

MALHEUR COUNTY COURT MINUTES

April 1, 2026

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Court was called to order by Judge Dan Joyce at 9:00 a.m. with Commissioner Ron Jacobs and Commissioner Jim Mendiola present. Judge Joyce led the Pledge of Allegiance. Members of the media, public and staff had the opportunity to join the meeting electronically or in person. Present in the meeting room were Sheriff Travis Johnson and Economic and Community Development Coordinator Taylor Rembowski; Administrative Officer Lorinda DuBois joined the meeting at 9:05 a.m. Notice of the meeting was posted on the County website, Courthouse bulletin board, and emailed to the Argus Observer and those persons who have requested notice. The agenda is recorded as instrument # 2026-1186

AMENDED AGENDA

Commissioner Jacobs requested the agenda be amended to add hire a planning director.

CULL ONIONS

Meeting with the Court to discuss cull onions were: Casey Prentiss, Nichole Orosco-Chase, and Deputy Director Lindsay Eng from Oregon Department of Agriculture; Stuart Reitz from OSU (Oregon State University) Malheur Experiment Station; and Tyler Wagstaff from WBH Farms and the Onion Growers Association. The local onion industry is experiencing a high number of cull onions and is requesting assistance with how to dispose of the onions or change the Onion Maggot Control Order to help with disposal efforts. Ms. Eng explained that Malheur County is a groundwater management area for high nitrate levels. One limiting factor of the Onion Maggot Control Order is the 80 tons per acre that can be spread on the fields listed in the rule as a DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality) limit. Spreading onions across a field is considered a beneficial use for agricultural purposes and not a waste disposal use. ODA regulates agricultural beneficial use and it may be possible to implement a temporary emergency rule as an agricultural beneficial use amendment. Mr. Reitz has worked with ODA (Oregon Department of Agriculture) water quality staff regarding nitrate levels going into the soil from onions and ODA is comfortable with removing the 80 ton per acre limit given the knowledge gleaned, particularly when the onions are chopped. Growers would need to consult with OSU or their crop consultants to ensure there are no water quality concerns. Burial/piling is considered solid waste disposal and fully in DEQ's purview. ODA is also comfortable removing the Northwest Pest Management Guidelines in the amendment; in the short-term timeframe cull onion piles could be sprayed with any label pesticide that is labeled for use.

Mr. Reitz discussed the reasons for the large amounts of onions and the concerns regarding onion waste. The Onion Maggot Control Order has been in effect for approximately 70 years; in the 1950s onion maggots were the primary pest problem growers dealt with. Potentially one-third of last season's onion crop needs to be disposed of.

ODA also discussed changing the control area but there does not appear to be a benefit to shrinking the control area as disposal still must be done in a proper manner.

Mr. Wagstaff explained that the local onion growers feel that lifting the 80 ton per acre rule would be extremely helpful.

After discussions, consensus was that implementing an ODA temporary rule to lift the 80 ton per acre rule and the Northwest Pest Management Guidelines requirements would greatly help. ODA will start on the emergency temporary rule process and provide widespread notice when it is in place.

COURT MINUTES

Commissioner Mendiola moved to approve Court Minutes of March 24 and March 25, 2026 as written. Commissioner Jacobs seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Vote: JM/RJ/DJ in favor. Approved.

AGREEMENT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES – VALE

The Court discussed the agreement with the City of Vale for law enforcement services with Sheriff Johnson. Personnel costs were updated in the agreement. The Vale deputies cover the Vale School District boundary. The term of the agreement is July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2029. Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve Agreement for Law Enforcement Services with the City of Vale. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously. See instrument # 2026-1187

Vote: RJ/JM/DJ in favor. Approved.

ASD ADVISORY BOARD

Commissioner Jacobs moved to appoint Heather Burrows to the Ambulance Service District (ASD) Advisory Board as the Health Department representative. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously. (Ms. Burrows fills the vacancy left by Tristin Wishard's resignation.)

Vote: RJ/JM/DJ in favor. Approved.

SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET RESOLUTION

Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve Supplemental Budget Resolution R26-12: In the Matter of Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Supplemental Budget by Resolution Under Local Budget Law ORS (Oregon Revised Statute) 294.471. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The purpose of the supplemental budget is to allocate additional grant funds in the CAMI/DA (Child Abuse Multi-disciplinary Intervention / District Attorney) budget that were not anticipated when the budget was adopted – these funds will be used for staff travel and training and office supplies; to allocate refund money in the Jail budget that that was not anticipated when

the budget was adopted – these funds are due to a lost check that was processed and will be receipted to offset a double payment; and to allocate Eastern Oregon Border Board Community Improvement Planning Grant funds in the Economic Development fund that were not anticipated when the budget was adopted – these funds are to be used for a drone feasibility study. See instrument # 2026-1188

Vote: RJ/JM/DJ in favor. Approved.

PLANNING DIRECTOR VACANCY

Commissioner Jacobs moved to hire Kelsie Haueter as the County's Planning Director as an underfill and that the Court review the written offer before presented to Ms. Haueter. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Vote: RJ/JM/DJ in favor. Approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Judge Joyce asked for comments from the public. No public comments were received.

COURT ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Mendiola moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Jacobs seconded and the motion passed unanimously.