



Board of Commissioners

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**MINUTES OF THE
INFORMATION SHARING MEETING
BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Tuesday, October 28, 2025**

Present: Nancy Wyse, Chair; Pat Malone, Vice Chair; Rachel McEneny, County Administrator; Rick Crager, Assistant County Administrator; Vance Croney, County Counsel

Excused: Gabe Shepherd, Commissioner

Elected Officials: Ryan Joslin, District Attorney; Jef Van Arsdall, Benton County Sheriff

Staff: Rachel Bulder, Maura Kwiatkowski, Board staff; Derek Hering, Jamie Olsen, Juvenile Department; Erika Milo, Board Recorder

Guests: Lt. Logan Denning, Oregon State Police; Captain Jerry Drum, Chief Marcia Harnden, Albany Police Department; Chief David Gurski, Philomath Police Department; Chief Jason Harvey, Corvallis Police Department; James Yon, Oregon State University Police Department

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Wyse called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM.

2. Review and Approve Agenda

No changes were made to the agenda.

3. Announcements

No announcements were made.

4. Work Session

4.1 Regional Law Enforcement Roundtable Discussion

Representatives from each law enforcement or department shared updates about staff and programs, current initiatives, and current challenges.

Benton County Sheriff's Office (BCSO)

Sheriff Van Arsdall shared updates including these highlights:

- BCSO received a \$1 million radio infrastructure grant for Vineyard Mountain. This will improve service for law enforcement and first responders in the area.
- For cost savings, BCSO switched from renting additional jail beds from NORCOR Corrections to renting from Clackamas County. This has cost \$82,000 year-to-date, an approximately 50% savings.
- Behavioral Health delays continue to create difficulties at the Benton County Jail due to fines incurred when individuals remain in jail awaiting court-ordered mental health treatment.
- BCSO's biggest challenges are financial.
- BCSO received a grant for jail improvements which will make it possible to house more adults-in-custody.

Crager noted that Deflection Program funding had been lower than anticipated, apparently because the State is using a methodology based on numbers of citations. Crager asked whether Van Arsdall had seen a reduction in citations.

Van Arsdall replied that between BCSO and the City of Corvallis Police Department, there are sufficient citations/arrests, but usually there is a crime attached to that citation which makes the individual ineligible for the Deflection Program.

Joslin added that the main limiting factor is that the individual must qualify for the program and choose to participate. While dozens of individuals have been referred, only fifteen have signed up for the program, and three are actively participating. The District Attorney's Office may broaden program eligibility on a case-by-case basis. When Linn County charges cases which may be eligible for deflection, program staff inform the Court before the case is processed. Although Benton's first appearances are done remotely, Benton could have part of the Deflection Team available. Joslin will ascertain whether the Benton County judges are interested in this approach. The individuals are told to contact the Deflection Program Coordinator before the first court appearance, which may bring in more program participants.

City of Corvallis Police Department (CPD)

Chief Harvey shared updates including these highlights:

- CPD's greatest challenge is staffing. It takes months to hire a new officer, followed by a year of training before the officer can work independently.

- CPD provides most staff for the Benton County Dispatch Center. Increased staffing has allowed Dispatch to split the channels on swing shift between CPD and Benton County/Philomath.
- Dispatch has established a formal 911 backup center at the Corvallis-Benton Public Library. CPD seeks about \$2 million in Federal funds to make the center completely independent of the Law Enforcement Building.
- Corvallis has nearly finished constructing a second evidence storage facility, freeing up some storage space in the Law Enforcement Building.
- CPD is finishing year four of accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), which will assess CPD in early December 2025.
- In general, Corvallis crime has trended down during the last four years.

