

MALHEUR COUNTY BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
April 22-23, 2025

The Malheur County Budget Committee convened on April 22, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. in the County Court Office of the Malheur County Courthouse to consider the 2025/2026 budget with Judge Dan Joyce, Commissioner Ron Jacobs, and Commissioner Jim Mendiola; Budget Committee Members Bob Skinner, Dave Ingram, and Cheri Hung; and Budget Officer Lorinda DuBois present. 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, Malheur Enterprise, and those persons who have requested notice. The meeting was audio recorded. The agenda is recorded as instrument # 2025-1185

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. Judge Joyce explained that given the current cuts in federal funding, Ms. DuBois has prepared the 2025-2026 budget without PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) funding. Judge Joyce noted that Bob Skinner is a past president of the Public Lands Council. Commissioner Jacobs was asked to Chair the meeting.

INFORMATION SERVICES (IS) DEPARTMENT

IS (Information Services) Director Joshua Kreger discussed and answered questions concerning Page 3 – Information Services; and Page 83 – IS Tech Fund. Extra Help is for a temporary summer staff position. Contracted Services includes software for system security; moved to LATCF (Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund) budget.

WEED CONTROL

Weed Inspector Amanda Zander discussed and answered questions concerning Page 36 – Weed Control. This will be the last year of the BLM (Bureau of Land Management) Noxious Weed Grant. Taylor Grazing is not transferring funding to the Weed department. An increase to the Chemicals line-item was requested; it is not in the Proposed budget. A Flatbed for the Weed Inspector pickup was requested; this request is in the LATCF budget. Ms. Zander also has grants managed through the Owyhee Watershed Council.

PREDATORY ANIMAL CONTROL

USDA/APHIS (United States Department of Agriculture / Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services) Wildlife Services Specialist Scott Phillips and District Supervisor Shane Koyle gave an update on predatory animal control activities and answered questions; funding requested for the Wildlife Services program is \$119,000 (\$10,000 is for aerial aviation through USDA). Predatory Animal Control also includes funding for the County's landowner cost share fly program. Ms. DuBois has proposed to move Predatory Animal Control from the General Fund to the LATCF fund in the Contracted Services line-item. Mr. Phillips has done a lot of badger work at SRCI (Snake River Correctional Institution). Beaver work is at 156; 217 coyotes; and 7 marmots. Raven

work is at 144 and the cap is 180. Starlings at Beef Northwest have greatly increased (Beef Northwest pays for the chemical.) There are no confirmed collared wolves in the county. See instrument # 2025-1186 for the written correspondence.

FAIRGROUNDS

Fairgrounds Manager Amy Wood and Board Member Jennifer Hall discussed and answered questions concerning Pages 55-57 – County Fair Fund. Revenue is included for Fair Admissions as there will be a gate entrance fee for the 2025 County Fair. There will also be an entrance fee for the rodeo. A commercial kitchen was put in the Commercial Building with grant funds. A power project is taking place with the infrastructure grant; the camping area has 70 new pedestals. There are 26 power poles that are in poor condition; running underground power is also planned under the infrastructure grant. The Barn I grant is completed. Numerous improvements to the rodeo facility have been completed. Additional grant opportunities are always being sought.

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT (SWCD)

SWCD Manager Linda Rowe discussed activities of SWCD, shared project photos, and answered questions; financial support in the amount of \$25,000 was requested to support the efforts of SWCD. SWCD is attempting to purchase property for their facility; earnest money was put down; with the federal budget difficulties the purchase may not take place. Funds for SWCD are appropriated from the Technical Assistance line in the Economic Development budget. See instrument # 2025-1187 for the written correspondence.

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

MCOA&CS Transportation Project Manager Brittany White discussed the funding request 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. There are additional ODOT (Oregon Department of Transportation) funding grants that the County receives and subcontracts with MCOA&CS to provide the services.

JUVENILE DEPARTMENT

Juvenile Department Director Ted Martinez discussed and answered questions concerning Page 15 – Juvenile Department; Page 59 – Juvenile Crime Prevention; and Page 71 – MS 11 (Measure 11) Detention Fund.

Page 15 – Juvenile Department: included a line-item for maintenance of the Satellite Office in Ontario. There are several line-items that were decreased from the Requested budget to the Proposed budget. No funding is being transferred to the MS 11 Detention Fund in the 2025/2026 budget.

Page 59 – Juvenile Crime Prevention is State juvenile crime prevention and juvenile basic funding. Exact revenue numbers won't be available until June or July.

Page 71 – MS 11 Detention Fund is a Special Fund for Measure 11 Detention youth; funding is not spent until the detention line-items in other budgets are exhausted.

COURT SECURITY; DRUG COURT; MEDIATION

Trial Court Administrator Marilee Aldred discussed Page 62 – Court Facilities Security; Page 63 – State Drug Court Fund; and Page 64 – State Mediation Fund. These are Special Fund budgets and can only be used for specific purposes designated for the fund.

Page 62 – Court Facilities Security: There will be a deputy assigned to court security; when the deputy is working upstairs the salary will come from the Court Facilities Security budget; when the deputy is working downstairs the salary will come from the Jail budget.

Page 63 – State Drug Court Fund: Funding is used to support the drug court program, graduation supplies and incentives are purchased with these funds.

Page 64 – State Mediation Fund: Funding is from the State through filing fees.

ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Assessor Chris Russell discussed and answered questions concerning Page 6 – Assessor; and Page 68 – GIS (Geographical Information System) Maintenance Fund. Few changes from last year. There have not been many Border Region Housing (BRH) applications.

DOG CONTROL/ANI-CARE ANIMAL SHELTER

Amanda Grosdidier with Ani-Care Animal Shelter discussed the “Dog Control” line-item on Page 20 – Non-Program. The contract is for abandoned or stray canines located in Malheur County – not city limits. There are extra funds in this line-item in case needed for situations such as quarantine holds. Ms. Grosdidier has not requested an increase to the contract for the 2025/2026 fiscal year.

The meeting recessed for lunch.

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. OSU (Oregon State University) Eastern Region Regional Director Natalie Kinion and Malheur Experiment Station Director Stuart Reitz reviewed the budget for the tax service district and answered questions. Also present was Darci Payne and Extension Office Manager Emerald Lewis. Tax district funds are split between the Extension Office and the Experiment Station. The Experiment Station uses the funds for personnel costs and is approximately 35% of the Experiment Station’s base operation budget. The Extension Service uses the funds for personnel and operating expenses. There is currently a vacant 4-H position. The

Office Specialist 2 is a new position in the budget; this is an OSU employee. Historically, the County provided an Office Manager for the Extension Service; this position ended December 2024 with the retirement of that staff member but the County agreed to fund the position for the entirety of the fiscal year. If the County does not fund the Office Specialist 2 position in the 2025/2026 fiscal year it will need to be funded in the Tax Service District budget. The Tax Service District has approximately \$1.5 million contingency funds. The County General fund budget proposes to no longer fund the Extension Service (the County is concerned it may not receive PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) payments and has no contingency funds in the 2025/2026 Proposed budget). It was noted that the space use agreement and IGA (Intergovernmental Agreement) need to be updated. Ms. Kinion suggested changing the requisition process and billing quarterly; Ms. DuBois noted this would not decrease the workload for County staff. A copy of Oregon State University's Thriving Together, The Power of OSU Extension Service 2024 (booklet) was left for the committee.

The Extension Service District budget meeting was closed and the County budget session was reopened.

EXTENSION SERVICE

Page 35 – Extension Service was reviewed. The County owns the building that houses Extension Service; \$5,000 is proposed for Building Repairs in this budget.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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

Page 18 – Solid Waste. Power was run to the Lytle Boulevard Landfill this current fiscal year. It is proposed to put security cameras and Starlink service at the Landfill. The Dump Closure line-item was increased as costs have significantly increased. Replacement of the scale and scale house is in the LATCF budget.

Page 30 – Environmental Health. The County will no longer provide service to Baker County after June 30, 2025. The department has been short one employee for quite some time.

VETERANS SERVICE

Veterans Service Officer Connie Tanaka discussed and answered questions concerning Page 31 – Veterans Service; and Page 66 – CVSO (County Veterans Service Officer) Expansion Fund. Mr. Tanaka advocates for veterans and assists with the filling of claims and benefits. CVSO Expansion Fund are State funds that help to support the department.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Health Department Director Rebecca Stricker discussed Pages 27-28 – Health Department; and Page 29 – Medical Investigation.

Pages 27-28 – Health Department. Notification was received today that the State Health/WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Grant will be \$361,910 – a slight increase than what was proposed. Office Supplies and Clinic Expenses line-items were reduced in the Proposed budget; it is hoped that grant funding may be able to augment these expenses. There may be additional modernization funding (line-item 3-30-3807 LPHA (Local Public Health Authority) Implementation). AIDS Programs – State is a new program element and new funding; it is hoped to provide this program with current staff.

Page 29 – Medical Investigation: Unattended deaths are investigated by deputy medical investigators and they receive \$35 per unattended death. Dr. Brauer is the Medical Examiner.

COURTHOUSE

Maintenance Supervisor Don Dalton discussed and answered questions concerning Page 16 – Courthouse. Three Courthouse projects have been moved from the Courthouse budget to the LATCF budget – the three projects are: Back stairs chairlift \$12,000; Backflow valve \$15,500; and Snow removal equipment \$47,000.

CLERK'S OFFICE

Clerk Gayle Trotter discussed and answered questions concerning Page 5 – County Clerk; and Page 69 – Clerk Records Fund. The Special District election is May 2025. Next fiscal year will be an election in May 2026 and possibly a November 2025 election (depending on legislation currently being considered by the legislature). Funding in the Clerk Records Fund is used for digitizing and archiving permanent records.

