

MINUTES



County of Inyo Board of Supervisors

August 12, 2026

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Inyo, State of California, met in regular session at the hour of 8:37 a.m., on August 12, 2026, in the Board of Supervisors Room, County Administrative Center, Independence, with the following Supervisors present: Chairperson Trina Orrill, presiding, Will Wadelton, Jeff Griffiths, Jennifer Roeser and Scott Marcellin. Also present: CAO David Fraser, County Counsel John-Carl Vallejo, and Assistant Clerk of the Board Darcy Israel.

Pledge of Allegiance Supervisor Wadelton led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment II The Chairperson asked for public comment related to items not calendared on the agenda and there was no one wishing to speak.

Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget Workshop Assistant CAO Danelle Carrington and Auditor-Controller Amy Shepherd presented an overview of the county's budget development process and its current status, noting that the budget is not yet balanced. Carrington reviewed the county's budget philosophy, annual timeline, and key priorities for the year.

Shepherd presented preliminary financial data, noting rising costs across salaries, benefits, health insurance, and unfunded liabilities, and highlighted the essential role of fund balance to ensure a balanced budget. She reviewed major revenue sources and briefed the Board on reductions in Payments in-Lieu of Taxes (PILT) funding, declining geothermal royalties, and the uncertain impacts of HR1, underscoring the County's goal of limiting fund-balance usage to \$4.5 million.

HHS Director Anna Scott added that although some program revenues within her department may increase due to higher caseloads, significant uncertainties persist around indigent care and housing programs that depend on one-time funding.

Carrington outlined strategies used to balance the budget, including review of revenue, use of departmental spending plans, targeted cuts, and moving certain requests to mid-year. She also noted temporarily holding vacant positions, careful use of one-time funds, and possible reductions to discretionary general-fund programs such as grants-in-support and marketing.

Carrington, Assistant Personnel Director Keri Oney, and CAO Fraser addressed questions relating to personnel-related costs, noting that some adjustments may require union negotiations while others can be considered during mid-year and third-quarter budget reviews.

Oney further highlighted current cost-saving measures, including delayed hiring and recruitment and stressed that the review of vacant positions is not necessarily a hiring freeze but an opportunity for each vacancy to be evaluated individually, with essential and hard-to-fill positions prioritized and a more comprehensive review of the necessity of a position being given.

Recess/Reconvene The Chairperson recessed the meeting at 9:31 a.m. for a break and reconvened at 9:43 a.m. with all members present.

Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget Workshop Chairperson Orrill invited departments to comment on delaying recruitment for vacant positions as a cost-saving measure.

Deputy Public Works Director Shannon Platt raised concerns about filling three longstanding equipment operator vacancies, especially with winter approaching and asked for more

information on the hiring review committee. Oney explained that, moving forward, each vacant position will be reviewed monthly by a committee that includes Personnel, budget staff, the CAO, the Auditor-Controller, and the department head. Essential and hard-to-fill positions will be prioritized, and departments will remain central to the decision-making process. Oney said that following significant changes from the recent classification and compensation study and given current fiscal uncertainty, this added oversight is intended to slow the process just enough to support thoughtful, well-informed staffing decisions and said that administration is recommending no staffing changes this budget cycle.

Sheriff Rennie highlighted supervision and safety needs and said that one of the requested positions would be paid for out of non-general funds. HHS Director Anna Scott described increased workloads, expanded regional responsibilities, and grant-funded positions that may need reconsideration later in the year and outlined two new position requests to support rising housing demands and higher Medi-Cal/CalFresh caseloads under HR1. Planning Director Cathreen Richards noted its staffing needs stem from long-term staff absences and succession needs and Administration is exploring temporary support and potential contracting options to maintain workflow.

Supervisors Roeser and Orrill emphasized the importance of maintaining strong public service delivery while exercising caution in hiring, and they requested continued transparency from staff throughout the process.

Carrington outlined the FY 2026–2027 deferred maintenance plan, noting that Public Works is developing a Facilities Capital Improvement Plan to support a more systematic, long-term approach to facility funding. A draft CIP will be presented during budget hearings, along with policy discussions on creating a dedicated parks funding strategy. She added that of thirty-two new project requests, the Budget Team is recommending only eight, all considered emergent needs. Carrington also reviewed the 2025–26 rollover maintenance projects, noting that completing those already-funded projects remains the top priority.

Shepherd discussed FY 26-27 funding streams and highlighted dwindling geothermal revenue that currently supports parks and airport grant matches. She warned that continuing current transfer levels will exhaust the geothermal fund and eventually require a shift to the general fund or new funding sources. She reviewed other capital and maintenance funds (Accumulated Capital Outlay), which does not have a dedicated revenue stream and is now the primary source for deferred maintenance; the Criminal Justice Facilities Trust, which generates minimal revenue but supports jail and courthouse repairs; LATCF (one-time funds), which only fund previously approved rollover projects; and the Cannabis Tax Trust, with an accumulated fund balance that remains unused while current revenue is being used to balance the general fund.

Assistant CAO Meaghan McCamman Ostrander outlined major upcoming grant initiatives including: wildfire projects coordinated through the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments and partner agencies, large-scale airport projects building toward a commercial terminal with substantial local match requirements, the Lower Owens River Water Trail, facing time pressure due to DWP lease negotiations, and construction of the Southern Inyo Fire Protection District fire stations, which carry a \$500,000 county match.

Lastly, the Budget Team and the Board discussed unfunded policy considerations and possible funding sources for Code Enforcement abatement, air service contributions, the Wildlife Services Contract (Agriculture Department), and an RV dump station at Diaz Lake.

Chairperson Orrill thanked staff and departments for their input and participation.

Adjournment

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11:48 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, August 25, 2026, in the County Administrative Center in Independence.



Chairperson, Inyo County Board of Supervisors

*Attest: DAVID FRASER
Clerk of the Board*

by: 
Darcy Israel, Assistant