



O R E G O N

MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Work Session Summary Minutes

Solid Waste Update

October 23, 2025. 9:30 AM

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

ATTENDANCE:

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

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

Legal Counsel: Steve Elzinga.

Public Works: Brian May, Dennis Mansfield, and Brian Nicholas.

Citizen: Kathy Rogers.

Commissioner Danielle Bethell called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m.

Financial Update:

- Update request from recent work sessions and ongoing budget challenges.
- Need to address cash flow concerns and structural deficit in the solid waste fund.
- Proposal for \$30 per ton increase to current tip fee:
 - Related to franchise agreement to ensure county receives needed revenue.
- Historic and ongoing cost-cutting measures:
 - Almost 15% reduction in full-time equivalent (FTE) staff over two years.
 - Substantial cuts to waste reduction activities.
- Multiple budget scenarios:
 - Current 2025-26 budget.
 - Substantial cost-cutting levers:
 - Suspend all capital outlays (for new land or transfer station design).
 - Would save \$12.5 million.
- Evaluated impacts of budget line items:
 - Leachate disposal, capital projects, Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facility, waste reduction programs, and administrative allocations.
- With substantial cuts and revenue proposals fund still faces nearly \$2 million annual operating deficit.

Discussion:

- Options for cost savings:
 - Reducing operational days for solid waste transfer stations.
 - Removing or retaining tip bed trailer service.
 - Not filling select staff positions.
- Pros and cons of service reductions:
 - Impact on revenue.

- Customer experience.
 - Employee layoffs.
- Alternate models for HHW facility:
 - Closing the permanent site and replacing it with satellite events.
 - Potential risks:
 - Citizens stockpiling hazardous waste.
 - Higher costs per event.
- Consider elimination of waste reduction programs:
 - Education, Earth Wise, specialty recycling like battery and Styrofoam.
 - Implications for regulatory compliance:
 - Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).
 - Recycling Modernization Act).
- Administrative overhead:
 - Public Works and County Central Services.
 - Reviewed existing and proposed methods for cost allocation.
 - Move from mix of Materials and Services (M&S)/FTE to FTE-only.
- Increase tip fees:
 - Structure as either traditional disposal fees or alternate system fees.
 - Input from legal counsel on county's authority and distinction of fee and tax.
- Long-term sustainability of the solid waste fund:
 - Reallocation of costs to other funds (like storm water).
 - Cost-sharing/partner with other jurisdictions for events and education.

Other:

- Concern with contract amendments and negotiations with third parties:
 - Changes may start new requests or condition-setting from franchisees or service providers.
- Behavioral factors for the community:
 - How residents manage hazardous waste access.
 - Changes to recycling programming.
- Recorded requests for more detailed financial and operational breakdowns (i.e., storm water expenses, admin cost components, HHW volumes, and comparison metrics).
- Identified areas where internal administrative processes—like code enforcement and cost tracking—need improvement or more transparency.

Next Steps:

- Updated version of budget scenarios to reflect board preferences:
 - Maintain tip beds at some locations.
 - Partial rather than total reduction in HHW facility.
- Detailed analysis and historical data on HHW facility costs and volumes:
 - Include comparisons to surrounding counties' practices.
- Break down storm water services costs:
 - Include required legal compliance expenses.
 - Outreach.
 - Impact of shifting these costs fully to the storm water fund.
- Generate a full, itemized accounting of Public Works administration charges:
 - Format comparable to central services admin details.
- Explore cost-sharing opportunities with other cities/jurisdictions:
 - Education, outreach, and special event programming.

- Retain specialty recycling programs:
 - Battery, Styrofoam, and paint.
 - Explore alternate ways to meet regulatory/economic requirements.
- Legal counsel to clarify county's authority on implementing and allocating tip fees:
 - Structure fees to retain county control while avoiding tax-like liabilities.
- Schedule work sessions to revisit outstanding questions:
 - Incorporate additional data as it becomes available.
 - Provide ongoing updates to the board for decision-making.

Adjourned – time: 11:12 a.m.

Minutes by: Mary Vityukova

Reviewed by: Gary L. White