



**MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION**

**Sheriff's Office Update
Minutes**

Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Commissioners' Boardroom
Courthouse Square, 555 Court St. NE, Suite 5231
Salem, Oregon 97301

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Colm Willis and Kevin Cameron.

Board's Office: Trevor Lane, Chris Eppley, Toni Whitler, Alvin Klausen, and Matt Lawyer.

Legal Counsel: Steve Elzinga, and Cody Hawkins.

Sheriff's Office: Sherrie Hickam, Matt Wilkinson, Jacob Ramsey, Jason Bernards, Jeremy Landers, and Nick Hunter.

Commissioner Colm Willis called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

1. Welcome & Introductions

-Commissioner Colm Willis

2. Evidence Move Update

-Commander Jason Bernards

- Evidence unit staffing is stable:
 - Two full-time evidence technicians and one supervisor.
- Extra part-time Friday support has accelerated labeling and moving smaller items:
 - Shortening move timeline by an estimated couple of months.
- Covanta closure greatly increased work and reduced capacity to destroy evidence:
 - Prior year:
 - Over 8,500 more items to be destroyed than in previous year.
 - Current year:
 - Large volume of eligible items being stored while options are evaluated.
- Protocol for destruction requires:
 - Transport to an out-of-state or out-of-area facility:
 - Spokane, and Utah.
 - Escort by a deputy and likely overnight travel.
 - Discuss consolidating loads with other counties to reduce staffing and costs.
- Contacts with jurisdictions underway to explore joint transport or shared solutions:
 - Polk County, and Clackamas County.
- A recent "dump run" removed 3,155 items and opened significant storage space:
 - Non-evidence items that can be discarded rather than formally destroyed.
- About 50% of the evidence is repackaged for the move or labeled for destruction.
- Work continues on:
 - Misplaced and undocumented evidence that accumulated over prior years.

- Unaddressed Conex containers.
- Lego retail theft case being held pending Department of Justice prosecution:
 - Multiple pallets of Legos.
 - Case is occupying vehicle evidence bay.
 - Final disposition dependent on adjudication.
- Walk through new evidence building:
 - Construction is about 30 days behind.
 - Projected opening near the end of June.
 - Estimated 4–6-month transition period after opening to fully complete move.
- Initial plan for old evidence building is Facilities assuming it for surplus storage.

3. Body Worn Cameras

-Undersheriff Jeremy Landers

- Sheriff's Office and IT have been evaluating an enterprise approach to:
 - Body Worn Cameras (BWCs).
 - In car video systems, Motor Vehicle Record (MVR).
 - Digital Evidence Management Systems (DEMS) and prosecution system integration.
- Stakeholder input gathered from:
 - Patrol deputies and other frontline users.
 - Evidence staff who process digital evidence.
 - District Attorney's Office and its case management system - Carpel.
- Congressional community-initiated project request submitted for approximately \$2 million to help fund implementation.
- Preliminary scale and cost concepts:
 - About 100 body worn cameras that are enforcement focused.
 - About 60 in car video systems.
 - Docking stations and related hardware.
 - Software licenses with unlimited storage:
 - Estimated at a per license monthly rate.
 - District Attorney (DA) software to integrate digital evidence with case management system and support:
 - Secure evidence links.
 - Redaction tools.
 - Transcription or keyword search within video.
- Annual operating costs projected to be about \$400k–\$500k once fully implemented:
 - For body cameras, in car systems, and DA integration.
 - Numbers are still being refined.
- Discussion and benefits:
 - Transparency, accountability, and public trust.
 - Liability mitigation and evidentiary clarity in critical incidents:
 - Use of force, officers involved shootings, and in jail incidents.
 - Ability to rapidly release videos to correct misleading clips on social media.
 - Strong evidentiary value to confirm proper conduct and identify misconduct.
- DA's Office needs:
 - Direct, efficient access to digital evidence from multiple law enforcement agencies in the county (not just the Sheriff's Office).
 - A common system that:
 - Reduces redundant processing by individual agencies.
 - Centralizes redaction, storage, and sharing with defense/other parties.
- Program manager - initially envisioned as a sergeant level role - proposed to:
 - Oversee implementation.

- Manage tagging, documentation, and auditing across users and vehicles.
- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)/record requests and policy compliance.
- Interest in exploring if some functions could be done by non-sworn staff:
 - Depending on final system design and workload.
- Integration and automation concepts:
 - Auto tagging camera footage to Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) incidents when arriving on scene.
 - Ensure video is tied to case numbers, incident types, and time frames.
- Cost and scalability considerations:
 - Licensing is primary driver of recurring costs:
 - Not the physical cameras
 - Expansion to jail operations and community corrections are contemplated:
 - Not yet fully costed.
 - Anticipating future legislation may mandate cameras without dedicated funding.
- Next information needs:
 - Comparable body camera program budgets and cost structures from:
 - Clackamas County:
 - Visited for benchmarking.
 - Salem Police Department.
 - Woodburn Police Department.
 - A standardized spreadsheet to collect and compare these costs.

