

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

The County Budget Committee continued its meeting on April 23, 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.

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: Currently do not have a caretaker at Bully Creek Park. The park is open; Mr. Tiffany is mowing and working to get the irrigation system going. A contractor is scheduled to spray. Commissioner Jacobs noted that BOR (Bureau of Reclamation) will not be able to complete the ADA (American with Disabilities Act) project at the park until next year.

Pages 40-42 – Road Fund: Road Equipment/Parts, Repairs; and Culverts line-items were increased. Sand & Gravel will be spent down by the end of the fiscal year. Cash on Hand is approximately \$5 million – if a bridge washes out, it will be expensive to replace. There is not a regular rotation schedule for equipment but may be beneficial to create one. Would like to have a bridge foreman position. When the Jordan Valley Foreman retires there will be an expense to move equipment to a new location; this expense should be planned for. Mr. Skinner noted there is a great need for gravel in the Jordan Valley area. Commissioner Mendiola inquired about gravel for Crowley Road; a rock source is needed.

Page 43 – Major Bridge Fund: Reserve fund for major bridge projects in the County (including road districts); 2% of the gas tax funding is put into this fund each year.

Page 44 – Road Equipment Fund: Transfer from the Road fund. Grader is almost paid off.

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

DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

District Attorney (DA) 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; Page 14 – CFA (Criminal Fine Account)/DA; and Page 52 – DA Enforcement.

Pages 9-10 – District Attorney. The office is currently fully staffed. The summer clerk intern position was successful last year; also had a Malheur Works intern last summer. The Proposed budget has some reductions from what was requested. A SAFE Court grant is run through the DA's Office.

Page 11 – VOCA Grant/DA; and Page 12 – CAMI Grant/DA. There may be interruptions to the grants for Victims Services; this is due to federal funding uncertainty. Victims services is constitutionally required and the office relies heavily on grant funding to provide the services.

Page 14 – CFA/DA: Funding helps to support the Victims Services program.

Page 52 – DA Enforcement: Revenue is from fines; the actual monies received are transferred to the General Fund to support the DA's Office.

See instrument # 2025-1188 for the written correspondence.

SURVEYOR

Surveyor Derrick McKrola discussed Page 37 – County Surveyor; and Page 46 – Surveyor Corner Preservation Fund.

Page 46 – Surveyor Corner Preservation: Requested this fund no longer reimburse the County Surveyor Fund for work performed by the Surveyor (line-item 5-20-3223). This change is in the Proposed budget. Capital Outlay proposed is for a truck, truck accessories, storage container, and UTV (Utility Terrain Vehicles) side-by-side. The current pickup and side-by-side Mr. McKrola is using are not off-road vehicles. Corner Preservation work is an important responsibility of the County Surveyor.

The Road Fund funds .25 of the County Surveyor salary. Mr. McKrola noted that he does not work for the Bridge Fund and suggested that his .10 salary be removed; Ms. DuBois said that Mr. Tiffany agreed to leave it in the budget for the 2025/2026 fiscal year.

Page 37 – County Surveyor: The requested budget included \$4,981 in Capital Outlay towards the purchase of a vehicle; this is not in the Proposed budget.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Planning Department Director Carol Parker discussed and answered questions concerning Page 17 – Planning/Zoning. The requested budget is mostly the same as last year; Contracted Services was

removed. Planning Commission and BRH meetings are now held at the Vale Senior Center and rent is \$50 a month.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Building Official Adele Schaffeld discussed Pages 73-74 – Building Department. The Building Department administers the State building code program locally. It is a State program and the budget is dedicated funds. Fees are dedicated and funds cannot be swept into the General fund. The electrical program must be tracked separately during the fiscal year. A 12% State surcharge is collected and sent to the State monthly. The department is fully staffed – 4 FTE (Full Time Equivalent). The Admin Fee was increased to \$10,000. The department is now located in the Goodfellow building in Ontario. Small Equipment is for 3 computers and two scanners (this is a Special Fund and pays for its own computers and software/licensing). Requests for refunds have significantly increased; the County ordinance provides for refunds of up to 80%; many jurisdictions are starting to implement a minimum fee. Capital Outlay projects are for painting of two doors; trim on a window and door; and building of the front counter; and future replacement of a vehicle (currently has 106,000 miles).

SNAKE RIVER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE (SREDA)

SREDA requested funding to support SREDA. SREDA encompasses Payette and Washington Counties (Idaho) and Malheur County and markets the 3 counties in 2 states as 1 region; it is a public-private partnership. Consensus was to contribute \$5,000 to SREDA. See instrument # 2025-1189 for the written documents.