City of Albany Police Department (APD)

Chief Harnden shared updates that included:

- Overall, violent crime in the City of Albany is down about 22%. Drug arrests from August 2024 to August 2025 increased 35% because the State recriminalized certain drugs.
- APD added two more sworn police officers. APD has experienced low vacancy rates in recent years and is a member of the international 30x30 Initiative, which aims for 30% female law enforcement officers by 2030. APD has around 22% female officers, with good success hiring female lateral transfer candidates.
- APD completed its two-year CALEA cycle in 2025 and will complete the four-year cycle in 2027.
- Albany is still experiencing a high number of overdose deaths, with seven so far this year. APD's use of Narcan units per incident almost doubled in 2025 over 2024. The Linn Inter-agency Narcotics Enforcement team has received resources from Homeland Security Investigations and the National Guard.
- APD is advertising for a replacement Mental Health Intervention Specialist. Due to a lack of candidates, degree requirements were changed. The position is completely funded by Opiate Settlement provisions.
- The Linn County Crisis Center is in the early design phase, but there are issues with permitting.
- For any citation that APD writes, deflections are handled through the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office and routed to the District Attorney's Office (DAO). The main challenge is that those cases usually have an accompanying crime.
- APD is preparing for potential statewide Law Enforcement issues regarding automated license plate readers, use of Artificial Intelligence in report writing, and data sharing and/or masking of Law Enforcement officers.

- The biggest challenge is keeping up with the pace of growth. Infrastructure (including roadwork) is not keeping pace with development. To even keep up with the current workload, APD seeks to add three officers each biennium.

Oregon State University (OSU) Police Department (PD)

Interim Chief Yon shared updates including:

- When OSU PD was established, there was supposed to be an oversight committee, but this was not done; the department is making a renewed effort in June 2025.
- Staffing: OSU PD is two police officers and two dispatchers short of being fully staffed for the first time. Because OSU prioritizes engagement, OSU PD works on building relationships with the university as a whole. The first on-campus Citizens Academy class just began.
- OSU PD will pursue accreditation with the Northwest Accreditation Alliance, to be completed in 2026.
- OSU's crime rate is down. OSU PD has reinstituted its bicycle team.
- Biggest challenges: funding and staffing.

Chair Wyse recessed the meeting at 10:20 AM and reconvened at 10:30 AM.

Oregon State Police (OPS) Albany Area Command (AAC)

Lt. Denning, Patrol Services, (reporting for Albany Area Commander Nathan House) provided updates including:

- One-third of Benton County calls for service relate to fish and wildlife.
- The number of crashes rose after 2020, when vehicle miles climbed but Patrol had staffing issues. As a result, the agency put in more field hours and worked on staffing objectives. Thanks to strong collaboration between local and State agencies, early Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) data shows a predominant reduction in crashes.
- Staffing is always a challenge, but AAC is 99% staffed for the first time. AAC does not patrol in Benton County as much as in the past due to lack of staff and because Linn County is larger than Benton. AAC has a frequent presence on Highway 34, which involves much traffic to and from Benton County. AAC receives pass-through grants from the Federal government through ODOT, which are established for 2025. OSP's primary mission is to back local jurisdictions.
- The largest number of traffic fatalities occur on Highway 34 and Highway 20. If AAC receives a call, a trooper will be dispatched to Benton County. AAC hopes to have worksites at OSU and Corvallis in the future. Troopers still pass throughs Corvallis, to Highway 99 and Highway 34. AAC has mainly responded to calls for

service, and 65-70% of the call load relates to driving complaints. Denning emphasized that the public should call in bad drivers.

- AAC Fish and Wildlife troopers work in Polk County as well, taking a regional approach to prevent poaching.
- OSP AAC has been recognized as one of best offices in the state.

***Juvenile Department (JD)**

Hering described changes in the department's organizational structure. Crager is the acting Department Director. Thirteen of 14 positions are filled. The department's approach balances community safety and accountability with competency development and family support. The department provides informal and formal supervision, and has partnerships with multiple law enforcement agencies, school districts, and service providers.

