

24 January 2025

To: Washington County Commissioners and Administrator
From: Washington County History Roundtable
Regarding: **Emergency Supplemental Funding for Five Oaks Museum**

Whereas, The Washington County Roundtable consists of individuals who serve as Board and Staff members of historical societies, museums, heritage education, and historic preservation organizations in and around Washington County, Oregon; and,

Whereas, The Washington County History Roundtable has been meeting for a quarter-century to share knowledge, coordinate efforts to improve awareness of the importance of history, and assure the preservation and interpretation of historic art, archives, artifacts, architecture, and sites in and around the County; and,

Whereas, In the true spirit of a Roundtable, its members speak for themselves and for the non-profit organizations they serve as Board and Staff when those organizations authorize them to do so; and,

Whereas, The Washington County Historical Society, which recently rebranded itself as Five Oaks Museum, has partnered with Washington County since 1987 to care for the extensive collection of historic art, archives, and artifacts owned by Washington County; and,

Whereas, The County's partnership with Five Oaks Museum is governed by an Agreement signed in 1987 that grants the Museum custody and stewardship responsibilities for the collection as well as occupancy of the County's building on the Rock Creek Campus of Portland Community College (PCC) and standing in the County's long-term lease with PCC; and,

Whereas, The Agreement obligates the Museum to

1. Preserve and interpret the cultural heritage of Washington County
2. Maintain and exhibit museum collections
3. Provide historical and cultural education programs
4. Maintain and develop research facilities
5. Maintain County historical archives; and,

Whereas, The Roundtable believes that the County's funding of the Museum that is guaranteed under the terms of the 1987 Agreement is insufficient to safeguard the collection and organize exhibitions and educational programs that the County and the Museum know the County's residents deserve in order to understand the history of this place and thus to guide the evolution of this place; and,

Whereas, The Museum has been closed since 29 December 2024 due to insufficient funding and its staff of five museum professionals have been furloughed and are therefore unable to speak for the organization or do any work for it; and,

Whereas, The Roundtable recognizes that the County's collection of more than 100,000 items may be at risk due to the absence of responsible stewards to maintain security and climate control appropriate for a collection as significant as the County's;

Therefore, Be It Resolved,

The Roundtable requests that Washington County provide emergency supplemental funding of no less than \$10,000 per month through the end of FY2024-25 so that the Board and Staff of Five Oaks Museum can continue to safeguard the County's extensive collection of art, archives, and artifacts until the County and the Museum amend or terminate the 1987 Agreement that governs this fruitful public/private partnership that provides inestimable benefits to the People of Washington County.