

Multnomah County

2025-26 Hearing Minutes

Wednesday, June 4, 2025

9:00 a.m.

Multnomah Building 501 SE Hawthorne Blvd.
Portland, Oregon

Present:

TSCC:

Chair Harmony Quiroz,
Vice Chair Matt Donahue,
Commissioner Tod Burton,
Commissioner Allison Lugo Knapp,
Commissioner Dr. Rita Moore,
Executive Director Allegra Willhite,
Budget Analyst Brittanie Abayare

Absent: None

Multnomah County Board of Commissioners:

Chair Jessica Vega Pederson
Commissioner Meaghan Moyer, District 1
Commissioner Shannon Singleton, District 2
Commissioner Julia Brim-Edwards, District 3
Commissioner Vince Jones-Dixon, District 4

Opening Remarks and Introductions

Chair Harmony Quiroz called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees to the annual Multnomah County budget hearing. She introduced herself as the Chair of the Tax Supervising and Conservation Commission (TSCC) and provided an overview of the Commission's purpose. She explained that the TSCC was established by the Oregon Legislature more than a century ago to provide independent community oversight of local government budgets. The Commission reviews and certifies the budgets of all TSCC member taxing districts and conducts annual public hearings to engage with district leadership and provide the public with an opportunity to comment before budgets are adopted.

Chair Quiroz requested that commissioners and staff introduce themselves and declare any potential conflicts of interest with the County.

Chair Quiroz acknowledged that the County had received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its FY 2024–25 budget. She emphasized the importance of making budgets readable and understandable for both TSCC and the public, noting that transparency is critical.

She then outlined the structure of the hearing: introductory remarks from the County, followed by public comment, and then a question-and-answer period. She encouraged participants to speak directly and openly and to keep readings of prepared statements brief in order to allow more time for discussion.

Chair Quiroz then turned the floor over to County Chair Jessica Vega Pederson.

Chair Vega Pederson began her introductory remarks by stating that this was the first County budget cycle in many years involving significant deficits, which required a different approach to planning for the upcoming fiscal year. She noted that although the County has weathered challenges in the past, including the COVID-19 pandemic, previous years had been bolstered by federal funds that helped soften the impact. In contrast, this year's budget cycle was particularly difficult for departments and County leadership. She stated that although hard decisions were made, the County grounded its work in community values and hoped that would be reflected in the answers provided during the hearing.

Public Comment

No members of the public had signed up for testimony.

Commissioner Questions and District Responses

Commissioner Lugo Knapp asked: We understand you have a new data dashboard showing how many people are experiencing homelessness and how many people are being served. This is a positive step forward in better understanding the current landscape of homelessness in the community. What have you learned so far that can help you fine tune your response to homelessness?

Commissioner Julia Brim-Edwards responded that for many years the County relied on point-in-time counts, which they knew undercounted people. The new by-name list dashboard, launched in April, allows tracking of inflow and outflow data. It shows who is entering the system, what services they are receiving, and whether they are exiting. The dashboard has revealed that while people are transitioning into shelter, the outflow from shelter into housing is lower than expected. The data allows the County to identify pressure points and match services more accurately to the needs of individuals.

Follow-up question asked by Commissioner Moore: Creating a real-time tracking system for shelter beds has been a topic of discussion for many years. Last fall, the Joint Office launched a pilot covering a small number of providers, with plans for full implementation this past January. Can you tell us the status of this project and any preliminary assessment of how it's working?

Commissioner Brim-Edwards stated the real-time tracking system has been expanded to include all adult shelters with an open referral process. It is now used by outreach workers and other providers throughout the County. The project continues to expand and is expected to support a more robust Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) by integrating data on availability and need, including types of shelter beds.

Follow-up question asked by Commissioner Moore: Do you have plans to use this tracking system to implement or impact your evaluation of the success of programs?