Hering discussed challenges and opportunities for the department:

Challenges

- The services that can be provided are often limited to the youth referred to the department. Many youth come from Law Enforcement referral. JD reviews the cases, often in consultation with the DAO. Sometimes JD can provide Mental Health services for youth who will not be on supervision. The goal is to keep youth local.
- Lack of local treatment providers and other youth resources.
- Increasing needs treatment needs for mental health, alcohol/drug use, and sex offenses.
- Increase in complex cases involving multiple agencies and/or counties. Limitations on resources for families experiencing hardships.

Opportunities

- working with Health Services to be able to bill insurance for mental health services.
- Expansion of Work Group program to generate revenue.
- Expanding services to serve more youth.
- Increased facilitation of support groups in schools. JD is looking for partners in this.

Wyse commented that partnering with schools is very important and needs to be worked on. Wyse felt the situation with School District 509J was not ideal and there were issues to work on. Wyse encouraged Hering to inform the Board if there are ways for the Board to help advocate for strengthening those relationships.

Hering concurred. JD has been in discussions about holding in-school hours. Some schools are very excited about that.

Crager added that Hering has been doing school outreach, especially with Corvallis School District, but more can be done in this area, including better partnerships with school superintendents.

Hering shared that one of JD's priorities is reinvigorating consistent partnerships with local law enforcement. Regular contact among all agencies would be a highly beneficial step.

{Exhibit 1: Juvenile Department Presentation}

District Attorney's Office (DAO)

Joslin shared updates including the following highlights:

- The DAO is now fully funded for 12 positions. Crime levels are fairly consistent. Trial delays caused by the pandemic shutdown and a period of insufficient staffing resulted in a backlog of cases, but now employees are energized by being fully staffed.
- In April 2025, the DAO started using the Axon system to process media, which enables faster exchange of video evidence and information between law enforcement and the DAO.
- Currently, the DAO is spread out over three floors of the historic Courthouse (HCH). Moving to the new Courthouse (NCH) will increase efficiencies. There are currently three judges and three active courtrooms. The NCH will have a fourth courtroom. Shepherd is very interested in trying to get a fourth judge. NCH will have a fourth courtroom. Benton County Circuit Court Judge Joan Demarest shared that there is a possible area at the HCH for a fourth judge that could be used until the NCH is completed. This could help reduce delayed trials.
- In the past, Benton County had a very successful Drug Treatment Court (DTC), with up to 45-50 participants at a time, but eventually the program was discontinued due to loss of funding, changes in drug laws, and other factors. Judge Demarest has actively helped to revive DTC, which should resume on January 14, 2026. A key element was finding a treatment provider that is willing to purchase treatment and bill to insurance, without being paid directly for their services.

Joslin provided an overview of pre-trial, hearing, and trial procedures from the DAO's perspective, emphasizing defendants' and victims' constitutional right to a speedy trial, as well as the financial cost of prolonged procedures. The goal for DAO is community safety and justice. Decreased efficiencies mean that staff process fewer cases. Joslin described a case that took two years to resolve. Because the Benton County jail is not big enough, some individuals who commit additional crimes while on release still have

to be released, whereas if the person had been accountable after the first crime, the other crimes might not have occurred.

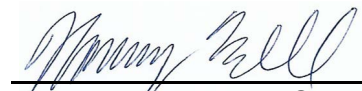
Linn County Judge Doug Marteeny did a study which estimated a cost of around \$1,000 per each failure to appear. Joslin emphasized the need for a new correctional facility, which would allow the Courts to serve people much better and save thousands of dollars. Joslin seeks to educate the public about this need. Not only is there insufficient room for jail time to punish criminals, there is not enough room to hold individuals before a hearing, even though the Court is required to do so. Swift accountability is the best practice, but the size of the jail limits options for length of jail time. The County does not have a correctional facility that meets community needs.

5. Other

No other business was conducted.

6. Adjournment

Chair Wyse adjourned the meeting at 11:34 a.m.



Nancy Wyse, 2025 Chair



Erika Milo, Recorder

*Items denoted with an asterisk do not have accompanying written materials in the meeting packet.