

Union County Budget Committee Meeting
Budget Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 20, 2025
Joseph Building Annex Conference Room

Present: Paul Anderes, Commission Chair
R. Matthew Scarfo, Commissioner
Jake Seavert, Commissioner
Matthew Goodwin, Budget Committee Member
Audrey Cant, Budget Committee Member
Mathew Miles, Budget Committee Member
Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer/Budget Officer
Allison Moore, Senior Department Specialist/Recording Secretary

Call to Order

Commissioner Anderes called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm and the Pledge of Allegiance was given.

Election of Budget Committee Chair

Matthew Goodwin made a motion to elect Audrey Cant as the Budget Committee Chair. Mat Miles seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Presentation of Budget Message

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer presented the FY 2025-26 budget message.

The proposed Union County budget for FY 2025-26 is presented in the total amount of \$70,365,199. The budget is prepared and presented utilizing the same format and basis of accounting as previous years. The budget consists of 48 funds, all of which are balanced and presented. Three funds are planned for closure during the upcoming fiscal year at the recommendation of the Budget Committee last year. Those funds are the Ambulance Fund, Library Project Fund and the Map Fund. These funds are no longer necessary and will reduce the overall number of funds to 45. The proposed budget is approximately 8 percent higher than last fiscal year which is primarily due to capital projects within the Airport Capital Fund.

The General Fund budget totals \$17,749,882 and is the largest of all funds providing for the delivery of services by twelve county departments. The primary general fund revenues are property tax (40 %), Beginning Fund Balance (23 %) and PILT payments (8.5 %). Property taxes are levied at the rate of 2.9668 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Other general fund revenues come from state shared revenues, fees for service, and state and federal grants. This year personnel costs in the General Fund account for 66 percent of expenditures which is due to the fact that the primary purpose of most general fund departments is to provide services.

Personnel cost increases for FY 2025-26 are due to significant increases in the cost of medical insurance and salary cost of living adjustments (COLA) tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The proposed budget will maintain the staffing levels and services provided in the current fiscal year with the exception of the loss of the District Attorney Investigator due to the loss of grant funds for that position. In addition, a School Resource Deputy will be added to the Sheriff's Department funded in part by revenues from a contract with the school districts to be served.

The proposed budget is similar to the department requests with two primary exceptions. The Sheriff's budget request included the addition of the previously mentioned school resource deputy, as well as another general patrol deputy and capital purchase of four new vehicles. Only the school resource deputy has been included in the proposed budget along with only three new vehicles. The Corrections budget request included the addition of one corrections deputy position. That position has not been included in the proposed budget.

The FY 2025-26 proposed budget has been prepared with the goal of providing the maximum services within the funds available at the present time and into the future.

Matthew Goodwin asked if there is a contract in place for insurance services. Administrative Officer Burgess indicated that the county purchases insurance through County/City Insurance Services (CIS) because the county is not big enough to be self-insured. CIS goes out to bid for services every 3 years.

Mat Miles asked if the 66% expenditure on Personnel is consistent. Administrative Officer Burgess indicated that it stays about the same each year; last year it was 67%.

Commissioner Anderes acknowledged Annette Powers for her efforts in preparing the budget meeting binders. He also provided a little background on PILT and Secure Rural Schools (SRS), which has not been reauthorized as of yet.

General Fund Department Presentations

General Revenue

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, provided a brief summary of the general revenue department.

The General Revenue Department reflects the revenue received by the county which provides the majority of the funding for the programs contained in the General Fund. Included in this department are the primary revenues of property taxes, payment in lieu of taxes, interest, and state shared revenue such as liquor and cigarette taxes. These revenues are not specifically tied to any one department within the general fund.

PILT revenue for FY 2025-26 is budgeted at \$1,500,000. This figure represents roughly 8.5 percent of the general fund revenue.

Property tax revenue represents approximately 40 percent of the General Fund revenues; a 3 percent increase in taxes collected is anticipated in the proposed budget. This figure includes taxes to be

received due to the anticipated under levy by the La Grande Urban Renewal District (URD), estimated \$205,522. These funds will not be available in future years unless the under levy continues.

The general fund beginning balance is also reflected in this department and this year is projected at \$4,000,000.

