



# Work Session Summary Minutes

OREGON

## Sheriff's Office Update

October 28, 2025. 1:30 PM

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

### ATTENDANCE:

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

**Board's Office:** Trevor Lane, Alvin Klausen, Jan Fritz, Toni Whitler, Heather Inyama, and Matt Lawyer.

**Legal Counsel:** Steve Elzinga, Sebastian Tapia Cody Hawkins.

**Sheriff's Office:** Nick Hunter, Jacob Ramsey, Sherrie Hickam, and Jay Bergmann.

Commissioner Colm Willis called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m.

### **Evidence Update:**

- Evidence from sheriff's office will relocate to a new facility:
  - Process estimated to take about four and a half months.
- Project involves cataloging, securing, transporting, and re-inventorying:
  - Drugs, guns, money, and other items.
- Two evidence techs and a transport van are considered sufficient for move:
  - Extra resources may be added if needed.
- Complexity stems from maintaining chain of custody standards:
  - Handling old and haphazardly boxed evidence.
  - Ensuring security at every stage.
- Timeline and methods are based on detailed calculations:
  - Estimate of 15 minutes per box.
  - Adjusted for reality by reviewing actual work patterns.
- Lessons learned from past audits are factored in.
- Team is striving for maximum accountability and transparency.
- Boxes containing unsorted or miscellaneous items are to be moved as-is:
  - Will be sorted upon arrival to minimize process disruption.
- Ongoing clean-up is required for non-evidence items left in storage.
- Staff from the main office provide support.

### **Jail Medical Contract:**

- Contract with Salem Health was renewed:
  - Settling outstanding bills at the legacy 60% discount rate.
  - Provider is now requesting 80% payment:
    - Representing a 33% increase.
- The county's history:
  - Relied on ad-hoc payments:

- Leveraging a medical exemption.
    - Until a contract established in 2009.
    - Now faces cost containment struggles.
- Providers are supposed to bill insurance first (as per Oregon law):
  - Emergency medical needs mean the county often pays upfront.
- Legal interpretation is that hospitals are charging at a rate higher than the law allows:
  - Ongoing legal research is examining “baseline” rate that applies by law.
  - Could save the county money regardless of the percentage discount.
- House Bill 3320 does not offer relief for costs related to incarcerated persons:
  - Focus is on those seeking financial assistance generally, not jail populations.
- Stakeholders are not currently providing policy guidance on this matter:
  - Oregon State Sheriffs’ Association (OSSA).
  - Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) Public Safety Committee.
- Other counties reported to have very different discounts with one at 50%.
  - Reluctance to share details due to competitive and confidentiality concerns.
  - Despite this being public record.

**Jail Medical Audit:**

- Legal research is being done by county staff to clarify what rates are enforceable and what contractual obligations are required.
- Past legal attempts involved getting legal counsel to provide clarification:
  - Detailed findings have not yet been reviewed.
- Establish what law says:
  - Use as a negotiating tool with health providers.
  - Possible basis for legislative change.

**Population Increase – Capacity Management Plan:**

- Transition Center’s move led to a recalibrated jail capacity of 470 inmates:
  - Population was steady at 380.
  - Recently spiking to 450.
- Increase may result from system-wide changes:
  - More defense attorneys moving cases forward.
  - Reduction in unrepresented cases.
  - More judicial overrides for retention for those failing to appear.
- Population fluctuations managed by seeking open beds:
  - Plans being prepared for possible future supervisory authority releases.
  - If the jail exceeds capacity.
- Efforts are underway to update existing management plans:
  - Include recalculating numbers.
  - Ensure Senate Bill 48 implementation for releases matches court expectations.
- Consideration of seasonal trends:
  - No strong pattern established with anecdotal reports only.
  - Potential influence of increased medic.

**Food Vendor Request for Proposal (RFP):**

- Current food contracts span meals for both Adults in Custody (AICS) and staff:
  - Staff meals are prepared separately, per policy.
- Shift from standard RFP to Request for Quotation (RFQ) to get more information:

- Avoid premature cost commitment.
- Suggestions to partner with local food banks for specific food items:
  - Healthy options that might otherwise be expensive.
- Inmates rely heavily on commissary (cookies, candy) for sustenance and morale:
  - Raising concerns on both nutrition and mental health impacts.
- Washington County serves higher-grade protein and produce:
  - Costlier but potentially beneficial for health outcomes.
- Evaluation of vendor models:
  - Most similarly sized counties use large providers (Aramark, Trinity, CFM/Summit).
  - Some smaller jails use local fast food due to low numbers.
- Proposals include piloting variety with food trucks or local culinary programs:
  - Juvenile justice’s culinary initiative.
  - Exploring local vendor “Fresh and Local Foods” for fresh, regional produce.
- Cost improvement projects in contracts to spread capital costs and avoid emergencies:
  - New dishwashers
- Leverage state-level contracts or distribution centers for buying power.
- Benchmarking caloric standards and practices against other counties.

**Other:**

- Public safety update provided from Salem Chamber event:
  - Chief announced doubling of High Risk Tactical Operations (HRTTO) teams.
  - New hires on target to start before January.
- Ongoing issues in city wards:
  - Displacement between areas when enforcement is focused.
  - Concerns at the municipal level.
- General sense of satisfaction with public safety progress.
- Collaborative and supportive relationships among county and city officials.
- Regional and statewide partnerships are needed to influence meaningful policy changes in the future.

**Next Steps:**

- Speak with Jail Command Council about ongoing medical contract disputes and shared advocacy needs.
- Commissioner Bethell to connect jail’s contract team with local vendor:
  - “Fresh and Local Foods” for possible food service partnership.
- Update and present revised capacity management plan:
  - Reflect current numbers.
- Explore issuing RFQ for food services:
  - Partnerships with agencies like Northwest Senior Disability Services.
- Research logistics and regulatory feasibility of allowing food trucks on-site for staff.
- Draft and distribute short memo summarizing legal findings on enforceable contract rates with Salem Health.
- Update stakeholders on evidence move process and timeline:
  - Possibly providing periodic check-ins and reports.

**Adjourned** – time: 2:20 p.m.

**Minutes by:** Mary Vityukova

**Reviewed by:** Gary L. White