Chair Vega Pederson answered that the tracking system would allow the County to examine how long people stay in different types of shelters and where there are vacancies. It will help determine which shelters provide better outcomes and which models are more effective. Chair Vega Pederson said she is particularly interested in ensuring the Mayor's planned overnight shelter beds are integrated into the system, including data tracking and usage, so the County can optimize the system.

Follow-up question asked by Commissioner Moore: Does this tracking system include only shelter beds, or is it expanding to cover any other housing-related programs?

Chair Vega Pederson confirmed that currently the tracking system is focused on adult shelter beds.

Follow-up question asked by Chair Quiroz: Is the dashboard shared with the City? What is the overlap or shared information between the City, County, and Metro?

Chair Vega Pederson explained that the original pilot was done in partnership with the City of Portland. The County is now expanding to include shelters beyond those operated by the City. The HMIS data system is administered by Multnomah County but is used across the tri-county area.

Commissioner Donahue asked: We're curious about how you choose when and how much to fund permanent supportive housing vs. providing short-term shelter beds. How does the county balance these two approaches? Are you guided by a specific strategy? If so, what is the strategy based on? Is the County's strategy the same as the City's?

Commissioner Shannon Singleton responded that none of the reductions made during the current budget cycle were easy, and all represent lost services the County would otherwise provide. She emphasized that the County does not frame the issue as shelter versus PSH. Instead, a full continuum is needed, including eviction prevention, emergency shelter, rent assistance, transitional and recovery housing, and housing for individuals with severe mental illness. She noted that currently there is little between the Oregon State Hospital and PSH for people needing intermediate levels of care.

She explained that the County is building a system that is under-resourced and therefore requires a balanced investment strategy. Without that balance, bottlenecks develop like when people in transitional housing cannot move into permanent housing due to lack of units. She also noted the current challenge of more people entering homelessness than the system can house each month.

She described how the County has been evaluating its investments through internal work sessions, a joint session with the City of Portland, and participation in the regional Homelessness Response System Steering and Oversight Committee. These discussions are grounded in data on cost, usage, and outcomes. The County is using its new by-name dashboard to monitor monthly inflow and outflow, identify pinch points in the system, and guide where additional resources are needed.

Singleton stated that the FY 2025–26 budget includes funding for 1,726 PSH units, and the County's Local Implementation Plan supports 2,235 PSH units—part of Metro's regional goal of 5,000 units. She added that upcoming studies on rapid rehousing, outreach, and housing pathways through Portland State University will further inform the County's decisions in the year ahead.

Follow-up question asked by Commissioner Donahue: What area is getting more investment than the others? Are you looking at where you get the most 'bang for your buck' in terms of services?

Commissioner Singleton stated that the County is analyzing cost by shelter type, including length of stay and outcomes. That data will inform future decisions. She emphasized that no area is currently over-invested, and the County seeks a balanced approach.

Follow-up question asked by Commissioner Burton: When the County identified the large funding gap early in the budget process, how did you begin closing that gap?

Chair Vega Pederson responded that the updated revenue forecast from Metro arrived in December, after departments had already begun drafting budget proposals based on initial guidance. The forecast impacted both the current year (FY25) and the proposed FY26. To address the shortfall in FY 2024–25, the County used reserves, identified unspent funds, and avoided its usual practice of reallocating leftover dollars from providers to other programs at year-end. For FY 2025–26, the County aligned spending decisions with existing plans, such as the Homeless Response Action Plan and the Local Implementation Plan under the SHS program. Staff focused on critical areas with high impact potential and evaluated whether existing programs were supported by ongoing revenue or had been funded primarily with one-time dollars. The County aimed to avoid overinvesting in any single area in order to

maintain system balance.

Follow-up question asked by Commissioner Moore: So, you're talking about inflow and outflow at various stages. Is permanent supportive housing actually permanent? Or is the expectation that people eventually move on?