Mathew Miles asked for clarification on the Railroad Car Tax that was budgeted at \$9,500 if only \$3,397 was received in FY 2024-25. Administrative Officer Burgess indicated that one is very hard to speculate what will come in as revenue because the number of cars that enter Union County. As you can see in years past revenue has been in the \$10,000 range.

Assessment/Taxation

Cody Vavra, Assessor/Tax Collector, provided a brief description of the Assessor/Tax Collector's staff and department function to the committee for their information.

The Assessor/Tax Collector proposed budget is very similar to that of last year. There are some increases in Personnel due to the cost of personnel benefits, along with merit and cost of living increases. Materials and Services has a net decrease because he is lowering his line item for Cartography, which is contracted through Harney County.

There are several increases in postage, copying and travel expenses due to rising costs.

Commissioner Anderes asked if the Assessor's office is in charge of the Blue Mountain Translator District. Cody Vavra indicated that the Assessor's office is the delinquent collector, essentially. The Blue Mountain Translator District bills the customer on their list yearly. If the customer doesn't pay, the Blue Mountain Translator District provides the user list to the Assessor's office, who then adds the fee to the customers property taxes.

Commissioner Anderes asked how it is determined they are using it or not. Cody Vavra indicated at one time they were driving around looking for antennas on homes to determine who was utilizing the service. They do rely on annual notifications sent out as well.

Accounting/Treasurer

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented the proposed Accounting/Treasurer budget to the committee for their information.

The Accounting/Treasurer Department budget request is very similar to that of the current year. It includes the county elected Treasurer at .50 FTE, Accounting Manager at .90 FTE, Accounts Payable Specialist at .70 FTE and a Payroll Specialist at .70 FTE.

The changes in the budget this year are an increase in postage, personnel costs such as merit increases and cost of living allowances, and travel and training to keep staff up to date on new laws and policies. There was also an increase in dues.

Clerk – General Operations, BoPTA & Elections

On behalf of Lisa Feik, County Clerk, Administrative Officer Burgess provided a brief description of the Clerks budget to the committee for their information.

The Clerks Office is broken up into three departments, General Operations, BoPTA & Elections. The staffing is the same for each department.

The budget is very similar to that of last year with the increase in Personnel Services due to the anticipated cost increases for insurance, merit, and an estimated cost of living allowance. There is also an increase in vendor fees and postage.

Materials and Services are broken out separately so expenses can be tracked between the three departments. There a couple of increases in software. When the Assessor's office moved to a new platform, the recording package moved as well. In the Elections budget, there is maintenance for the election machines. Which will increase due to vendor costs

Audrey Cant asked if microfilm is a part of the software. Administrative Officer Burgess indicated that is correct.

Matthew Goodwin asked if Clerks Fees were down due to less Recording. Administrative Officer Burgess indicated the Clerks Fees used to be combined with Passport Fees, but they are now separated. Fee collection overall is running similar to previous years.

Commissioner Anderes indicated that current legislation is working on raising marriage license fees.

Board of Commissioners

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, provided the Commissioner's proposed budget request to the committee for their information.

The Board of Commissioners budget request is very similar to that of last year. There is an increase in Personnel costs due the cost of personnel benefits, along with merit and cost of living allowance increases.

The Commissioners Office consists of the three elected Commissioners, one Administrative Officer, one Senior Department Specialist at 1.0 FTE and a Senior Department Specialist at .50 FTE who is shared with Emergency Services Department. Staffing remains the same with the exception of a cost of living allowance and increases for insurance costs.

Materials and Service line items remain the same as FY 2025-26 with no changes

Mathew Miles asked for clarification on Personnel Services expenditures which is down a little. Administrative Officer Burgess clarified that there are two months left in the fiscal year.

Facilities

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented the proposed Facilities Department budget to the committee for their information.

The Facilities department budget is divided into five different sections, and each section has its own department budget for each of the buildings. There is General, Law Enforcement Annex, Joseph Building & Joseph Annex, Chaplin Building and Court Building.

The staffing for this department is one Lead Facilities Maintenance Worker and one Custodian/Facilities Worker. We do a small amount of contracting for a few things like, cleaning of law enforcement annex and have partnered with the City of La Grande who pay part of a contract for those services. We also contract for lawn services at Riveria.

Contractual services line items for some of the buildings has been increased in the FY 2025-26 budget to allow for a once per month deep cleaning utilizing a contractor. There is a challenge with janitorial services in those buildings with only 2 staff members.

