

MALHEUR COUNTY BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
April 28-29, 2026

The Malheur County Budget Committee convened on April 28, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. in the County Court Office of the Malheur County Courthouse to consider the 2026/2027 budget with Judge Dan Joyce, Commissioner Ron Jacobs, and Commissioner Jim Mendiola; Budget Committee Members Dave Ingram, Cheri Hung, and Lance King; and Budget Officer Lorinda DuBois present. Judge Joyce led the Pledge of Allegiance. Those persons discussing the budget with the Budget Committee were present electronically or in-person. Members of the media, public and staff had the opportunity to join the meeting electronically or in-person. Notice of the meeting was published in the Argus Observer and on the County website and emailed to the Argus Observer and those persons who have requested notice. The meeting was audio recorded. The agenda is recorded as instrument # 2026-1590

BUDGET MESSAGE & APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Judge Joyce welcomed everyone and expressed appreciation for the volunteers' service and thanked Ms. DuBois for her work on the budget. Commissioner Jacobs was asked to Chair the meeting.

Commissioner Jacobs also thanked the budget committee members and Ms. DuBois.

INFORMATION SERVICES (IS) DEPARTMENT

IS Director Joshua Kreger discussed and answered questions concerning Page 3 – Information Services; and Page 82 – IS Tech Fund. Contracted Services includes cyber security software. IS Tech Fund is a “rainy day fund” for technology. PCs (Personal Computer) and servers are purchased from this fund; PCs are on a five-year rotation cycle.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Building Official Adele Schaffeld discussed and answered questions concerning Pages 72-73 – Building Program. The Building Department administers the State building code program locally. It is a State program and the budget is dedicated funds. A 12% State surcharge is collected and sent to the State monthly. Statute requires the department to carry a Reserve – most jurisdictions keep two to three years of operating expenses in Reserve. Capital Outlay funding is for vehicle replacement when needed. The Building Evaluation Support revenue/expense lines are for a statewide mutual aid assistance agreement.

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT (SWCD)

SWCD Manager Linda Rowe and Gary Faw discussed activities of SWCD and answered questions; financial support in the amount of \$25,000 was requested to support the efforts of SWCD. Funds for SWCD are appropriated from the Technical Assistance line in the Economic Development budget. SWCD currently has nine open grants; and is in the running for a couple of OWEB (Owyhee Watershed Enhanced Board) grants. Ms. Rowe will retire June 30, 2026; Jason

Kesling, District Manager for Harney SWCD will manage both districts. See instrument # 2026-1591 for the written correspondence.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Health Department Director Rebecca Stricker discussed and answered questions concerning Pages 27-28 – Health Department; and Page 29 – Medical Investigation. The Health Department continues to apply for various grants to help offset expenses. The Medicaid Administrative Claiming (MAC) revenue has increased over the last few years due to staff efforts. Rural Health Transformation Program funding (approximately \$100,000) will be available this next year; the County would need to submit a proposal for the funding if it determines that it has the capacity to implement a project that would benefit the community.

ONTARIO COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Ontario Community Library Director Darlyne Johnson discussed Page 33 – Ontario Community Library. The library is requesting funding for Bookmobile services outside the District's boundaries; the District requested \$10,000. The funds are transferred from the Economic Development budget to the Library budget.

JUVENILE DEPARTMENT

Juvenile Department Director Ted Martinez discussed and answered questions concerning Page 15 – Juvenile Department; Page 58 – Juvenile Crime Prevention; and Page 70 – MS 11 Detention Fund.

Page 15 – Juvenile Department. The department is fully staffed; the Travel line-item is increased from last year. Small Equipment is for monitors. The OYA (Oregon Youth Authority) Expungement grant in the Revenue section covers the Overtime Expungement expenses in the personal services section.

Page 58 – Juvenile Crime Prevention is State juvenile crime prevention and juvenile basic funding. Funding is population based.

