



For Recording Stamp Only

Minutes of the Meeting of the
Deschutes County Audit Committee

Date: October 10, 2025

Location: Deschutes County Services Building, DeArmond Room and via Zoom
1300 NW Wall Street, Bend, OR 97703

x	Facilitator: Elizabeth Pape, County Internal Auditor		
Audit Committee Public Members (6 members)			
x	Daryl Parrish, Chair <i>(via Zoom)</i>	x	Phil Anderson
	Jodi Burch	x	Liz Foott
x	Joe Healy	x	Kristin Toney
Audit Committee County Management Members (3 members)			
x	Patti Adair, County Commissioner	x	Steve Dennison, County Clerk
x	Lee Randall, Facilities Director		
Others Present:			
x	Nick Lelack, County Administrator and <i>non-voting</i> Ex-Officio member	x	Erik Kropp, Deputy County Administrator
x	Whitney Hale, Deputy County Administrator	x	Gabrielle Poccia, Incoming Performance Auditor <i>(via Zoom)</i>
x	Susan DeJoode, Director Human Resources	x	Robert Tintle, Chief Financial Officer
x	Dave Doyle, County Counsel <i>(via Zoom)</i>	x	Angie Powers, BOCC Administrative Assistant

This HYBRID meeting was held virtually via Zoom virtual meeting platform, and in the DeArmond room of the Deschutes County Services Building.

- I. **Call to Order:** Joe Healy called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.
- II. **Introductions & Notices:** In addition to those listed above, several individuals representing offices and County Clerks and Elections Managers from across Oregon were present via Zoom, and introduced themselves.
- III. **Approval of Minutes from the August 8, 2025 meeting**
Motion: Elizabeth Foott moved approval of the August 8, 2025 Audit Committee meeting minutes
Second: Commissioner Adair seconded the motion
Votes: All yes. Motion carried.

IV. Internal Audit Reports

a) Election Audit

Elizabeth Pape presented the results of the May 2025 Election Audit. The objective of the audit was to determine whether the election system is secure, accessible and accurate. Pape summarized the audit's sub-objectives. She shared a timeline of the May 2024 election, from candidate filing to election results certification. The Clerk's Office's twelve steps of an election were outlined.

Audit was unable to draw conclusions related to the election system's information security due to scope impairment as the Clerk denied Audit access to the Clear Ballot system.

Pape summarized the findings of this audit:

- Ballot drop boxes were not fully accessible. Audit's recommendation was to regularly inspect drop boxes to ensure they meet ADA standards and create a plan for improving any drop boxes that do not meet these standards.

Pape summarized observations from this audit:

- Voter rolls were checked and confirmed. Two tests of voter rolls were conducted. Registered voters per household were examined and OHA death records were compared against voter rolls.
- The signature verification process worked.
- Votes cast reflected voter intent.
- Accommodations were offered, but outreach could be improved upon.
 - Individuals from Spanish speaking and disabled populations expressed a desire to have available accommodations more clearly communicated and advertised. Dennison responded that his office is meeting the minimum requirements, and while more can be done to improve outreach, resources are limited.
 - Audit Committee members suggested posting flyers in locations around the community such as post offices, reaching out to local media outlets and updating the County's website to educate the public about available accommodations.

Responding to Foott, Dennison said the Oregon Secretary of State's Vote by Mail procedures manual outlines voter intent guidelines for elections offices. Pape noted that in the event of unclear voter intent, no two people from the same political party interpret the intent.

Dennison expressed his gratitude for the audit, noting that his office initiated the audit. He stated his appreciation for the sections of the report that highlight what his department is doing correctly.

Dennison then stated his disagreement with the section of the report related to ballot drop box accessibility. He indicated that he requested to review of the report with the committee prior to making it public and feels that his request was not granted. His

interpretation of the report is that it included negative undertones in some of the language used.

Dennison highlighted excerpts from several pages of the report with which he disagrees. He and Audit Committee members participated in a dialogue related to some of these sections.

Highlighting page 7 which references the Clerk's refusal to share data, Dennison explained that he was cooperative and explained why he was not comfortable sharing the requested information. Pape assured Dennison that the Office of Internal Audit has access to much confidential information and has several safeguards in place. Dennison referenced State of Oregon directives explaining why this critical infrastructure could not be shared.

Page 8 references the Clerk's Office 2024 Integrated Audit, which Dennison did not feel is relevant to the May 2024 Election Audit. Dennison noted that the area of risk identified in the May 2024 Election Audit has been resolved.

Page 10 reads that ballot drop boxes are not fully accessible. Dennison said the boxes are accessible, and the Clerk's Office is following the law. The Department of Justice's 2010 ballot drop box checklist applies to "polling places". The Clerk's Office itself is the County's only polling place. Drive-through ballot boxes are intended to be accessed from a motor vehicle, not by pedestrians. Dennison would not suggest an individual walk up to a drive-up ballot box. Additionally, drive-up depositories are not required to comply with ADA requirements.

Lee Randall, speaking in his role as Facilities Director, stated there is not an ADA standard for drive-up ballot boxes. When these drop boxes are installed, they are intended for drive-up motor vehicles only. The Facilities department has an ADA representative on-staff who also concluded that these guidelines do not apply to drive-up boxes.

Responding to Commissioner Adair, Dennison said the *location* of drop boxes is a separate discussion. Responding to Toney, Dennison said there is no signage indicating the boxes are drive-up only. Pape said she felt it was important to keep this in the report to help make these ballot drop boxes more accessible to those on foot, as it makes opportunities for voting more accessible.

Dennison said that he is currently working with Bend Parks and Recreation District on the Larkspur box which has a gate installed in front of it, impeding vehicle traffic. Foott and Toney suggested that if the drive-up boxes are for motor vehicles only then they should be labeled as such with the appropriate signage.

Dennison acknowledged there is room for improvement with ballot drop boxes, but he requested the section be rewritten. He believes the audit reporting process to be flawed, as it was his desire to review the report with the committee prior to making it public. Toney stated that management has an opportunity to respond to audit findings

and recommendations, and a follow-up report will be drafted referencing management's response. This is standard protocol.

Anderson acknowledged Dennison's desire for administrative fairness despite an overall "good audit report". Lelack suggested that perhaps the report can be indicated as draft with an appropriate watermark, as management's response is forthcoming. He acknowledged that Dennison is raising issues beyond Deschutes County, as evidenced by the many individuals in attendance who represent counties across the state.

Parrish said that ADA issues are common for facilities created more than 10 years ago, and improvements are typically made when funds are available. As the County's ADA Coordinator, Kropp manages complaints and cautioned against unintended consequences of making ballot drop box requirements too prescriptive as there would end up being fewer of them.

Rochelle Long, Klamath County Clerk, stated that at the advice of her county's Legal Counsel, her office does not share security information plans with auditors due to elections safety and security. Drive-through ballot drop boxes are listed on their websites as such.

Dan Forester, Washington County Elections Division Manager, echoed Long's comments. He cited ORS 254.074 and Oregon Secretary of State Critical Infrastructure Security Directive 2022-3 from May 3, 2022.

Bobbi Childers, Morrow County Clerk, indicated that County Clerks determines how many drive-up boxes exist, and where they are located. They are not a requirement and can removed at any time.

b) Courthouse Reconstruction Follow-Up

Pape indicated that previous Performance Auditor, Aaron Kay, was the lead on the original audit which was published in September 2024, and this is a follow-up. Pape provided an overview of the project's construction timeline and funding sources.

Of the three recommendations of this audit, all three have been resolved.

- A Construction Management Manual was developed which assesses risk.
- The manual directs staff to assign clear roles and expectations to the construction team.
- Staff researched contracts from various Oregon public entities and were open to using these as contract templates. A template enhances cost control at the County's disposal.