Audrey Cant asked what Reimbursable Expenses are under Facilities. Administrative Officer Burgess indicated that line item is there for cost shares. One example is, the City of La Grande Police Department is a tenant in the law enforcement building, and sometimes would like improvements they are willing to pay a portion of. This line has also been used with the recent arson fire in the Joseph Building. Related expenses for the fire will be reimbursed through insurance and those funds will go into the Reimbursable Expenses line item.

Matthew Goodwin asked if Riveria is still part of the Facilities budget. Administrative Officer Burgess indicated that Riveria has a different fund which will be discussed tomorrow.

Computer Services

Jason Fouts, Computer Services Manager, presented the proposed budget for the Computer Services department to the committee for their information.

Mr. Fouts reported that the Computer Services budget decreased from last year due to the Assessment software transition being completed. There was also a decrease in the office supplies line item.

Staffing remains the same with the exception of a cost of living allowance and increases for insurance costs.

GIS Fund

Jason Fouts, Computer Services Manager, continued his proposed budget presentation with a brief summary regarding the GIS Fund.

There are no significant changes made to the budget this year. Funds are used to maintain required software licenses, with contingency for tasks that cannot be handled inhouse. However, we have not had to utilize contingency in quite some time.

Audrey Cant asked what the Recording Fees are for GIS. Administrative Officer Burgess explained that a \$4.75 charge on most documents recorded by the County Clerk, which include fees for specific GIS file or data requests go into the GIS fund.

District Attorney/Legal Services

Kelsie McDaniel, Union County District Attorney, presented the proposed budget for the District Attorney's office to the committee for their information.

The District Attorney's budget looks a lot different than last year because there have been so many federal changes. The District Attorney's budget does not normally see changes in revenue items, however, they did this year. One change is that the Victim Impact panel will be reduced from twice a year to once a year, which is a good thing because it means people are not getting DUI's.

Another change beginning July 1, 2025 will be an increase in Discovery fees from \$35 to \$50. This is a much-needed change to reflect the way they provide the material and to offset the cost of cloud storage for the case management system.

In terms of expenses, the long-term Support Enforcement Specialist retired, which gave the opportunity of transferring the program over to the state. Counties all over Oregon are turning their Support Enforcement cases over to the state. Closing this position saves the county approximately \$10,000 annually.

There is an increase in Personnel costs due the cost of personnel benefits, along with merit and cost of living allowance increases. Membership dues have also increased through the National District Attorneys Association, whom her department has been longtime members of.

Grant funding this year has been disastrous. Funding that the District Attorney's office relies on are not available yet. As mentioned before, funding for the investigator position has ended with no continuation. On top of that, there could be up to 40% cuts to the Victims Services Program.

Spending this year looks a bit different. Investigations are not typically one of the largest line items but is significantly higher. She asked to flag it last year because she knew there would be a homicide trial, and would be one that required to pay professionals needed during the trial.

Reduced fees include postage, investigations and witness fees.

Commissioner Anderes stated that EOCA is pushing their legislative fiscal priorities to Ways and Means and on that list is continuing services for District Attorneys offices. District Attorney McDaniel is happy to hear that is anxious to participate in the off-session workgroup that she will be participating in.

Mathew Miles asked for clarification from District Attorney McDaniel regarding the Legal Secretary and Trial Assistant position. She indicated that there are two (2) Legal Secretary's and one (1) part time Trial Assistant who also works as the Grand Jury Clerk. Essentially there are three people that do the work that falls into that category. Her office has been down a Deputy District Attorney for over three years and adding the Trial Assistant and Investigator position really helps balance out the work load.

Commissioner Anderes asked if the county is responsible for the witness fee. District Attorney McDaniel indicated that is correct and also becomes a part of the defense's legal bill.

Matthew Goodwin asked who the county Medical Examiners are. District Attorney McDaniel indicated that there are two; Dr. Brian and Michelle Thule and are located at the Fourth Street Clinic.

Matthew Goodwin asked what the District Attorney's office is doing to get another attorney hired. District Attorney McDaniel indicated that the county is not competitive enough and don't offer PERS retirement. Anyone with experience is not going to come as a lateral, so she is seeing applicants right out of law school.

Juvenile Department

Odin Miller, Juvenile Director, presented the proposed budget for the Juvenile Department budget to the committee for their review. Mr. Miller noted that he was hired into this position a little over 10 months ago and is happy to be here.