TREASURER/TAX OFFICE

Treasurer/Tax Collector Jennifer Forsyth discussed Page 8 – County Treasurer/Tax. Ms. Forsyth is requesting an admin fee from Eastern Oregon Border Board; Border Board is taking the proposal to its board for approval. The admin fee requested is \$2,000. If approved that line-item will be added to the budget before budget adoption. Foreclosure Fees and a Foreclosure Expense line-items were added to the budget; this is due to legislation currently under consideration by the legislature. Office Supplies was lowered in the Proposed budget and this fiscal year is the rotation to microfiche the tax rolls (this is done every five years); there is concern that the Proposed budget may not be sufficient.

POVERTY TO PROSPERITY (P2P)

Poverty to Prosperity did not submit a request for funding; no funding was allocated.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND

Economic & Community Development Director Taylor Rembowski discussed and answered questions concerning Pages 38-39 – Economic Development Fund. Mr. Rembowski proposed not funding SREDA; and requested a vehicle from Capital Outlay for Economic Development rather than using the assigned Carpool vehicle; a vehicle with more ground clearance is needed. A transfer to County Fair in the amount of \$5,000 was requested and is in the Proposed budget. Expenses for MCDC (Malheur County Development Corporation) are also in this fund. Other

transfers are the 5311 Match in the Special Transportation Fund; bookmobile in the Ontario Community Library, and the Reload/Industrial Park Project.

BULLY CREEK PARK

Commissioner Jacobs noted he has been in contact with Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and BOR may be able to contribute funding assistance this year for maintenance and operations of the park; an application will need to be completed. BOR will not be able to complete the ADA project until next year.

Review of previously discussed budgets: Road Department budgets were approved; District Attorney's Office budgets were approved.

Surveyor budgets were discussed: Ms. Hung suggested increasing Surveyor Fees revenue and pay for a portion of the vehicle from the County Surveyor budget.

Planning and Zoning was approved; Building Department was approved; SREDA's request for \$5,000 was approved; Treasurer/Tax was approved; and no allocation to Poverty to Prosperity.

The meeting recessed for lunch.

The County budget meeting was closed and the ASD (Ambulance Service District) budget meeting was opened.

AMBULANCE SERVICE DISTRICT (ASD)

Interim ASD Coordinator Rich Harriman reviewed the Ambulance Service District budget. Notice of the ASD budget meeting was published in the Argus Observer. Tax assessment is \$16.00 per household; \$2.50 per hotel room; and \$1.50 per employee. Dr. Morris Smith is the Medical Director. The ASD Coordinator is a part-time position (.60 FTE (Full Time Equivalent)) and is currently vacant. Provider Training is for training opportunities for the local EMTs (Emergency Medical Technician) and first responders. Protocol Expenses is for an app the ambulances use. Disposable Medical Supplies was increased; costs have risen. Education Fund is used to reimburse persons/providers who complete training and obtain licenses. Funding under Direct Payments to Providers is allocated through a request for reimbursement process; this allows for the providers to get partial reimbursement from the Ambulance Service District for the cost of doing business. The ASD budget was approved.

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

ONTARIO JUSTICE COURT

Justice of the Peace Margie Mahony discussed Page 13 – Ontario Justice Court. Very little change to the budget from last year. Data Processing Expense was slightly increased as the database contractor increased its cost; Copy Machine Lease was slightly increased; and Court Security was

increased to fund a camera in the parking lot. It was later determined that the amount requested for the camera was not enough so Judge Mahony will address it in the next fiscal year.

GENERAL FUND NON-DEPARTMENTAL REVENUES

Page 1 – General Fund Non-Departmental Revenues was reviewed; these are revenue sources not tied to a specific department. No PILT (Payment in Lieu of taxes) funding is anticipated for the current fiscal year or the 2025/2026 fiscal year. The 45th Parallel fund was transferred to the General Fund per the agreement of the District Attorney and the County Court at last year’s budget meeting. Budget was approved.

COUNTY COURT

Page 2 – County Court was reviewed. Travel was reduced in the Proposed budget. Budget was approved.

COUNTY COUNSEL

Page 4 – County Counsel was reviewed and approved.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Page 7 – Administrative Office was reviewed and approved. The Equipment Reserve Transfer was moved to the LATCF budget. Still looking at possible options for Time Tracking.

NON-PROGRAM

Page 20 – Non-Program was reviewed and approved. Courthouse Postage; Predatory Animal Control; Goodfellow Gate & Fence project; and the Transfer to the Insurance Reserve were moved to LATCF.

WATERMASTER

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

LAW LIBRARY

Page 49 – Law Library was reviewed and approved.

TAYLOR GRAZING FUND

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

SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION FUND

Page 58 – Special Transportation Fund was reviewed and approved; revenue is ODOT (Oregon Department of Transportation) grant funds for transportation purposes and the County subcontracts with MCOA&CS (Malheur Council on Aging and Community Services) to provide the services. The “5311 Match” is in this budget; the match funds are transferred into this budget from

Economic Development. The Discretionary Grant payments may change as a new biennium is starting.

MENTAL HEALTH FUND

Page 65 – Mental Health Fund was reviewed and approved; funds are from the State and passed through to Lifeways for mental health services. The County contracts with Lifeways as the Community Mental Health Program (CMHP).

RELOAD/INDUSTRIAL PARK PROJECT

Page 75 – Reload/Industrial Park Project was reviewed and approved; the interest and principal payment for the Business Oregon Special Public Works Fund loan is budgeted in this fund. The funds are transferred from the Economic Development Fund.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

Page 76 – American Rescue Plan was reviewed and approved. Funds must be expended per the requirements of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Funds had to be obligated by the end of 2024; and projects must be completed by the end of 2026. Ms. DuBois recently completed the annual reporting report. The only project that has not had funds expended on is the mapping module project. Reporting must be done until Treasury closes out the program.

OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUND

Page 77 – Opioid Settlement Fund was reviewed and approved; these funds can only be used for specific purposes as stated in the settlement agreement. Ms. DuBois recently completed annual reporting on these funds.

LOCAL ASSIST LATCF

Pages 78-79 Local Assist LATCF (Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund) was reviewed and approved. LATCF funds can be used for governmental purposes. It is proposed to move numerous General Fund requests and Transfers to the LATCF fund; these requests and transfers are allocated in the LATCF budget. Ms. DuBois noted Postage should be increased to \$65,000. There is concern that PILT funding will not be received to support the General Fund.

INSURANCE RESERVE

Page 81 – Insurance Reserve was reviewed and approved. The County is self-insured for unemployment; workers compensation and liability insurance is paid from this fund.

CAR POOL FUND

Page 82 – Car Pool Fund was reviewed and approved. 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 sale of the vehicles.

GENERAL COUNTY EQUIPMENT FUND

Pages 84-85 – General County Equipment Fund was reviewed and approved. Saving for future projects is done in this fund (such as HVAC, phone system, election equipment). The courthouse central copy machine and county phone system are in this fund. Health Department Building Maintenance is in this fund (Health Department rent charged to program elements goes to the Health Department Building Maintenance line). Jail Kitchen Equipment line was created last year; the walk-in cooler for the jail needs to be replaced as well as the floor underneath the cooler.

GENERAL COUNTY CONTINGENCY

Page 19 – General County Contingency was reviewed and approved. General County Contingency is zero. Given the current cuts in federal funding, the 2025/2026 Proposed budget for the General Fund does not include PILT funding. This resulted in a significant shortage for the General Fund. If PILT funding is received it will be placed in Contingency.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT; SURVEYOR CORNER PRESERVATION

Commissioner Jacobs expressed support for a vehicle purchase for Economic Development. Ms. Hung expressed thoughts on equity and balance between General Fund departments and Special Fund departments. The request for a vehicle from the Surveyor Preservation Fund was also discussed. Commissioner Mendiola expressed support for both vehicle purchases from the Special Fund budgets. It was suggested the Surveyor continue to use the pickup currently assigned to him and upgrade the UTV request. After discussion, consensus was to approve Economic Development and Corner Preservation Fund as shown in Proposed budget.

JUSTICE COURT

Ontario Justice Court budget was approved.

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

The DOC (Department of Corrections)/Measure 57 revenue fund should be \$95,024; the budget was corrected.

This is the only change to the Proposed budget. See instrument # 2025-1190

APPROVALS

Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve the budget for the Malheur County Ambulance Service District for the 2025-2026 fiscal year in the amount of \$313,320. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Judge Joyce moved to approve the budget for the Malheur County Agricultural Educational Extension Service District for the 2025-2026 fiscal year in the amount of \$2,366,015; and moved to approve property taxes for the 2025-2026 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.

Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve the budget for Malheur County for the 2025-2026 fiscal year in the amount of \$65,480,166; and moved to approve property taxes for the 2025-2026 fiscal year at the rate of \$2.5823 per \$1,000 of assessed value for operating purposes in the General Fund. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned.