

# MEETING MINUTES

## Malheur County Community Mental Health, Local Alcohol and Drug, and Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee

**Date:** May 27, 2026

**Time:** 1:32 PM – 2:00 PM (approx. 31 minutes)

**Location:** In-person and virtual (hybrid)

**Chair:** Ted Martinez

**Quorum:** Not achieved. Business items (including approval of minutes) tabled to June meeting.

### Attendees

Name	Organization / Role	Attendance
Ted Martinez	Malheur County Juvenile Department; Committee Chair	In-person
Crystal Copenhaver	Lifeways – Crisis Services Program Manager	In-person
Suzanne Steele	Lifeways – Director of Substance Use Services	In-person
Rachel Weideman	Lifeways	In-person
Brad Andrews	Lifeways -- Community Developmental Disabilities Program Director	In-person
Ron Van Ausdal	Lifeways – Clinical Operations Officer	In-person
Michelle Belnap	Community Member; Special Needs Support, High School	Virtual
Jason Cooper	Ontario Police Chief	Virtual
Barbara Brody	OSU Extension	Virtual
Travis Johnson	Malheur County Sheriff	Virtual
Rebecca Stricker	Malheur County Health Department – Director	Virtual

### 1. Call to Order & Introductions

- Meeting called to order at approximately 1:32 PM by Ted Martinez.
- Brief round of introductions completed for in-person and virtual attendees.

- Attendance was notably low; several members were noted as being away for summer or other commitments.
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## 2. Quorum & Approval of Minutes

- Quorum was not achieved at this meeting.
  - Minutes from the February and April meetings (no March meeting was held) were previously distributed but cannot be formally approved without a quorum.
  - Both sets of minutes are tabled to the June 24 meeting.
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## 3. Public Comment

- No public comment requests were received in advance.
  - No public comment was offered by virtual attendees when the floor was opened.
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## 4. Malheur County Behavioral Health Updates

Updates were shared by Lifeways program staff present.

### 4a. Substance Use Services (Suzanne Steele)

- Services continue to be busy; client availability remains open.
- Lifeways will be returning to Huntington School in the fall – a new/renewed partnership for school-based services.
- Ongoing influx of clients; capacity is being maintained.

### 4b. Crisis Services (Crystal Copenhaver)

- Triage/stabilization center has been open approximately six weeks; clients are utilizing the center and outcomes are positive so far.
- Average current length of stay: approximately 5 hours. Statewide data indicates 10 hours is the typical stabilization timeframe; the center is working toward that benchmark.
- Referral sources: walk-ins, Ontario Police Department drop-offs, and internal Lifeways referrals.
- Valley Family toured the center the day prior (May 26) and expressed strong interest in utilizing it as a referral destination.
- Crisis team continues to be very busy; a full moon was noted as an upcoming pressure point.

### 4c. Developmental Disabilities (Brad Andrews)

- Record enrollment levels being experienced; approximately 15 new applications received in the prior week alone.
- Volume of daily applications is unprecedented.
- Capacity and placement are being actively managed.

#### **4d. Lifeways Organization-Wide (Ron Van Ausdal)**

- Groundbreaking ceremony for the new facility took place recently; strong turnout exceeded expectations.
- Construction start is imminent but slightly delayed: Oregon regulations require a licensed engineer to install storm-water runoff control tubing around the construction site before excavation can begin. That process is underway.
- Steve has indicated he would like to revisit the purpose and focus of the CMHP Advisory Committee at a future meeting, including:
  - What can the CMHP do to support the community within its scope?
  - What areas is the CMHP succeeding in?
  - What areas fall outside CMHP scope and may need other community partners?
  - A deeper dive beyond the high-level umbrella/funding overview he has previously shared.

#### **4e. Law Enforcement Partnership Acknowledgment**

- Ron (Lifeways) expressed appreciation to Chief Cooper (OPD) and Sheriff Johnson for their continued partnership with the crisis triage center, including referrals and drop-offs.
- Recognized that not every interaction results in a client staying, but the collaborative effort is valued.

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### **5. Partner & Community Updates**

#### **5a. OSU Extension / Building Healthy Families – Skill Up for Life (Barbara Brody)**

- The next Skill Up for Life cohort runs June 9–11. The session filled within three days when sent to targeted partners (without broader advertising); a waitlist has formed.
- Program overview: youth receive four national certifications in three days:
  - Safe Sitter (babysitting certification)
  - First Aid & CPR
  - Food Handler's Card
  - QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) – suicide prevention gatekeeper training
- Participants also learn to cook meals from scratch as a team-building component.
- Cost: approximately \$900 per youth. Funded through HIDA funds and OSU Extension dollars.
- To date: 57 youth enrolled, 56 completed – a very high completion rate.
- Appreciation expressed to Ted Martinez (Juvenile Department) for providing staff support (Daniel) for cohorts with higher-need youth.

#### **5b. OSU Extension – Community Conversations Award**

- OSU Extension's Community Conversations initiative – which Travis Johnson served on as an advisory board member and whose data has been used by Steve/Lifeways – was named the Oregon State Winner for a national OSU Extension award.
- The award recognizes efforts in building community partnerships to meet educational needs of individuals, families, and communities.
- Will now advance to regional and then national competition.

- Barbara plans to present the award officially at the county courthouse.
- Travis Johnson and Ted Martinez congratulated; Travis acknowledged the program as one where he sees tangible impact.

### **5c. Youth Crisis Intervention Training (UCIT) (Barbara Brody)**

- UCIT scheduled for July 20–24. Continuing education credits available through ESD.
- Youth-focused version addresses some different content than the standard CIT; developed in response to a GOBI-identified regional need. Lifeways/this region is the pilot site; program is intended to go statewide.
- Travis Johnson is on the agenda to present.
- Target audience: anyone working with youth – teachers, educators, hospital staff, police, juvenile detention, etc. No charge to attend.
- Ted Martinez asked to distribute registration information (registration is now open).
- Lifeways representatives Laurie and one other staff member are on the planning committee.

### **5d. Malheur County Sheriff (Travis Johnson)**

- No formal update. Sheriff Johnson noted personal logistical issues and acknowledged being behind on communications.

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## **6. Committee Business**

### **6a. Co-Chair Nomination**

- Ted Martinez noted the need for a co-chair to facilitate meetings in his absence.
- Expressed that a co-chair would have been valuable at this meeting given competing obligations.
- Ted will send an email to committee members soliciting nominations and expressions of interest.
- Role description: run the meeting in the chair's absence.

### **6b. Committee Membership – Charter & Bylaws Compliance**

- The committee charter/bylaws require representation from:
  - Families of individuals involved in DD services
  - Families or community members with SUD experience
  - At least one community member representative
- These seats are currently not consistently filled. A previous inquiry about family member participation was reportedly declined, though the bylaws appear to require it.
- The committee is open to recruiting members who fit these categories; anyone with suitable connections is encouraged to make referrals.

### **6c. Community Member Feedback – Engagement & Purpose (Michelle Belnap)**

- Michelle Belnap (community member, parent of a child who went through the DD system and state group home) shared that:

- She values the connections she has made (with Barbara Brody, Crystal Copenhaver, and others).
- Meetings feel primarily informational, making it difficult for community members to know how to contribute or where they fit.
- The format can feel intimidating for community members who want to help but are uncertain when or how to speak.
- Ted acknowledged the feedback and encouraged Michelle to reach out directly if she has a topic she wants to raise; it can be placed on the agenda for open discussion.
- Ted committed to continuing to send agendas to full committee membership and to actively solicit input.

#### **6d. CMHP Context & Community Accountability (Ron Van Ausdal)**

- Ron provided context for the committee's importance: Lifeways serves all 15,000 Medicaid recipients in Malheur County for behavioral health; Crystal's crisis team is responsible for crisis services for all 35,000 county residents.
  - The committee is intended to provide guidance and accountability, filtered back to the county. Positive feedback as well as areas for improvement are welcome.
  - The committee was dormant for approximately five years; prior to that, it may not have functioned as designed. Lifeways is committed to transparency and community partnership going forward.
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### **7. Next Meeting**

**Date:** June 24, 2026

**Time:** 1:30 PM

- Agenda to include: approval of February and April minutes (quorum required), ongoing behavioral health updates, and CMHP purpose discussion (pending Steve's availability).

### **8. Adjournment**

- Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:00 PM.