Mr. Miller noted that the narrative is a great snapshot of the department as a whole being that each department is very complex.

As of July 1, 2025 the Union County Juvenile Department will no longer be the grantee for the 906 Youth Resource Center in regards to the Youth Development Oregon grant. The 906 Youth Resource Center has done an outstanding job building its services and becoming financially stable on its own. The Juvenile Department will still hold a strong presence at the 906 in the form of staff participating in facilitation of family night activities and open hours.

A goal this fiscal year is to add a Prevention/Expunction Specialist in the new fiscal year. This position will take on various duties that include providing prevention services and tracking for the Juvenile Department.

In 2024, they had 195 total referrals in the Juvenile Department. 104 of those were criminal, 74 misdemeanors and 30 felony. They also have 14 OYA youth from this county, those are kids who are committed to the State of Oregon. Those kids go to long time treatment facilities, or Juvenile Correction Facilities. The goal is to transition them back home. There are many support groups which assist in this process.

Mathew Miles asked for clarification on the 906 Youth Resource Center. Mr. Miller explained it is a program for at risk youth. During open hours they provide food, showers, laundry, support and

pathways for medical and housing assistance. There is also family support night, where there is parent education with a hot meal.

Commissioner Seavert asked if there are medical expenses incurred for the OYA youth. Mr. Miller explained that those expenses are turned over to the state, and the individual once they are released from custody.

Commissioner Anderes asked Mr. Miller to elaborate on Friends of the Children. Mr. Miller indicated that it is a groundbreaking organization that will help lead troubled youth down the right path. It is privately owned; meaning all red tape is gone. There are large funders, people that have huge hearts to fund these programs. Mentors stay with the children from Kindergarten through 12th grade.

Planning Department

Inga Williams, Planning Director, presented the proposed budget for the Planning Department to the budget committee for their consideration. Ms. Williams noted that she was hired as the Planning Director a little over 7 months ago.

Beyond usual materials costs, Ms. Williams would like to purchase a meeting OWL, which is a portable camera/speaker/microphone for Planning Commission and upcoming community meetings. An increase of \$900 will be added to Office/Operating Supplies to offset this cost.

There is also an increase in Personnel costs due the cost of personnel benefits, along with merit and cost of living allowance increases.

Mathew Miles thanked Ms. Williams for the narrative regarding the meeting OWL.

Communications

Nick Vora, Emergency Manager, presented the proposed Communications budget request to the committee for their review.

The purpose of the Communication System Fund is to support maintenance and up-keep of the County-wide public safety communication system. The Communications System Fund is funded by users with a scheduled increase by 3 percent in the next fiscal year. We anticipate approximately \$70,000 in user fees this coming year. The balance of revenue will be coming from the Communications grants that were previously mentioned and as well as beginning fund balance.

The Building/System Maintenance line was increased by \$15,000 to reflect anticipated one-time costs associated with radio tower maintenance needed on Mount Harris currently being negotiated with the site owner.

The most significant expense this coming year is a partnership with Oregon Department of Forestry to do structural enhancements to the Mount Harris fire lookout tower. He included \$15,000 in his Maintenance line item to accommodate the project.

The proposed budget is balanced as presented.

Emergency Services Department

Nick Vora, Emergency Manager, presented the proposed budget for the Emergency Services Department to the committee for their information.

The Emergency Services Department consists of a full time Emergency Manager and a half-time Department Specialist who assists in daily operations and grant reporting. There is an increase in Personnel costs due the cost of personnel benefits, along with cost of living allowance increases.

Union County Emergency Management receives significant funding through the Federal Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG), which is a 50% matching grant. In FY 2025-26, the EMPG allocation for Union County is estimated to be \$63,000. Due to current federal funding, that estimate remains uncertain. Emergency Managers in Oregon have requested the State Legislature use state general funds to fill that, but the status of that request is unknown.

Administrative Officer Burgess indicated that the revenue is included in the proposed budget with the hope the funding will be worked out.

Emergency Manager Vora reported that \$12,000 in staff time along with \$1,020 in benefits were rolled over for the temporary position of CWPP plan writer. The position is funded by an external grant from the Oregon State Fire Marshall's Office.

