



MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Work Session Summary Minutes

O R E G O N

Legislative Update with Rep. Kevin Mannix

February 26, 2025. 11:00 AM

Courthouse Square, 555 Court St. NE, Salem

5th Floor, Suite 5232, Commissioners Board Room

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Kevin Cameron, Colm Willis and Danielle Bethell.

Board's Office: Trevor Lane, Heather Inyama, Toni Whitler, Chris Eppley, Alvin Klausen, Jan Fritz, Matt Lawyer

Representative: Kevin Mannix

Commissioner Danielle Bethell called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

Summary

The meeting covered various legislative and policy issues. Rep. Mannix is involved in the Joint Committee on Addiction and Community Safety, Transportation, Judiciary, and Housing and Homelessness. There is need for major legislation in these areas. Proposed creative solutions like repurposing the I-5 bridge for pedestrians and vehicles separately and advocating for commuter rail. Need state funding for homelessness cleanup. Challenges faced by local law enforcement. Mill City sewer system project requires legislative fixes to avoid losing \$50 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Need better funding for public defense and there are challenges of urban growth boundaries.

Legislative Update

- Rep. Mannix gave up a seat on the Ways and Means Committee to join the Judiciary and Housing committees:
 - These committees would be crucial for addressing major legislation in housing, transportation, and public safety.
- The importance of the Judiciary Committee is addressing public safety issues:
 - Need accountability and effective use of the Highway Trust Fund in transportation legislation.
- Support for commuter rail development, including the potential use of the Portland and Western Railroad (PNWR) and the West rail system, to improve transportation infrastructure.

County Priorities

- Challenges faced by Marion County including homelessness and public safety:
 - Need for state funding support.

- Portland received several million dollars for homelessness cleanup, and the board is interested in receiving similar allocations for Salem.
- Concern about the state-owned properties in the Salem area:
 - Potential for these to be repurposed for housing, commercial enterprises, or other local uses.
 - Obstacles posed by current statutes.
 - Need to streamline the process of selling or repurposing these properties.
- Issues with the waste energy facility, which is currently not operational:
 - Need legislative solutions to support its continued operation or revitalization.
- The Mill City sewer system project has a \$82 million price tag:
 - Legislative fixes needed to address challenges posed by the Maui decision.
- Concerns with the Justice Court bill:
 - Potential cost issues for the circuit court.
 - Need better coordination with local partners, including the district attorney.

Discussion

- Explored expanding urban growth boundaries and allowing more flexible housing development:
 - Local jurisdictions should be able to decide what suits their communities.
- Challenges with civil commitment and transportation issues:
 - Legal discrepancies preventing law enforcement from transporting individuals for civil commitments.
- Important for the state to provide property into the local tax base:
 - Cover costs of maintaining state-owned properties.
 - As issues have a significant impact on local governance and public safety.

Other

- Need administrative law judges dedicated to the state hospital environment to improve the civil commitment process:
 - Currently rely on Administrative Law Judges (ALJ) from the general administrative hearings unit:
 - May not be familiar with the state hospital's operations.
- Recreational liability law:
 - Need a comprehensive solution to protect property owners who allow public access to their land for recreational purposes.

Next Steps

- Provide documentation on the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)-owned properties in the greater Salem area and the geographic information.
- Review the legal discrepancy between the Case Information Statement (CIS) attorneys and the Office of Staff Attorneys (OSA) attorney regarding the civil warrant transportation issue and draft an amendment to address it.
- Provide a cost analysis on the impact of the state's light bulb replacement requirement on Marion County.

Adjourned – time: 11:55 a.m.

Minutes by: Mary Vityukova

Reviewed by: Gary L. White