

MALHEUR COUNTY BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 28-29, 2026

The County Budget Committee continued its meeting on April 29, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. in the County Court Office of the 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. 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.

ROAD DEPARTMENT

Road Supervisor Dave Tiffany discussed and answered questions concerning Page 32 – Marine & Park; Pages 40-42 – Road Fund; Page 43 – Major Bridge Fund; Page 44 – Road Equipment Fund; and Page 45 – Road Improvement Fund.

Page 32 – Marine & Park. Bureau of Reclamation grant revenue is incorrect; will be corrected before budget adoption. An operations and maintenance grant was received; and grant funds to replace the irrigation system was received in the 2025/2026 fiscal year. The irrigation project is currently underway.

Pages 40-42 – Road Fund. Mineral Leases revenue was much higher than normal this current fiscal year; unknown if that will continue. Building Maintenance line was increased as insurance costs are now being paid for by the Road Fund. Sand and Gravel; and Asphalt Oil will be spent down by the end of the fiscal year. The gravel pit loan will be paid off; this is a variable interest loan and the interest rate has greatly risen.

Page 43 – Major Bridge Fund. Reserve fund for major bridge projects in the County (including road districts).

Page 44 – Road Equipment Fund. Transfer from the Road Fund.

Page 45 – Road Improvement Fund. There have been no landowner road improvement projects in many years.

Mr. King suggested the County Surveyor should review Crossing Permits as there has been disturbance to monuments with some of the recent fiber optic work.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE (DA)

District Attorney Dave Goldthorpe and Management Assistant Sasha Goodell discussed and answered questions concerning Pages 9-10 – District Attorney; Page 11 – VOCA (Victims of

Crime Act) Grant/DA; Page 12 – CAMI (Child Abuse Multi-disciplinary Intervention) Grant/DA; CFA (Criminal Fine Account) /DA.

Pages 9-10 – District Attorney. Mr. Goldthorpe explained the year was filled with plenty of crime, including prosecuting a missing persons homicide and a violent home invasion robbery. Mr. Goldthorpe requested a small increase to the stipend he receives from the County and explained that if granted it could be covered by the Child Support Division in recognition of his participation in the Child Support Remote Court program (up to 10% of the compensation given by the County).

The clerkship/intern program has been successful.

Child Support Specialist Terri Miller will retire the end of 2026 after 21 years of service. The State has a transition plan that the program is expected to follow. A new hire will need to train with Ms. Miller and Child Support Incentive funds can be used for the additional salary/payroll expenses for 4-5 months. A handout detailing the new hire training proposal was given to the budget committee.

It is hoped that the TCATT (Tri-County Anti-Trafficking Taskforce) Grant will be renewed in October; if the grant is not renewed the TCATT Coordinator position will terminate unless the County is willing to fund the position.

Victims services is constitutionally required and the office relies heavily on grant funding to provide the services. Unfortunately, it does not appear that the grant funding will be sufficient to sustain the current three victim advocate positions. Mr. Goldthorpe anticipates an approximate \$30,000 shortfall and requested the County consider increasing its financial support of the program and all three victim advocate positions. Mr. Goldthorpe provided handouts regarding the Victims Services program and possible options the Court could consider for the Victims Services program.

Ms. DuBois noted that the Proposed budget reflects the County covering the revenue shortages for the Victims Services program.

It is requested to add a digital evidence module to the Karpel system and this is in the Proposed budget in the Karpel Contract line.

See instrument # 2026-1593 for the written correspondence.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Environmental Health Director Evan Manger discussed and answered questions concerning Page 18 – Solid Waste; and Page 30 – Environmental Health.

Page 18 – Solid Waste. Solid Waste Fees revenue is incorrect and should be increased. The power project at the Landfill has been completed. The Dump Closure cost was increased. The ACDP Permit/Fees is DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality) methane monitoring requirements.

Page 30 – Environmental Health. No longer providing inspection services in Baker County.