IS BUDGETS

Information Services and IS Tech Fund budgets were reviewed and approved.

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. The request was approved.

PERS

The County has three PERS (Public Employees Retirement System) Rates: Tier 1/Tier 2, OPSRP, and OPSRP Police and Fire. The current rate for Tier 1/Tier 2 is 22.21%; OPSRP is 17.64%; and OPSRP Police and Fire is 22.43%. July 2025 Tier 1/Tier2 will be 27.81%; OPSR 22.47%; and OPSR Police and Fire 27.74%. The County must still pay PERS on PERS retirees who continue to work for the County. Malheur County does not pick up the employee's 6% PERS contribution.

Review of previously discussed budgets.

The Weed Control budget was approved.

Taylor Grazing Fund was discussed.

County Fairgrounds budget was discussed and approved.

Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) request for \$25,000 was approved.

Special Transportation 5311 Match (\$15,000) was approved.

Juvenile Department budgets were approved.

Court Facilities Security; State Drug Court Fund; and State Mediation Fund were approved.

Assessor's and GIS Maintenance budgets were approved.

Ani-Care Animal Shelter's request was approved.

Agricultural Educational Extension District Budget was discussed. The tax district has \$1.5 million contingency and the Proposed budget reflects full staffing. The budget was approved as proposed.

Extension Service was approved.

Solid Waste and Environmental Health budgets were reviewed and approved. Replacement of the scale at the Landfill is proposed in the LATCF budget.

Veterans Service and CVSO Expansion Fund budgets were approved.

County Clerk and Clerk Records Fund budgets were approved.

Courthouse budget was approved.

Health Department; and Medical Investigation budgets were approved.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff Travis Johnson, Undersheriff Dave Kesey, 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 Sherriff'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 60 – 911 Fund; Page 61 – Traffic Safety Fund; Page 67 – Search and Rescue Fund; Page 70 – Federal Forfeitures Fund; and Page 80 – Work Release Construction Fund.

Pages 21-22 – Sheriff: CJC Diversion Grant is new and is used for the deflection program; most of the funding is passed through to Lifeways. Vacation Buy Back is only for backfilled positions. Investigation Expense includes \$5,000 for the Task Force Fee. Motorola Flex annual maintenance fee was moved to LATCF budget. Small Equipment includes requests for a CHL card printer, desk printer, and taser contract. Capital Outlay request is for one vehicle; and epoxy of the floor at the Ironhead building; both requests were moved to the LATCF budget. The CHL card printer request was also moved to LATCF.

Pages 23-24 – Jail. Community Corrections budget transfers funds to the Jail budget. Overtime is a large expense. Jail medical is a large expense. Food & Kitchen Expenses continue to increase – the daily rate to feed an inmate is currently \$8.84. Small Equipment requests are for monitors, duty vests and body cams. The body cams request was moved to LATCF. Requests for a storage unit for the Sally Port and remodel of the jail medical office are also in the LATCF budget.

Page 25 – MCSO Communication Center. The 911 Transfer is decreased due to a change in allocation of the 911 funds. Dispatch is currently fully staffed.

Page 26 – Emergency Management. The OEMPG (Oregon Emergency Management Performance Grant) grant is federal funds passed through to the State; there is concern about the stability of these funds. Open projects under the Homeland Security Grant can continue; future funding of the Homeland Security Grant is unknown at this time. The notification system is changing from AlertSense to Everbridge and the State will pay for it. There will also be a reimbursement grant for the Owyhee Ridge Project – Lt. Harriman will provide Ms. DuBois with those funding details before the budget is adopted.

Pages 47-48 – Community Corrections. Supervision numbers continue to increase. Vehicles are aging and maintenance costs are increasing. Measure 57 funding is incorrect in the budget – that figure will be corrected.

Page 50 – Boat License Fund. The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) grant was canceled by BOR; this grant funded a part-time deputy.

Page 51 – Corrections Assessment: Funds a portion of a corrections deputy who is the programs coordinator.

Page 54 – Task Force Fund.

Page 60 – 911 Fund. Funds are transferred to the MCSO Communication Center.

Page 61 – Traffic Safety Fund. Small amount of funds leftover from a grant.

Page 67 – Search and Rescue Fund. Small amount of funding that needs used up on Search and Rescue so the fund can be closed out.

Page 70 – Federal Forfeitures Fund. Use of these funds is complicated and very limited.

Page 80 – Work Release Construction Fund. Funds were used for a new roof this last year.

Ms. Hung abstained from approval of the Jail budget as she is the Chief Financial Officer for Valley Family Health Care and that Valley Family Health Care contracts with the County to provide jail medical services. The Sheriff's Office budgets above were approved.

The meeting recessed for the day.