Mathew Miles asked where the Emergency Services office is located because he noticed there is Rent under Expenses. Emergency Manager Vora explained his office is located in the building above the maintenance shop. Rent is included in his budget as it is included in his budget as it is an eligible grant expense.

Commissioner Seavert asked what the Emergency Managers requested from legislation. Emergency Manager Vora indicated approximately \$9 million for the biennium. That would be for all 36 counties, currently receiving funds including the tribes.

Commissioner Anderes commented that Emergency Manager Vora would not be able to do his job effectively without the partnership of other Emergency Managers; he suggests the opposite of that is true as well. Other Emergency Managers would not be able to do their jobs without him.

Mr. Vora thanked the Commissioners and Administrative Officer Burgess for allowing him to be able to assist other counties when they are in need.

Budget Committee members thanked Emergency Manager Vora for everything he does for Union County.

Special Accounts

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, provided a summary of the Special Accounts fund to the committee for their information.

This fund provides payment of costs not specifically charged to each general fund department such as liability insurance, legal services, auditing, postage and property insurance. We also pay our dues to the Association of Oregon Counties, National Association of Counties dues and participation costs.

This budget also includes support to programs not operated directly by the county, such as programs operated by Center for Human Development, EOU-GED program, BMCC services and Predator Control program. Some of the smaller programs are the Cherry Fruit Fly and Smoke Management program.

There are personnel costs in the Special Account budget for the Vector Control District. The employees are paid through the county system as county employees and all expenses are reimbursed by the Vector Control District.

Most of the numbers are very similar to last year. Property and Liability did increase about 3.5%. It also includes CHD's requested increase in services of 4.25%. The Predator Control program includes a full-time position, which was requested last year from a half-time position.

Commissioner Seavert asked for clarification on the Safety/Employee Recognition line item. Administrative Officer Burgess indicated that it is for safety improvements and employee morale, however, we have not had the opportunity to spend the funds. Her hope is to leave it in there for future use.

Audrey Cant asked for clarification on the Fruit Inspector position. Administrative Officer Burgess indicated that the county is required to have cherries inspected for fruit flies, which is a seasonal, part-time position. The county works in cooperation with the 4-H & Extension Service District for those services.

Audrey Cant asked for clarification on the Reimbursable Travel line item. Administrative Officer Burgess indicated it is used in case one of the Commissioners travel for NACo or other organizations and the travel expenses are reimbursable.

Transfers

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, provided a summary to the committee on Transfers.

The Transfers department of the general fund budget includes allocations of general fund dollars for transfer into special funds for specific purposes. Transfers included in the FY 2025-26 budget provide funds for Animal Control and Animal Shelter, the County Surveyor, Vehicle Reserve and the Riveria Activity Center (RAC).

These transfers are necessary to balance the special funds which do not generate enough funds to cover budgeted expenditures. The Vehicle Reserve fund accumulates funding for future vehicle replacement needs.

Mathew Miles asked where the county currently is with the Riveria Activity Center. Administrative Officer indicated that the county recently entered into a contract with La Grande Parks and Rec who already has an online reservation system in place that works great. The county still owns and maintains the building; along with storage space for Emergency Services, exercise room for the Sheriff's Department and a backup system for IT.

Sheriff

Cody Bowen, Union County Sheriff, presented the proposed budget for the Sheriff's Office to the budget committee for their consideration.

Major funding changes include adding \$95,000 to the County Schools Contract line for an addition of a School Resource Deputy. There will be a slight decrease in the City of Elgin Contract line to reflect a new contract amount based on declining city revenues; and also, a decrease in SFS funding as the grant will expire in September 2025.

As far as personnel, he did ask for another full-time position and has since been recanted in hopes to make room for a new position later down the road.

Under Materials and Services is an increase in Dispatch Services line of \$37,434 paid to the City of La Grande, which is based on the Sheriff's Department usage of those services. Also increased is RV/Tow Storage Fees of \$20,000 to cover the expense of towing and disposing of abandoned RV/s on county roads and property.

The Sheriff's office is requesting the purchase of four (4) new patrol vehicles at \$95,000 each, totaling \$380,000. Sheriff Bowen understands that this is a large ask. He did note that deputies and their gear take up quite a bit of space, and the Chevy Tahoe which accommodates the work space they need while patrolling. He understands the funding has been reduced to cover only three vehicles.

Commissioner Seavert asked if the decrease in marine funding will affect the Marine Deputy position. Sheriff Bowen indicated this was brought to his office four days ago, and he is unsure at this point.

