



OREGON

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