



Marion County Extension and 4-H Service District (MCE4H)

Meeting Minutes – February 3, 2026

SERVICE DISTRICT SPECIAL MEETING

Open Meeting

The meeting of the Marion County Extension and 4-H Service District (MCE4H) was called to order by Director Cameron Willis at 3:00p.m. Introductions were made.

Board Members Present: Commissioner Danielle Bethell, MCE4H Director; Commissioner Colm Willis, MCE4H Director; Commissioner Kevin Cameron, MCE4H Director

Attending: Toni Whitler, MC Board's Office; Trevor Lane, MC Board's Office; Scott Norris, MC Legal; Jennifer Rogers, MC Legal; Chris Eppley, MC Board's Office; Laura McClellan, MC Community & Economic Development; Krista Ulm MC Community & Economic Development; Kelli Weese, MCE4H Secretary and Budget Officer; Richard Riggs, OSU Extension Regional Director; Elvira Alvarez, OSU Extension; , OSU Extension; Amy Goulter-Allem, MCE4H Budget Committee Member; Dana Castano, MCE4H Budget Committee Member; Desirea Jackson, Stayton Soccer; Rolando Barcia, Stayton Soccer; Patrick Jackson, Stayton Soccer; Stephanie Thompson, Stayton Soccer; Elijha Klampe, Stayton Soccer; Mateo Sandoval, Stayton Soccer; Adrian Garvia Zamudio, Stayton Soccer; Leonardo Zamudio, Stayton Soccer; Lucas Thompson, Stayton Soccer; Mason Thompson, Stayton Soccer

District Minutes

The minutes from October 30, 2025 were presented for approval and signature.

MOTION: Director Cameron made a motion to approve the October 30, 2025 Marion County Extension and 4-H Service District Board meeting minutes as presented. Director Bethell seconded the motion. A voice vote was Unanimous **MOTION PASSED**

The minutes from December 11, 2025 were presented for approval and signature.

MOTION: Director Cameron made a motion to approve the December 11, 2025 Marion County Extension and 4-H Service District Board meeting minutes as presented. Director Bethell seconded the motion. A voice vote was Unanimous **MOTION PASSED**

Boad of Directors Chair Update

Background Summary – Presented by Kelli Weese

The Marion County Extension and 4-H Service District updates its officers annually to align with the Marion County Board of Commissioners. This administrative update is authorized under Order 17-011 (adopted in 2017) to improve efficiency and reduce duplicative governance actions. No action is required by the Service District Board.



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For 2026, the Service District officer positions are:

- Chair: Colm Willis
- Vice Chair: Kevin Cameron
- Second Vice Chair: Danielle Bethell

Budget Updates

Projections for MCE4H - Presented Kelli Weese

Background Summary – Kelli Weese

- Staff presented a high-level review of the Marion County Extension and 4-H Service District's budget history and projections to assist in developing the FY 2026–2027 budget and to support discussion at the April 1, 2025 Budget Committee meeting.
- District revenue has steadily increased over time; however, expenditures have grown at a faster rate, gradually closing the gap between revenue and expenses by FY 2025-26. The gap was temporarily addressed in FY 2025-26 by reducing the unappropriated ending fund balance, but this approach is not a sustainable long-term solution. Moving forward, expenditure is projected to exceed revenue, which may result in a budget gap if no adjustments are made.
- District's primary expenditure categories:
 - OSU Extension Operating Expenses, including support for programs and staff. The FY 2026 budget includes 12.79 FTE funded by the district, with projected personnel costs of approximately \$1.2 million and about \$300,000 in materials and services. Costs have increased over time in large part due to the addition of staff and increasing staff costs.
 - MCE4H Grant Expenditures, which support programs such as local youth soccer groups and the YEDAAG grant program for after school and educational initiatives. Grant expenditure has had a notable rise since 2023.
 - MCE4H Materials and Services, including administrative and legal services contracted through Marion County, contributions to the Marion County Fair, OSU building rent, insurance premiums, and dues and memberships. These costs have steadily increased over time due to rising operational costs.
- The review highlighted the need to consider strategies to address the projected gap between revenues and expenditures during the upcoming budget development process.

OSU Extension FY 27 Budget Overview: Early Discussion - Presented Kelli Weese

Background Summary – Kelli Weese

- OSU Extension provided a broad overview of its anticipated FY 2026–27 proposed budget, including projected budget levels, potential future factors impacting the District, projected staffing levels, and future capital project updates.



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- OSU Extension’s operational budget has increased over time, primarily due to new program positions and rising faculty costs. OSU noted it is not proposing new positions for the upcoming fiscal year.
- OSU has historically maintained actual expenditures below budgeted amounts. Any surplus funds have been transferred to the District’s Capital Reserve Fund, which was established to support a future construction project or office purchase for OSU Extension.
 - The current budget designates over \$1.1 million in capital reserve funding for this purpose.

Summary of Discussion

- The Board asked OSU Extension staff about the accuracy of projected rising staff costs and whether higher personnel costs are anticipated. Richard Riggs responded:
 - No changes to current staffing levels are projected. Vacancies in MCE4H-funded positions are expected to be filled in the coming months, while positions funded through legislative funds may remain vacant depending on the outcome of the upcoming legislative session. Current vacancies total approximately 1.2 FTE, which may result in some savings during the current year.
 - Classified staff funded by MCE4H are expected to receive a 3% cost-of-living adjustment per the collective bargaining agreement. Professional faculty salary increases, if granted, are expected to be less than 3%, though final decisions are still pending due to external factors affecting the overall OSU Extension budget.
 - The Board requested that staff update fiscal year references in materials to include the full fiscal year format (FY 2025–26 instead of FY 26).
 - Board members noted they will review the attachments in more detail and may reach out to OSU staff for additional clarification if needed.

