

NOTICE OF RECEIPT OF BALLOT TITLE

Filed in the Office of County Clerk 8/07/2024.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a ballot title for a measure to be referred by the Columbia County Board of Commissioners has been filed with the Columbia County Clerk on August 7, 2024. A measure election will be held within the boundaries of Columbia County on November 5, 2024. The election will be conducted by mail.

The ballot title caption is: 4-Year Jail Operating Tax Levy

Caption

4-Year Jail Operating Tax Levy

Question

Shall Columbia County levy a tax of \$0.79/\$1000.00 of assessed value for four years beginning in FY2025 for Jail operations? This measure may cause property taxes to increase more than three percent.

Summary

In 2014, 2017, and 2020, voters approved a jail operating levy, expiring in 2024.

The Jail's primary funding sources are the County's General Fund, Federal bed rentals, and the Jail Operating Tax Levy.

Since 2020, the County's General Fund support for the Jail has increased. However, operating expenses have increased by \$1,500,000 due to medical costs. To cover these rising costs, the Jail has been using reserve funds since 2020 which are no longer available. A 50% increase in General Fund support is not sustainable. Operation of the Jail at current levels is now dependent upon Federal bed rentals which are not guaranteed.

Without a new levy rate of \$0.79 per \$1,000 of assessed value, the Jail will not be able to operate at current capacity leading to staff reductions, fewer jail beds, and a shift to a "book and release" model. A complete Jail closure is possible.

The proposed tax levy will fund continued operations through FY2027-2028, including constitutionally mandated healthcare for adults-in-custody, food services, clothing, and Jail management.

The estimated money raised will be \$5,057,189, in FY2024-2025; \$5,270,715 in FY2025-2026; \$5,493,256 in FY2026-2027 and \$5,725,194 in FY2027-2028, for a total estimated tax levy of \$21,546,354.

Any elector of the district may file a petition for review of this ballot title in the Columbia County Circuit no later than the seventh business day after the title was filed with the county clerk. The challenger must notify the Columbia County Clerk's Office in writing not later than 5:00 p.m. on the next business day following the day the petition for review is filed (ORS 250.195).

This notice is published pursuant to ORS 250.175(5) by Debbie Klug, Columbia County Clerk.
