

MEETING NOTES

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

April 22, 2026 | 1:30 PM | Hybrid Meeting (In-Person & Virtual)

Chair: Ted Martinez, Director, Malheur County Juvenile Department

Attendance

Name	Title / Organization
Ted Martinez (Chair)	Malheur County Juvenile Department
Steve Jensen	CEO, Lifeways
Brad Andrews	Director, Community Developmental Disabilities Program, Lifeways
Suzanne Steele	Director of Substance Use Services, Lifeways
Crystal Copenhaver	Program Manager, Crisis Team, Lifeways
Ron Van Ausdal	Clinical Operations Officer, Lifeways
Travis Johnson	Malheur County Sheriff
Holly Dominick	Child Welfare Program Manager, District 14, Oregon DHS
Jose Marquez	School District (attending virtually)
Jenn Susuki	Student Wellness Coordinator, Malheur ESD
Judge Dan Joyce	Attending virtually
Toiresa Frazier	Family and Community Health, OSU Extension (sitting in for Barb Brody)
Annaliese Dolph	Director, Oregon Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission (presenter, virtual)

Note: A quorum was not achieved. Meeting minutes from the previous meeting were not formally approved.

1. Call to Order

Ted Martinez called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees. Introductions were conducted for both in-person and virtual participants. This was noted as the second meeting chaired by Ted Martinez. The committee was advised that a presenter from the Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission would join virtually at 1:30 PM, and the agenda would be adjusted accordingly.

2. Lifeways Updates

A. Crisis Stabilization / Triage Center — Soft Opening

Ron Van Ausdal and Crystal Copenhaver presented an update on the soft opening of Lifeways' Crisis Stabilization / Triage Center.

Key details:

- Location: 348 West Idaho, Ontario (Old Valley Family Building) — temporary site pending permanent facility
- Hours: 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM, Sunday through Saturday; goal is 24/7 operations
- Capacity: 4 individuals at a time; stay limited to fewer than 23 hours (not residential care)
- Walk-in model: individuals may walk in or be dropped off by law enforcement without a referral
- Services available: intake/triage assessment, stabilization, recliner/rest area, food, clothing change, case management connection, outpatient referrals
- On-site tools: UA testing, breathalyzer, and wand for weapons screening
- Age: Primarily 18 and older; youth as young as 16 may be seen if the center is empty and no adults are present
- Modeled after the Deschutes County crisis stabilization center
- Voluntary: individuals may leave at any time; if they do, the referring officer is notified
- Goal: Reduce unnecessary ED admissions and divert appropriate cases from jail

Law Enforcement MOU:

Sheriff Johnson noted he has a draft MOU from Andrea Recla regarding the center with a few suggested edits. He will coordinate with Ron Van Ausdal or Crystal Copenhaver to review and finalize the document.

Tours:

Tours have been conducted with the Sheriff's Office, Ontario PD, and Ted Martinez. Additional tours are open to all community partners. Contact Ron Van Ausdal or Crystal Copenhaver to schedule.

B. Project Hope — Groundbreaking Announcement

Steve Jensen announced a groundbreaking ceremony for Project Hope, a \$30 million capital expansion project.

Groundbreaking Details:

- Date: Monday, May 12, 2026
- Ceremony: 3:00 PM (remarks by Mayor Folden, board chair, county commissioner, and potentially the governor's office)
- Open House: 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM at the Lifeways campus (east side of building); will feature placards explaining new programs

Project Hope Overview:

- Three new buildings on the Lifeways campus

- Building 1: Expanded outpatient services including a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) with primary care screenings; reunites children's and adult services on one campus with separate entrances/lobbies
- Building 2: New Crisis Stabilization Center with urgent care walk-in and 16 residential treatment beds for higher levels of care
- Building 3: Replacement Lifeways Recovery Center (residential/inpatient) expanded to 40 beds with 6 withdrawal management beds, private/semi-private rooms, and full ADA accessibility
- Anticipated construction timeline: approximately two years from groundbreaking
- Will serve Malheur County and surrounding counties including Baker, Harney, Lake, and Wallowa
- The current Lifeways Youth Center building will be repurposed; ideas for future use are welcome

3. Presentation: Oregon Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission (ADPC)

Presenter: Annaliese Dolph, Director, Oregon Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission (virtual)

A. About the ADPC

- Statutory agency established in 2009; works across 14 participating state agencies (OHA, DHS, ODE, Criminal Justice Commission, OLCC, Oregon State Police, and others)
- Reports directly to the Governor; housed within OHA for shared services but operates independently
- Mission: Align state agencies on substance use disorder prevention, treatment, and harm reduction

B. Five-Year Comprehensive Plan

The ADPC recently completed its second five-year comprehensive plan (successor to the 2020 plan). Community input was gathered statewide, including outreach at the Malheur County Library.

Three overarching outcomes:

- Reduce prevalence of substance use disorder in Oregon
- Reduce substance use-related deaths
- Reduce substance use-related disparities and inequities

Plan framework — Recovery Oriented System of Care (ROSC):

- Primary prevention → early intervention → treatment → recovery services, with risk reduction throughout
- Person- and community-centered approach

Plan areas include:

- Prevention, Early Intervention, Treatment, Recovery, and Infrastructure (funding/sustainability)
- New statutory requirement: youth substance use disorder must now be addressed in the plan
- Youth section developed by the Oregon Youth Addiction Alliance (youth-led group) in collaboration with the System of Care Advisory Council

- Recovery priorities: recovery community centers, recovery housing, peer recovery support services, recovery-friendly workplaces
- Infrastructure priority: developing a State Agency Substance Use Disorder Financial Analysis to improve funding transparency and sustainability

Funding context:

- Primary funding sources include federal Medicaid, other federal grants, and cannabis tax revenue (declining)
- State direction is to improve the existing system sustainably, not seek new funding

C. Local Alcohol and Drug Planning Councils (LADPCs)

Annaliese Dolph explained that LADPCs are referenced in state statute but had largely gone dormant. Upon inquiry, the ADPC found that nearly every county has a body that functions similarly to an LADPC. This committee may qualify.

Potential LADPC functions (discussion prompts from a statewide survey):

- Evaluate the local service continuum
- Establish local priorities for substance use disorder services
- Review local data related to substance use disorder
- Make funding recommendations to county commissioners or agencies
- Coordinate local substance use disorder services and supports

Discussion highlights:

- Ted Martinez noted this committee is in a “baby steps” phase of rebuilding after COVID-era decline in engagement
- Committee is working to function as a true advisory body with input on block grant funding and CMHP priorities
- Jenn Susuki noted the survey provided useful framing for committee members less familiar with the service system
- Lifeways raised the need for a fee schedule and clearer guidance on co-occurring (mental health + substance use) services
- Youth programming gaps and barriers to accessing services in Malheur County were identified as priorities

Action Item:

Ted Martinez (on behalf of the committee) agreed to circulate the ADPC survey to all committee members so each agency can submit responses. Annaliese Dolph will provide an anonymized summary of responses back to the group. Annaliese Dolph will be invited to return and present findings.

4. Law Enforcement Update

Sheriff Travis Johnson, Malheur County Sheriff’s Office

- Jail population has risen significantly since bail reform; consistently above 80 inmates and frequently reaching 90+, with the female unit (16-person capacity) consistently at 100% capacity

- Increase attributed in part to a growing number of out-of-state individuals involved in local crime; anecdotally linked to Oregon's lenient criminal statutes and welfare system
- Malheur County's opioid overdose death rate is reportedly second per capita in Oregon (source to be confirmed by the Sheriff)
- Low accountability and low consequences at the state level are seen as deterrents to voluntary treatment engagement
- An active homicide investigation is underway; described as particularly complex
- Law enforcement is dealing with a revolving-door dynamic for low-level offenders; deputy morale affected by repeated contacts with the same individuals
- Sheriff noted difficulty recruiting qualified applicants despite competitive pay

Discussion:

A broader conversation followed about the relationship between accountability, expectations, and treatment engagement. Both Ted Martinez (Juvenile Dept.) and Lifeways acknowledged a parallel revolving-door challenge in the treatment system. Sheriff Johnson acknowledged Lifeways is busy and expressed appreciation for the services being provided.

