

Here is a list of questions we can discuss. These questions were based on the first public meeting:

1. *Why did the Crane Union School District receive \$3.2M in ARPA funding?*  
This funding was allocated.
2. *Regarding the feasibility study, how was the future growth population determined?*  
The design criteria was set as follows: (this is all in the draft study)
  - 45 connections that aren't the school (counted current structures). Most are residences, there is a post office, a few churches, etc.
  - Assumed 2 people per residential connection so 85 total.
  - School staff = 45
  - Grade school = 165
  - High school = 30
  - High school boarded = 60
  - School equivalent population = 37 based on typical demands
  - Assumed 85 people grow at 1.5% per year, for 20 years, to reach 115.
  - $115 + 37 = 152$ . This is the design population.

The thought process was once there are community wide water and sewer systems, subdivision of lots could occur, so growth may occur higher than anticipated otherwise.

3. *Can Anderson Perry develop a model for slow to no growth scenario?*  
Yes, but it won't show much difference in main feature sizes. The water system is mostly driven by school demands and fire flow protection for school structures. The residential demands aren't too significant on the water system. The residential demands affect the sewer lagoon sizing the most. No growth would mean the design population would be  $85 + 37 = 122$  instead of 152. This is a 20% reduction from 152. Typically, new systems are designed to cover current and anticipated demands over a 20-year planning period, at a minimum. Rarely are they designed for no growth.
4. *Why is the creation of a Special Water and Sewer District required?*  
While not required, this allows the entire area of Crane to have a water and sewer system. If a district is not formed, the School District will be utilizing this funding only for their future projections and not for the Crane area.
5. *The actual Order to create the Special Water and Sewer District was written by lawyers. Is there flexibility to change the existing language re: allowing the newly elected board to "compel" residents hook up to the new water and wastewater systems?*
  - a. *The term "compel" is difficult for residents to accept, especially if they just replaced their septic systems in the last five years and they are now being told that this board can make them abandon their septic systems and hook into the new system on their own dime.*  
We aren't attorneys, but the District board members are typically in control of the language they use. I am not aware of any mandatory connection clauses with

ARPA funding. There can be with other funding sources, such as USDA. Thus, there aren't any mandatory connection requirements that I am aware of.

6. *If the community chooses not to support the creation of a Special Water and Sewer District, how does that impact the current proposed project? The proposed project as identified in the August 2023 Draft "Crane, Oregon Water and Wastewater Feasibility Study" document, Anderson Perry & Associates.*

The proposed project would need to be scaled back to only include the School District. The school needs will include a storage reservoir and transmission line (for fire protection and for service when the power is out and will include the new well and well pump station and a few fire hydrants. The sewer lagoons need to be expanded and sewer pressure lines rerouted. This would be the minimum for just the school.

If a District is not formed, there would be no water or sewer system piping routed to all other structures in Crane, which would significantly reduce the overall project cost. If this was to occur, the initial school improvements could be expanded in the future to add other users, similar to the current plan.

7. *If the community chooses not to support the creation of a Special Water and Sewer District, how does that impact the ARPA funding?*

The ARPA funding was awarded to the Crane School District, the proposed project would be scaled back and only used to include the School District.

8. *If the community chooses not to support the creation of a Special Water and Sewer District, how does that affect the Crane Union High School?*

If a District is not created, the Crane School District would continue to be responsible for sewer facilities, which would be upgraded. The School District would also need to register and manage their water facilities, which would include the new reservoir, transmission line, a few main lines, a new well and well pump station, and some fire hydrants for adequate fire protection for the school structures. The new reservoir will also provide water service and fire protection when the power is out.

9. *Is it possible to scale the project back that allows the school to fix their water and sewer issues right now, and add capacity to those systems in the future?*

Yes, this would be easily completed. The lagoons could be expanded in the future, and the water and sewer system lines extended to other areas in the Crane community. The school only system would be designed to be easily expanded.