Commissioner Singleton responded that permanent supportive housing is indeed intended to be permanent. It is designed for people who are chronically homeless, defined by HUD (The Department of Housing and Urban Development) as being unhoused for over a year and having a disabling condition. Most individuals in PSH have long-term disabilities. However, in some cases, individuals do "step down" to a lower level of care over time. For example, through the County's partnership with Home Forward, some residents who no longer need intensive services but still need rent assistance can transition into more independent housing. Still, most PSH participants remain long term, given the severity of their conditions.

Follow-up question asked by Commissioner Moore: And the ultimate goal is 5,000 of those units?

Commissioner Singleton clarified that the 5,000-unit target is the regional goal under Metro's Supportive Housing Services program. Multnomah County's specific goal is to fund at least 2,235 of those units.

Follow-up question asked by Chair Quiroz: We've heard several mentions of rental assistance. I know in recent years there were one-time federal dollars helping on the prevention side. What about now—what kind of tracking systems or supports are in place for people who are housing insecure or on the edge?"

Commissioner Singleton replied that with the expiration of federal COVID funding, the County's rental assistance and eviction prevention efforts have returned to pre-pandemic levels. While those programs still exist, they operate with fewer dollars and can serve fewer people. The County continues to offer support through its Multnomah Stability Initiative (MSI), which provides not just rent assistance but also help with utilities, food, and other basic needs. However, Singleton emphasized that service capacity has been reduced due to the loss of one-time resources.

Chair Quiroz asked: Preschool for All's current model assumes 80% of existing preschool seats being converted to Preschool for All by 2030. A recent audit found that only around 11% of potential licensed sites are participating. Has that number improved since the audit was released? And what feedback are you receiving from providers in terms of those choosing not to participate - what are the barriers?

Commissioner Vince Jones-Dixon responded that Preschool for All (PFA) must both create new seats and stabilize existing ones to reach universal preschool access. The County estimates that it needs to stabilize approximately 7,000 existing seats and upgrade 4,000 new ones. As of FY 2025–26, over one-third of the 1,300 seats are new—created since the launch of PFA. By participating in the program, providers receive stable and timely funding that supports staff wages and business operations, which in turn allows some to expand. 23% of current providers will be expanding to additional locations next year. Expansion has been supported in part by facilities funding from the program. Some providers choose not to participate because they cannot select which children they serve and may feel unequipped to meet all student needs. The County is responding to these concerns by creating provider feedback tables to better understand and address the roadblocks and providing coaching funding and funding to increase staff wages. Preschool has grown from 80 to 127 providers in the next year.

Follow-up question asked by Chair Quiroz: We've heard concerns about the licensing process. Can you tell us about the steps required for licensure and whether there are hour requirements?

Chair Jessica Vega Pederson explained that childcare licensing is administered by the Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care, not the County. There are three license types: Registered Family (home-based care), Certified Family (home-based, but with stricter standards) and Certified Center (commercial building-based care)

Preschool for All prioritizes certified family and center sites due to their higher safety and quality standards. As of the hearing, there are 982 licensed childcare sites in Multnomah County, including 330 certified centers, 343 certified family homes, and 309 registered family homes.

Licensing involves submitting an application, enrolling in the Central Background Registry, passing an initial site inspection, and completing a follow-up inspection with children present. The process typically takes three to six weeks. There is no required number of hours dictated by the license itself; hours of care are determined by each provider.

Vega Pederson noted that the most significant challenges for providers often come before licensing—specifically with finding facilities, meeting zoning and building code requirements, and changing a building's occupancy designation. These can be time-consuming and expensive. The County helps address these barriers through the Preschool for All Facilities Fund, which provides both capital support and technical assistance to guide providers through the regulatory and construction process. She referenced Prosper Portland's Childcare Facilities Navigator Report as a resource that outlines these challenges in detail.

Follow-up question asked by Chair Quiroz: There are over 900 licensed sites, but only around 125 are part of Preschool for All (*Note: Chair Vega-Pederson clarified they have 218*). Can you help us understand the gap and what the County is doing to address it—for both providers and families?

Chair Vega Pederson explained that early phases of PFA focused on serving priority populations with the least access to quality preschool, including children in poverty and children of color. That approach sometimes conflicted with maintaining continuity for families already in care. To improve access and continuity, the County recently modified its "continuation of care" policy to reserve some seats for new families while still supporting current students. She acknowledged the difficulty of balancing program growth with family needs, and noted that PFA leadership is working closely with providers to adapt. She expressed appreciation for the feedback being shared by the provider community.

Follow-up question asked by Chair Quiroz: If 10 hours of kid present time are required to be licensed, it seems to us this is more like daycare licensing, rather than strictly pre-school - 10 kid present hours is more than elementary school hours. Are facilities providing pre-school and after-school care that count towards eligible expenses for Preschool for All? And if so, do you believe this aligns with the original program intent communicated to voters to provide pre-school?

Chair Vega Pederson stated that PFA includes multiple models: some offer school-day, school-year schedules; others are year-round and 10 hours per day. The 10-hour model was shaped by parent feedback during initial program development—many working families said they would not be able to use the program if it didn't cover a full workday. As the program grows, the County is evaluating which models are most in demand and may revisit what level of care can be offered universally. She noted that future decisions may include whether to continue offering 10 hours of free care for all families, or to scale it back to the self-sufficiency model based on income as initially proposed.

Follow-up question asked by Commissioner Lugo Knapp: We're hearing reports in the community about a lack of availability or a lack of knowledge of programs serving bilingual families - what is your response to this? How are you communicating these programs? Do you believe the programs available are enough to meet need, and if not, how are you measuring how well need is being met?

Chair Vega Pederson replied that the County surveys providers and families on demographics and language needs. One of the original goals of PFA was to improve access for communities whose primary language is not English. The County has made efforts to recruit bilingual and culturally specific providers and supports them with coaching and professional development. She did not have the data on hand but offered to follow up.

Follow-up question asked by Chair Quiroz: Currently, the program requires 10-hour availability. Will

there be flexibility going forward—for example, offering part-day culturally responsive models for communities that may not want a full day?

Chair Vega Pederson confirmed that not all sites operate 10-hour programs. Some follow a school-day model. While there is a minimum number of hours to meet developmental goals, there is already variation in the program, and the County is open to evolving models based on community feedback.

Follow-up question asked by Commissioner Moore: Can you give us a sense of the cost per child/per seat? Are the costs expected to decrease as the availability scales up?

Chair Vega Pederson stated that they don't have those numbers available at the moment, but will follow up with the numbers.

Commissioner Donahue asked: Last year we spoke with you about the deflection program, a very complex and ambitious program that was just being launched. In a February press release the county shared that 212 individuals had been served so far. We'd like to hear more about this program - how does deflection work? And are there enough treatment options and other service providers available to meet demand?

Commissioner Meaghan Moyer, explained that the deflection program is designed to provide a warm handoff from law enforcement to County-contracted service providers. Rather than being arrested for misdemeanor possession of controlled substances, individuals are offered support services, including substance use and behavioral health treatment. The program is a collaborative effort between the County Health Department, local law enforcement, the District Attorney's Office, and the courts.

Participants are taken to the County's "Coordinated Care Pathway Center," where they receive screenings for medical and substance use disorder (SUD) needs and may begin case management. As of April 28, 2025, voluntary sobering services also became available at the center.

To be eligible, a person must be potentially chargeable with possession, not be engaged in another crime, not have a warrant, not pose a danger to self or others, and must not have failed deflection in the previous 30 days. People can be deflected multiple times if they access services during each 30-day eligibility window. This structure seeks to balance accountability with recognition that recovery is a process that often requires multiple opportunities.

She elaborated that once a participant receives a care plan, they may be referred to services such as outpatient or residential treatment, peer supports, recovery housing, detox, and medication-assisted treatment. However, the availability of these services depends on community capacity.

They acknowledged that capacity for treatment is limited and that a broader expansion of services is planned. A key next step is the opening of a sobering and crisis stabilization center in 2027, which will offer additional sobering beds, detox services, and medication-assisted treatment.

