

**BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA**

4:00p.m. Virtual Only on Zoom

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS**
3. **CONFLICT OR POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**
4. **OLD BUSINESS**
  - A. **Public Safety Levy Renewal**  
**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve the Resolution referring the proposed renewal of the Public Safety Levy to the electors at the November 2024 general election and instruct counsel to submit the Ballot Title and Explanatory Statement to the County Clerk.
5. **ADJOURNMENT**

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**OF**

**HOOD RIVER COUNTY, OREGON**

**IN THE MATTER OF REFERRING TO ) RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_**  
**THE ELECTORS OF HOOD RIVER )**  
**COUNTY AT THE NOVEMBER 5, 2024 )**  
**GENERAL ELECTION THE QUESTION )**  
**OF WHETHER TO RENEW THE )**  
**PUBLIC SAFETY LOCAL OPTION )**  
**LEVY )**

**WHEREAS**, the Hood River County Board of Commissioners has determined that the voters of Hood River County should be asked to vote on a five-year local option renewal levy, continuing the rate of \$0.78 per \$1,000 of assessed value, beginning July 1, 2025; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed renewal levy would continue to fund dedicated public safety services, retain existing patrol positions, and support 24-hour patrol coverage, criminal investigations, courthouse security and emergency management.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Hood River County Board of Commissioners:

1. A measure election is called for the purpose of referring to the electors of Hood River County a five-year local option renewal levy at the continued rate of \$0.78 per \$1,000 of assessed value, beginning July 1, 2025. The Ballot Title to appear on the ballot is attached and incorporated as Exhibit A.
2. The measure election shall be held on Tuesday, November 5, 2024. As required by ORS 254.465 and ORS 254.470, the measure election will be conducted by mail by the Hood River County Elections Department, according to the procedures adopted by the Oregon Secretary of State.
3. The Ballot Title and Explanatory Statement attached hereto and marked as Exhibits A and B are approved for submission to the County Clerk for the November 5, 2024 Election.
4. Hood River County General Counsel will certify form SEL 801, Notice of County Measure Election, as required by law.

5. Following certification, Counsel shall cause to be delivered to the County Clerk this Resolution, Ballot Title, form SEL 801 and Explanatory Statement for the voter's pamphlet, for further action as required by law for placement on the November 5, 2024 election ballot.

6. The County Clerk shall publish notice of receipt of the Ballot Title and Explanatory Statement and notice of electors' right to petition for review of the Ballot Title and Explanatory Statement in the next available edition of the Columbia Gorge News.

**ADOPTED THIS 18TH DAY OF JULY, 2024.  
HOOD RIVER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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Jennifer Euwer, Chair

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Ed Weathers, Commissioner

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Arthur Babitz, Commissioner

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Leticia Moretti, Commissioner

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Chad Muenzer, Commissioner

**EXHIBIT A**

**BALLOT MEASURE \_\_\_\_\_**

CAPTION:

Renewal of Public Safety Five-Year Local Option Tax

QUESTION:

Shall Hood River County renew the current levy of \$0.78 per \$1,000 assessed value for public safety services for five years beginning 2025?

This measure renews current local option taxes.

BALLOT SUMMARY:

This measure renews the existing public safety levy that expires June 2025. It will not increase the current tax rate. The levy paid for staffing levels to support 24-hour patrol coverage, criminal investigations, emergency management and courthouse security.

Passage of the renewal levy would continue these investments to support all aspects of the public safety and criminal justice system, including, but not limited to:

- \*Law Enforcement Patrol
- \*Criminal Investigations including Child Abuse and Domestic Violence
- \*Criminal Prosecution
- \*Emergency Management

Approval of this measure would maintain the current level of public safety services over the five-year levy period. Without this revenue, public safety and other county services will be reduced or eliminated.

Because this is a renewal, passage of the measure would not increase the current tax rate of \$0.78 per \$1,000 assessed value. The cost of this levy would be approximately \$169.77 per year, or \$14.15 per month, based on the median assessed home value in Hood River County.

The measure is estimated to generate \$2,621,276 in 2025/26, \$2,699,914 in 2026/27, \$2,780,911 in 2027/28, \$2,864,339 in 2028/29 and \$2,950,269 in 2029/30. Unless renewed the measure expires at the end of five years.

The estimated tax cost for this measure is an ESTIMATE ONLY based on the best information available from the county assessor at the time of estimate and may reflect the impact of early payment discounts, compression and the collection rate.

## EXHIBIT B

### EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

In 2020, the voters of Hood River County passed a Public Safety Levy of \$.78 per \$1,000 of assessed value to address significant financial issues the county was facing. Proposed solutions to the budget crisis included closing county departments and reducing levels of service across remaining county departments. Public polling in 2019 demonstrated support for maintaining and enhancing patrol and public safety services. As a result, the Public Safety Levy was referred to the voters. The revenue from this operating levy was dedicated to public safety services, allowing the county to retain staff, extend hours of patrol to 24/7 coverage, support criminal investigations, prosecution, emergency management and courthouse security, and retain services across the county. The Board of Commissioners is asking the voters to renew the Public Safety Levy at the same rate of \$.78 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

The County's population has increased 19.6% since 2000, and public safety staffing levels have struggled to keep pace without additional funding. When the number of patrol deputies does not keep pace with population growth, call response times are slower, and the Sheriff cannot safely staff law enforcement patrol to provide 24/7 coverage countywide. The Sheriff's office has continued to see increases in call volume, with a 24% increase in calls between 2021 and 2023. Calls have also increased in complexity due to the number of behavioral health calls. Approval of this measure would retain staffing levels to support 24/7 patrol coverage and operational support, preserving current levels of service.

Approval of this measure would also maintain current levels of criminal justice services, including child abuse and domestic violence investigations, transporting prisoners, courthouse security and criminal prosecution services in conjunction with the District Attorney. With the passage of the levy in 2020 the District Attorney's office was spared additional budget cuts. In addition, the Juvenile Department was able to restore a position.

Without approval of this measure, public safety positions may be eliminated, reducing staffing levels below the level needed to support 24/7 coverage. Additional service reductions would be implemented in the Sheriff's office and countywide.

The proposed levy is a renewal of the five-year local option tax. It cannot be renewed without voter approval. At \$.78 per \$1,000 of assessed value, the tax would cost approximately \$14.15/month, or \$169.77/year based on the median assessed home value in Hood River County. The measure is estimated to generate: \$2,621,276 in 2025-26; \$2,699,914 in 2026-27; \$2,780,911 in 2027-28; \$2,864,339 in 2028-29; and \$2,950,269 in 2029-30.

Renewal of the Public Safety Levy would not raise taxes beyond what are currently collected.