Page 70 – MS 11 Detention Fund is a Special Fund for detention youth; funding is not spent until the detention line-items in other budgets are exhausted. MS 11 legislation was modified; new funding is not currently being added to the fund.

COURT SECURITY; DRUG COURT; MEDIATION

Trial Court Administrator Marilee Aldred discussed and answered questions concerning Page 61 – Court Facilities Security; Page 62 – State Drug Court Fund; and Page 63 – State Mediation Fund. These are Special Fund budgets and can only be used for specific purposes designated for the fund.

Page 61 – Court Facilities Security. Salary for the deputy assigned to court security is paid from this fund when that deputy is working upstairs. Consistent security in the courtrooms and upstairs is important.

Page 62 – State Drug Court Fund. Funding is used to support the drug court program; graduation supplies and incentives are purchased with these funds.

Page 63 – State Mediation Fund. Funding is from the State through filing fees to support the State mediation program.

TREASURER/TAX OFFICE

Treasurer/Tax Collector Jennifer Forsyth and Management Assistant Angie Micheli discussed and answered questions concerning Page 8 – County Treasurer/Tax. Ms. Forsyth's term of office expires December 2026 and she is not running again. Ms. Micheli has filed for the position. The majority of changes in the budget are due to how the State now requires counties to handle tax foreclosures. Ms. Forsyth suggested adding funds to the Personal Services section for succession planning; with Ms. Forsyth retiring, it would be helpful to hire for Ms. Micheli's current position in advance of her taking over the elected position January 1.

ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Assessor Chris Russell discussed and answered questions concerning Page 6 – Assessor; and Page 67 – GIS (Geographical Information System) Maintenance Fund.

Page 6 – Assessor. \$12,000 for a new KIP (total cost to be shared with Assessor and GIS); Small Equipment includes funding to reconfigure the front counter area for wheelchairs - \$5,700.

Page 67 – GIS Maintenance Fund. \$12,000 for a new KIP; the last KIP printer was purchased in 2014 and is no longer supported.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Planning Department Director Kelsie Haueter discussed and answered questions concerning Page 17 – Planning/Zoning. Contracted Services is funding to update sections of the County planning/zoning code. Additional electrical outlets in the office are needed; a quote of \$1800 was given – Ms. DuBois confirmed that project could be taken from the Courthouse budget rather than the Planning/ Zoning budget.

The meeting recessed for lunch.

ONTARIO JUSTICE COURT

Justice of the Peace Margie Mahony discussed and answered questions concerning Page 13 – Ontario Justice Court. Very little change to the budget from last year. Rent was increased per the terms of the current lease agreement. Postage, utilities, and data processing expenses were slightly increased. Judge Mahoney requested \$6,000 be added for the digiTICKET system maintenance; the Sheriff's Office and Justice Court are currently using the system and the maintenance cost will be split between the two offices. Court security is provided by Ontario Police Department.

GENERAL FUND NON-DEPARTMENTAL REVENUES

Page 1 – General Fund Non-Departmental Revenues was reviewed; these are revenue sources not tied to a specific department.

MALHEUR COUNCIL ON AGING & COMMUNITY SERVICES (MCOA&CS)

MCOA&CS

Transportation Project Manager Brittany White discussed funding requested to help support public transportation services and answered questions. \$15,000 was requested to utilize as match funds for the 5311 transportation grant; this request is in the Special Transportation Fund budget. Funds for the 5311 Match are transferred from the Economic Development budget. The County receives multiple ODOT (Oregon Department of Transportation) funding grants and subcontracts with MCOA&CS to provide the services.

COURTHOUSE

Maintenance Supervisor Don Dalton discussed and answered questions concerning Page 16 – Courthouse. Three projects are planned for this next year; repair the Northside of the Sheriff's Office facility - \$8,000; various Courthouse interior painting projects - \$19,710; and the addition of 11 DDC heating controls to the existing system - \$104,530. The main boiler in the jail recently went out; options to replace the boiler are being explored. The boilers sit above the dispatch center which is concerning. Relocating the boiler system is extremely expensive; it may be more advantageous to relocate the dispatch center. It was decided to add the electrical outlets project for the Planning Department into the Planning/Zoning budget.

