Polk County. The number of cases were broken down by age and zip code in the hand out. Dallas Retirement Village have a total of 56 cases, Independence Health and Rehab have a total of 11 cases, and Prestige Senior Living Orchard Heights have 5 cases. For the period of Oct 3rd through October 9th there were 2,382 Covid tests performed in Polk County and 249 of those were positive. Ms. Umstead reviewed the number of hospitalization in Oregon and in our region. There are 11 Polk County residents hospitalized with Covid. In Polk County there are 52,547 residents that are 12 years and older who are vaccinated. As of October 3rd there were a total of 585 breakthrough cases. To date, 91.2% of Covid cases in Polk County were unvaccinated.

4. SHERIFF OFFICE UPDATE

Sheriff Mark Garton informed the Board that there are no Covid cases in the jail and nobody in the jail is being quarantined. Sheriff Garton updated the Board on staffing in the jail and patrol. They are currently working to fill multiple positions in patrol and in the jail. The Sheriff's Office has selected a new vendor for jail system management. The staff member who was doing of stats is no longer with the office and the Sheriff would like to know what kind of information the Commissioners feel would be useful to track and report to them regularly. Sheriff Garton proposed offering hazard pay and or sign on bonuses in an effort to recruit and maintain quality staff in the Sheriff's Office. Other agencies are offering monetary incentives for working through Covid in an effort to make staff feel more valued. Commissioner Pope expressed his concern with the monetary incentive proposed because it would not be fair to other departments who have also worked through Covid. Commissioner Pope also felt that the federal ARPA funds the county received should be invested in the community and in projects that benefit the whole county. As well as the fact that if the county offers a sign on bonus the employee could still potentially leave. Commissioner Pope also expressed his willingness to work with the Sheriff to find ways to improve staffing levels and recruitment efforts. Sheriff Garton stated that he believes he would be able to restructure the Sheriff's office budget in order to facilitate some of the incentives he proposed. Commissioner Mordhorst suggested offering bonuses for current employee who recruit more qualified applicants. Commissioner Gordon recommended that they continue to get feedback from the county staff to see what they feel would be the best incentive.

5. MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL HAZARDS MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE

Austin McGuigan, Community Development Director, gave the Board an update on the progress on the Polk County Hazard Mitigation Plan action items. Through the review process, the Steering Committee found that all but one action item has been implemented and significant progress has

been made on that item, with Public Works estimating 90% complete. The Steering Committee continued to prioritize the remaining action item the needs implementation. The Steering Committee did not identify a need to develop any recommendations for new projects, revise recommendations or to defer or remove any action items. The Steering Committee concluded that Polk County has made significant progress implementing the identified action items within the timeframes set forth in the 2017 plan. The Steering Committee found that the majority of the action items are ongoing and, as resources are made available, Polk County has continues to enhance, update and generally improve these implemented action items. The Steering Committee found that this review helped to strengthen and renew the efforts put forth to date to reduce the risk of fiscal loss to the county and its residents from natural hazards events.

The Steering Committee concluded that no additional action is needed at this time and that we remain committed to making our community more resilient from natural hazards and reducing our overall vulnerability.

6. ASA COMMITTEE APPLICANT

Carter Rickert, Dallas resident, and Candice Strickland, Monmouth resident, interviewed for the Ambulance Service Area Advisory Committee. Commissioner Pope began by asking Mr. Rickert how he feels the ambulance and EMS performing in Polk County. Mr. Rickert feels that there might be issues with jurisdictional response. Commissioner Pope asked Mr. Rickert if he has any experience advising. Mr. Rickert stated that he did not have any experience advising in the EMS or ambulance field but he has an interest in serving the community and he works and lives off of Hwy 22 and feels he has a lot to offer the ASA Committee.

Commissioner Pope asked Ms. Strickland the same questions. In response to the first question Ms. Strickland stated that she volunteered at the fire department and ambulance service and has knowledge of the inner workings of the department. She also feels that better response time in rural areas is important. In response to the second question, Ms. Strickland stated that she has no experiencing advising in the EMS or Ambulance Service field and the she hopes to help bring more awareness to the community in regards to what is going on with the ambulance services in the community.

Commissioner Pope wanted to wait at least 24 hours to consider the candidates and will deliberate with the Board at the next Board meeting. Commissioner Gordon and Commissioner Mordhorst agreed.

6. NON-LISTED ITEMS - (Pursuant to ORS 192.640, the Board of Commissioners considered the below identified non-listed items.)

Commissioner Pope adjourned the meeting at 9:42 a.m.