There are notable systemwide gaps, especially for people with co-occurring severe mental illness and substance use disorder. The County stated there is no dedicated residential treatment program for this population in the state of Oregon. To address capacity tracking, the County is partnering with OHSU's Behavioral Health Coordination Center to improve visibility into regional bed availability. They also cited a 2023 OHSU gap analysis and the Health Department's CAST assessment, which surveyed 93 SUD organizations and found staffing shortages and a need for more Level 2 and 3 residential beds.

Follow up question asked by Commissioner Donahue: So is there a network of treatment services already available to support those individuals when they're diverted into the program? Or are you still building out the broader system?

Commissioner Moyer responded that gaps remain in the broader system of care. There are still significant shortages in detox capacity, sobering services, and housing options to meet the needs of

people being diverted. She stated that the County is working with OHSU on a regional needs analysis to understand existing service gaps and to plan for additional resources.

She shared that the County is in the planning stages of opening a sobering and stabilization center, with an anticipated opening date in 2027, though planning is still underway. She acknowledged that while the deflection program provides the point of contact, the supporting systems people are deflected into must be better resourced to ensure success.

Commissioner Donahue asked for clarification: So if someone is arrested by police for a misdemeanor possession charge, they are given the option to go to a deflection center or get processed in court and go to jail. Is that right?

Chair Vega Pederson responded yes, individuals who meet eligibility criteria are offered the option to go to the deflection center instead of being booked into jail. Once at the center, they undergo screening and receive support services. They may stay for up to 24 hours, but most people stay for a shorter duration. From there, they are connected to other services depending on needs such as a medical appointment, shelter, detox, or peer support. Staff follow up to ensure that referred services are accessed within the 30-day window. A second 30-day period allows for administrative follow-up and provider verification.

Commissioner Donahue followed up: And then if they get arrested again within that 30-day window of deflection?

Chair Vega Pederson responded that if a participant is still within the 30-day window from a previous deflection, they are not disqualified from being deflected again. However, if they previously failed to engage with services during their window and it was documented, they would not be eligible again for another 30-days.

Follow-up question asked by Commissioner Moore: What kind of data are you tracking in relation to this program? How are you planning to measure success?

Commissioner Moyer shared that they are collecting data, as of the day before the hearing, 283 people had been referred to deflection, representing 264 unique individuals. Of those, 183 engaged in services – an engagement rate of 65%. 169 people followed through with at least one referred service.

They also track which law enforcement agencies are making referrals, the types of screenings participants receive (medical, SUD, basic needs), and demographic data including age, race, gender, housing status, and employment status. Completion of deflection is defined as accessing at least one referred service within a 30-day period.

Commissioner Singleton added that the County has had a lot of conversations about how to really connect deflection with homeless services – especially as people exit deflection. They're exploring how to align deflection pathways with shelter availability and services. She stated that The County is actively exploring expanding deflection referral authority beyond law enforcement to groups like Portland Street Response. Law enforcement was prioritized initially to gauge capacity needs, but the goal is broader access.

Follow-up question asked by Commissioner Moore: Do you have a real-time tracking capability, so that as I understand it—you've got all these potential referrals—does the social worker talking to an individual have access to information on the availability of services?

Commissioner Moyer stated that this functionality is in development as part of the County's partnership with OHSU. The intention is to have a "control center" with live information about treatment bed capacity across the region so providers can refer participants more efficiently. They are not yet at full implementation but are actively working toward it.

Follow-up question asked by Commissioner Moore: is there an ETA on the tracking system?

No ETA yet, but staff will follow up.

Follow-up question asked by Commissioner Moore: are you also collecting data on outcomes? It sounded like you're tracking who people are seen by, but do you have the capacity at this point to collect any information about the outcomes for individuals? Did they successfully complete services? Did they manage to get housing?