Commissioner Adair stated her appreciation for the monthly budget reports, which show the current project cost at approximately \$46.8 million. Randall noted the project's estimated August 2026 completion date.

Audit has plans for a post-construction audit of the courthouse construction project after the project's completion.

c) Language Access Follow-Up

Pape reported 2022 census data which shows that Deschutes County has approximately 3,243 people who speak Spanish while speaking English less than well. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and the U.S. Department of Justice Language Access and Assessment Planning Tool were used.

One recommendation has been resolved, with the Language Access program responsibility having been assigned to the Deputy County Administrator who oversees Risk Management.

Four recommendations are in process:

- Risk Management has been tasked with updating the Civil Rights Act policy to provide for clear guidance and best practices. This has been delayed due to staffing shortages in HR and a Deputy County Administrator backfilling in HR.
- Administration and HR are tasked with creating a Language Access Plan based on the DOJ Assessment and Planning Tool.
- Rather than administration developing mandatory countywide procedures to the Language Access Policy, they plan to coordinate with departments to develop procedures.
- A policy will be created for the Bilingual Program to clarify selection, hiring, testing, expectations, and compensation. This has also been delayed due to HR vacancies.

The status of the in-process recommendations will be in the Global Follow-Up Report.

d) In process and upcoming:

- **Sheriff's Office Body and Auto Cameras** – Audit was unable to access Body-Worn Camera footage so this audit will have a significant scope impairment. The results of this audit will be shared in December.
- **Houselessness** – This audit has been complicated as there is not one place where houselessness sits within the County. Objectives will be shared at the December meeting.
- **Status Report** – A status report is provided in the agenda packet, outlining how the Office of Internal Audit spends its time on different activities.

V. Special Topics

a) Preparation for Topics to be discussed at December Meeting:

- **Annual Report** – The Audit Committee presents this report to the Board of Commissioners. Pape outlined some topics covered on previous reports. Pape provided the committee with the option to take more ownership over the report. Parrish suggested including information for the public about the function of the committee and how to serve on the committee in the event of vacancies.

It was determined that a subcommittee will examine last year's report and make any necessary changes and provide comments to Pape via email no later than mid-November. The subcommittee will consist of Foott and Toney.

- **Chair and Vice-Chair Elections**

Pape expressed a desire for a more formal process of electing the committee's Chair and Vice Chair. The nomination and selection process will take place at the December meeting.

b) Proposal to Establish a Subcommittee to Support Ongoing Auditor Performance Review

Pape reported that her performance review took place last week. Discussion ensued related to establishing a subcommittee to solicit feedback from department heads. It was determined that the subcommittee will consist of Anderson, Healy, and Parrish. Their work will begin in January.

VI. Other Discussion Items

a) Administrative Update

County Administrator Nick Lelack announced that Holly Harris has been named Deschutes County Health Services Director. Harris has served as the Behavioral Health Director for three years.

Lelack reported that Fair Director first round interviews took place this morning. Recruitment closes on October 12 at 11:59 p.m. The second round of interviews will take place virtually, then in-person interviews will take place on October 28.

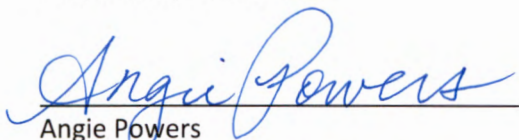
There is a vacancy on the Budget Committee, and the recruitment closes on October 27. This is a volunteer position.

The District Mapping Advisory Committee (DMAC) has been meeting weekly. The DMAC's recommendation for a district map will go before the BOCC for consideration. The BOCC will determine whether to put the map before voters on the May 26 ballot.

VII. Closing and Adjourn - Chair Parrish adjourned the meeting at 2:49 p.m.

The next hybrid meeting is scheduled for December 12, 2025 at 12:00 p.m., in the Barnes & Sawyer room of the Deschutes Services Building and via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,


Angie Powers
BOCC Administrative Assistant