VETERANS SERVICE

Veterans Service Officer Connie Tanaka discussed and answered questions concerning Page 31 – Veterans Service; and Page 65 – CVSOS Expansion Fund. Mr. Tanaka advocates for veterans and assists with the filing of claims and benefits. CVSOS (County Veterans Service Officer) Expansion Fund is State funding that helps to support the department. Very little change to the budgets from last year – mainly personal services costs.

COUNTY COURT

Page 2- County Court was reviewed.

COUNTY COUNSEL

Page 4 – County Counsel was reviewed.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Page 7 – Administrative Office was reviewed. Request for Ms. DuBois to move to a 40-hour work week. Commissioner Jacobs suggested all department heads/elected officials be offered the option to move to 40 hours a week if there is a need in order to perform their duties. (Some already are on a 40-hour work week.) Commissioner Jacobs also suggested the Court implement a flex time policy and supplemental pay policy. Commissioner Jacobs inquired where the supplemental pay contract for Ms. DuBois for ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) and LATCF (Local Assistance

and Tribal Consistency Fund) was in the Administrative Office budget; that contract is in the Admin line in the ARPA and LATCF budgets. Commissioner Jacobs also inquired if Ms. DuBois would be requesting a supplemental pay contract for next fiscal year if she was moved to a 40-hour work week; yes, it is currently in the Proposed budgets for ARPA and LATCF.

NeoGov increase is to include a candidate text module. A time tracking system is under testing by a couple of departments.

WATERMASTER

Page 34 – Watermaster was reviewed. The State Watermaster office is in the Courthouse; the budget is \$1,000.

LAW LIBRARY

Page 49 – Law Library was reviewed.

DA ENFORCEMENT

Page 52 – DA (District Attorney) Enforcement was reviewed; funds are transferred to the General fund to help support the District Attorney’s Office budget.

TAYLOR GRAZING FUND

Page 53 – Taylor Grazing Fund was reviewed; this is federal funding and is used for range improvement projects. There is an advisory board that approves projects for funding.

PREDATORY ANIMAL CONTROL

USDA (United States Department of Agricultural) /APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services) Wildlife Services Specialist Scott Phillips gave an update on predatory animal control activities and answered questions; various types of animal control activities have taken place throughout the county. Also present electronically was District Supervisor Shane Koyle. Funding requested for the Wildlife Services program is \$127,000 (includes \$10,000 for aerial aviation through USDA). The Predatory Animal Control line-item 5-20-8020 in the Non-Program fund also includes funding (\$25,000) for the County’s landowner cost share fly program. See instrument # 2026-1592 for the written correspondence.

WEED CONTROL

Weed Inspector Amanda Zander discussed and answered questions concerning Page 36 – Weed Control. A seasonal position is included in the Proposed budget; BLM (Bureau of Land Management) Weed Grant funding is low; it is hoped that additional funds may be allocated. Other grant funding was received and those grants are managed by the Owyhee Watershed Council.

FAIRGROUNDS

Fair Board Member Jennifer Hall discussed and answered questions concerning Pages 55-56 – County Fair Fund. The Fairgrounds Manager position is currently vacant. Legislative changes were made and the State Apportionment revenue should increase in 2028; it is hoped that the increased revenue can be used for the Fair Manager and Caretaker salaries. The facility has

numerous rental events scheduled in the upcoming months. The arena is also rented for team roping and barrel racing events. A new goat and sheep barn is planned using remaining infrastructure grant funds. Barn E will be removed. D&B is a fantastic supporter of the fair and donates a lot. Costs for fair entertainment, judges, and such continue to rise.

