



MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

# Work Session Summary Minutes

OREGON

## Marion County and City of Salem Joint Work Session

January 30, 2025. 6:00 PM

Courthouse Square, 555 Court St. NE, Salem  
5th Floor, Suite 5232, Commissioners Board Room

### ATTENDANCE:

**Commissioners:** Colm Willis, Kevin Cameron, and Danielle Bethell.

**Board's Office:** Matt Lawyer, Alvin Klausen, and Toni Whitler.

**Legal Counsel:** Steve Elzinga, and Cody Hawkins.

**Sheriff's Department:**

**Health and Human Services:**

**District Attorney's Office:**

### **City of Salem:**

Commissioner Danielle Bethell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

### **Summary**

Focused on addressing the behavioral health crisis in Salem, emphasizing collaboration between the city and county. Key points included the need for sustainable funding, the rise in mental health and addiction issues, and the challenges in obtaining consent for treatment. Highlighted the community developmental disabilities program's \$500 million annual funding and a 350% increase in child enrollment since 2018. The crisis center served 1,799 individuals in 2023, with a 75-76% commitment rate for civil commitments. Need legislative changes to improve civil commitment processes and the importance of stable housing for effective treatment. Discussed various programs and initiatives aimed at addressing substance abuse and mental health crises. Key points included the PRIME+ program, which connects individuals with substance use disorder to recovery services, and the Student Opportunity for Achieving Results (SOAR) program for community re-entry. Measure 110 funding increased treatment capacity, adding 16 positions. In 2024, 844 individuals received services, with 35 at Her Place and 30 at His Place. Restitution & Treatment On Route to Expungement (RESTORE) Court, funded by House Bill 4002, aims to connect individuals with substance use disorders to treatment while addressing restitution. Challenges include the voluntary nature of engagement and the need for better collaboration between law enforcement and health services.

### **Opening Comments**

- Need for sustainable, practical, wise funding to address obstacles and create healthy, safe communities for everyone.
- Difference in service systems between the county and city:

- This was the first conversation to get on the same page about responsibilities and working together.
- Focus on the behavioral health system of care due to the acute mental health and addiction crisis within the city limits of Salem.

### **Marion County Health and Human Services Presentation**

- Four statutory roles of the department:
  - Community developmental disabilities program.
  - Local public health authority.
  - Community mental health program.
  - Ambulance service area.
- Significant growth in intellectual/developmental disabilities services:
  - 350% increase in child enrollment since 2018.
  - Program now serving just under 3,000 individuals.
  - Challenges with funding as an entitlement program.
- Behavioral health and substance use services:
  - 50/50 funding split between Medicaid and non-Medicaid populations.
- Outpatient mental health services:
  - Programs for children and adults with severe and persistent mental illness.
  - Children 0-17 years old:
    - Approximately 775 individuals served
  - Adults with Severe and Persistently Mentally III (SPMI):
    - About 985 individuals served.
    - 8.75% transient or homeless at intake.
  - Assertive Community Treatment team:
    - About 75 individuals served.
    - 18% transient or homeless at intake.
  - Psychiatric Security Review Board:
    - Approximately 166 individuals served.
  - Choice Model (Exceptional Needs Care Coordination):
    - approximately 120-124 individuals served.
  - Wraparound Services:
    - Served approximately 229 youth with multi-systemic issues.
  - Early Assessment and Support Alliance (early psychosis program):
    - Served youth and young adults aged 12-25.
- Behavioral health crisis services:
  - Diversion programs, civil commitment process and challenges with transporting individuals for treatment.
  - Need for legislative changes.
- Housing services and supports:
  - Rental assistance, transitional housing, Medicaid waiver program for health-related social needs.
  - Stable housing is for effective treatment.

### **Follow-Up Questions**

- Inquiries about budgets and funding allocations for different services.
- A large portion of the general fund goes to public safety compared to other counties.
- Marion County (MCHA) and Salem Housing Authorities (SHA) collaboration:
  - Opportunities to increase affordable housing:

- MCHA and SHA directors work together.
  - Marion County is working to get housing in rural areas.
  - Affordable housing to be a key focus during the next joint session.
- Opportunities to increase referrals to community response teams:
  - Salem Fire Department, which runs the 911 dispatch center, is referring behavioral health crisis calls to the 988 crisis line.:
    - This helps divert some calls from the 911 system.
  - The fire department has a "back door" number to directly connect with the county's crisis response teams:
    - Allows referrals outside of the 911 system.
  - Need more education and awareness among first responders about the available crisis response services and how to access them.
- Challenges of voluntary engagement:
  - Voluntary nature of individuals engaging with crisis response and treatment services:
    - Services are available, and those in crisis have to accept help.
  - Examples of individuals who may intentionally have a behavioral episode to get a temporary stay in a hospital instead of engaging in longer-term treatment.
  - Voluntary engagement barrier is a significant hurdle:
    - Law enforcement can't force individuals into treatment unless they meet very high legal standards for civil commitment.
  - Many individuals in need of help are not accessing available resources and programs.

### **RESTORE Court**

- Overview of the RESTORE Court program:
  - Connects people with substance use disorders to treatment and restitution.
  - Developed in response to challenges posed by Measure 110:
    - Decriminalized low-level drug possession in Oregon.
  - Targets individuals who committed property crimes, owe restitution, and have substance use issues.
- The primary goals of RESTORE Court are:
  - Connect these individuals to appropriate treatment and recovery services;
  - Provide a pathway for them to pay restitution to victims;
  - Dismiss and expunge criminal charges if the program is done successfully.
- Key features of RESTORE Court include:
  - A dedicated judge, court coordinator, and defense attorney assigned.
  - Individuals work on "RESTORE crews" and earn money to pay restitution.
  - Successful program completion, including restitution payment, has criminal charges dismissed and expunged.
- Challenges include the following:
  - The program is in the early stages of implementation, with about 15 participants so far.
  - Getting individuals to voluntarily accept and engage with the program.
  - Coordinating treatment, restitution, and expungement has proven to be complex in the initial rollout.

### **Follow-Up Discussion**

- Affordable housing is a key issue that should be the focus of a future joint session.

- Acknowledge past challenges with collaboration between the county and city:
  - The need for clear understanding of constraints and limitations.

### **Next Steps**

- Connect the crisis services team with the Fire Chief to coordinate response services and ensure understanding of available resources.
- Follow up with the Fire Chief or Sheriff:
  - Mr. Matthews to visit the Fire Defense Board.
  - Provide available services and how to access them.
- Affordable housing as an added topic in the next joint session.
- Schedule another joint meeting to continue addressing the ongoing challenges.

**Adjourned** – time: 8:23 p.m.

**Minutes by:** Mary Vityukova

**Reviewed by:** Gary L. White