Chair Vega Pederson acknowledged that long-term outcome tracking is still a work in progress. They are participating in a statewide effort coordinated by OHSU and the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission. All counties participating in deflection report standardized data through the REDCap system, which includes information on engagement, referrals, and service delivery. The County is awaiting a statewide report from OHSU due in September that will include best practices, recommendations, and further insight into long-term outcomes. Locally, the County is building internal systems to track participants through the continuum of care, including whether they "fall off" at certain points.

Commissioner Moyer added that they report uniform data to the statewide database REDCap data and they release monthly reports that the County participates in and you can see their progress monthly as well as other counties that are also participating in deflection.

Commissioner Moore asked: Last summer ended the decriminalization of certain illegal substances, and people can again be arrested for possession. The county is doing work to address some of these charges through the deflection program, but as we've discussed, that program is just getting off the ground. How are things going so far, are you seeing changes in the number of people being prosecuted for crimes related to decriminalization?

- The [County prepared slides in coordination with the District Attorney and Sheriff's offices to address this question.](#)
- The overall County jail population has been growing steadily for the past two years at a rate of just under 1% per month.
- Drug Enforcement Misdemeanors (DEMs) represent a very minor portion of the overall County jail bookings.
 - 108 total bookings on DEM charges since September of 2024 against an average of between 1500 and 1600 bookings per month in the same interval.
 - These 108 bookings have had virtually zero impact on jail capacity. The average length of stay in custody for those bookings is 26 hours, and the median is far lower at just 4 hours.
- The Department of Community Justice (DCJ) has seen a limited number of adults come on supervision as a result of the passing of HB 4002.
- As of May 10, 2025, there were 18 adults on supervision with DCJ for drug enforced misdemeanors (DEM). Of these 18, five were convicted in Multnomah County.
- Other counties of disposition include Clackamas (9), Jackson (1), Washington (2) and Yamhill (1). Four of the five adults have initiated and completed the deflection process at the Deflection Center, with one declining to participate.
- DCJ holds monthly internal coordination meetings to review new cases, and the coordination process with system partners, to support early information sharing and establish best practices.
- Since HB 4002, the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office has seen a predictable increase in law enforcement referrals for these charges.
 - In the eight months following:
 - the law's enactment, our office received 930 referred cases that included at least one charge of Possession of a Controlled Substance, compared to 387 such cases in the eight months prior.

- The majority of these cases also include at least one companion felony charge. The most common co-occurring offenses are:
 - Unlawful possession of firearms
 - Felony elude
 - DUII
 - Property crimes such as theft and unauthorized use of a vehicle

Chair Vega Pederson reported that law enforcement participation is critical to the deflection program's success. During May 2025, the County received 144 deflection referrals, approximately one-third of all deflection cases to date, due to a concentrated law enforcement initiative conducted with Oregon State Police. Officers focused more on identifying drug users and directing them to treatment services through deflection, rather than pursuing drug dealing arrests.

Commissioner Burton asked: Last year you talked about the County budget process objectives for this year, including adding more time for the Proposed Budget process, particularly with the commissioners, as well as getting the County Budget Advisory Committee more involved in the process. My question is this: Commissioners, can you give us an update on how the budget process went this year and share your perspective?

Commissioner Brim-Edwards explained that she was surprised last year to be asked to approve the Chair's proposed budget just one day after receiving it. This year, a three-week gap between budget release and approval was introduced, which was a positive step. That window allowed for some high-level review of the executive summary and initial conversations, but they still had not held public hearings or heard from Budget Advisory Committees before voting.

She voted no on the proposed budget for that reason—not due to disagreement with the content, but because the process didn't allow for thorough public or commissioner review prior to approval. She emphasized that the approval timeline may undermine public trust if people believe commissioners are endorsing a document they haven't had time to scrutinize.

Commissioner Brim-Edwards advocated for a structure where TSCC receives the Chair's proposed budget for review, but the commission is not required to "approve" it until a later stage, after hearings and amendments. She expressed hope for future process improvements.

