

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE BOARD SESSION – Regular Session

Wednesday, February 3, 2021  
9:00 a.m.

Senator Hearing Room  
555 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**PRESENT:** Commissioner Danielle Bethell and Commissioner Colm Willis. Also present were Jan Fritz, chief administrative officer, Jane Vetto as county counsel, and Brenda Koenig as recorder.

**ABSENT:** Commissioner Kevin Cameron.

Commissioner Bethell called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

*(Video Time 00:00:47)*

Commissioner Bethell read the text of the emails that were submitted for public comment. **(Attached as Exhibit A-D).**

Nelson Vierra:

- Mr. Vierra lives along Butte Creek on the Clackamas County side;
- He would like what is left of the dam removed due to the following concerns:
  - It is a danger to navigation;
  - It is a danger to the fish population; and
  - He believes that the county will be using it more frequently due to the recent wildfires.
- Children play along the river where there is exposed rebar;
- The fish count is falling;
- There is funding for dam removal; and
- The dam should be removed for safety, navigation, and the fish population.

Susan Daily:

- Ms. Daily resides in the City of Scotts Mills;
- She would like the remaining portion of the dam removed for the same reasons that Mr. Vierra had stated;
- She also believes that the county has put a lot of time and effort into refurbishing county parks:
  - Due to the recent wildfires, many county parks are closed;

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- The Scott Mills Park remains open;
- Many visitors come to the park during the spring and summer months; and
- Dam removal would be safer for the residents that visit as well as fish migration.

## **PRESENTATION**

*(Video Time 00:09:30)*

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) update. –Katrina Rothenberger

- Ms. Rothenberger reported the following updates for the COVID-19 pandemic as of 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, February 3, 2021:
  - There have been an estimated 17,424 cumulative cases within the county from the start of the pandemic;
  - An estimated 25 county residents are currently being monitored in the hospital for symptoms related to COVID-19;
  - An estimated 264 individuals have died from symptoms related to COVID-19; and
  - In Region 2, a total of 36 individuals have been hospitalized due to symptoms related to COVID-19:
    - This is a decrease from the prior week.
- COVID-19 cases within the state and Marion County have been decreasing:
  - There was a 16 percent decrease in the county over the last two-week period, in comparison to the previous two-week period.
- The current positivity rate for the county is estimated to be 9.4 percent:
  - This is higher than the state’s positivity rate of 5.9 percent.
- Most positive cases are still coming from the following areas:
  - The City of Woodburn;
  - The City of Keizer;
  - Central Salem; and
  - Northeast Salem.
- Ms. Rothenberger has received several questions regarding the decrease in cases being attributed to a decrease in testing:
  - Testing in Marion County has fluctuated between 8,800 and just under 10,000 per week throughout the month of January; and
  - There has also been a decrease in cases, hospitalization, and deaths:
    - This is not attributed to a decrease in testing.
- To date, 353,000 Oregonians have received the vaccine:
  - It is estimated that 51,000 reside in Marion County:
    - An estimated 43,000 are in the group for Phase 1A; and
    - An estimated 7,300 are in the group for Phase 1B.
- Ms. Rothenberger anticipates that another vaccine, Johnson and Johnson, will receive emergency use authorization by the end of the month;
- The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) has the following sequencing plan for vaccinations:

