MARION COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BOC/CAO Issues Coordination

October 22, 2026
3:00PM to 4:30PM
Courthouse Square
Commissioner's Boardroom
Salem, Oregon

Meeting Minutes

AGENDA

1. Welcome Chair Willis

Chair Willis called the meeting to order at 3:00PM

Chair Willis, Commissioner Bethell, Commissioner Cameron, CAO Fritz, DCAO Eppley, County Ops Manager Lawyer, HHS Director Gregg, HHS Division Manager Wells, Sheriff Hunter, PW Director Nicholas were present.

2. REACH Program Update Commissioner Bethell

a. Commissioner Bethell led a discussion on the REACH Program stating that current data from MC HHS shows that only 14.8% of contracts made by the REACH Team are related to substance abuse, while Salem Fire Department identifies 32.3% of contacts being related to substance abuse. The current adopted budget has $130,868 of Opioid Settlement funds being used to support Marion County's efforts on the multi-jurisdictional REACH Team. Commissioner Bethell explained that we can't use 100% Opioid funds for an activity that isn't 100% tied to treating or preventing opioid abuse, therefore she would like to have HB4002 funding used in conjunction with Opioid Settlement funds to support this effort so that Opioid Settlement funds are only paying for that portion of the work that can statistically be tied to substance abuse. The Board agreed and would also like HHS to refine their data collection methods to more accurately capture the percentage of contacts associated with substance abuse.

3. PW Radio Project Update Public Works Director Nicholas

a. Brian Nicholas provided an update on the funding and expenses for building the new Marion County Emergency Radio System that will be used by PW, Marion County Sheriff's Office, and other police and fire entities in Marion County. He stated that we have $17,379,870 in funding identified with $19,940,727 in anticipated expenses,

leaving a gap of $2,560,857. Jan explained that the new Capital Improvement Projects loan being issued will include gap funding for this project. The Board wants to see how rates are affected if debt service for this gap funding is included as part of the calculation.

4. Other All

a. Brian Nicholas asked if any additional information was required by the Board regarding the current information sent by Brian May on the annual solid waste collection COSA that was recently sent. No additional information was requested by any Commissioner.

b. Brian Nicholas asked if it would be OK for him to walk on an agenda item at the next BOC Meeting regarding a property line adjustment for a property bordering Minto Park. The property is one that was affected during the 2020 wildfires, and a property line adjustment is required for the house to have a conforming lot so that it can be sold. The Board agreed.

c. Commissioner Bethell explained that she was contacted by the owner of Route 99 Café in Brooks who expressed concern about the upcoming water outage that will be caused by the cutover to the new Brooks water system that was constructed by the County as an ARPA project. Commissioner Bethell stated that the café owner believes she will need to be closed for 2-days due to the Boil-Water requirement that will result from the outage. Commissioner Bethell would like to offer the café owner an EEOP grant to cover the cost of the establishment being closed for this time. Commissioner Cameron explained that there are ways to stay open during a Boil-Water notice, but they are more expensive and time consuming. Commissioner Willis stated he would be willing to offer up to $2K through the EEOP grant program to make up for the inconvenience of staying open during the water system cutover. Commissioner Bethell will contact the café owner and discuss.

d. Commissioner Bethell explained that Sheriff Hunter would like to light up the new evidence building purple for the remainder of October in solidarity with Silver Rail Elementary School and then Green for the month of November for Veterans recognition. Commissioner Bethell would like a policy on how the Board decides what to light up and for what events. Jan stated there is already a policy on this matter and she will distribute. The Board agreed with the Sheriff's request in this matter.

e. Commissioner Bethell said she is frustrated by the lack of information in some Initial Board Review (IBR) packets at Management Update. The Board would like enough information to be able to understand the context of what they are being asked to decide on. Matt Lawyer and Chriss Eppley will provide additional training to dial in the process.

f. Commissioner Bethell stated that she was contacted by Tim Davis, a local charitable business owner. He is concerned about competing with food trucks since his business model includes running a number of brick-and-mortar cafes where they provide job training for youth. He asked if the Commissioners would consider limiting the number of food trucks allowed to operate in Marion County. The Commissioners discussed that they don't control permitting in city limits but would consider the fee structure and make it more expensive to permit a food truck to level the playing field some.

g. Commissioner Bethell explained that she had received a contact from Emanual Lutheran Church in Woodburn asking the Commissioners to provide them with $15K to help sponsor their community dinner program. The Board was willing to have them apply for an EEOP grant that they can consider. Commissioner Bethell will have Jonathan Sanford, her policy analyst, reach out to them and provide an application.

h. Commissioner Bethell received a spreadsheet of costs outlining the items in the Isaac's Houst project that need to be paid for. Commissioner Willis stated he wants the downstairs bathroom to be part of the project that is paid for with Opioid Funds through a grant. The Board stated they are willing to make a grant available for up to $300,000.

i. Commissioner Bethell stated that Melissa Gable from HHS sent a draft letter she would like to send to HHS partners asking them to oppose OHA cuts to IDD funding. Commissioner Bethell stated she is willing to send the letter, but Commissioner Willis would prefer the letter to simply state our case and provide a copy of our comments to OHA instead of explicitly asking our partners to sign on to a letter opposing OHA's planned cuts. The Board agreed with Commissioner Willis's approach.

j. Commissioner Bethell would like to change the job description for LEAD Navigator to require lived experience in the industry but no longer mandate time spent in the correction system so that we can attain a greater number of qualified applicants for job postings. The Board agreed. Commissioner Bethell will work with Jan Fritz to get it accomplished.

k. Commissioner Bethell explained that she agreed to be interviewed by the Statesman Journal to discuss the ballot box placement issue.

l. Commissioner Cameron provided information to the other commissioners that the Lower Bennet dam had been breached but that it had been repaired and there is no longer an issue.

5. Adjourn

a. Chair Willis adjourned the meeting at 4:15PM.