
Josephine (JO) County (CO) Justice System & Public Safety Services

JO CO Justice System & Public Safety Services

The 2012 expiration of federal funding for services resulted in two JO CO proposed levies as a solution. They both failed. **“Is JO CO providing a minimally adequate level of public safety services?”**¹⁻² Just as important, what is a minimally adequate level?

May 2013 OR House Bill 3453³ A bill aimed at imposing a local income tax in financially troubled counties in Oregon may run into legal problems -- particularly in Josephine County. Rep. Bruce Hanna, R-Roseburg, who co-chairs a House task force on Oregon timber counties, said a Josephine County charter provision prohibiting local income taxes could prevent the state from imposing such a tax there.

Hanna and other legislators have been working on a measure, House Bill 3453, aimed at ensuring counties can preserve key public-safety services. Josephine and Curry counties have been particularly hard-hit by the loss of federal forest payments and are slashing jail, prosecutorial and patrol services. Oregon State Representative Wally Hicks, R-Grants Pass, said he doesn't believe the Oregon governor will be able to impose an income tax -- that it might be forbidden by the Oregon Constitution and that Josephine County's Home Rule Charter may also prevent it.

JO CO Commissioner Cheryl Walker, “. . . said the Josephine County Charter specifically prohibits imposing personal or business taxes . . .”⁴

1. Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society (HNA&HS). July 9, 2013. *Justice System Exploratory Committee*. Hugo, OR.

Justice System Exploratory Committee

July 2013 OR House Bill 3453⁴ Josephine County can decide whether it's in a public safety emergency and receive matching funds from the state to pay for law enforcement, following passage of House Bill 3453 on Monday, the last day of the Legislature's 2013 session. HB 3453 passed the House 49-10 and the



Senate 22-7 on Monday, and is expected to be signed by Gov. John Kitzhaber.

The bill allows financially troubled counties such as Josephine and Curry to impose other taxes or fees, which the state would match dollar-for-dollar. Those two counties are in the worst financial shape after the end of federal subsidies that replaced dwindling timber receipts.

Josephine County's charter wouldn't allow an income tax, but the bill would allow more tax on 911 services or some other fees for services, said Cheryl Walker, county commissioner. It would also allow for matching of existing sources of county revenue.

State Gives JoCo Emergency Option

(http://www.thedailycourier.com/articles/2013/07/09/front_page_news/news01.txt)

2. Hugo Neighborhood Association. July 9, 2013. *All Voters & Votes Are Legitimate*. Hugo, OR.

3. Stumbo, Stacy D. June 2, 2013. *State Representatives Working On Fiscal Crisis*. “The Grants Pass Daily Courier”. Front Page. Grants Pass, OR.

4. *Public Safety Dominates JoCo Leaders Discussion; Private Use Of Force, Takeover By State Or City Key Subjects*. 06/06/13.

Josephine County Home Rule Charter

JO CO Home Rule Charter

(<http://www.co.josephine.or.us/Files/Josephine%20County%20Charter.pdf>)

2005 Annotations On Charter by County Counsel

(<http://www.co.josephine.or.us/Files/08-23-07.pdf>)

Section 29.7 PROHIBITION OF INCOME TAX
Josephine County shall not establish an income tax; both personal and business income taxes would be disallowed. [Amended May 1990]

July 9, 2013⁵ Josephine County's charter wouldn't allow an income tax, but the bill would allow more tax on 911 services or some other fees for services, said Cheryl Walker, county commissioner.

The Editor of the *Grants Pass Daily Courier*, Dennis Roller, is quoted in an opinion, “This county's charter prohibits imposition of an income tax, but the bill would allow tax on 911 services or some other fees for service.”⁶

ORS 203 — County Governing Bodies; County Home Rule (<http://www.leg.state.or.us/ors/203.html>)

Note: ORS 203.095 was enacted into law by the Legislative Assembly but was not added to or made a part of ORS chapter 203 or any series therein by legislative action. See Preface to Oregon Revised Statutes for further explanation.

Want more information? Contact a member of the *Exploratory Committee*.

5. Jeff Duewel. 07/09/13. *State Gives JoCo Emergency Option*. TDC Front Page News. Grants Pass, OR.

6. *Josephine County's Financial Woes Lead Workers To Bail Out*. 07/11/13. Dennis Roler, Editor's Opinion.

Exploratory Committee's Mission

Mission An independent Justice System and Public Safety Services Exploratory Committee (*Exploratory Committee*) to investigate the JO CO Justice System & Public Safety Services (JS&PSS) issue was formed under the leadership of the Hugo Neighborhood Association and Historical Society (HNA&HS).

Big picture ideas for the exploratory effort include the following.

1. Identifying the JS&PSS issue.
2. Identifying the JS&PSS sub-issues for research and analysis.
3. Identifying a range in level of services
4. Identifying a range of costs for services.
5. Identifying revenues for services.

The ultimate goal is an adequate justice system and public safety services. Is it possible to have a higher level of service for a lower cost? The purpose of the *Exploratory Committee* is to gather information adequate enough to understand the JS&PSS issues. This includes educational outreach efforts.

The *Exploratory Committee's* purpose is limited to investigating and researching the JS&PSS issues. It will not make evaluations of right or wrong, nor make recommendations on how to vote.

The contents of this brochure are expressions of the opinions and beliefs of those that contribute based on their thoughts and experiences. Hopefully, their efforts will assist the public toward informed decision-making.

- Donations Are Not Tax Deductible -

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Justice System Exploratory Committee

<http://www.hugoneighborhood.org/justicesystemexploratorycommittee.htm>

HNA&HS

<http://www.hugoneighborhood.org/>

JOSEPHINE COUNTY HOME RULE CHARTER

Brochure III.E.1.5

Justice System & Public Safety Services Series

Standards & Authorities

Josephine County Home Rule Charter
Section 29.7 Prohibition of Income Tax



1856 Josephine County Seal

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Hugo Justice System Exploratory Committee