



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