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- Seniors will begin receiving vaccinations on February 8<sup>th</sup>;
- Anyone over the age of 75 will begin receiving vaccinations on February 15<sup>th</sup>;
- Persons 70 and over on February 22<sup>nd</sup>; and
- Persons 65 and over on March 1<sup>st</sup>.
- In order to immunize more than seven in ten seniors, the state is anticipating that it will take until mid-April, based on vaccine supply and the number of seniors in the community:
  - There are an estimated 750,000 individuals over the age of 65 years in Oregon;
  - Approximately 100,000 individuals have already received the vaccine; and
  - In Marion County there are approximately 56,000 individuals over the age of 65 years.
- The county's final sequencing plan has been submitted to the Governor's Office for approval;
- Marion County Health and Human Services (MCHHS) has reached out to community partners for planning of vaccine distribution;
- The Fred Meyer pharmacy has also been approved as a COVID-19 provider and they are able to administer shots:
  - As more providers are enrolled with the state, more distribution sites will be made available.
- It is recommended that individuals who have already had COVID-19 still get the vaccine:
  - There are some concerns regarding side effects in individuals who have recently recovered from the virus; and
  - Those individuals should consult with their physician before getting vaccinated.
- MCHHS has been working with the University of Oregon throughout the pandemic:
  - They will be offering testing in Marion County in the following cities:
    - Woodburn;
    - Gervais;
    - Jefferson; and
    - Salem.
  - For more information please visit the county's COVID-19 webpage; and
  - The first clinic is scheduled for Saturday, February 6<sup>th</sup>.

***Board discussion:***

- Commissioner Willis commented that over 15 percent of the population within the county has been vaccinated:
  - He thanked Ms. Rothenberger and the county's community partners for making that possible.
- Commissioner Bethell encouraged residents who are 65 years and older to speak with their own health care provider prior to getting vaccinated to make sure that it is a safe option for individuals.

*Video Time (00:17:08)*

**MOTION:** Commissioner Willis moved to add an item to the Action Agenda under Board of Commissioners: Consider approval of an order ratifying a Wildfire Recovery payment to the City of Gates in the amount of \$50,000 to assist with financial hardship as a result of the September 2020 wildfires. Seconded by Commissioner Bethell; motion carried. A voice vote was unanimous.

***Board discussion:***

- Commissioner Willis gave some background information regarding the pressing need to provide financial assistance to the City of Gates; and
- Commissioner Bethell thanked Jan Fritz, Marion County Chief Administrative Officer, for her role in expediting the request.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Willis withdrew his initial motion and moved to add the item to the Consent Agenda under Board of Commissioners: Consider approval of an order ratifying a Wildfire Recovery payment to the City of Gates in the amount of \$50,000 to assist with financial hardship as a result of the September 2020 wildfires. Seconded by Commissioner Bethell; motion carried. A voice vote was unanimous.

**CONSENT**

*(Video Time 00:22:55)*

**COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Approve an order reappointing District Attorney Paige Clarkson and Sheriff Joe Kast to the Marion County Children and Families Commission with terms ending February 28, 2025.

**PUBLIC WORKS**

Receive notice of hearings officer's recommendation and schedule a public hearing for February 17, 2021, for Comprehensive Plan Amendment/Zone Change (CP/ZC) Case #20-005/Mark D. Stadeli, Trustee of the Mark D. Stadeli Living Trust.

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Approve an order ratifying a Wildfire Recovery payment to the City of Gates in the amount of \$50,000 to assist with financial hardship as a result of the September 2020 wildfires.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Willis moved for approval of the consent agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Bethell; motion carried. A voice vote was unanimous.

## ACTION

(Video Time 00:24:02)

### PUBLIC WORKS

1. Consider approval of an order establishing a Marion County Safety Corridor on McKay Road, Yergen Road, and Ehlen Road pursuant to section 2(1)(c) of Chapter #501, Oregon Laws 2019.

