



MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Work Session Summary Minutes

OREGON

Winter 2025 Storm Update

December 23, 2025. 9:30 AM

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: Alvin Klausen, Chris Eppley, and Matt Lawyer.

Legal Counsel: Steve Elzinga.

Public Works: Dennis Mansfield, Brian Nicholas, and Gren Walsh.

Assessor's Office: Tom Rohlwing, Brooke Skidmore, and Nate Combs

Information Technology: Adam Crateau.

Commissioner Kevin Cameron called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m.

Status Update

- Building and Planning:
 - Building inspections focusing initially on most affected areas done.
 - Thirteen dwellings and one deck found to have notable damage:
 - One structure already being repaired.
 - Two required further inspection for possible structural impact.
 - Damage assessments focus on structural issues that require permits.
 - Issues like damaged eaves are typically not considered permit-worthy:
 - Unless they affect structural integrity.
 - Placards will be used at affected properties:
 - Red for significant structural damage preventing occupancy.
 - Yellow for limited use of accessory structures or decks.
 - Official assessment form:
 - Following Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) guidelines.
 - Used to document significant hazards:
 - Collapse, foundation shifts, or electrical hazards.
 - Residents affected by storm will receive a sympathy letter with guidance:
 - Safety, permits, and next steps.
 - Letters will be mailed and posted to ensure delivery.
 - Especially where homes are unoccupied.
 - Content and wording will be county-wide, not specific to any one town:
 - Crafted to accommodate all impacted residents.
- Emergency Management:
 - Coordinated with local cities to gather reports on damage.
 - Detroit had most substantial impacts reported:

- Elsewhere impacts were minor.
- Threshold for FEMA/state emergency declaration is high:
 - \$8 million for the state.
 - \$1.8 million for Marion County in public infrastructure cost.
 - Threshold not met at time of meeting.
- Emergency declaration enables access to grant funds and greater procurement authority:
 - Not practical given current damage and reporting.
- State and counties partnership provides resource access without needing a formal declaration.
- Countywide communication to inform residents:
 - Debris disposal options and process changes after storm events.
- Browns Island disposal site will open for free residential yard debris drop-off through January 3rd:
 - Proper public notice to be issued.
 - Public Works authorized to carry out this short-term action.
- Coordinating with haulers and to find additional designated sites for debris:
 - Especially where building materials and yard debris can be separated.
- Considered but not declaring a countywide emergency at this time:
 - Minor level of regret and lack of FEMA eligibility.
- Assessor's Office:
 - Assessed impact on property values and eligibility for tax relief.
 - Real market values of properties in affected area are generally double assessed values:
 - Significant loss is required before tax relief is triggered.
 - Applications for tax relief for owners if damage meets the thresholds:
 - Act of God, proration of taxes
 - The Homestead Act:
 - Created post-2020 wildfires.
 - Allows certain tax reassessment options.
 - Depends on 2020 wildfires ownership and certain legislative windows.
 - Legal review of recent storm-affected residents who did not claim wildfire-related relief:
 - Still eligible under the original law.
 - Assessor indicated very limited reassessment workload as result of storm:
 - Will respond to qualified relief claims as appropriate.
- Geographic Information System (GIS):
 - Data will be compiled in cloud-based GIS system for mapping and analysis.
 - State Fire Marshal reports and county assessments for response and resource targeting.
 - Responsible for maintaining single source of mapped data for this event:
 - Ensure all relevant departments and decision-makers have access.

Other

- Concerns about county's liability for private road and bridge safety:
 - Especially pertaining to Camp Taloali.
- Agreed county is not responsible for private engineering review or certification.
- Camp Taloali:
 - Emergency bridge in place after damage to their culvert.
 - County will send written notice clarifying non-jurisdiction.

- Recommend seeking private engineering and insurance solutions.
- Past legislative efforts for assessment/tax relief after emergencies:
 - Need legal/legislative review for owners in Detroit facing repeated impacts.
- Ongoing vulnerability of communities affected by 2020 wildfires:
 - Need to continue support and communication.

Next Steps

- Create hardship application for building permit fees in coordination with planning/building departments:
 - For owners facing hardship or lacking insurance
- Send county-wide building inspection guidance letter to affected property owners:
 - After internal review.
- Issue formal letter to cities and fire districts about the hardship waiver process:
 - Suggest they align their fee policies for storm-related rebuilding.
- Public Works to open Brown's Island Demolition Landfill for free residential yard debris disposal through January 3:
 - Issue public notice and oversee site operations.
- Matt Lawyer to respond to constituent queries about debris cleanup options.
- Cleanup cost data from Forest Service to evaluate potential future FEMA or state relief eligibility.
- Legal counsel advise on use of recent legislation for storm-affected residents:
 - SB 1545 and related measures.
 - Draft recommendations for future legislative advocacy if needed.
- GIS continue gathering damage information and produce maps to guide response.
- Draft letter to Camp Taloali explaining county's non-involvement:
 - Advise on next steps for bridge/culvert safety.
- Monitor damage, support residents, and give policy updates to public and partners.

Adjourned – time: 10:31 a.m.

Minutes by: Mary Vityukova

Reviewed by: Gary L. White