Commissioner Anderes asked how long the City of Elgin contract is for. Sheriff Bowen indicated the contract is for an additional six (6) years.

Corrections

Cody Bowen, Union County Sheriff, presented the proposed budget for the Corrections Department to the budget committee for their consideration.

Major funding changes in revenues are adding \$64,000 from a JRI grant to assist in funding the Work Crew position. Administrative Officer Burgess indicated that she has not yet heard the status of the JRI grant application.

Sheriff Bowen also reported that Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) has agreed to contribute \$7,500 a year to assist with the Work Crew position. The work crew will help clean up transient camps along the freeway that have been there for many years. There is a transient that lives on the right side of the road towards the fairgrounds that has been living there for five years. ODOT has tried numerous times to get him evicted, and have been unsuccessful until recently. There will be a 60-90 day vacate notice, and the work crew will be utilized to clean up the area with equipment provided by ODOT. Over the year, they will also periodically be out on the local highways assisting ODOT in cleaning up the high traffic areas.

Sheriff Bowen is requesting to increase Extra Help under Personnel by \$10,000. Extra Help are people who come into the facility and provide additional services within the jail.

Materials and Services increased this year in Work Crew Expenses by \$3,000 to replace worn out equipment. Repair and Maintenance increased by \$20,000 to upgrade the control room. To give a better perspective of the space, Sheriff Bowen offered to give a tour of the control room to anyone who has not had the opportunity to see it. There is also an increase of \$6,000 in Travel/Training to purchase training equipment.

Commissioner Anderes asked how Sheriff Bowen would categorize the contract with Wallowa County. Sheriff Bowen indicated that it is a very good working relationship. They continue to ask for beds, but it remains a juggle at times because he doesn't want to end up running at capacity and turning offenders away. It is a great revenue source for the department at \$120 a day, per bed. Parole and Probation also pay the \$120 bed fee.

Sheriff Bowen indicated that Friends of the Children does not play a part in his budget, but provided background on the program to the committee for their information. It is a non-profit organization that functions on strictly donations and has 38 locations across the nation.

Mathew Miles asked Sheriff Bowen for clarification on the Drug Task Force. Sheriff Bowen provided background on the program and its inception. The City of La Grande has not put forth a deputy to assist in the efforts of keeping the program running at this time. Mathew Miles thanked Sheriff Bowen for the history and background on the program.

Community Corrections

Travis Miller, Community Corrections Director, presented the proposed budget for Community Corrections to the budget committee for their consideration.

All of the department funding comes from the state level. Union County receives approximately .67% of the Department of Corrections, Community Corrections biennial budget. The .67% is based on the number of offenders supervised by Union County. Community Corrections is currently only funded

through the state to supervise Possession of Controlled Substance (PCS) misdemeanor offenders and some Domestic Violence misdemeanor offenders. The monies their department receives from the state is allocated to fund 1145 custody, sex offender services, work crew, transition subsidy, field services and client services.

Capital Outlay requests include \$5,000 for the purchase of an enclosed trailer to store all of the UCCC firearms training equipment. The Community Corrections department currently stores all of their equipment in their evidence room which requires moving it up and down the stairs anytime they use it. The trailer would make things a lot easier and free up space in their evidence room.

Commissioner Anderes asked if there is potential for their equipment to be stored in the Search and Rescue Building. Director Miller indicated that his department utilizes the Starkey gun range. Commissioner Anderes asked if the trailer would be stored at the range behind a locked gate. Director Miller was hoping to park it in the back-parking lot of the Joseph Building with a lock.

Matthew Goodwin asked what the standard case load looked like. Director Miller indicated prior to COVID, there were 299 cases, which is now down to 156. Each probation officer will have anywhere from 20-30 cases.

Commissioner Seavert asked if his department is able to handle their caseload with the current staffing level available. Director Miller indicated they are up to 156 and are able to handle it; however, it would always be better if it were lighter.

EOU-GED Program

Cathy Trochlell and Tressa Seydel, EOU-GED Program presented to the committee and provided a statement from EOU wishing to extend the GED program.

There is a critical need for General Education Development (GED) support services and an on-site testing location in Union County for residents over 16 years of age and above in anticipation of a more-qualified and prepared work force. On average, 120 individuals per year access the program. This service is not being provided anywhere else in Union County.