10. *If the community chooses to support the creation of a Special Water and Sewer District, how will that directly affect them?*

The community would have the means to connect to both municipal water and sewer systems, thereby eliminating the following:

- No need to permit and maintain a septic system and drain field.
- No need to install a new septic system or upgrade with a new drain field when failure occurs.

- No need to drill a new private well.
- There would likely be monthly rate requirements for water and sewer which are necessary to help operate and maintain the main systems for the community. These rates help to pay for a system operator, power bills, system maintenance costs, etc.
- Basic fire projection would now be available for all residents, which should reduce fire insurance requirements as there is currently no meaningful fire projection.
- The hindrances to readily subdivide and develop property in Crane would be eliminated with connection to community water and sewer systems. This should raise property values for current property owners in Crane, should they desire to subdivide.

11. *Is there any assistance to help residents connect to the systems?*

Unsure of any grant funding to private landowners to connect to municipally owned systems. I can reach out to OHA and DEQ to see if there are any programs that can help.

12. *About how much will it cost to connect to the systems?*

The initial connection will be paid for by the project (for work in the right of way). Each property owner would need to connect from their property line to their house at their expense. But, funding agencies will see if some funding help is available. Future connections would likely have a fee for connection to the systems on top of the private property costs. All of this is yet to be determined but this is typically what occurs.

13. *About how much will it cost each month for water and sewer service?*

This is yet to be determined. Typical monthly costs could be in the \$25 to \$30 per month per utility, so water and sewer combined could be \$50 to \$60 per month. The future Crane system should be simple to operate so hopefully monthly rates can be on the lower end of typical municipal rates.

In many cities, monthly water and sewer rates are in the \$70 to \$100 range combined.

Please note rates for nearby Burns and Hines:

Burns water rate = \$ 22 per month. They are currently doing a project, so this is expected to go up by about \$10 to \$12 per month to reach \$34 per month.

Burns sewer rate = \$ 23.40 per month.

Hines water rate = \$ 45.92 per month.

Hines sewer rate = \$ 23 per month.

14. *Will the District require an easement through private property?*

No. Most all piping can be placed in rights of way. There may be a few needed easements for main lines to the reservoir, etc. No easements are needed from private residential property.

15. *After the district has been formed and the board appointed, can the voters of the district disband the board and district if they decide it is not in their best interests to continue?*

**Answer:** Yes, as explained below.

ORS 450.788 states that “a water authority or a sanitary authority formed under ORS 450.600 to 450.989 may be dissolved in the manner set forth in ORS 198.920 to 198.955 for other districts.” Here, the district was formed under ORS 450.600, so the procedure below applies which provides three options for dissolution.

ORS 198.920. Dissolution procedure

(1) Dissolution of a district may be initiated:

(a) By a petition of the electors requesting dissolution of the district, filed with the county board.

(b) By resolution of the district board filed with the county board when the district board determines that it is in the best interest of the inhabitants of the district that the district be dissolved and liquidated.

(c) By resolution of the county board:

(A)(i) If the district at the time of the regular district election has not elected district board members, as required by the principal Act, to fill vacancies on the district board; or

(ii) If the territory within the district is uninhabited; and

(B) If the county board determines that it is in the best interest of the people of the county that the district be dissolved and liquidated.

16. *The initial order that was provided to the Court indicated in chapter 3 states "... The general powers of the Authority include the power to compel all residence and property owners within the Authority's boundaries to connect their houses and structures requiring sewage disposal with adjacent sewer within the Authority..." Question from this statement I would infer that there would be no power to compel the connection of potable water?*

**Answer:** Correct, the County Counsel’s opinion is that water potable water service cannot be compelled.

ORS 450.640(1) states that “a joint water and sanitary authority possesses all the duties, functions and powers granted to water authorities and to sanitary authorities under ORS 450.600 to 450.989.”

The statute that gives the power to compel is found in ORS 450.815(8), which falls under the section for sanitary authorities: “Compel all residents and property owners in the authority to connect their houses and structures requiring sewage disposal with adjacent sewers within the authority.”

