

County Commissioners
Colm Willis, Chair
Kevin Cameron
Danielle Bethell



Chief Administrative Officer
Jan Fritz

MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION

Economic Development Program Update
Minutes

Thursday, June 25, 2026, 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Commissioners' Boardroom
Courthouse Square, 555 Court St. NE, Suite 5231
Salem, Oregon 97301

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Kevin Cameron, Colm Willis and Danielle Bethell.

Board's Office: Kendall Hall, Jonathan Sanford, Trevor Lane, and Matt Lawyer.

Legal Counsel: Jennifer Rogers.

Community and Economic Development: Kirsta Ulm, Kelli Weese, Sarah Couley, and Chip Bury.

Citizen: Kathey Rogers.

Commissioner Colm Willis called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m.

1. Welcome & Introductions

-Commissioner Colm Willis

2. Detroit Marina Updates

-Chip Bury

- Earlier board direction to explore alternatives due to cultural resources on peninsula.
- Three main project alternatives had been considered:
 - Original plan.
 - Upland disposal.
 - Kane's Marina:
 - Sediment back into reservoir.
- Peninsula is known archaeological site:
 - This is main driver of permitting complexity with US Army Corps of Engineers.
- Scrapping peninsula placement area and using upland disposal will simplify permits but increase costs.
- Archaeological investigation is still required in marina excavation area regardless of what happens with peninsula.
- Compared archaeological study options:
 - Marina-only study estimated at about \$50,000.
 - Marina and peninsula study about \$200,000, with similar timelines.
- No construction can occur until archaeological requirements are satisfied:
 - Current expectations point to work beginning no earlier than next year.
- US Army Corps requires new study:
 - Assert prior archaeology is outdated or not sufficiently rigorous.
- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests for prior studies and standards pending:

- Concern about changing standards late in the process.
- Two-track approach:
 - Proceed with study while pressing the Corps to accept existing marina study:
 - Using FOIA results and political channels.
 - Filing too early could reduce leverage of Corps accepting existing archaeology.
- Agreed to:
 - Pause filing new Section 106 permit applications for about 30 days:
 - Wait for FOIA responses and potential escalation.
 - Continue internal preparation:
 - Negotiating with an archaeological firm.
 - Drafting permit materials.
 - Defining scope, without submitting to Corps yet.
- Reviewed contractor implications:
 - Request to extend substantial and final completion dates by two years.
 - Agreed to delay decision on contract date extensions until fall:
 - After there is more clarity on permits and schedule.
 - Timeline extensions may later lead to requests for additional funding:
 - No immediate financial change is approved.
- Reviewed overall budget:
 - American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) swap of about \$1.5 million is in progress.
 - Total budgeted amount about \$8.1M:
 - Projected costs under original option are about \$8.5M.
 - including \$200k for archaeology and ~7% increase overall.
 - Implies about \$400k shortfall.
 - Deficit not viewed as unmanageable but expectation to control costs and stay near that level.

3. Tourism Grant Award Selections

- Sarah Coutley

- Reviewed structure of tourism grant program:
 - Salem Metro Grant is \$100,000/year for 3 years - total \$300,000.
 - North Marion Region Grant is \$50,000/year for 3 years - total \$150,000.
 - Marion County Grant is \$50,000 annually, potentially multiple awards.
- Confirmed there was one applicant each for:
 - Salem Metro: Travel Salem.
 - North Marion Region: North Marion Tourism Collaboration.
- Canyon and east county was effectively left out of regional grant structure:
 - Jefferson, Stayton, Sublimity, Mill City, Detroit, Idanha, Gates, Aumsville
- Some face-to-face outreach was done for \$50,000 County grant to communities:
 - Stayton and Jefferson.
- Smaller communities may lack ability to respond quickly to grant structures.
- Travel Salem's role:
 - Market beyond Salem but are primarily Salem-focused:
 - Tension when they are expected to represent entire county or canyon.
 - Do not want one entity to speak for entire county without region-specific focus.
- Marion County Grant allocation decisions:
 - Will not to award Marion County grant funds to Travel Salem or North Marion via this pool.
 - Focus county grant dollars on specific community projects and canyon-related needs.
- Tentative award decisions under the Marion County Grant:
 - Mill City - \$20,000.

- City of Idanha - \$8,000.
- Idanha Development Foundation - \$5,000.
- North Marion Tourism Collaboration - \$7,500.
- Mt. Angel Oktoberfest - \$4,000:
 - Explore shuttle to Stayton and Sublimity using any remaining funds.
- No award to the Keizer Chamber proposal from this pool:
 - Concern it primarily funds Full Time Equivalent (FTE).
 - Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenues supports tourism-related operations.
- Direction regarding Keizer:
 - Policy preference not to fund ongoing operations or FTEs with limited dollars.
 - City of Keizer should be primary partner funding tourism FTE:
 - Given its existing TOT resources.

