

**POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**MINUTES January 24, 2024**

**1. CALL TO ORDER & ATTENDANCE**

At 9:00 a.m., Commissioner Pope declared the meeting of the Polk County Board of Commissioners to be in session. Commissioner Mordhorst and Commissioner Gordon were present.

Staff present: Greg Hansen, Administrative Officer  
Morgan Smith, County Counsel  
Matt Hawkins, Administrative Services Director

**2. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Regular meetings of the Board of Commissioners are held on Tuesday and Wednesday each week. Each meeting is held in the Courthouse Conference Room, 850 Main Street, Dallas, Oregon. Each meeting begins at 9:00 a.m. and is conducted according to a prepared agenda that lists the principle subjects anticipated to be considered. Pursuant to ORS 192.640, The Board may consider and take action on subjects that are not listed on the agenda. The Board also holds a department staff meeting at 9:00 a.m. on every Monday in the Commissioners Conference Room at 850 Main Street, Dallas, Oregon.

The Polk County Board of Commissioners will be attending the Polk County Local Public Safety Coordinating Council meeting on February 5, 2024 at 12:00 p.m., located at 850 Main St., Dallas, OR 97338.

**3. COMMENTS**

Mandy Strauss wanted to ask the Commissioners questions in regards to the low barrier housing that is being proposed here in Dallas. Mrs. Strauss stated that she does agree that people should have shelter, food and all the basic needs that are required to live. Mrs. Strauss then started to provide some background information on her family and them fostering children. Mrs. Strauss stated that she wanted to hear from the Commissioners if what is being said is true or not. Commissioner Pope stated that she is welcome to make an appointment with the Commissioners to come and talk with them one on one because this is not a public hearing. Commissioner Gordon provided a comment to her statements and welcomed her to make an appointment with him at any time.

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER MORDHORST MOVED, COMMISSIONER GORDON SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.**

**MOTION PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD.**

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING OF January 17, 2024**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER GORDON MOVED, COMMISSIONER MORDHORST SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF January 17, 2024.**

**MOTION PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD.**

**6. APPROVAL OF CONSENT CALENDAR**

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER MORDHORST MOVED, COMMISSIONER GORDON SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR.**

**MOTION PASSED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE BOARD.**

**7. PROPERTY TAX VETERAN EXEMPTION**

Commissioner Pope stated that he wanted to welcome Valerie Patoine, Polk County Assessor, up to speak first to allow her to introduce the topic in which Mr. Ekstrand is here to speak on. Mrs. Patoine read aloud a prepared statement to the Board, present staff and to the public. Next, Commissioner Pope invited Bram Ekstrand, Property Tax Administrator to offer his rebuttal to Mrs. Patoine's statement. Mr. Ekstrand introduced his colleague, Seiji Shiratori, Policy Director in the Property Tax Division, and they both went over a PowerPoint presentation that they prepared for the Board of Commissioners and for the public. Their presentation went over Assessed Value Exemptions, the timeline for the recent change in veterans exemptions, information on OAR 150-307-0032 and Mr. Shiratori gave a summary and explanation of Article XI from the Oregon Constitution. Commissioner Pope asked who requested the guidance in 2019 and Mr. Ekstrand answered his question. Commissioner Pope asked if they can acknowledge that their process has been the same for the last 26 years and Mr. Eckstrand stated that yes, they can acknowledge that. Commissioner Pope asked them where the direction came from to change their process and Mr. Ekstrand answered his question. Commissioner Pope stated that they need to get a stay on this action until they can get a legislative fix and that there are multiple county assessors who agree with what Mrs. Patoine stated previously. Commissioner Pope also shared his frustrations with this process change and not being able to see the record on how this happened. Mr. Ekstrand responded to his statement. Mr. Ekstrand stated that he would be happy to look over Mrs. Patoine's statement and answer her questions. Commissioner Mordhorst shared his frustrations with the process change and the timeline in which these changes have been made. Mr. Ekstrand responded to his statement. Commissioner Gordon thanked them for both being here and wanted to echo Commissioner Pope's statement on the qualifier.

**8. VETERAN SERVICE OFFICE GRANT UPDATE**

Eric Enderle, VSO Manager, and Brent DeMoe, FCO Director, came before the Board of Commissioners to talk to them about a new Veterans Services Grant. Mr. Enderle went over what this grant is for and how the funds will be used. He is asking for the Board to approve and sign this grant. Brent DeMoe, FCO Director, explained what Gale's Lodge is and provided a brief background history on it. Commissioner Pope stated that he couldn't be more thrilled with the work that they are doing with and for our veterans and he is very proud and very happy with the Gale's Lodge project. Commissioner Gordon stated that he also supports everything that they do and also asked them to provide some information on the wraparound programs that are available to veterans who are using Gale's Lodge. Mr. Enderle answered his question. Mr. Enderle provided some information on the different ages of veterans who have used Gale's Lodge as well. Commissioner Mordhorst stated that looking at Gale's Lodge it just exemplifies what Polk County is all about and he wanted to recognize Eric and all of their staff for everything that they have done and everything that they continue to do.

**SIGNING AND APPROVING THE GRANT WAS APPROVED BY CONSENSUS OF THE BOARD.**

**9. POLK COUNTY ORDINANCE NO. 24-01**

Greg Hansen, Administrative Officer, is recommending that the Board of Commissioners sign and adopt Polk County Ordinance No. 24-01. Mr. Hansen provided background information on the order and stated that this was to memorialize Polk County Resolution No. 16-03. Mr. Hansen stated that he can answer any questions that the Commissioners may have. The Commissioners did not have any questions.

**MOTION: COMMISSIONER MORDHORST MOVED, COMMISSIONER GORDON SECONDED, TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR.**


**MOTION PASSED BY VOTE OF THE QUORUM. COMMISSIONER GORDON CHOSE TO ABSTAIN.**

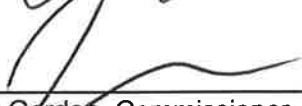
The following items were approved by Motion under **5. APPROVAL OF CONSENT CALENDAR:**

- a) Polk County Contract No. 23-13, Employment Agreement  
(Greg Hansen, Administrative Officer)
- b) Polk County Contract No. 24-14, State of Oregon – Dept. of Corrections  
(Jodi Merritt, Community Corrections)
- c) Polk County Contract No. 24-15, City of Salem  
(Austin McGuigan, Community Development Director)
- d) Polk County Right of Way Dedication, McAllister  
(Todd Whitaker, Public Works Director)

There no need for an executive session and Commissioner Pope adjourned the meeting at 9:46 a.m.

**POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

  
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Craig Pope, Chair

  
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Jeremy Gordon, Commissioner

  
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Lyle Mordhorst, Commissioner