OSU Extension Presentation- Richard Riggs

Background Summary – Kelli Weese

- OSU Extension noted that the budget information provided is preliminary and may change as internal budget development continues.
- The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) has recommended a reduction to the OSU Statewide budget; however, OSU is requesting that any reductions align with the smaller cut recommended for higher education overall.
- County financial staff have requested that the District align its FY 2026-27 budget development timeline with the County’s revised schedule.
- OSU Extension is exploring capital improvements to renovate its current space in the Oregon Farm Bureau building, with estimated costs of approximately \$1.2 million and a projected timeline of about nine months.



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Summary of Discussion

- Richard Riggs clarified that any renovation would only occur in the space currently used by OSU Extension for programming and instruction, such as teaching spaces including a commercial kitchen.
 - The Board expressed concern about investing funds to renovate a facility that is not owned by the district, noting that improvements would add value to a property the district does not own.
- Board members requested a tour of the facility to better understand the current layout and how the space is used.
- Director Bethell mentioned a county-owned building within the Juvenile Department that requires renovations and includes a full commercial kitchen. She suggested a future discussion about the possibility of OSU Extension utilizing that space, noting it may be preferable to invest funds in a facility owned by the county.

Other

Stayton Soccer Club

Background Summary

- The Board invited representatives from the Stayton Soccer Club to present their program and to explore potential partnership opportunities. MCE4H currently supports two other soccer clubs.

Presentation – Rolando Garcia

- Rolando has been involved with the program for approximately 10 years and noted that all coaches are volunteers.
- The program has experienced growing demand in recent years and serves as an important community activity in Stayton, where after school opportunities are limited.
- The club serves approximately 200 youth each season, ranging from kindergarten through 12th grade.
- The program provides training, mentorship, transportation assistance, academic support, and equipment. Club leaders emphasized their goal of building confidence, discipline, leadership, and positive community involvement among participants.
- Representatives noted that they strive not to turn away youth participants and at times contribute personal funds to support program needs.
- The club expressed interest in potential grant funding to help expand the program, reduce participation fees, and create additional opportunities for youth development.
- The club noted that new facilities in Stayton may help expand programming and reach more youth as the program currently operates year-round.



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Summary of Discussion

- The Board asked whether the program currently serves girls. Representatives shared that the club initially began with boys' teams and has recently expanded to include both girls and boys, with ongoing efforts to promote participation among girls.
- The club currently serves approximately 179 players and has one competitive team, with the goal of establishing a competitive team for girls.
- The Board invited the Stayton Soccer Club to apply for funding and encouraged them to submit a proposed budget and program goals.
- Staff were directed to provide information on the district's current funding approach for other supported soccer clubs to help guide the club's application.

NWREC

Background Summary – Kelli Weese

- The North Willamette Research and Extension Center (NWREC), operated by Oregon State University near Aurora, provides research and education supporting regional crops such as nurseries, berries, vegetables, Christmas trees, and hazelnuts.
- The Marion County Extension and 4-H Service District (MCE4H) has provided financial support to NWREC since the district was established in 2015 through funding included in the OSU Extension portion of the district's budget.
- Funding remained relatively consistent at about \$50,000 annually, with a one-time increase for a specific project and additional increases in recent years to \$58,000 following formal requests and Board consideration during the budget process.

Summary of Presentation – Steve Young

- Programs at the center include events and initiatives such as the Blueberry Field Day, Nursery Science Summit, IPM trials, an endowed position, Droid technology, and many other partnerships.
- Staff invited a Multnomah County Commissioner to visit the facility to explore opportunities for broader regional support.
- The "Farm of the Future" initiative was discussed, noting there is significant opportunity for growth and continued improvements.
 - The conference pavilion and 4G network infrastructure remain partially completed and currently lack heating and restroom facilities.
 - The Berty storage and processing building was funded through researcher supported programs.
 - A modernization plan has been contracted with a Portland based firm to help design future facility improvements.



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- The annual dinner event will transition to a fall fundraising dinner in partnership with the Food Innovation Center to provide a farm-to-fork meal experience.
- Steve noted that additional funding will be needed to continue advancing programs and facility improvements.

Summary of Discussion

- Director Bethell mentioned that George Packing produces approximately 40 tons of shells annually and suggested making a connection with the program
- The Board asked for clarification about why staff conduct fewer outreach activities than in the past.
 - Steve explained that staffing levels have decreased among nursery specialists, making it difficult to meet demand. The program previously had 4–5 nursery specialists and currently has approximately 1.2 FTE filling that role

Willamette Workforce Partnership (WWP)

Background Summary – Kelli Weese

- In 2022, the Marion County Extension and 4-H Service District entered into a \$50,000 agreement with WWP to support small agricultural and farming businesses in hiring youth ages 14–17 through the Youth Wage Grant program.
- The contract expired in December 2024, and staff had previously understood that no funds had been expended during the contract period.
- WWP recently notified staff that expenses had been incurred but were not previously invoiced due to an administrative oversight. Staff have requested documentation and reporting to verify the expenditures and confirm they meet the terms of the agreement.
- No action was requested from the Board at this time. Staff will return with options for the Board to consider once the requested information is received.

Summary of Discussion

- The Board noted that the funding had previously been included as a budgeted item and indicated support for considering payment through a supplemental budget.
- Staff recommended inviting WWP to a future meeting and noted that any payment would be processed only after required documentation is received and contractual obligations are verified.

Highland Elementary

Background Summary – Kelli Weese

- Staff received a letter from Highland Elementary thanking the District for previous funding and inquiring whether the Board would consider extending the grant for another year or request that they reapply.

