



MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

# Work Session Summary Minutes

O R E G O N

## 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 Rohlfing, 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 3<sup>rd</sup>:
  - 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