Commissioner Megan Moyer added that as a first-time commissioner, her past experience with public budgeting was with the Oregon Legislature. Compared to that, she found the County process less transparent and more difficult to navigate. She appreciated the three public hearings which brought in diverse perspectives.

However, she found the procedural rules challenging, especially around "serial deliberation," which limits how and when commissioners can discuss budget amendments with each other. This makes it harder to collaborate and build consensus.

Follow-up question asked by Commissioner Burton: At the proposed budget stage, before we even come out with a proposed budget, what we're seeing in most communities is that Budget Advisory Committees and elected officials are all involved with putting together the proposed budget. So it's not really the first time you see it when it gets to the proposed stage. How involved are County Commissioners or Budget Advisory Groups?

Commissioner Singleton and staff clarified that County Commissioners do *not* participate in developing the proposed budget, the directors do. Chair Vega Pederson explained that the department directors submit their program offers to the Chair's Office in February, and the Chair releases the proposed budget in April. That proposal becomes public at that time.

Although the program offers are technically available earlier, they are not accompanied by public deliberation until after the April release. Commissioners serve both as the Budget Committee and the governing body that adopts the budget.

Chair Quiroz asked: A number of Youth and Family Services programs, School Based Mental Health counselors, and the Nurse-Family Partnership program, serving some of our most vulnerable children and families, are facing significant cuts or complete elimination. Funding preventive services is always difficult, but especially during times of budget cuts. How does the County balance the need to deal with current emergent situations with the ultimate goal of early intervention to prevent later problems?

Chair Vega Pederson acknowledged the ongoing tension in public budgeting between immediate needs and long-term prevention. She said the County tried to protect direct service programs for people who are most vulnerable—those facing homelessness, at risk of eviction, or without access to other programs.

Programs for children, seniors, and communities affected by systemic disparities remain priorities. However, the County had to make painful tradeoffs, especially given shrinking state and federal support. The goal was to preserve programs that are uniquely provided by Multnomah County and not available elsewhere.

She also acknowledged feedback from CBACs warning against reducing administrative and staffing infrastructure, but maintained that the County had to balance investments across the continuum while prioritizing urgent crises like homelessness.

Commissioner Moyer reinforced that difficult cuts are unavoidable. While commissioners are trying to preserve services, the budget situation is such that reductions to important programs—including those for children and families—are inevitable.

Closing Remarks and Certification

At the conclusion of the hearing, Executive Director Allegra presented the commission's findings regarding Multnomah County's FY 2025–26 approved budget.

She began by thanking the County's budget and finance staff for their diligence in preparing a budget of this size and complexity. She recognized their professionalism, grace under pressure, and continued partnership with TSCC throughout the year. She acknowledged the significant workload associated with balancing a large and multifaceted budget under difficult fiscal conditions.

Findings:

For the FY 2025–26 budget, TSCC staff found no objections to the budget itself. However, they made one formal recommendation.

In three of the past five fiscal years, Multnomah County expenditures exceeded legally adopted appropriations in one or more funds – a violation of Oregon Local Budget Law. Allegra noted that County finance staff have consistently been transparent and responsive in explaining why the over-expenditures occurred and have outlined clear corrective actions to prevent recurrence.

Allegra noted that the repetition of over-expenditures raised concern. Therefore, the commission recommended that the County closely follow its outlined action plan to ensure that spending remains within legally adopted appropriations in future fiscal years.

Aside from this recurring issue, TSCC found the County's budget estimates to be reasonable for the purposes stated and concluded that the overall budget is in compliance with Oregon Local Budget Law.

Chair Quiroz motioned to authorize the commission to sign the certification letter with the one recommendation as presented by staff. The motion was moved by Commissioner Moore and seconded

by Commissioner Burton and approved unanimously by all the commissioners present.

Chair Quiroz thanked the County for their continued efforts and reminded everyone that the certification process is designed not only to ensure legal compliance, but also to support transparency and public trust. She encouraged continued diligence in execution of the action plan and closed the hearing.

There being no other business, Chair Quiroz closed the meeting.