–Lani Radtke

#### ***Summary of presentation:***

- Ms. Radtke gave some background information regarding safety corridors:
  - The corridors are assigned to roads with high crash rates;
  - The corridors allow agencies to set priority areas and collaborate on the following:
    - Engineering;
    - Education;
    - Enforcement; and
    - Emergency Services.
  - The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) has been successful in reducing fatal and serious injury crashes within safety corridors; and
  - Historically safety corridors have only been allowed on ODOT highways.
- House Bill 3213 was passed in 2019;
- Ms. Radtke thanked the sponsoring representatives of the bill;
- Marion County is the first county within the state to approve a safety corridor;
- The goal of a safety corridor is to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes;
- There will be increased signage in the area as well as an increase in traffic fines to motivate motorists to comply;
- Approval of the order will designate a seven mile stretch of roadway between OR 219 and Interstate 5 (I-5) that will include:
  - A two-lane road;
  - A rural location;
  - The designation as a principal arterial; and
  - An estimated 7,000 vehicles travel this roadway daily.
- The crash rating on this road is over twice the rate expected on other similar roadways;
- Contributing factors could include excessive speeds and failure to stop or yield at intersections;
- Previous safety improvements included:
  - Centerline rumble strips;
  - Striping;
  - Larger reflective signs;
  - Vegetation removal;
  - Street lighting at intersections;
  - Reflectors on guardrails; and
  - Increased enforcement.

- Short term improvements will include:
  - Green “Safety Corridor” signs, which will be installed next week;
  - Signs related to fines for failure to follow traffic laws within the corridor;
  - Increasing intersection illumination;
  - Driver feedback signs:
    - The signs read and display the driver’s current speed.
  - An intersection conflict warning system; and
  - Flashing red beacons on stop signs.
- The next steps for the safety corridor include:
  - Applying for more funding through the state:
    - All Roads Transportation Safety Transportation Program (ARTS) grants;
    - More improvements for the corridor; and
    - Adding left turn lanes at the intersections of French Prairie Road and McKay Road.
  - The submission of press releases;
  - Sheriff’s Office enforcement efforts; and
  - A technical advisory committee meeting, as well as a multi-disciplinary stakeholder group meeting is planned for next week.
- Future steps include:
  - Conducting more extensive safety analysis;
  - Providing annual updates to the board;
  - Submitting reports according to ORS requirements; and
  - The decommissioning of the safety corridor in approximately five years, once crash ratings decrease.

***Board discussion:***

- If there is a 15 percent decrease in accidents within the five-year period, the safety corridor designation will be decommissioned:
  - The safety improvements will remain.
- ODOT has reported that their safety corridors have passed the criteria before being decommissioned;
- Many drivers from other counties drive along these roads to avoid traffic;
- The county started this process a couple years ago, and Commissioner Brentano fought hard to make this happen;
- The Sheriff’s Office has assisted with saturation patrols:
  - This has helped to reduce vehicle speeds and accidents.
- Commissioner Willis requested that the speed limit be permanently reduced in this area:
  - The county will need to collaborate with the state on any speed limit changes.
- Driver feedback signs have proven to be effective;
- There is a concern of lost funding for the corridor once it is decommissioned; and
- Ms. Radtke was hopeful that the improvements being implemented will be a permanent solution in the area.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Willis moved to approve an order establishing a Marion County Safety Corridor on McKay Road, Yergen Road, and Ehlen Road pursuant to section 2(1)(c) of chapter #501, Oregon Laws 2019. Seconded by Commissioner Bethell; motion carried. A voice vote was unanimous.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

9:30 A.M.

None.

Commissioner Willis read the calendar.  
Commissioner Bethell adjourned the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

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CHAIR

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COMMISSIONER

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COMMISSIONER

**Board Sessions can be viewed on-line at**  
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLSUQ1gg6M78UsBE3q6w4rdf59Z5rXkEi5>

Attachment "A"

**Jolene Kelley - Ehlen Road Traffic Safety Corridor**

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**From:** Greg Leo [REDACTED]  
**To:** Marion County Board of Commissioners <commissioners@co.marion.or.us>  
**Date:** 2/2/2021 11:50 PM  
**Subject:** Ehlen Road Traffic Safety Corridor

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Commissioners:

I strongly support action by the Marion County Commissioners to establish a traffic safety corridor on the McKay, Yergen, Ehlen alignment from I-5 to Highway 219. There have been many deadly accidents on this highway caused by speed, poor sight lines and inattention at intersections.

This action by the Commissioners will make this dangerous stretch of road safer.

Please vote YES on the Ehlen Road Traffic Safety Corridor.