17. *What is the time period between the initial hearing (step 1) and the adoption of another order identifying the name and boundaries of the proposed district (step 3) and does this step include 2 orders, one adopting the name and boundaries and a second that creates the District and appoints the interim Board Members that is entered at the hearing?*

**Answer:** See below.

In order to answer your question, we broke the process down further.

Step 1: Draft order initiates the process.

Step 2: Notice given under ORS 198.800 and ORS 198.840

Step 3: Hearing- This occurs no less than 30 days and no more than 50 days after the date of the initiating order. ORS 198.800.

During the hearing “the county board shall hear the petition and determine, in accordance with the criteria prescribed by ORS 199.462, whether the area could be benefited by the formation of the district.” ORS 198.805(1). This hearing may adjourn from time to time but it cannot exceed four weeks unless additional notice is given. *Id.*

Step 4: If, after the hearing, the County Court moves forward with formation, the County Court enters “an order so declaring. The order shall set forth the name of the district and the boundaries as determined by the board or by the boundary commission. The order shall also fix a place, and a time not less than 20 nor more than 50 days after the date of the order, for a final hearing on the petition.” ORS 198.810.

Step 5: Final Hearing. If no objections are filed, the court will “enter its order creating the district.” ORS 198.810.

First, the time between the first hearing and the order identifying the name and boundaries depends on how long the hearing is. *See Step 3.* The hearing can take up to 4 weeks. However, if the hearing is short, the board can enter the order immediately and the final hearing can occur 20 days after the order is entered. *See Step 4.*

Second, the order in Step 3 sets “forth the name of the district and the boundaries.” The order that is entered in Step 5 at the final hearing creates the district and appoints the interim Board until an election is held under ORS 198.825.

#### *18. Property Taxes, would property taxes increase?*

Probably not, potable water wells and septic systems are considered “Site Development”. Connection to municipal water and sanitary service is also considered “Site Development”. Property would not be assessed twice for the same development. In most cases it would be a wash.

### A FEW OTHER INFORMATIONAL ITEMS TO ADD TO THIS LIST AS FOLLOWS

What happens if you are faced with a septic system upgrade?

- A standard system could be \$15,000 or more.
- A sand filter system could be \$35,000 or more, assuming you could get it permitted for your property. In many cases, too small of a lot will not allow a new septic system.
- If you compare this to a monthly sewer rate, note the following:
  - \$35,000 is the same as a \$30 monthly sewer rate for 97 years. Also, you would still pay \$500 per year for maintenance, etc. that you wouldn't pay for with a community sewer system.

- Connecting to a new municipal system will be less expensive than installing a new septic tank and drain field system for yourself, even if rates are higher than \$30 per month.

What happens if you must drill a new private well?

- Private well costs could be in the \$50,000 range, and you may not find adequate water.
- If you compare this to a monthly water rate, note the following:
  - \$50,000 is the same as a \$30 monthly water rate for 139 years.
  - Connecting to a new municipal system will be less expensive than drilling a new well for yourself, even if rates are higher than \$30 per month.

Could my fire insurance be reduced with a municipal water system in place?

- We will try to figure this out prior to the meeting.
- It is likely, with a municipal system capable of basic residential fire protection of around 1,000 gallons per minute, and a trained fire department, fire insurance costs could significantly reduce for each residence and/or business. This will help to offset monthly water rates.

Do I have to Connect?

- I don't believe there is a mandatory connection requirement, but the systems would be in place when you need them, should the full systems be built.
- Connecting to the new systems later will cost more than connecting now. Once the initial project is finished, the District will likely have a connection fee to cover the future costs of you to connect since there won't be a revenue source for those expenses. This would include the lines from the main to the property line, a water meter, etc.

OTHER ITEMS WE WILL HAVE READY AT THE MEETING

- Map showing District boundary.
- Figures showing the currently planned layout of the water and sewer systems.
- Comparison of typical water and sewer rates for surrounding communities