

Submitted by Thomas Busse on April 5, 2022

I urge adding a "sunshine clause" to the charter.

A basic flaw of the Oregon Constitution is that it does not provide for an open meetings law or a public records law. The legislature could repeal these essential open government laws at any time. Similarly, the legislature continually adds exceptions to the public records law, and these automatically trickle down to the county. Ensuring open government through a charter amendment will provide for long-term protections.

Here's my stab at charter language:

"CHAPTER 13: Open Government"

13.10 (A) The people have the right of access to information concerning the conduct of the people's business, and, therefore, the meetings of public bodies and the writings of county staff and officials and shall be open to public scrutiny.

(B) A statute, court rule, or other authority, including those in effect on the effective date of this subdivision, shall be broadly construed if it furthers the people's right of access, and narrowly construed if it limits the right of access.

(C) The Board of County Commissioners shall enact a sunshine ordinance to ensure the people's right of access to no less than that of the Oregon Public Records and Public Meetings laws as of the effective date of this subdivision. Amendments adopted after the effective date of this subdivision that limits the right of access shall be adopted with findings demonstrating the interest protected by the limitation and the need for protecting that interest.

(D) This subdivision does not repeal or nullify, expressly or by implication, any constitutional or statutory exception to the right of access to public records or meetings of public bodies that is in effect on the effective date of this subdivision.

(E) A people's basic right of access shall extend to non-profits that receive at least \$500,000 per year in funding from the County. Through grant agreement provisions, covered non-profits shall ensure at least two annual board meetings noticed at least 30 days in advance be open to the public with a designated period for public comment"