4. Jail Capacity Management

-Commander Jacob Ramsey

- The plan's last major revision was in 2021, with changes including:
 - Removal of city ordinance offenses from primary population calculations.
 - Addition of emergency authority for the Sheriff (e.g., during pandemics).
- Proposed updates:
 - Increase operational capacity figure from 415 to 470 Adults in Custody (AIC).
 - Align with Senate Bill 48 and judge's order on pretrial release and lodging.
- Current operational reality:
 - Average daily population is close to 450:
 - Near its practical ceiling and close to triggering forced releases.
 - Budgeted for 470 AIC, actual usable capacity may be lower, 450–455, due to:
 - Single cell requirements.
 - Behavioral and mental health needs.
 - Housing configuration and classification restrictions.
- Senate Bill 48 framework and judicial orders:
 - Categories of offenses dictate whether individuals must be:
 - Released with conditions.
 - Released with specified considerations.
 - Lodged and held.
 - Overriding circumstances, defined by presiding judge's order, allow:
 - Arresting agencies to insist on lodging in specific circumstances:
 - Significant public safety risk.
 - Repeated failures to appear.
 - Failure to follow court orders.
 - Plan is being updated to explicitly reflect this operational framework.
- Board concerns and discussion:
 - Embedding Senate Bill 48/judicial order language in plan:
 - Adds necessary clarity or

- Less flexibility and frequent plan revisions when laws/orders change.
 - Community safety while being compliant with state law and judicial orders.
 - Concern:
 - Being criticized for releasing individuals.
 - Minimized forced release leads to under detention of chronic offenders.
 - Not holding serious charges if space taken by judicial overrides:
 - On lesser charger under current rules.
- Comparative practices:
 - Jails overriding circumstance rules experience more forced releases.
 - Marion County relies on structured front-end risk-based release decisions.
- Strategic questions raised:
 - Long-term capacity needs given population growth and rising demand.
 - Potential for:
 - Jail capital expansion via a bond.
 - Ongoing operating funding via a levy.
 - Possibility that more consistent accountability might:
 - Alter behavior over time.
 - Influence where offenders reside or operate along I5 corridor.
- Coordination and governance:
 - Planned revisions involve:
 - Sheriff's Office.
 - District Attorney's Office.
 - Presiding judges:
 - Within constraints of state level orders from Chief Justice.
 - County legal counsel.
 - Updated drafts being circulated for review among these stakeholders.

5. Other

-All

- Pharmacy contract and medical systems:
 - Get medicine by long standing arrangement with multi-state contract alliance.
 - Price comparison suggests possible savings of around \$4,000 per month:
 - By switching to another pharmacy vendor.
 - Considerations for the potential change:
 - Ability to deliver medications promptly.
 - Policy and logistics for returning unused medications:
 - Common in short jail stays.
 - Includes Electronic Medication Administration Record (eMAR):
 - Help nursing staff track and administer meds.
 - Strong concern about:
 - Fragmented Electronic Medical Record (EMR) between jail and health department.
 - New medication or health system can interoperate or share data:
 - Not rely on Portable Document Format (PDFs), emails, or printed records.
 - eMAR is distinct from full EMR but could be paired with separate EMR partner.
- Cost pressures:
 - Rising medical costs prompts examination of alternative vendors and tools.
 - Vendor change should not compromise goals of a county wide EMR approach.

6. Next Steps

-All

- Evidence move and destruction:
 - Continue work toward full readiness when the new building opens.
 - Explore joint destruction transport with neighboring counties:
 - Clarify operational/logistical implications.
 - Continue resolving legacy issues.
 - Work to move Lego case toward adjudication and disposition.
- Jail capacity management:
 - Legal counsel and DA's Office will review capacity management plan revisions:
 - How Senate Bill 48 and judicial orders are referenced.
 - Attachments or embedded language are appropriate and sustainable.
 - Revised draft of capacity management plan sent to relevant reviewers.
 - Further board discussion scheduled after legal counsel and DA review:
 - No formal action will be taken until that occurs.
- Pharmacy and medical systems:
 - Continue due diligence on alternative pharmacy vendor:
 - Service reliability.
 - Returns process.
 - eMAR functionality.
 - Projected net savings.
 - Develop recommendation and timeline aligning with broader county EMR integration goals.
- Body worn cameras and digital evidence:
 - Gather and document cost and program data from:
 - Clackamas County.
 - Salem Police Department.
 - Woodburn Police Department.
 - Populate standardized comparison spreadsheet to support board evaluation:
 - One time versus recurring costs.
 - Different vendor and licensing models.
 - Refine implementation and scaling plan based on:
 - External benchmarks.
 - Potential congressional or other external funding.
 - The county's capacity to sustain ongoing operating costs.
 - Brief commissioner who was absent from meeting to ensure full awareness.
- Ongoing governance:
 - Use additional information on capacity, medical costs, and body camera programs to inform future policy, budget, and potential ballot measure discussions.

Adjourned – time: 3:08 p.m.

Minutes by: Mary Vityukova

Reviewed by: