



MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Department Head and Elected Officials Meeting

Summary Minutes

Meeting Minutes

September 4, 2025. 9:30 AM
Courthouse Square, 555 Court St. NE, Salem
5th Floor, Suite 5232, Commissioners Board Room

ATTENDANCE:

Elected Officials: Colm Willis, Kevin Cameron, Paige Clarkson, Nick Hunter, and Justin Kidd.

Department Heads: Jan Fritz, Troy Gregg, Steve Elzinga, Tamra Goettsch, Jeff White, Kelli Weese, Salvador Llerenas, and Ryan Matthews.

Board Office: Chris Eppley.

Pollster: Ryan Steusloff.

Commissioner Colm Willis called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Community Survey

- County-wide survey collected responses from 400 residents demographically representing Marion County:
 - Focusing on local issues, perceptions, and service satisfaction.
- Key findings indicated general satisfaction with county services:
 - Especially sheriff and patrol, emergency response, and waste/recycling.
- Most important community issues:
 - Homelessness, jobs/economy and affordable housing.
 - Mental health and substance abuse assistance are notable challenges.
- Satisfaction with communication from the county was at 53%.
- 59% overall were satisfied with county services.
- Most attribute responsibility for major issues to state government:
 - Such as drugs and homelessness
- 84% feel the community is safe:
 - Satisfaction trends have improved since previous survey dates.
- Residents provided positive feedback:
 - Energy/food assistance, public safety, clear roads.
- Residents provided negative feedback:
 - Perceived benefits to non-citizens, fiscal complaints.

Board Update

- Participated in five-year wildfire anniversary at Detroit Lake:
 - Honored public safety officials and emphasizing community resilience.
- Ongoing busy period for departments:
 - Mill City and Gates sewer system construction.

- Brooks water system upgrades.
 - Countywide radio system project.
 - Detroit Lake Marina excavation.
 - New evidence building.
 - Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software system implementation:
 - All together projects represent \$120 million.
- Ongoing and upcoming responsibilities:
 - Transitions due to upcoming retirements.
 - Ensure continuity of leadership and services.
- Paige Clarkson will not be running to be District Attorney.
- Ongoing efforts are underway to secure and manage grant funding:
 - HB4002 grant.
 - Grant application focused on ongoing and future county projects.
 - First phase decision of 4002 grant funding is expected by end of the year.

National Association of Counties (NACo) Leadership and Training

- Participating in NACo's online leadership development program for emerging and established leaders:
 - Emphasizing retention and internal talent growth.
- The 12-week, cohort-based program.
- Blends asynchronous content with regular virtual meetings, peer report-outs, and networking opportunities.
- Departmental leaders highlighted program benefits:
 - Development of common leadership language.
 - Workplace culture improvement.
 - Positive feedback from previous participants.
- Costs and time commitment can be significant:
 - Funding and participation pursued where feasible:
 - Within departmental constraints.
- Workforce development is key:
 - Building future-ready leadership.
 - Aiding succession planning.
 - Improving employee retention.

Budget Update

- Accelerating annual budget process to align with ERP rollout and other operations.
- New timeline:
 - Budget committee meets March 4, 2026.
 - Final board adoption planned for June 17, 2026:
 - Earlier than usual.
- Process is being streamlined:
 - Shorter timelines.
 - Fewer decision packages.
 - More focus on critical/priority changes for the upcoming year.
- Facilities, Information Technology (IT), and capital projects narrowed to only highest priority:
 - Given current capacity limits.
- Future budgets will benefit from ERP system features:
 - Scenario forecasting and more efficient workflow.
- Departments advised preparing early and collaborating with central budget team:

- Supplemental budget cycles will capture late-breaking needs.
- Federal or state funding shifts.

ERP Update

- In design and early implementation phase of a new ERP system.
- Expected to modernize finance, Human Resources (HR), payroll, grants, capital projects, and administrative chargeback processes.
- Design phase:
 - Department staff and leadership documenting and re-engineering workflows.
 - Future “lab” sessions to test modules using real user input.
- ERP go-live is scheduled for November 2026:
 - All new processes will start at once.
- Requires heavy cross-training among staff to mitigate workload impacts:
 - Communication is ramping up as milestones are completed.
- Forecasting, automation, and project modules aim to reduce manual effort by at least 30%:
 - Improve overall county efficiency.

Declaratory Judgement Action Update

- Filed a declaratory judgment action in federal court:
 - Conflict between administrative subpoenas from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Oregon sanctuary law, and public records demands.
- Subpoenas sought information about parolees with serious criminal records:
 - Federal law, state law, and public records law provide conflicting directives.
- Legal action seeks judicial clarification on county obligations:
 - Whether required, prohibited, or permitted to provide the requested records.
- May set precedent for other counties:
 - Marion County is acting on internal legal advice.
 - Not using outside counsel to minimize expense.
- Legal distinction:
 - Administrative subpoenas are less forceful.
 - Court orders override all else.
- Transparency with public and staff about limited scope and intent of litigation.

Department Updates

- Business Services:
 - Continue to function without a facility manager after several failed recruitment attempts:
 - Vacancy remains a challenge for day-to-day operations.
 - Responsibilities shared by facility/construction teams, field supervisors, and management.
 - Latest recruitment round for Facility Manager just closed:
 - Optimism about finding right candidate this cycle.
 - New Grounds Supervisor, Don Philman, actively engaging all departments to assess facilities needs and respond to outstanding maintenance tasks.
 - Facilities and maintenance teams work diligently to address routine and delayed issues despite limited resources.
 - Courthouse grounds received positive attention for improvements and maintenance.
- General Operations & Communication

- Responsive communication with departments.
- Appreciate staff flexibility and extra effort during period of transition.
- Departments encouraged to extend support and patience as team navigates staffing shortfalls and higher workloads.

Other

- Recognition of staff efforts, adaptation to change, and helping one another.
- Communication, culture-building, and preparing for large upcoming operational shifts are important:
 - ERP, retirements, and union negotiations.
- Innovative ideas for workplace experience:
 - Visually themed conference rooms and wellness initiatives.
 - Aim to make county offices engaging and meaningful for all.
- Encouraged to share information and correct public misconceptions when relevant:
 - Especially in legal/compliance contexts.

Adjourned – time: 11:31 a.m.

Minutes by: Mary Vityukova

Reviewed by: Gary L. White