4. Emergent Economic Opportunity Program (EEOP) Opportunities

-Chip Bury and Sarah Coutley

- EEOP lottery-funded requests:
 - Next fiscal year budget is \$300,000.
- Support for following:
 - Santiam Youth Sports / Santiam Sports:
 - \$50,000 for planning/engineering for expanded athletic field and broader facility master plan:
 - Total project planning cost estimated at \$75,000.
 - Recognized high cost but accepted need for a comprehensive plan.
 - Pointman Ministries (approx. \$51,800):
 - Supported.
 - Aligns with community development goals.
- Use of EEOP process for opioid settlement funds:
 - Approved funding for Painted Horse Recovery via EEOP framework:
 - One-time exception while dedicated opioid-fund process is being built.
 - Painted Horse lost 14% of key funding due to external changes.
 - Needed temporary support for a staff role.
- Additional EEOP-related items:
 - Phased funding request for veterans' memorial project:
 - Grant would fund specific, tangible items not ongoing operations.
 - Frustration with coordination but accepted scaled-down request.
 - Support is not long-term commitment to fully fund project.

5. Discussion

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- Army Corps and Regulatory Issues:
 - Frustrated with late-stage new archaeological work after years of planning.
 - Discarding previous archaeological studies when artifacts are thousands of years old and unlikely to appear in last few years.
 - Concern about potential conflicts of interest or perceived favoritism among archaeological consultants connected to Corps staff.
 - Need to vet any consultant's actual track record with Army Corps.
- Strategy on Archaeology:
 - Concern that complying with new demands may reduce leverage to insist on validity of existing studies.

- Use FOIA results and political channels to push accepting available marina studies.
- Community Engagement and Equity:
 - County committed to its prior promises to Detroit and canyon communities.
 - Community meetings before major project layout changes because expectations and local investment must be respected.
 - East county and canyon communities historically lacked capacity and support to engage in regional tourism initiatives.
- Financial Stewardship:
 - Cost escalation concern in large capital projects and contractor change orders.
 - Not lock into long-term terms that could invite large future claims.
 - Avoid funding ongoing operations or FTEs where local governments or other revenues exist.
- Tourism Strategy and Governance:
 - Structural tension between countywide marketing and city-level TOT control.
 - Need proactive, coordinated, county-driven approach to help small communities define and pursue tourism strategies.

6. Other

-All

- Detroit Marina cable cart concept:
 - Future cable cart to move people and gear between parking and water as lake levels and access change.
 - Valuable but deferred until dredging timeline and clear project scope.
- Idanha / Detroit Food Pantry:
 - Transitioning operations of food pantry from church to Idanha Development Foundation.
 - Food assistance is not a natural fit for economic development funds.
 - More information and alignment with appropriate funding sources are needed.
- Isaac's Room – Youth Workforce Development:
 - Interest in detailed proposal from Isaac's Room focused on youth workforce development.
 - Potentially aligned with EEOP and broader economic development goals.
- Parish Little League:
 - Outreach from Parish Little League seeking meeting and potential funding.
 - Prefer organization submits formal application before scheduling Board time.

7. Next Steps

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- Archaeology and Detroit Marina:
 - Wait approximately 30 days before filing new Section 106 permit applications:
 - Allow FOIA responses from Army Corps and other agencies to arrive.
 - Maintain leverage and seek political and intergovernmental advocacy.
 - Continue preparing in background:
 - Negotiate contract terms with an archaeological consultant:
 - Capable of potentially doing both marina and peninsula.
 - Draft permit materials and define broad scope without submission.
 - Request detailed follow-up from two archaeological firms:
 - Number and type of projects completed with the Army Corps.
 - Specific Section 106 experience, outcomes, and documented hurdles.
- Contracts and Budget:

- Review contract to find clauses that could have unfavorable financial obligations if timelines shift.
 - Report the Board before any contract amendments are approved.
- Delay extending date decisions until fall, when permit and schedule clarity improves.
- Complete planned ARPA swap and bring updated budget:
 - Including projected shortfall and contingency use, to the Board.
- Tourism and Canyon Strategy:
 - Implement agreed grant awards and communicate clear conditions.
 - Develop tourism grant allocation process:
 - Includes canyon and east county communities.
 - Clarifies program differences.
 - Explore designating or hiring regional coordinator in Economic Development to:
 - Convene canyon communities.
 - Define tourism and recruitment priorities.
 - Identify regional collaboration models.
- EEOP and Opioid Funds:
 - Finalize EEOP awards.
 - Fund Painted Horse Recovery as one-time support via EEOP:
 - Design dedicated opioid-funding process.
 - Decide if process is housed in Economic Development or managed separately.
- Future Proposals and Information Requests:
 - Invite detailed proposals for:
 - Isaac’s Room youth workforce development.
 - Parish Little League.
 - Detroit Marina cable cart.
 - Any request related to Idanha Food Pantry.
 - New proposals are routed through established application process before scheduling Board presentations.

Adjourned – time: 10:44 a.m.

Minutes by: Mary Vityukova

Reviewed by: Gary L. White