

Town Hall Participant Written Comments

Services and Priorities

- Where is the responsibility of the County for housing and particularly affordable housing?
- Could we contact other services (health, justice, roads, police, etc.) to see if they would like to send people to future meetings?
- Public Health
- Need for Immediate Care Clinic in Eagle Point
- Shady Cove needs transportation so persons can get to the doctors & shopping
- Must somehow explain to residents that services require money (i.e. taxes). It's not a bad word to ask how to fund the community services needed. *Would a questionnaire, such as the Oregonian published after nasty Measure 5 took the state budget down, be helpful. This would list services and cost of each. Let citizens prioritize what they want for what they want to spend. Obviously, this would not be binding, and mandated services would not be listed. This might help people understand what county taxes do for them..
- I'd like to see alternative transportation, light rail, bike paths, horse trails, etc.
- Don't spend our \$ on things like the recent approval for infrared surveillance devices. If they are really needed it should be a federal expenditure. That money would have been far better spent on the libraries!
- Cut trees along road right-away to lower need for Trees Inc.
- Stop the destruction of the Elk Creek Dam and finish it.
- Check on legal status on recipients of county service. Give services only to citizens
- Need to deal with illegals & all the opportunity given out

PRIORITIES

(Each person was given 4 blue dots to indicate their priorities among four choices.)

Eagle Point

- 26 Library
- 20 Health and Human Services
- 16 Public Safety (Community Justice, Sheriff, District Attorney, Justice Court)
- 12 Roads

Rogue River:

- 23 Libraries
- 20 Public Safety

- 20 Health and Human Services
- 10 Roads

Ruch

- 34 Libraries
- 21 Public Safety
- 20 Health and Human Services
- 11 Roads

Medford

- 46 Libraries
- 29 Health and Human Services
- 16 Public Safety
- 11 Roads

Ashland (not done at that session)

Libraries

- Make the library public again and find the funds for the education they provide
- Libraries need a high priority
- This is only meeting I've been able to attend. But why are 15 libraries opening? It's great if county can afford it, but since it can't, why not fewer openings of them & use funds from sale of buildings, no (illegible) of staffing etc, to support ones opened?
- Be fairer in dispensing \$. Why no question on 1 agency's outsourcing or not, but outsource library when it has a very positive/efficient system
- The library system should be given as much importance and as high a priority as all the other county functions and services
- It's not genius to run our libraries at half time for half the money. I would like to see money permanently allocated to our wonderful library system and not wasted in other areas as is currently the case. Do not even reconsider selling the library properties. Many individuals and charitable foundations contributed cash to build the buildings as well as taxpayers. They cannot be sold - period!
- Make the libraries a priority! How can a "for profit" company manage a service that should be free for our community? Does our tax money end up in Maryland?
- Libraries are important & need to be funded with employees having fair benefits!
- Get those libraries fully operational. 8 hours per week for Ruch is ridiculous!
- To do a better job on libraries, you should be smart enough to do what the people from Mass. (sic) have done. I thought you had the smarts. Guess I was wrong.
- Outsource roads, not libraries!

Funding

- 2 said a sales tax should be investigated (1 of these said "for specific purposes")
- "It's been great, but we've depended on the Feds too long!"
- Fiscal restraint needs to be practiced by all county departments, including law enforcement. Marijuana detection equipment - how many lives does this save?"
- Task Force recommendation boiled down to which tax do you prefer. Need fresh, new ideas.
- Follow-up with a different format that allows attendees to bring forth creative ideas for revenue generation If we keep all this & want to add services we need to approve funding alternatives
- I'd like to know which revenue stream you'd favor to guarantee services are adequately funding long term
- Too bad so much of our new construction for homes are for homes so large any tax/\$1000 seems "intolerable" for the residents. Please continue to research and pursue alternative revenue sources to replace property tax increases. Are we spreading the tax burden evenly to non-property owners and visitors/tourists? Could we generate electricity through a "cogen" plant burning small diameter wood and then selling the "surplus" electricity to urban areas outside of the county/state?
- Pursue "reimbursement" fees to those requiring search & rescue services and those wanting fire suppression for human-caused fire starts.
- Utilize correction crews for road/roadside maintenance. "Hand clean" ditches rather than heavy equipment on 2-lane roads. (I've witnessed road damage from use of this oversized equip.)
- I don't see why Jails, Search and Rescue and other services can't be operated to make revenue
- We all need to pay for our share of county services. We all need to support the needs of all of us. (We've been 'spoiled' too long by O & C funds.) Other states/counties have paid their own ways and their services are adequate.
- A lot of effort needs to be expended on sources of revenue to fund county responsibilities. We need to be self-sufficient.
- Stay away from privatization as much as possible The commissioners should facilitate meetings with the Forest Service and BLM and environmental groups in order to avoid the deadlock that leads to the courts disallowing timber sales (and pigs should fly).
- New taxes are not an option. Older long time (3rd or 4 generation) residents cannot afford to take on new taxes.
- Please, no more property tax levies for residents. Send property tax bills to USFS and BLM.