COUNTY SURVEYOR

Surveyor Derrick McKrola discussed and answered questions concerning Page 37 – County Surveyor; and Page 46 – Surveyor Corner Preservation Fund. The Requested budget includes Capital Outlay funds for a ½ ton pickup with towing (total price of \$70,000 split between County Surveyor (General fund) and Surveyor Corner Preservation Fund). The request is not in the Proposed budget for the County Surveyor budget. A midsize pickup was in the Corner Preservation budget last year but was not purchased. Mr. McKrola has been using his personal vehicle when working in the field. There is a vehicle at the Road Department that Mr. McKrola can use but it is restrictive to load and unload the needed equipment each time field work is done. A Small Equipment line was added to County Surveyor. Mr. King noted it is important to have a vehicle properly setup with the survey equipment; otherwise, the equipment is easily damaged. A side-by-side was purchased from the Corner Preservation Fund. Mr. King noted the Surveyor Corner Preservation Fund should only be used for expenses directly tied to establishing and maintaining corners (labor and cost of monument); that County funds should not be used on BLM (Bureau of Land Management) ground; and the corner work most beneficial to the public is in the populated areas. Mr. McKrola explained the County Surveyor’s department needs to be strengthened (personnel and equipment) and be a priority in order the fulfill statutory duties and protect the public.

POVERTY TO PROSPERITY (P2P)

Riley Hill from Poverty to Prosperity requested \$10,000 to support the ongoing efforts of P2P. P2P contributed funding to assist with the purchase of simulators (backhoes/track hoes/loaders). Members of P2P also personally donate funding for equipment for the college/high school. Efforts with BOLI (Bureau of Labor and Industries) continue in trying to get changes to the apprenticeship requirements and allow training at the high school level to count towards the requirements. Funds the County contributes to P2P are paid out of the Technical Assistance line in the Economic Development budget. The budget committee approved allocating \$10,000 to P2P.

SNAKE RIVER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE (SREDA)

Snake River Economic Development Alliance (SREDA) Executive Director Jeff Carpenter requested funding to support SREDA. SREDA encompasses Payette and Washington Counties (Idaho) and Malheur County and is a public-private partnership. Mr. Carpenter reviewed activities and accomplishments of 2025 and goals for 2026-2027. Funds the County contributes to SREDA are paid out of the Technical Assistance line in the Economic Development budget. See instrument # 2026-1594 for the written documents.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND

Economic & Community Development Coordinator Taylor Rembowski discussed and answered questions concerning Pages 38-39 – Economic Development Fund. Jaguar Transport recently entered into a lease and operating agreement with MCDC (Malheur County Development Corporation) and the County for the reload center. The Economic Development Fund is revenue

from the State lottery program; and various grant funding that Mr. Rembowski has applied for. Mr. Rembowski has been working with the new SREDA Executive Director, Jeff Carpenter. Funding for a wetlands mitigation project for the reload facility is included in the MCDC Operating Expenses line (Jaguar will also contribute funding to the project.) The transfer to County Fair in the amount of \$5,000 was increased to \$20,000. Other transfers include the 5311 Match in the Special Transportation Fund; and bookmobile in the Ontario Community Library. Technical Assistance includes SWCD (Soil & Water Conservation District), P2P, and SREDA.

The meeting recessed for lunch.

EXTENSION SERVICE

Present were: OSU Eastern Regional Director Natalie Kinion, Malheur Experiment Station Director Stuart Reitz, Office Manager Emerald Lewis, Agricultural Educational Extension Service District Advisory Board Member Jeff Burkhardt; and Advisory Board Member Ryan Svaty later joined the session.

Page 35 – Extension Service was reviewed. The tax service district Advisory Board requested the County fund the OSU Office Manager position; this Request is not included in the Proposed budget. \$5,000 in Building Repairs is in the Proposed budget (the County owns the building). The tax service district has over \$1.5 million in contingency.

