



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

1300 NW Wall Street, Bend, Oregon
(541) 388-6571

FOR RECORDING STAMP ONLY

JOINT MEETING WITH CIRCUIT COURT

3:30 PM

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2025

Allen Room and via Zoom

Deschutes County Attendance:			
X	Commissioner Anthony DeBone	X	Nick Lelack, County Administrator
X	Commissioner Patti Adair	X	Erik Kropp, Deputy County Administrator
X	Commissioner Phil Chang	X	Whitney Hale, Deputy County Administrator
X	Dave Doyle, County Counsel	X	Kim Riley, Senior Assistant Legal Counsel
X	Lee Randall, Facilities Director	X	Brenda Fritsvold, Executive Assistant
X	Health Services Director Holly Harris	X	Sheriff Ty Rupert
X	DCSO Captain Michael Schults		
Circuit Court Attendance:			
X	Hon. Judge Bethany Flint		Hon. Judge Beth Bagley
X	Hon. Judge Wells Ashby	X	Hon. Judge Alison Emerson
X	Hon. Judge Alycia Sykora		Hon. Judge Raymond Crutchley
	Hon. Judge Alycia Herriott	X	Hon. Judge Randy Miller
	Hon. Judge Michelle McIver	X	Trial Court Administrator Zoe Wild

1. Introductions

Chair DeBone called the meeting to order at 3:32 pm, at which time everyone present introduced themselves. During the introductions, Judge Ashby announced Judge Miller's succession to Presiding Judge in January 2026.

2. Courthouse Expansion Project

Lee Randall, Facilities Director, provided an overview of the Courthouse expansion project, sharing floor plans and renderings and reporting the status of various

components of the construction work. He reminded that completion is anticipated by next August.

Judge Ashby expressed his appreciation to the Board and the State for supporting this project. He additionally stated his appreciation for Randall and his team, saying that County staff and the contractor have been sensitive to the operations of the Court and have taken care to advise Court staff of anticipated noise disturbances before those happen.

3. Mental Health and Public Safety

Judge Emerson described the assigned judicial coverage for Aid and Assist matters amid several years of legal changes. She explained that, notwithstanding recent legislation, the federal Mossman order governs eligibility for Oregon State Hospital admission and associated timelines, which continue to be exceeded, resulting in populations remaining at the jail beyond seven days. Noting that DCSO's jail administers medication-assisted treatment, a practice not replicated across the state, she described the positive effects of collaborative efforts between Behavioral Health, the jail, and the hospital as the court continues to navigate specialty dockets and rising caseloads.

Judge Emerson further reported that the Aid and Assist caseload has grown substantially: from 24 defendants in 2020 to more than 57 currently, with 99 during 2024; hearings rose from 437 in 2020 to 1,061 in 2024, with further increases projected this year. She said although House Bill 2005 may reduce Aid and Assist numbers, it is expected to broaden civil-commitment criteria.

Health Services Director Holly Harris agreed that the system is underfunded and said while 41 beds in residential treatment facilities will be added over the next two years, demand will continue to outpace needed resources.

Commissioner Chang asked how the Mossman order is influencing State and local system responses and whether legislative actions sufficiently support local communities. Explaining the effects of having additional requirements placed on local jurisdictions without commensurate resources, Harris advocated for funding to match those obligations.

Discussion ensued regarding deflection and related programs. It was noted that the jail reviews incoming persons on a daily basis to identify cases with a drug-use nexus. DCSO's deflection program has had between 30 and 33 participants, of which 26 have graduated the program. These efforts, together with pretrial release practices, have reduced time in custody and supported stabilization in the community.

4. Status of Public Defense Services in Deschutes County

Judge Ashby said while the Court remains close to having an unrepresented list, needed public defense services are currently covered through attorneys from contracted firms.

Commissioner DeBone noted that the upcoming short legislative session may present opportunities to advocate for additional funding of public defense services.

Judge Ashby reported that Judge Herriott recently assumed responsibility for a domestic-violence-related program which requires defendants to plead into participation; unsuccessful participants move to regular probation. Recent results included a 15% increase in participation and a 5% increase in successful completions over the past year; successful completion can result in dismissal, reducing the domestic-violence trial load.

5. Mediation Funding

Zoe Wild, Trial Court Administrator, described work to build a full mediation panel, explaining that eight additional mediators have expressed interest in joining the single part-time mediator now serving. Wild said in the first half of 2025 alone, more than 300 issues could have been referred to mediation rather than be heard by judges. Wild added that funds received by the State for mediations are anticipated to be roughly twice the projected annual expense of approximately \$60,000.

Judge Ashby added that mediation has many benefits beyond keeping a case out of a courtroom.

Judge Miller added that, given the chance, parties to a case will often take the chance to settle the matter between themselves instead of having a judge decide the outcome for them. Wild agreed that mediation is a way that parties can be heard and move forward without representation and without needing to wait on the formal court process.

6. 2025 Court Updates

Judge Ashby reported trial activity increases year-over-year: felony jury trials rose 50% from 22 to 35, and domestic-relations bench trials increased from 376 to 451, a 20% rise. As the overall volume climbed, the time-to-disposition metric slipped by five percent.

Judge Miller presented an overview of the Veterans Intervention Strategies Court, explaining that participants in this post-sentencing program must show a nexus between their service-related trauma and their criminal conduct. The program uses mentoring, employment or education expectations, and tiered accountability to deepen the chances of participant success. Matt Nelson of the District Attorney's Office was credited for initiating this program locally.

Judge Flint briefed the group on the dependency docket, saying that during the pandemic, only about 22% of cases met the 60-day fact-finding benchmark. After creating a dedicated dependency docket, performance improved, and the court continues to work towards meeting dispositional standards within required timelines.

Commissioner Adair remarked on the need for more CASA volunteers and noted concerns about the prevalence of mental illness among individuals incarcerated at Deer Ridge. Discussion ensued regarding housing needs upon reentry and the availability of transitional support services.

Judge Ashby reported that the Court has contracted with the National Center for State Courts to evaluate the Court's business operations and recommend improvements. Saying that he knows the Court can improve in certain areas such as family law, he said a report is expected in September or October of 2026.

Adjournment: Chair DeBone adjourned the meeting at 5:14 pm pending an optional tour of the Courthouse expansion for those interested to view the construction in person.



Brenda Fritsvold, BOCC Executive Assistant