- Charge those keeping the forests from producing county income for the amount of money lost.
Consider sustainable funding other than property taxation
- Can we get prisoners to do a lot of the work for county? Learn trades from road work, agriculture. Help on having to do spending in housing themselves?
- I would support revenue enhancing options including some compromise with timber harvesting on the 52% federal land in our area, a sales or bed/restaurant tax, a county income tax, or the real estate transfer tax (if found to be legal in Oregon). What about increasing developer fees, or passing on fees to new buyers via inspection fees?
- You should seriously consider alternative taxes; i.e., sales tax, income tax, etc.
- Consider alternative ways to obtain funds: County dedicated income tax OR County dedicated sales tax (dedicated to public health, libraries, etc.)
- I would encourage the commissioners to not rely, solely, on property taxes, or taxes such as the restaurant, lodging, gas, utility, or any other tax to fund our services. I believe we defeat our purpose when the price of those tax increases are passed off to the people who can afford it the least, and creates needs for more services.
- Time to think outside the box. Cannot continue to tax, tax, tax. Must push for tax reform, try to consolidate city/county services. Cities are struggling financially as well. The proposed taxes, if adopted, must be shared with cities.
- Make tax structure broader/more equitable: sales/lodging/meals taxes; increase property tax.
- Citizens with the least resources (poverty level folks, children, handicapped) need services the most: health, libraries, public transportation. Don't forget them, even if you don't hear from them.
- Thinning/habitat restoration in the woods; no clearcutting, please. Replanting has always been iffy here; with global warming it'll be more so.
- Reach out to the environmental community. We are stymied in court, and will continue to be if we don't start talking.

County government

- 4 said the County Charter should be reviewed/revised
- 2 said the number of county commissioners should be increased
- "We need more transparency such as what was offered today."
- Would 5 Commissioners do a better job?
- I want a better job in the Planning Dept. It's a disgrace what you have done to the people putting up the greenhouse.
- I think the permitting process would be much easier if a county employee was assigned to each applicant to help them through the entire process. The former

county employees that I've spoken to have quit because they are embarrassed about the inefficiency & inconsistency - not the salary!

Commissioners

- 2 suggested Jack Walker and C.W. Smith should attend the remaining town hall meetings
- "Thanks to Gilmore (sic) for coming!"
- Glad C.W. was here to address some complicated issues. Glad he's on the mend.
- Keep showing up and listening to people
- You do work hard. I don't always agree with decisions, but I do agree all of us must tighten our economic belts.
- Work to get better ways to get information to the public. Improve efficiency of County workforce. Too many people doing too little and no emphasis on "Service to the Citizen."
- We need to increase the number of commissioners & diversity. What's happening on this?
- Not enough prior public input & commissioners don't seem to be ahead of the game but trying to salvage a done deal like the loss of O & C funds.
- Jack Walker: Represent all of the people. Stop name calling "We got to do something about these Applegate people" repeated over 6 times at the budget meeting.
- Become more transparent with budget items that people should be giving input to.
- I had hoped that Danny Jordan had been here as was promoted. I understand he has a presentation that would have been very helpful in our understanding.
- You should be doing public meetings with the people you represent.
- We need to do public meetings. People can give very informed input as we proved in public meeting about libraries for Applegate/Ruch. You need to put more faith in the people that voted for you (BOC) to represent.
- More town meetings. It was informative.
- Put the County Commissioners meetings on the county website.
- Please put minutes of BOC meetings on website. The County Commissioners work for us and we need to have more knowledge and opportunity for public input.
- Make county government operations more transparent to the public! (One example: Measure 37 claim submittals & review.)
- Commissioners need to be more sensitive to fact they represent every citizen in the county, not just the voters who elected them.
- Transparency in department, please.
- More/complete information on your website is expected from county residents.

- Thanks, C.W., for being here and being available. Make sure the BOC and county processes are transparent enough to garner public trust. Minutes of BOC, updated website, clear elections procedures would be a good start.
- Get honest.
- More public in action at informed settings.

Town hall format

- Voters need education on how things work in county budgeting. The problem is getting them to pay attention. Try to find a way to get voters interested in learning
- Helpful to hear many views
- Broad-based questions from audience
- This is a good beginning. There is a lot to learn and I applaud the LWV and AAUW for starting this process.
- Enlightening
- It was good to see so many people interested in County services and government
- Good to have so much time to comment
- Would like to come to another presentation once have heard alternate views & had a better understanding
- Very informative
- Good information
- Well presented
- Clear presentation of complicated issue
- Thanks for the information
- Well rounded. Glad didn't focus on one subject
- Appreciate the courtesy
- Nice job, Tam Good explanation. Good leaders.
- I learned a lot.
- Material presented in a clear, concise manner. Questions thoughtfully answered. Pre-preparation was evident.
- I appreciate the opportunity to learn more about, comment about, and hear others comments on the County budget. I wish there had been a larger turnout. It should have been posted in the Post Office weeks ago.
- Material was presented in an understandable manner. Questions were of real interest.
- I'd have liked more detail about the budget
- Budget is complex. Unfortunate we could not have benefit of the power point presentation.
- Please publish a spreadsheet with just the departments which make up the \$30 million of discretionary funds.

- It would have been much better for the meeting to center on the parts of the budget that the commissioners can regulate or change. Too much material offered; becomes too confusing.
- Tam through out too many numbers in what seemed like random fashion.
- Present "like" as "like", e.g. # deputies per 1000 from state, but total cops & population county & Medford.
- Opening 45 minutes seemed like economics 101. I think most average people know how to make a budget and know how they work. Too much intro.
- I appreciate the input by our speaker but would have preferred someone closer to the issues. Thank you to the LWV and others for their sponsorship.
- Everyone was too long-winded. How about time limits?
- Going up to a microphone is intimidating. How about a future format with smaller round tables for discussion.
- Thoughtful, well reasoned comments.
- Great initiative. Continue in some way(s) to get more & more people into the debate. Other processes, in addition to town halls. For example, low income citizens less likely to attend these town halls. So, go to those neighborhoods & organize (town halls) gatherings, etc. As largest population center, I feel this is important to get more citizens involved.
- Great variety of speaker comments.
- Good public input.
- It was great until the lecture by C.W. Smith.
- The League of Women Voters were great.

Note: Written comments often addressed topics that were not discussed during the town hall meetings.