The 2026 OSU (Oregon State University) Impact Report and miscellaneous handouts were reviewed with the Budget Committee. Ms. Kinion said that each \$1.00 in local taxpayer funding for OSU Extension staffing brings in \$2.02 in additional staffing support from OSU; this does not include grant-funded positions. See instrument # 2026-1595

The County budget meeting was closed and the Malheur County Agricultural Educational Extension Service District budget meeting was opened.

EXTENSION TAX SERVICE DISTRICT

Notice of the Malheur County Agricultural Educational Extension Service District budget meeting was published in the Argus Observer. Ms. Kinion and Mr. Reitz reviewed the budget for the tax service district and answered questions. Tax district funds are split between the Extension Office and the Experiment Station. The Experiment Station uses the funds for personnel costs (approximately 30% of total operating costs). The Extension Service uses the funds for personnel and operating expenses. If the County does not fund the Office Manager position, then Contingency funding from the tax district will need to be utilized (approximately \$80,000). A key card system is proposed in the Office Maintenance/Repairs line. The water fountain in the office needs repaired or replaced. Ms. Kinion explained the service district strives to be fiscally responsible as the District monies were meant to get people to serve the people.

Mr. Burkhardt encouraged the Budget Committee to be open and thoughtful with their decisions regarding the budget.

Mr. Svaty expressed appreciation for the resources that the Experiment Station provides; and the importance of maintaining a reserve in the District budget.

Ms. DuBois noted the County relies on unspent funds and net fund balance at the end of the year that rolls over the next year to help fund the budgets; the County relies on carryover funds.

The Extension Service District budget meeting was closed and the Ambulance Service District budget meeting was opened.

AMBULANCE SERVICE DISTRICT (ASD)

ASD Coordinator Keith Ishida gave the ASD budget message, reviewed the budget and answered questions.

Budget Message: I respectfully submit this proposal for the 2026-2027 budget for Malheur County Ambulance Service District. This budget reflects continued efforts to be financially responsible while supporting and improving emergency medical services throughout Malheur County. Because I am new, a lot of my work so far has been focused on what to do, when to do it, and to make sure that I'm not making anybody upset while I do it. But in the short time as director, work has been focused on strengthening and coordinating among providers, updating policies, procedures, supporting training initiatives, and improving system planning and managing the district's resources carefully. Progress has been made in rebuilding the County's emergency standard operating procedures, supporting enhanced clinical capabilities in rural areas and advancing mutual aid coordination and promoting countywide training and preparedness. Effort has also been made in controlling cost through careful purchasing and reasonable oversight of district funds. In the past, the County was just relying on two medical suppliers and since I came into office, I have branched that out to several other suppliers. From now on, instead of just placing medical supply orders of just two suppliers we'll be sending that out on bids and that's something that I have been doing and so far since November I've been able to save the County about \$5,600 in medical supplies. If these distributors want our business, I'm sure they'll bid for it. This proposed budget was intended to continue system readiness while maintaining prudent use of public funds. I want to have you note that on one of your budget items it says Payments to Providers. That account last year was somewhere around \$111,000, and when I first submitted my budget and got the results back, it was cut to about \$50,000. That Payments to Providers is what goes to our providers when they have what we call a Request for Funds to help out with their education and certain other little needs throughout their system. Because it was brought back at \$50,000 I was having to cut different other line items in order to get that up to at least \$84,000. There's a trend from year to year that if you notice that like with everything, everything is getting too expensive, but our income is pretty much staying the same and it's not supporting what is going out. It costs, just like every other department, it costs more and more, inflation is killing us. But we're talking about a service that provides the service for people's lives for emergency purposes. And we'll have to find some way to boost that in the future. I have some ideas, but you know, it's just going to take a matter of time. I want to thank you all for letting me come here and

be able to submit this budget. We'll work with it. We'll do the best we can and we'll just keep moving forward.

The ASD assessment is \$16.00 per residence (adopted in 1995); \$1.50 per full time employee; and \$2.50 per hotel/motel room. An increase to the assessment would need to be voted on by the people.