The Fair Manager salary was discussed. The position is currently vacant and the salary advertised for the position is \$45,000 with employee only health insurance. Commissioner Jacobs suggested the County consider contributing additional funding to the Fair Manager salary package. After discussion, it was decided to allocate \$20,000 from County General funds and \$20,000 from Economic Development funds to the Fair fund to increase the Fair Manager salary, payroll costs and employee/spouse health insurance.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff Travis Johnson, Undersheriff Dave Kesity, Lieutenant Rachel Reyna, Lieutenant Jim St. Michell, and Lieutenant Rich Harriman discussed and answered questions concerning Pages 21-22 – Sheriff; Pages 23-24 – Jail; Page 25 – MCSO (Malheur County Sheriff's Office) Communication Center; Page 26 – Emergency Management; Pages 47-48 – Community Corrections; Page 50 – Boat License Fund; Page 51 – Corrections Assessment; Page 54 – Task Force Fund; Page 59 – 911 Fund; Page 60 – Traffic Safety Fund; Page 69 – Federal Forfeitures Fund; and Page 79 – Work Release Construction Fund.

Pages 21-22- Sheriff. CJC Diversion Grant will now be managed by Lifeways. 3% increase to Travel/Vehicle Maintenance; 6% increase to Law Enforcement School; slight increase to Office Supplies. BVP Grant is a matching grant. Small Equipment includes the taser contract. Capital Outlay request is for one vehicle and outfitting. Ironhead facility has been great and has been utilized by others in the county. The Technology Expense line item should be sufficient to cover the digiTICKET maintenance (\$6,000).

Pages 23-24 – Jail. Community Corrections budget transfers funds to the Jail budget. The CJC JMOUD Grant is for medicated assisted treatment in the jail setting for opioid addiction. Overtime is a large expense; jail staffing continues to be challenging. The Physicians Service Contract with Valley Family is increased. Repairs and Maintenance includes funding for three larger projects; the facility is aging. Food and Kitchen Expenses was somewhat increased – the daily rate to feed an inmate is currently about \$8.85. Several items are designated in the Small Equipment line; and three projects are proposed in the Capital Outlay. Ms. Hung noted she is the Chief Financial Officer for Valley Family Health Care and Valley Family Health Care contracts with the County to provide jail medical services and abstained from the Jail budget.

Page 25 – MCSO Communication Center. Currently one dispatcher short. Capital Outlay is for consolettes.

Page 26 – Emergency Management. The Oregon Emergency Management Planning Grant (OEMPG) funds approximately 50% of the Emergency Manager position. Homeland Security Grant will be used for one project.

Pages 47-48 – Community Corrections. Supervision numbers continue to increase. D.O.C./Grant-in-Aid revenue is correlated to supervision numbers. Work Release Facility Operations Costs was increased as Community Corrections will now be paying its own insurance costs for the building and vehicles. Grant Contracted Services is for the Justice Reinvestment Program and provides \$20,000 to Lifeways, \$20,000 to the Jail, and \$43,960 to Project Dove for victim services.

Page 50 – Boat License Fund. State Marine Board grant revenue helps to support the Marine program. There is one deputy assigned full-time to the Marine program and this deputy also manages the Search and Rescue program. There is also a part-time Marine Patrol Deputy (covers the summer months of the program and is the Vale School Resource Deputy during the school year).

Page 51 – Corrections Assessment. The corrections assessment funds a portion of a corrections deputy who is the programs coordinator.

Page 54 – Task Force Fund.

Page 59 – 911 Fund. Funds are transferred to the MCSO Communication Center budget.

Page 60 – Traffic Safety Fund.

Page 66 – Search and Rescue Fund. Fund was closed out.

Page 69 – Federal Forfeitures Fund. Use of these funds is complicated and very limited.

Page 79 – Work Release Construction Fund. Used for repairs of the facility when necessary.

The meeting recessed for the day.