



OCHS Board of Directors Meeting Notes

February 18, 2026 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Siuslaw Library Bromley Room

1. **Roll Call:** Joe Zarate, President; Elizabeth Thompson, Executive Director; Mitzi Hathaway, Vice President; Cynthia Beck, Treasurer; Marchel DeMersseman, Secretary, Krisi Maderos, Board Member, Susan Williams, Board Member; Tim Franklin, Board Member; Jill Macfarland, Board Member
2. **Welcome and Introductions:** Joe Zarate called the meeting to order at 10:37 and asked each board member to introduce and share a bit about themselves with the audience.
3. **Approval of Agenda:** Moved, seconded and unanimously approved.
4. **Approval of January Minutes:** Moved, seconded and unanimously approved
5. **Treasurer's Report:** Cynthia Beck - We are hoping that 2026 will be as profitable as 2025. We ended the year covering the budget. The clinic has been a game changer for the community. It appears that the public has been inspired by the clinic and has provided even more support because of it. Big shout out to the Thrift Store that exceeded their fundraising goal by 16%! We expected a trust distribution last year that did not happen, but may come this year. Donations have been very good. The vet services are starting to see revenues that started in the fourth quarter of 2025. On the flip side of that is high medical expenses. Having our own clinic will help ameliorate some of those costs which will further improve our financial position, as we will save a lot of money having our own clinic and doctors. After the purchase and upgrades to the clinic, we still have very healthy cash assets of 1.2 million. Due to community donations and good stewardship and balance of spend and save we were able to make a cash purchase of the clinic and upgrades. Elizabeth gave kudos to Cynthia for her management of OCHS finances which allowed us to make money. This has contributed to us getting the clinic up and running for the community much quicker than originally planned.
6. **Executive Directors Report:** Elizabeth Thompson -
 - a. We want to share that Valerie Swensrud is now not only our Community Outreach Coordinator but also our new Volunteer Coordinator. Stand by for new volunteer opportunities and programs!
 - b. We have a large dog crisis. It's more difficult to place larger dogs in our community. Dogs like Liam, a perfectly lovely dog, have been in the shelter far too long, just because they are larger and active. Cappy is now in foster care

where he is doing much better. We need help sharing outside of our community about these wonderful dogs.

- c. Strays are not being claimed. We need to get the word out to the community that there is no shame in surrendering a pet they can no longer care for. It's much better to surrender to the shelter than dump and put the animal's life at risk.
- d. Elizabeth shared a slide about Shadow who recently passed while out on a trail walk. Shadow came to us in rough shape, with several medical problems. A sweet boy who was a favorite of shelter staff and volunteers. Honestly, there wasn't a dry eye in the house during this story.
- e. Audience question - Regarding emergency vet services at the OCHS clinic: *Yes, right now emergency services are available, but only during regular hours. We are not yet staffed for after hours emergency care.*
- f. Audience question - Regarding long term plans for the vet clinic: *There is a budget for 1.5 veterinarians. Dr. Schaad is currently working 3 days a month. Bonnie Burns, retired from a successful mobile vet practice, may do some contract work. Dr. Montes lives here in Florence and works in Eugene. She works Eugene two days a week for wellness visits. OSU vet program is offering community clinic preceptorships. Some are experienced vet techs. Students are excited about our program. There are more vets leaving the field than entering.*
- g. There will be a President's Club event in early May. The last event at the clinic raised over 60k.
- h. The Volunteer Appreciation event is April 4th at the Honeyman Yurt.
- i. Audience question - Regarding proper boundaries: *Three property markers have been located, one still remains to be found. The trail crosses property lines and signage will be placed to notify the public that they are crossing into shelter property. The parking lot below the shelter is on our property, but the easement is in question.*
- j. Regarding the purchase of the property and shelter expansion. There is a 5 year plan. There is a vision that includes a single story for the animals, separate HVAC systems per species and age group. We are at the very beginning of the process. There are many factors to account for. Should we update the existing building or build new. If we update and build out where do we put the animals so they do not go through the stress of construction. Building new is currently estimated at 3 million more than updating the existing. Elizabeth recognized Sandy Davidson for her work to obtain the property for us from the county. Side note: There may be a volunteer opportunity to do some excavating once construction is ready to begin.

7. Committee Reports:

- a. Animal Welfare: Cynthia Beck - The main policies the committee is currently working on are codes of conduct for community members accessing our clinic services, for the protection of our staff, our clients and the animals in our care. A Quality of Life panel is being discussed to provide an objective decision if there are disagreements about euthanasia for animals in our care. It can be very hard on staff to make these decisions when there is not a clear cut behavioral or medical issue, rather that it is in the best interest of the animal to euthanize.
- b. Community Outreach: Marchel DeMersseman - Gave big kudos to Valerie for all the projects and events she has planned and organized. Elizabeth had already provided information about upcoming events. Announced that this year's Gala will be held on New Year's Eve at the Florence Events Center.

8. Public Comments/Q&A:

- a. Sandy gave big kudos to OCHS
- b. A suggestion was made to train shelter dogs for search and rescue

9. Executive Session: not required

10. Closing Thoughts: Joe expressed how important the community is to our mission and how important our pets are. Elizabeth provided a reminder that it's time for the board nomination process and we are looking for great candidates. In particular we need people with legal, financial and strategic planning skills

11. Next Meeting: Mar 18, 2026

12. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 11:50, with Susan motion, Cynthia second, and a unanimous approval.