During 2024, 87 individuals-initiated contact with the CEP Coordinator via phone, text and email, and 39 of those students were provided with practice test vouchers. 24 students passed their GED tests either at the EOU Testing Center or through Online Proctored Testing. 45 of those passers received one or more test vouchers paid by the CEP. Over all, the number of students assisted by the program were consistent with the previous year.

Last year a request was included to add advertising costs to the budget in which have doubled the amount of people who have reached out for her assistance.

Total funding request is in the amount of \$22,500 – the same as the current year.

USDA Predator Control Program

Chris Lulay, Union County Fish & Wildlife Trapper, and Shane Koyle, District Supervisor, addressed the committee with a brief overview of their work and projects.

The proposed budget request for FY 2025-26 is \$111,000. This funding request indicates the amount needed to increase service in Union County to one full time person.

The budget is also an estimate and is based on the amount of state funds that wildlife services is currently proposed to receive. However, in the current Governor's budget through ODF and ODFW has been cut from \$1,051,198 to \$120,000 for the biennium or \$60,000 per year.

A commitment letter of intent is needed by June 15, 2025 to ensure USDA Predator Control can continue services beyond June 30, 2025.

Commissioner Seavert is appreciative of the Predator Control Program. He also noted that the Predator Control Program is not just in charge of the wolves, they also help with much more.

Center for Human Development – Public Health, Mental Health, Veterans Services

Barb Seatter, Mental Health Director, Carrie Brogoitti, Public Health Director, and Brian Blais, Veteran's Services addressed the budget committee with a summary of the proposed budget request.

The Center for Human Development is requesting \$327,254 in funding for FY 2025-26. This is a 4.25% increase across the board due to costs of inflation.

Carrie Brogoitti provided a breakdown of Public Health services that the Union County budget helps support. The work that they do is very important in protecting the health of our citizens. She also went over Health Network for Rural Schools, which provides services to students in the schools.

Brian Blais, Veteran Services, addressed the budget committee with an update related to the increase in services for Outreach Services.

Matthew Goodwin asked what types of services are available to veterans in Union County. Mr. Blais indicated that most of his duties are related to submitting applications for benefits available to them. He is a big advocate for transportation services available to veterans in the community.

Mat Miles thanked Mr. Blais for his work and efforts in his role. He believes it's very important to connect with veterans as most are isolated.

Audrey Cant asked how many veterans are in Union County. Mr. Blais indicated that there are approximately 2,600 and he assists about 2,000 of those veterans.

Barb Seatter, Mental Health Director, attended the Anthony Lakes Veteran's Skiing event this year and was very happy to see how well attended it was. Mr. Blais also assists with this event.

There was an open house for the Outreach House which is located next to Final Cut Pizza.

Mat Miles asked if the Outreach Center on Jefferson is a part of the Island Avenue location. Barb Seatter indicated the center was located there but was not a good fit. When the Island Avenue building became available, they jumped on it.

Public Comment

The chair provided an opportunity for public comment. There were no public comments.

Union County Solid Waste District

The Union County Solid Waste District proposed budget is presented in three funds, Enterprise Fund, Capital Reserve Fund, and Household Hazardous Waste Fund. The total proposed budget is in the amount of \$1,003,570. The Solid Waste District operates on revenues generated by franchise fees and includes no local taxes.

The Enterprise Fund is proposed at \$146,500. Its major expenses have to do with the monitoring activities since the landfill was closed November 2008, which is the county's responsibility for 30 years through the DEQ permit. In 2021, the board added a line item up to \$2,000 for clean-up events, which has become popular in our local cities such as Cove, Union and North Powder.

The Capital Reserve Fund is proposed at \$51,970. This fund is to insure that funds are available to complete the required monitoring of the landfill. A transfer of \$20,000 to the Enterprise Fund for monitoring and reporting expenses is budgeted in the event funds are needed.

The Household Hazardous Waste fund is proposed at \$805,100. This is a cooperative effort between Union, Baker and Wallowa counties. Union County receives fees from each of the counties being the fiscal agent and contract with Waste-Pro who runs the household hazardous waste facility.

Commissioner Anderes made a motion to approve the Solid Waste District Budget as presented. Mathew Miles seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Recess

The chair called for a recess until 4 PM on Wednesday, May 21, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison Moore



Senior Department Specialist