[https://www.co.marion.or.us/BOC/Documents/2015BoardCalendars/PW\\_Engineering\\_020321\\_Board Order\\_McKayYergenEhlenRd\\_SafetyCorridor\\_v2.pdf](https://www.co.marion.or.us/BOC/Documents/2015BoardCalendars/PW_Engineering_020321_Board_Order_McKayYergenEhlenRd_SafetyCorridor_v2.pdf)

Thank You!

Greg Leo  
The Leo Company, LLC  
9318 Champoeg Road NE  
Aurora, OR 97002

[REDACTED]



Attachment 'B'

**Jolene Kelley - McKay Road Safety Corridor**

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**From:** Gretchen Brown [REDACTED]  
**To:** <commissioners@co.marion.or.us>  
**Date:** 2/3/2021 7:20 AM  
**Subject:** McKay Road Safety Corridor

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Dear Marion County Commissioners,

I respectfully request that the proposed Ehlen/Yergen/McKay Road segment be designated a safety corridor. Because I frequently drive to St. Paul to visit family members, attend meetings, or maintain my property there, I am very aware of the hazards on that stretch of road.

Please designate the proposed Ehlen/Yergen/McKay Road segment a safety corridor. I would be happy to make that left turn onto French Prairie Road without wondering if I'm going to be hit from behind or head on.

Thank you for your consideration.

Gretchen Brown  
[REDACTED]

Attachment "C"

**Jolene Kelley - Ehlen/Yergen/McKay Safety Corridor**

**From:** Ben Williams [REDACTED]  
**To:** <commissioners@co.marion.or.us>  
**Date:** 2/3/2021 8:29 AM  
**Subject:** Ehlen/Yergen/McKay Safety Corridor  
**Cc:** [REDACTED] <bnicholas@co.marion.or.us>

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Commissioners:

Friends of French Prairie has sponsored a Traffic Safety Agenda for French Prairie for some years, with the goal of improving safety and reducing accidents and fatalities.

We strongly support action by the Marion County Commissioners to establish a traffic safety corridor on the McKay/Yergen/Ehlen Roads, the connector from I-5 to Highway 219. There have been many deadly accidents on this highway caused by speed, poor sight lines and inattention at intersections.

This action by the Commissioners will make this dangerous stretch of road safer.

Please vote YES on the Ehlen Road Traffic Safety Corridor.

[https://www.co.marion.or.us/BOC/Documents/2015BoardCalendars/PW\\_Engineering\\_020321\\_BoardOrder\\_McKayYergenEhlenRd\\_SafetyCorridor\\_v2.pdf](https://www.co.marion.or.us/BOC/Documents/2015BoardCalendars/PW_Engineering_020321_BoardOrder_McKayYergenEhlenRd_SafetyCorridor_v2.pdf)

Sincerely

--  
Ben Williams  
Friends of French Prairie  
[REDACTED]

**From:** Kim Wallis [REDACTED]  
**To:** <commissioners@co.marion.or.us>  
**Date:** 2/3/2021 8:21 AM  
**Subject:** Ehlen/Yergen/McKay Safety Corridor

Good morning - Today, you will have the opportunity to create Marion County's first and only safety corridor under the pilot program created by HB3213(2019). Marion County Engineer Brian Nicholas has recommended that the corridor be established on the Ehlen/Yergen/McKay road segment connecting the I-5 Ehlen Road intersection and Hwy 219(River Road). This stretch of roadway has a bad history of traffic issues, including speeding and 11 recent fatalities. Marion County and ODOT have been working diligently to address those issues, and we have seen a dramatic improvement. Adding the safety corridor designation will improve traffic safety on this stretch of roadway and the surrounding roads in French Prairie. Given the upcoming I-5/Ehlen Road interchange improvements by ODOT and additional planned development in Donald, the amount of traffic on this roadway is bound to increase and improving safety is paramount.

Please vote to approve the creation of this safety corridor.

Regards,

Kim Wallis

St. Paul, OR [REDACTED]