

MALHEUR COUNTY COURT MINUTES
August 26, 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 present. Commissioner Jim Mendiola was absent. Judge Joyce led the Pledge of Allegiance. Members of the media, public and staff were able to attend the meeting in person or electronically. Present in the meeting room was Administrative Officer Lorinda DuBois. Notice of the meeting was posted on the County website, the Courthouse bulletin board, and emailed to the Argus Observer and all persons who requested notice. The agenda is recorded as instrument # 2026-2893

PROCLAMATION – RECOVERY MONTH

Dawn Dalton, Lindsey Nieskens, Rene Kesler, Paula Olvera, Vince Rhodes, Steve Jensen and Jane Padgett were present for the signing of the Proclamation declaring September 2026 as Recovery Month. Ms. Kesler read the proclamation:

Malheur County Recovery Proclamation

Mental health challenges, substance use, and harmful gambling behaviors affect individuals and families throughout our nation—including right here in Malheur County. These struggles touch people from all walks of life, but recovery is possible and happening every day. It begins with hope, grows with support, and thrives through connections. With the right tools, treatment, and encouragement, people can rebuild their lives and find purpose and joy again.

This September, Malheur County joins the national observance of Recovery Month to celebrate the resilience and healing journeys of those in recovery.

The need for awareness and action is urgent. Over 48 million Americans live with substance use disorders, and tragically, over 80,000 families lose loved ones to overdose annually. Here in Oregon, the substance use rate is 21 percent, significantly above the national average—and rates of anxiety and depression are approximately 3 percent higher than nationwide figures. Gambling disorder also affects thousands, with an estimated 88,000 adults and youth meeting clinical criteria and another 180,000 at risk. These numbers are not just statistics—they represent our neighbors and loved ones. This reality calls us to expand prevention, treatment, and support so no one faces these challenges alone.

Recovery Month reminds us all to break down stigma, recognize the signs of mental health and substance use struggles, and offer compassion and support to those who need it. By coming together as a community to share resources and celebrate every step forward, we strengthen the foundation of recovery. This journey is not one anyone takes alone—it is made possible by the dedication of healthcare providers, peer mentors, families, friends, and advocates whose care and commitment help make healing possible for so many.

Therefore, we, the County of Malheur, Oregon, hereby proclaim September 2026 as Recovery Month for Mental Health, Substance Use, and Harmful Gambling Behaviors. We invite all citizens to observe this month with compassion, understanding, and action—celebrating those in recovery, supporting those still struggling, and building a community where healing is always within reach.

Commissioner Jacobs moved to proclaim the month of September 2026 as Recovery Month for Mental Health, Substance Use, and Harmful Gambling Behaviors. Judge Joyce seconded and the motion passed.

Vote: RJ/DJ in favor. Approved.

Commissioner Jacobs expressed appreciation to Lifeways for its work in the community.

Hands Around the Park is September 3, 2026.

FOUR RIVERS HEALTHY COMMUNITY – UPCOMING EVENTS

Jane Padgett with Four Rivers Healthy Community announced several upcoming community events:

- September 1 – The VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) in Ontario will host the AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) for a community listening session.
- September 2 – AARP Oregon/AARP Idaho is holding the Great Snake River shred. Free, on-site document shredding will be offered in the Treasure Valley Community College – Weese Parking Lot from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. This is a fraud prevention effort for seniors.
- September 15-17 the Eastern Oregon Funders Forum will be in the County. Representatives of major philanthropic organizations that serve Eastern Oregon and other parts of the State will travel to Jordan Valley and Adrian on September 15; Vale and Ontario on September 16; and attend the Four Rivers Healthy Community Conference at the Cultural Center on September 17.

PROJECT HOPE - UPDATE

Lifeways CEO (Chief Executive Officer) Steve Jensen provided a brief update on Project Hope. The concrete foundations are poured and the stem walls are up. Electricians and plumbers are performing prep work in preparation for the slab pour. The slab is expected to be poured in two to three weeks; and framing is anticipated to begin toward the end of September or the beginning of October.

CROSSING PERMIT

Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve Crossing Permit #152-26 to Idaho Power for installation of a new pole and overhead transformer on Imperial Avenue #844. Judge Joyce seconded and the motion passed. The original permit will be kept on file at the Road Department.

Vote: RJ/DJ in favor. Approved.

COURT MINUTES

Approval of Court Minutes of August 19th will be placed on the next meeting agenda as Commissioner Jacobs was not present on August 19th and Commissioner Mendiola is not present today.

AGREEMENT - FAIR BOARD/TVCC

Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve Agreement between Malheur County Fair Board and Treasure Valley Community College (TVCC). Judge Joyce seconded and the motion passed. This is a lease agreement for the TVCC rodeo program. See instrument # 2026-2894

Vote: RJ/DJ in favor. Approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

AGREEMENTS WITH CHAD CURREY

County Counsel Stephanie Williams met with the Court and reviewed real estate Listing Agreements with Chad Currey for two properties statutorily required to be listed with a licensed realtor under the tax foreclosure process:

Brogan Property – (Ref #5746) – Listed at \$73,000

Ontario Property, NW 22nd Street (Ref #7322) – Listed at \$44,680

Mr. Currey's commission rate is 3%. The listing agreements are for one year. The properties will be sold as-is, cash offers only; and a quitclaim deed will be executed. Title insurance will not be issued. Offers for the properties will be presented to Judge Joyce for review and approval.

The Sheriff's Office spent extensive time removing the occupants and cleaning up the Ontario property.

As this is a new process, the County is doing a direct appointment this year for a realtor. Next year, a different relator could be appointed or the Court could issue a request for proposals.

There is a second property in Ontario that will not be listed with a realtor at this time; the heirs are working with an attorney and pursuing the small estate process to buy-back the property.

The other tax foreclosed properties will be posted on the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) site 30 days prior to the County Land Sale. Ms. Williams has drafted a personal services contract with Mr. Currey for this service; Mr. Currey's rate is \$300 per listing for undeveloped properties and \$500 per listing for developed properties.

Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve the Listing Agreements and Personal Services Contract with Chad Currey and authorized Judge Joyce to sign the documents. Judge Joyce seconded and the motion passed.

Vote: RJ/DJ in favor. Approved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Executive Session was held in accordance with ORS (Oregon Revised Statutes) 192.660(2)(h) – Legal Counsel, with Judge Joyce presiding and Commissioner Jacobs present. Also present were County Counsel Stephanie Williams, Assessor Chris Russell, and Antonio Sunseri with the Argus Observer. No decisions were made during or following the session.

COURT ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Jacobs moved to adjourn the meeting. Judge Joyce seconded and the motion passed.

Vote: RJ/DJ in favor. Approved.