The ASD budget meeting was closed and the County budget meeting was reopened.

CLERK'S OFFICE

County Clerk Gayle Trotter discussed and answered questions concerning Page 5 – County Clerk; and Page 68 – Clerk's Records Fund. The General Election is in November; costs for elections continue to increase (postage, supplies, minimum wage, security). Funding in the Clerk's Records Fund is used for digitizing and archiving permanent records.

SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION FUND

Page 57 – Special Transportation Fund was reviewed; revenue is ODOT (Oregon Department of Transportation) grant funds for transportation purposes and the County subcontracts with MCOA&CS to provide the services. The "5311 Match" is in this budget; the match funds are transferred into this budget from the Economic Development Fund.

MENTAL HEALTH FUND

Page 64 – Mental Health Fund was reviewed. Oregon Health Authority (OHA) will contract directly with Lifeways for payments under the MHS (Mental Health Services) Allotment and Special Payments beginning July 2026.

RELOAD/INDUSTRIAL PARK PROJECT

Page 74 – Reload/Industrial Park Project was reviewed. The lease payments from Jaguar Transport will be held in this fund.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

Page 75 – American Rescue Plan was reviewed. Funds must be expended by the end of 2026; the final two projects are nearing completion; and the final reporting is due April 2027. The interest earned will be transferred to the County General Fund. The Admin line is the pay differential (includes payroll costs) that Ms. DuBois receives for managing the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds.

OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUND

Page 76 – Opioid Settlement Fund was reviewed; these funds can only be used for specific purposes as stated in the settlement agreement. Lifeways may make a request to the Court for some of the funds. It may be possible to use the funds for the medication assisted treatment for opioid addictions program in the jail when the current grant terminates.

LOCAL ASSIST LATCF

Page 77 – Local Assist LATCF (Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund) was reviewed. LATCF funds can be used for governmental purposes. The old Vale City Hall and Fire Hall properties were purchased with these funds; the fire hall needs to be demolished. It is proposed to epoxy the muster room and hallway floor in the Sheriff's Office this next fiscal year using this fund. Commissioner Jacobs noted the Road Department shop needs replaced.

GRASSHOPPER FUND

Page 78 – Grasshopper Fund was reviewed. This is Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) grant funding to be used for the control of grasshoppers/Mormon crickets. The County can also use the funds to contract with ODA for surveying of grasshoppers.

INSURANCE RESERVE

Page 80 – Insurance Reserve was reviewed. Funds from the General Fund are transferred to this fund. The County is self-insured for unemployment; workers compensation and liability insurance is paid from this fund. The Special Funds are now paying their portions of the insurance costs.

CAR POOL FUND

Page 81 – Car Pool Fund was reviewed. Vehicle mileage charges for when departments use vehicles from the car pool go into this fund. Service, repairs and fuel for the vehicles are tracked in the fund as is the sale of vehicles.

NON-PROGRAM

Page 20 – Non-Program is expenses that are not associated with any specific office/department.

GENERAL COUNTY EQUIPMENT FUND

Pages 83-84 – General County Equipment Fund was reviewed. County phone system and courthouse copy machine is in this fund. Saving for future projects is done in this fund (such as HVAC, phone system, election equipment). Health Department Building Maintenance, Jail Kitchen Equipment, and Sheriff Equipment is also in this fund.

BUDGET CHANGES

Ms. DuBois reviewed agreed upon changes to the budget.

Justice Court - \$6,000 was added for digiTICKET

Treasurer/Tax - \$12,525 added to the Management Assistant line and \$8,577 added to Payroll Costs (this allows for succession planning as requested by Ms. Forsyth)

Non-Program - \$20,000 transfer to the Fair Fund

Planning/Zoning - \$1,800 added for electrical outlets

Marine & Park – BOR (Bureau of Reclamation) Grant Revenue reduced to \$91,864

District Attorney – Removed \$11,154 from Capital Outlay as it was already accounted for in the Karpel Contract line; Removed Child Support Incentives funding from Capital Outlay and placed in Personal Services (Legal Assistant/Support and Payroll Costs) to use for training of a new Child Support Specialist (August – December).

Economic Development Fund – Transfer to County Fair was increased from \$5,000 to \$20,000

County Fair Fund – Increase Fair Manager salary from \$45,000 to \$60,000; Increase Payroll Costs to \$70,830 (changes insurance to employee and spouse) Economic Development Transfer increased to \$20,000; and County General Fund transfer of \$20,000)

Solid Waste – Landfill revenue will be corrected prior to budget adoption

County Surveyor and Surveyor Corner Preservation Fund – Mr. King expressed that the County needs to decide if it is going to build a Survey Department of more than one staff or if there will be more equipment than people; and that he did not feel that there is enough work to support very many people. In the summer months there may be enough for two people. The West side of the state has full survey departments. The East side counties have one or two in their departments; or contract the services out. Commissioner Jacobs expressed support for upgrading the Surveyor's vehicle. Concern was expressed about using Corner Preservation Fund monies for purchase of a vehicle. It was questioned if the current GPS (Global Positioning System) equipment was not working as \$20,000 was requested for survey GPS equipment; Mr. King suggested surveyor equipment needs should be included in the General County Equipment Fund. Consensus was that \$50,000 should be sufficient to purchase a pickup. Commissioner Jacobs offered to follow-up with Mr. McKrola and inquire as to what equipment the department currently has and how much corner work is done. Changes to the budget can be made prior to adoption.

Extension – it was discussed if the lock system should be considered maintenance and paid by the County. The lock system is an upgrade choice as the office has difficulties retaining keys; it is not a maintenance need. Consensus was not to fund the Office Manager position with County funds.

Administrative Office – Ms. Hung noted that Ms. DuBois salary is not listed on the supplemental information for salaries paid from more than one source. Commissioner Jacobs asked that Ms. DuBois not be increased to a 40-hour work week at this time. There may be other department heads that want to increase their hours; and the impact to the budget is not known at this time.

GENERAL COUNTY CONTINGENCY

Page 19 – General County Contingency was reviewed after the discussed changes to the budget were made. Interest from Contingency is accounted for in General Fund Revenues on Page 1. Agreed upon changes can be found on instrument # 2026-1632

APPROVALS

Malheur County Ambulance Service District

Judge Joyce moved to approve the budget for the Malheur County Ambulance Service District for the 2026-2027 fiscal year in the amount of \$274,470. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Vote: Dan Joyce/Jim Mendiola/Ron Jacobs/Cheri Hung/Dave Ingram/Lance King in favor.
Approved.

Malheur County Agricultural Educational Extension Service District

Judge Joyce moved to approve the budget for the Malheur County Agricultural Educational Extension Service District for the 2026-2027 fiscal year in the amount of \$2,406,353. Commissioner Jacob seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Vote: Dan Joyce/Ron Jacobs/Jim Mendiola/Cheri Hung/Dave Ingram/Lance King in favor.
Approved.

Judge Joyce moved to approve property taxes for the 2026-2027 fiscal year at the rate of \$0.23 per \$1,000 of assessed value for operating purposes in the District Special Fund. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Vote: Dan Joyce/Jim Mendiola/Ron Jacobs/Cheri Hung/Dave Ingram/Lance King in favor.
Approved.

Malheur County

Judge Joyce moved to approve the budget for Malheur County for the 2026-2027 fiscal year in the amount of \$72,934,209; and moved to approve property taxes for the 2026-2027 fiscal year at the rate of \$2.5823 per \$1,000 of assessed value for operating purposes in the General Fund. Commissioner Jacobs seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Vote: Dan Joyce/Ron Jacobs/Jim Mendiola/Cheri Hung/Dave Ingram/Lance King in favor.
Approved.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned.