



O R E G O N

MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

# Work Session Summary Minutes

## Solid Waste Updates

December 10, 2025. 3:00 PM

Courthouse Square, 555 Court St. NE, Salem  
5th Floor, Suite 5232, Commissioners Board Room

### ATTENDANCE:

**Commissioners:** Danielle Bethell, Colm Willis, and Kevin Cameron.

**Board's Office:** Alvin Klausen, Jan Fritz, Chris Eppley, Toni Whitler, Heather Inyama, and Matt Lawyer.

**Legal Counsel:** Steve Elzinga, and Scott Norris.

**Public Works:** Brian May, Brian Nicholas, and Dennis Mansfield.

**Citizen:** Kathy Rogers.

Commissioner Danielle Bethell called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

### 10/30 Work Session (WS) Follow-Up

- Progress on software system for transactions at transfer stations and landfills:
  - Integrate out-of-county driver's license information or not enough funds.
- Legal feedback on policies for charging higher rates to out-of-county users and mechanisms for data retention:
  - Driver's license information is stored for non-sufficient funds or code violations.
- Operation plans for using vehicle registration and alternative verification methods:
  - Vehicle registration will be an alternative method at waste facilities:
    - Primarily for commercial or non-resident users.
  - Check vehicle registration to confirm eligibility for in or out-of-county rates.
  - Supplements driver's license checks and verifies users for local businesses.
  - Will allow getting relevant data only when needed and protecting privacy:
    - Unpaid transactions, and code violations.
  - Balances policy enforcement with flexibility:
    - Staff training and communication will be critical.
- Preliminary cost-saving measures and updates since the 10/30/25 WS:
  - Overall strategy includes:
    - Reducing capital outlay.
    - Modifying Full-Time Equivalents (FTE) allocations.
    - Limiting major purchases.
- Detailed review of FTE changes, emphasizing the critical support role and billing structures between divisions and service districts:
  - FTE reductions considered as a budget savings measure:
    - No immediate changes to waste reduction FTEs were implemented.
  - Program coordinator role for environmental services is essential:
    - Supports councils, handles reports, grants, and service district billing.

- Unique skill set and challenging to replace support with general positions.
- Concerns about long-term necessity and funding method for this position:
  - Further analysis and possible cost-sharing options are being explored.
- No final decision to eliminate the position:
  - Discussion and desk audit planned to determine need and sustainability.
- Recent legal/contractual changes to the Hazardous Waste Program (HWP):
  - Review confirmed changes can be made to HWP under current terms.
  - Contractor has right to opt out if they disagree with program adjustments.
  - Verified that legal flexibility exists:
    - Significant change should be discussed with contractor in advance.
  - Reducing service hours or adjusting customer charges:
    - Must consider contract terms and possible renegotiation.
  - Communications to clarify changes and proper implementation and compliance.
- Analysis of waste reduction compliance strategies:
  - Partnerships with haulers, city jurisdictions, and Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Service:
    - Waste reduction and recycling education.
  - Opportunity to Recycle (OTR) requirements:
    - Outreach, communications, and shared resources.
    - Instead of hiring new waste reduction coordinators.
  - Current waste reduction compliance by using community education and reporting efforts.
  - Funding from Recycling Modernization Act (RMA) may support needs:
    - Without expanding county staff.
  - Legal review and collaboration ensures statutory compliance and creative, cost-effective solutions.
- Financial projections and tracked outcomes from previous work sessions:
  - Projections initially showed a \$4.2 million loss for solid waste fund.
  - Major budget actions include:
    - Removing \$11.5 million in capital outlay:
      - Land acquisition and project design.
    - Holding off on some FTE additions.
    - Adjusting service and program costs.
  - Improvement reduced overall expenses and slowed reserve depletion.
  - Tip fee increases analyzed to offset projected losses and stabilize balances.
  - Tracking helps align operations with available resources and meet future financial targets.

## **Other**

- Financial modeling:
  - Removal of capital outlay for large projects from budget.
  - Shifting to future years.
  - Their impacts on network capital and cash flow.
- Impact of closure cost liabilities for landfills:
  - Monophyly, Browns Island.
  - Classification as materials and services expenses rather than capital outlay.
  - Role of the self-insurance fund.

- Administrative and direct support costs being calculated, allocated, and potentially offset:
  - Central administration, FTE merits, benefits, materials and services.
- Strategies for managing code enforcement costs and property damage recovery:
  - Methods to recover costs from responsible parties instead of burdening taxpayers.
  - Calling for greater legal clarity.
- Implications of subsidizing specific services within service districts:
  - Historical practices.
  - Necessary changes.
  - Anticipated future conversations regarding equitable billing.
- Uses of RMA funds and how restricted funds can be leveraged to meet statutory obligations or fund positions.
- Stakeholders and negotiation boundaries with haulers and service providers:
  - Legal authority to adjust fees and resist “kickbacks” or increases not tied to actual new services rendered.
- Need clear, transparent communication with the public regarding rate increases:
  - Decision basis, and openness to future reductions if circumstances allow.
- Historical and projected tip fee rates and how recurring increases affect customers:
  - Have increased periodically to cover rising costs and projected budget gaps.
  - Each recurring rate hike adds to customers’ monthly trash bills over time.
  - Cumulative increases can become significant if raised every year without stabilization.

## **Next Steps**

- Discuss with HHW contractor and Polk County about changes and timelines.
- Legal counsel review regulatory requirements and assess options for compliance:
  - Define what requirements must be met and by what means.
- Coordinate partnerships with OSU Extension and haulers for waste reduction outreach and education:
  - Allocate supporting resources if viable.
- Provide updates to commissioners on HWP changes as soon as feedback and timelines are available.
- Meet with Commissioner Willis to review and sign off on updated solid waste fund financials:
  - Including tip rate recommendations.
- Legal counsel analyze process and authority for covering landfill closure liability costs through the county’s self-insurance fund:
  - Report findings.
- Schedule work session focusing on:
  - Code enforcement processes.
  - Financial accountability in property damage recovery.
  - Viable cost recovery mechanisms.
- Prepare detailed review of Marion County solid waste fund income statement and projections in January:
  - Peeling back personnel and service level costs by function and forecast.
- Gather information on additional fee requests by haulers or service partners:
  - Ensure transparency before any future Board decisions.
- Confirm legal ability and operational mechanism to adjust tip fees via franchisees without mandating administrative add-ons for haulers.

- Monitor financial projections considering updated Request for Proposal (RFP) responses:
  - Leachate disposal.
  - Potential rate escalations.
  - Shifting volumes/revenues.
  - Making budget adjustments as needed.

**Adjourned** – time: 4:55 p.m.

**Minutes by:** Mary Vityukova

**Reviewed by:** Gary L. White