5. Community Partner Updates

A. Malheur ESD — Jenn Susuki, Student Wellness Coordinator

- Malheur County schools have achieved the highest attendance rate in the state, correlating with high graduation rates — attributed to the county attendance ordinance and strong support structures
- Youth CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) training: tentatively scheduled July 20–24; registration opening soon
- Youth Sequential Intercept Mapping (SIM) session: scheduled for April 23, 2026 (following day)
- Noted that the same core group of people tends to participate; encouraged broader engagement across agencies

B. Oregon DHS Child Welfare — Holly Dominick, Child Welfare Program Manager, District 14

Monthly child welfare assessment referral numbers for Malheur County:

- January 2026: 31 cases
- February 2026: 38 cases
- March 2026: 45 cases
- April 2026 (partial): 27 cases

Holly Dominick noted that approximately 80–85% of open assessments involve at least one parent with a substance use issue, typically paired with neglect, physical abuse, or domestic violence.

C. Malheur County Juvenile Department — Ted Martinez, Director

- Substance use referrals to the Juvenile Department increased significantly in the past year; attributed to more law enforcement capacity in Ontario and the Sheriff's Office
- Over the last 18 months, more youth have been placed on supervised probation with substance use violations — previously rare

- Average age of youth presenting with substance use issues is approximately 14
- Prevention needs to begin earlier; very few referrals below age 12
- Expressed interest in potentially reestablishing a youth drug court and/or peer teen court in future years

D. Lifeways Deflection Program Update

- The deflection program has been moved under the supervision of Suzanne Steele, Director of Substance Use Services
- Aligns with certified recovery mentor (CRM) programming
- State guidance indicates deflection funding is primarily intended for the adult (18+) population
- Youth deflection had been discussed with schools but direction from the state clarified funding use restrictions
- Peer recovery mentors and in-school services (e.g., Chantel’s youth MRT group) continue; additional staffing needed

6. Other Business

A. Quorum Concerns

Jose Marquez raised concern that the committee has not achieved a quorum in recent meetings. Ted Martinez noted the committee has 14 total members and requires a two-thirds majority (approximately 9–10). Two members have recently left, contributing to the shortfall. Ted Martinez committed to sending reminders to absent members regarding the importance of attendance.

B. Co-Chair Vacancy

Chris Phillips has retired, leaving the Co-Chair position vacant. Ted Martinez asked for volunteers and encouraged members to reach out. Jose Marquez expressed interest. Ted Martinez will send an email to all members soliciting candidates, preferring a volunteer over an assignment.

7. Action Items Summary

Action Item	Responsible Party	Timeline
Review and finalize law enforcement MOU for Crisis Stabilization Center	Travis Johnson & Ron Van Ausdal or Crystal Copenhaver	Ongoing
Distribute ADPC survey to all committee members for individual agency responses	Ted Martinez	Before next meeting
Submit completed ADPC surveys to Annaliese Dolph	All committee members	Before next meeting
Annaliese Dolph to provide anonymized survey summary back to committee	Annaliese Dolph (ADPC)	After survey deadline

Invite Annaliese Dolph back to present survey findings	Ted Martinez	Upcoming meeting
Send reminder to absent members re: quorum importance	Ted Martinez	Immediately
Solicit Co-Chair volunteers via email to all members	Ted Martinez	Immediately
Schedule tours of Crisis Stabilization Center for interested partners	Ron Van Ausdal / Crystal Copenhaver	Ongoing
Confirm Youth CIT training dates (est. July 20–24) and share registration	Jenn Susuki	Next week

8. Adjournment

Ted Martinez adjourned the meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for the following month.