

MALHEUR COUNTY COURT MINUTES
October 29, 2025

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Court was called to order by Judge Dan Joyce at 9:00 a.m. with Commissioner Jim Mendiola present. Commissioner Ron Jacobs was absent. Members of the media, public and staff had the opportunity to join the meeting electronically or in-person. Present in the meeting room were Administrative Officer Lorinda DuBois, Economic and Community Development Coordinator Taylor Rembowski, and Surveyor Derrick McKrola. 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 # 2025-3499

OSU EXTENSION SERVICE PRESENTATION

Present in the meeting room from OSU (Oregon State University) Extension, Malheur County office were: Office Manager Emerald Lewis; Sergio Arispe, Livestock and Rangeland; Barbara Brody, Family and Community Health, College of Health; Hunter Doyle, Field Crops; Chané Nelson, 4-H Programs Coordinator; and Russell Smith-Ollivierre, Outreach Program Coordinator. Ms. Lewis explained the office is fully staffed; other staff include Katherine Wollstein, Rangeland and Fire Specialist; and Nayeli Contreras, Open Campus and Juntos Coordinator. A slide presentation regarding the various OSU Extension programs was shared with the Court.

Chané Nelson, 4-H Programs Coordinator: In 2025, 260 youth were enrolled in 4-H with 47 adult volunteers; 778 projects at fair; 2 youth horse and 3 static projects went to State Fair; and 6 youth attended Working Ranch Horse. The goal for this year is growth.

Barbara Brody, Family and Community Health, College of Health: The Family and Community Health team has been revitalized; the program engages with community partners to promote healthy lifestyles; physical activity; workforce development; behavioral health; food preservation, safety and security; emergency preparedness; and community resilience. Data shows a high percentage of physical inactivity in the county and barriers to exercise opportunities. Malheur County has the highest poverty rate in the state. The County is a High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area. A Behavioral Health Shared Response Plan was developed with goals to reduce substance abuse and promote upstream prevention and youth development. In the Skill Up for Life program youth can earn certificates in Safe Sitter; QPR Suicide Prevention; Food Handler's Card; and CPR and First Aid. Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) Suicide Prevention is evidence-based training and 87 youth in the community have completed the training. A community exercise program is offered in Ontario, Nyssa, Adrian and Vale for the aging population. Items such as a food dehydrator can be checked out at the Nyssa Library through the Home Food Safety and Preservation program. Malheur Works is a workforce development program that began in 2021; 102 local interns and 75 businesses have participated in the program. (This program is through the Frontier Stem Hub at Malheur ESD. (Educational Service District))

Russell Smith-Ollivierre, General Agriculture: The Master Gardener Program was started in 2024 and currently has 28 active members; the program trains volunteers in science-based gardening and sustainable horticulture. The use of 1.4 acre of certified organic land has been donated for the program with 4902 pounds of fresh produce grown and donated. The Pest Management Short Course is a comprehensive two-day training for agricultural professionals; on average over 110 individuals attend the course. The Core Pesticide Training is held in February and December and is ideal for private applicators and farm managers. A bimonthly newsletter is also produced with over 300 subscribers.

Sergio Arispe, Livestock and Rangeland: The program focuses on anything related to forage, primarily non-irrigated forage and cattle production. Malheur County is ranked number 4 nationwide in number of beef cows within a county. 72% of the land in the county is publicly managed (over 4.5 million acres). Since 2014, ten county residents have worked in the livestock and range summer program. The Vale District BLM (Bureau of Land Management) has contributed over \$650,000 towards restoration of sagebrush rangelands; the project area in Malheur County is the Three Fingers Allotment. OSU is also working in the schools with Malheur ESD and TVCC (Treasure Valley Community College) through a USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) grant that provides funding for field trips, experiential learning opportunities, for students to go out and see what the industry is doing. Additionally, OSU is working with beef cattle producers to mitigate any risk of any potential foreign animal diseases.

Hunter Doyle, Field Crops: Mr. Doyle started with OSU Malheur Extension about six months ago and is from Western Colorado and brings a lot of knowledge in irrigated agriculture and forage crops. The current focus is on onions, potatoes, and other field crops. Mr. Doyle's goals include establishing extension programs to promote better onion and potato production; research with the Experiment Station and on-farm projects; fostering collaboration; and improving farming in the County. A lot of programming will be tailored to the needs of local producers; currently partnering with University of Idaho to hold the Treasure Valley Onion Workshop. Malheur Water Systems quarterly meetings are being held; the meetings are centered around irrigation and water in the county; various entities participate and it is a space for collaboration and discussion.

See instrument # 2025-3500 for the complete slide presentation.

CROSSING PERMITS

Commissioner Mendiola moved to approve Crossing Permit #235-25 and #236-25 for work related to the Boardman to Hemingway (B2H) transmission line project on Owyhee Lake Road #846; and Permit #237-25 to CenturyLink/Crown Utilities for work on 3rd Avenue W #1086. Judge Joyce seconded and the motion passed. Original permits will be kept on file at the Road Department.

COURT MINUTES

Commissioner Mendiola moved to approve Court Minutes of October 22, 2025 as written. Judge Joyce seconded and the motion passed.

PLANNING DIRECTOR

Commissioner Mendiola moved to modify those with designation to sign as Planning Director and authorize Commissioner Jacobs to sign as Planning Director. Judge Joyce seconded and the motion passed. Ms. Williams and Mr. McKrola no longer have signatory authority. Planning Manager Kelsie Haueter can sign various documents and Commissioner Jacobs is authorized to sign those that Ms. Haueter cannot.

AMENDMENT – LETTER OF INTENT

Commissioner Mendiola moved to authorize Judge Joyce to sign an amendment to the Addendum to Binding Letter of Intent (LOI) between Malheur County, Malheur County Development Corporation (MCDC), and JTH, LLC (Jaguar Transport Holdings Inc) extending the date to execute a purchase and sale agreement or lease purchase agreement to November 21, 2025. Judge Joyce seconded and the motion passed.

PLANNING DIRECTOR VACANCY

Consensus of the Court was to postpone interviews for the Planning Director vacancy and continue to advertise and recruit for the position.

SURVEYOR QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Derrick McKrola: First, you've made a modification of the designation of persons with Planning Director signatory authority. Do you have any comments for the former designees – County Counsel Stephanie Williams and County Surveyor Derrick McKrola – and their voluntary, outstanding contributions, made without any additional consideration or compensation, in ensuring that the county's planning operations continued without interruption?

Judge Joyce: No, I don't.

Derrick McKrola: I've noticed on the agenda the postponing of Planning Director interviews. You've had a loss of three Planning Directors in less than three years. What is the County's plan to stop this costly turnover and bring stability to that department?

Judge Joyce: Comments?

Commissioner Mendiola: I think we've got to do some more recruitment I think, look for, I don't know, look for wider spaces to find somebody that's available that wants to come to Malheur County.

Derrick McKrola: That first question I asked, I want to follow up on that. I want to express my heartfelt appreciation for Stephanie Williams and especially Marc Berg, our Planning Clerk, for stepping up and taking a lot of time and effort to put in the amount of requests that fell on his desk and doubled the amount of projects that he had to be involved with. I want to appreciate Marc for his efforts on that.

Two different questions on a different subject: Do you fully grasp the scope and magnitude of the distinct statutory responsibilities, duties, and professional standing of the County Surveyor – including that the position is fundamentally different from other department head or management roles within Malheur County?

Judge Joyce: Everybody in this county has different roles, and we do appreciate that.

Mr. McKrola: Okay. Last question. Can you explain why the County Survey Department should remain the only county department staffed by a single person, considering the many statutory responsibilities the County Surveyor must fulfill to ensure the safety, health, and welfare of the public?

Judge Joyce: Well, as long as I've been here we've had one person in that position and at times we have actually hired other people to come and fulfill any of the extra duties that are necessary over time and generally it's during the summer months when that's gone on in the past.

Ms. DuBois: And other jurisdictions don't even have a full-time surveyor; it's contracted out. The services are contracted out. It's not a full-time position.

Mr. McKrola: I would like to recognize that most other counties, county surveyors, have a crew that needs to help them in the field function and things. I would invite the County Court to review the Oregon Revised Statutes, Chapter 209, and their obligations to fill those statutes. With that, I thank you, Judge Joyce, for your time and consideration.

Judge Joyce: Thank you for your comments. Appreciate it.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Judge Joyce asked for comments from the public; no public comments were received.

COURT ADJOURNMENT

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