

**Morrow County Board of Commissioners Meeting
February 5, 2025
Upper Conference Room, Bartholomew Building
Heppner, Oregon**

Present In-Person Chair David Sykes, Commissioner Jeff Wenholz, Commissioner Gus Peterson, Valerie Ballard, Justin Nelson, Matthew Jensen, Kevin Ince, Eric Imes, Sue Gibbs, Steven Davis, Scott Meakins

Present Via Zoom Sandi Pointer, Vince Guerrero, Deona Siex, Amanda Kenderick, Kirsti Cason, Yvonne Morter, Lindsay Grogan, Tami Ewing, Erin Anderson, Robin Canaday; Non-staff: Julie Jensen, Karen Pettigrew, Natalia Wight, Andrea Di Salvo

Call to Order 9:05 a.m.

Consideration and Adoption of Agenda

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Peterson seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Department Reports

The Fair Office report was presented by Sue Gibbs

The Public Works report was presented by Eric Imes

The Loop Public Transit report was presented by Steven Davis

The Finance Department report was presented by Kevin Ince

The written Assessment and Taxation report was submitted by Mike Gorman

Consent Agenda

- a. Minutes: January 8, Land Use Hearing
- b. Grant Agreement No. 178249-04
- c. DEQ:044025 LUBGWMA MOU

Commissioner Wenholz requested to pull item a from the agenda.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve items b and c. Commissioner Peterson seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Commissioner Wenholz asked if land use counsel Dan Kearns should review the minutes from the Land Use Hearing. County Counsel, Justin Nelson said he saw value in Mr. Kearns reviewing the minutes.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to table the minutes from the January 8 Land Use Hearing until the next meeting after they have been reviewed by Attorney Dan Kearns. Commissioner Wenholz seconded the motion. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Business Items

Request to Vacate Property

Eric Imes, Public Work Director; Scott Meakins, applicant

Commissioner Peterson motioned to approve Order No. OR-2025-02, in the matter of the Vacation of a Portion of Montana Avenue Easement. Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Approval of Public Transit Title VI Policy Updates

Steven Davis, Transit Manager

After reviewing the policy updates, questions arose regarding recently changed details such as the County domain address, upcoming changes to Public Transportation's physical address, and if Public Transportation requires a separate Title VI Policy from the County.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to table the approval of Title VI Policy Update to February 19. Commissioner Wenholz seconded the motion. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Budget Committee Appointment

Kevin Ince, Finance Director

Notice for the Budget Committee member vacancy and applications were published in the newspaper, county website, and Facebook with one applicant, Karen Pettigrew.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to appoint Karen Pettigrew to the Budget Committee. Commissioner Peterson seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval

Consideration of Formal Efforts HB2725

Gus Peterson, Commissioner

Following the Special Session held on January 31 when the Board approved a letter to Port of Morrow regarding port involvement in Strategic Investment Programs, Commissioner Peterson and County Administrator, Matthew Jensen, attended a Port of Morrow (POM) meeting for discussion. The sentiment from POM was for the two entities to work together and retain Port involvement on decisions and leave room for an Intergovernmental Agreement between the County and POM.

Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) remains interested in the issue with AOC President and Umatilla County Commissioner, John Shafer, taking lead. HB2725 may be undergoing further limits to include east of Bonneville Dam, but the inclusion of the four industrial parks detail is still unknown.

POM responded positively to an Intergovernmental Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding with the Amazon Web Services data Center on Bombing Range Road being the impetus. POM was not an actor in the 2023 HB2009, and strongly encourage this approach. Port Commissioners Murray and Peterson supported the idea to table the topic until additional information is gathered.

Commissioner Wenholz said he would be comfortable authorizing staff to make movement to modify HB2009 to stop ports' involvement with projects that have no impact on them.

Recess

10:49 a.m.

Resume

10:54 a.m.

Consideration to Adopt a County Theft Policy

Lindsay Grogan, HR Director; Justin Nelson, County Counsel

After a cyber phishing incident in 2024, it was realized that there wasn't a specific process for reporting theft or loss of County resources. At the December 4 meeting, a draft was provided to the Board and a revision with additional details was requested.

It was noted that updates are needed to the cash handling policy to address counterfeit bills and revisions for clarity were requested.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to adopt the County Theft Policy with changes discussed.

Commissioner Wenholtz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Correspondence**Letter from City of Boardman: Road Beautification Project**

There is a resurfacing project underway for the overpass on Interstate 84 at the Tower Road interchange and Oregon Department of Transportation approached Boardman City Manager, Brandon Hammond, about upgrading for beautification. Anticipated costs for the project would be approximately \$70,000 and would be funded by the County.

Commissioner Wenholtz asked if the adornment would be transferred from the current overpass when the overpass is fully replaced in a few years, or if it would need to be replaced as well. Mr. Jensen said he would request clarification on behalf of the Board.

Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Wenholtz received communication from JR Cook of Northeast Oregon Water Association (NOWA) requesting a letter of support in opposition to Senate Bill 747, requiring landowners with 200 acres or more of irrigated land to track and report annually on their fertilizer application. He asked if the Board would be comfortable with staff composing a letter in opposition to SB747 authorizing the Commission Chair to sign.

Commissioners Peterson and Sykes agreed to staff drafting a letter in opposition to SB747.

Additional brief reports on Commissioner activity were provided.

Executive Session

11:11 a.m.

The board entered into executive session pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(h), which allows the Commission to meet in executive session to consult with counsel concerning the legal rights and duties of a public body with regard to current litigation or litigation likely to be filed.

And

ORS 192.660(2)(f), which allows the Commission to meet in executive session to consider information or records that are exempt by law from public inspection under ORS 192.355(1), communications within a public body that are of an advisory nature that cover other than purely factual materials and are preliminary to determination of policy or action regarding the acquisition of additional legal services.

Return to Open Session

11:52 a.m. No action taken.

Adjourn

11:52 a.m.