County Commissioners
Colm Willis, Chair
Kevin Cameron
Danielle Bethell

Chief Administrative Officer
Jan Fritz

MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION

Economic Development Program Update
Minutes

Thursday, November 5, 2026, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 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: Alvin Klausen, Matt Lawyer, Jonathan Sanford, Trevor Lane and Toni Whitler.
Legal Counsel: Jennifer Rogers.
Community and Economic Development: Kelli Weese, Chip Bury and Ashley Jackson.
Guests: Todd Koch and Karen McKillip.

Commissioner Colm Willis called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

1. Welcome & Introductions
-Commissioner Colm Willis

2. St. Paul Rodeo Future Development Plans
-Todd Koch, Rodeo Board Chair
-Karen McKillip, General Manager

Summary of Discussion:
Presented the St. Paul Rodeo Association's long-term development concepts:
- Sky boxes.
- Event center.
- Support building.

Reported more than 78,000 visitors over five days. Described rodeo's community contributions, agricultural outreach, and potential benefits to local businesses. The immediate priority is the sky-box project, estimated at approximately $3 million. The Association said its capital funds nearly cover project. Expressed interest in grant support for preliminary costs. Board discussed a phased approach, beginning with engineering and other soft costs, followed by a more complete estimate of project's funding gap.

Direction and Follow-Up:
Board invited St. Paul Rodeo Association to apply for an Economic Opportunity Program grant for eligible project costs, with an initial application focused on soft costs.

Task: Work with Kelli Weese to itemize sky-box project's soft costs and prepare phased grant application.
Assigned to: St. Paul Rodeo Association, working with Kelli Weese.
Deadline/Timeline: Not specified.

3. Program Overview

a. Review of Economic Development Program

-Chip Bury, Sarah Coutley and Ashley Jackson

Summary of Discussion:

Reviewed department's economic development portfolio:

- Opal Creek-funded projects.
- Tourism grants.
- Community Prosperity Initiative.
- Community Resource Network.
- Youth employment grants.
- Business retention.
- Expansion work.

Updates:

- Approval of $3 million allocation for Detroit Marina project.
- Continued review of a separate Canyon Radio request.
- Progress on Santiam Rail Trail and North Fork Recreation Plan.
- Completed Mill City planning project.

Board discussed unresolved project planning and administration questions:

- North Block assessment.
- Future administration of opioid-funded projects.
- How to coordinate project agreements and proposals.

Reported that the youth employment grant had supported 31 employers and 92 youth. Board raised concerns about employer awareness and requested more detail on outreach and marketing.

Direction and Follow-Up:

Board asked for broader discussion of North Block project. Including how to address engineering assessment given current staff capacity. Board identified a need to clarify where opioid-funded projects will be administered. No final routing decision was recorded. For Opal Creek planning funds, the Board supported consolidating proposed projects for submission to Business Oregon. Discussed using project-specific approvals as needs arise, potentially within an overarching interdepartmental agreement.

Task: Follow up with Brian Nicholas regarding Mill City sewer-system dump station, including access needs and any tourism-related signage.
Assigned to: Matt Lawyer.
Deadline/Timeline: Not specified.

Task: Prepare a draft interdepartmental agreement between Community and Economic Development and Public Works. With project-specific work orders, for Board review.
Assigned to: Ashley Jackson.
Deadline/Timeline: Not specified.

Task: Review proposed Opal Creek project concepts and prepare consolidated planning-fund proposal for submission to Business Oregon and the Forest Service.
Assigned to: Ashley Jackson and Chip Bury.
Deadline/Timeline: Not specified.

Task: Bring proposed University of Oregon agreement for Idanha planning project to the Board for review.
Assigned to: Ashley Jackson.
Deadline/Timeline: December.

Task: Obtain detailed information from Willamette Workforce Partnership about employer outreach, marketing activities, and use of marketing budget for youth employment grant.
Assigned to: Chip Bury.
Deadline/Timeline: Not specified.

Task: Issue Request for Information for youth employment grant program and present feedback and recommended path forward to the Board.
Assigned to: Chip Bury.
Deadline/Timeline: December or early January.

Task: Consolidate feedback on the Business Retention and Expansion strategy and bring revised strategy back to the Board.
Assigned to: Chip Bury.
Deadline/Timeline: January.

Task: Review United Way Community Resource Network agreement. Provide feedback regarding proposed early closure.
Assigned to: Jennifer Rogers.
Deadline/Timeline: Not specified.

Task: Confirm with Commissioner Bethell whether Fourth Dimension should make its required final project presentation to the Board.
Assigned to: Chip Bury.
Deadline/Timeline: Before the December work session.

Task: Bring a proposed one-year KYAC Radio contract extension to the Board.
Assigned to: Chip Bury.
Deadline/Timeline: Not specified.

4. Discussion
-All

Summary of Discussion:
No separate discussion beyond the economic development program review was recorded.

5. Other

a. Economic Development Proposed 2027 Request
-Chip Bury

Summary of Discussion:
Request monthly work sessions in 2027. Board agreed to continue monthly schedule, with understanding that sessions could be canceled when there are no items to discuss.

Direction and Follow-up:

Task: Send the proposed 2027 work-session scheduling information to the Board.
Assigned to: Matt Lawyer.
Deadline/Timeline: Not specified.

6. Next Steps
-All

Summary of Discussion:
Follow-Up tasks listed above.

Adjourned – time: 3:18 p.m.
Minutes by: Mary Vityukova
Reviewed by: Gary L. White