

Board of Commissioners Meeting
August 16, 2025
Upper Conference Room, Bartholomew Building
Heppner, Oregon

Present In Person Chair David Sykes, Commissioner Jeff Wenholz, Commissioner Gus Peterson, Valerie Ballard, Matthew Jensen, Justin Nelson, Brian Snyder, Eric Imes, Tamra Mabbott, Jim Bagley; non-staff: Irma Solis, Kelli Stewart, Austin Gutierrez, Doug Carl, Lori Coppenworth, Sammy Rupp, Patrick Bestebreur, Sarah Larson

Present Via Zoom Steven Davis, Rose Kylo, Sabrina Bailey-Cave, Robin Canaday, Vince Guerrero, Mindy Wilson, Tami Ewing, Amanda Kenderick, Yvonne Morter, Bobbi Childes, Deona Siex, Erin Anderson, Debbie Peck; non-staff: Griffin Beach, Andrea Di Salvo, Julie Jensen, Brenda Profitt

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

9:02 a.m.

Public Comment

No Comment

Consideration and Adoption of Agenda

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

Department Reports

The Assessment & Taxation written report was submitted by Mike Gorman

The Public Works report was presented by Eric Imes

The Sheriff's Office report was presented by Brian Snyder

The Administrator's report was presented by Matthew Jensen

Consent Agenda

Chair Sykes pulled item 5e to address separately.

- a. Minutes: July 16, 2025
- b. Intergovernmental Agreement: Nurse Family Partnership with Umatilla County
- c. 2025-27 STIF Plan
- d. Cooperative Services Agreement: USDA APHIS Wildlife Services
- e. ~~State of Oregon Intergovernmental Grant Agreement No. 186317~~
- f. Oregon Parks and Recreation Department Grant Agreement: ATV 25-32

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve the consent agenda, excluding 5e. Commissioner Peterson seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Chair Sykes asked if the County is subsidizing IGA 186317 to which Finance Director, Kevin Ince, clarified the County is fully reimbursed by the Oregon Health Department.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to approve the State of Oregon IGA 186317. Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Business Items

Circuit Court Update

Lori Coppenworth, Sarah Larson, Sammy Rupp, Austin Gutierrez, and Kelli Stewart of DLR Group; Patrick Bestebreur, Bouten Construction; Doug Carl, Alliance Construction Management Shortly after presenting the schematic design, the design team with DLR removed the Justice Court space, reducing the square footage to 22,900 square feet to meet the requested budget requirement of \$35 million with 70% allocated to hard costs and 30% to soft costs. The District Attorney, Public Defender, lobby, and Sheriff's Office space remain on the first floor with the Circuit Court, holding, and mechanical space on the second floor.

Samples of finishes have been arriving, and the design team presented the Board with two possible designs for the front exterior. Construction is expected to begin February 2026 and complete by July 2027.

Morrow County Letter Regarding Notice of Intent for Lena Wind Project

Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director; Jim Bagley, Principal Planner

As a member of the Board of Directors for Umatilla Electric Coop, Commissioner Wenholz recused himself from the discussion and any action on this subject.

The Lena Wind Project is a proposed 190 MW wind energy project south of Heppner currently under review by the Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC). The letter under review for the Board to sign provides a list of substantive local criteria to EFSC to ensure that local rules are being followed.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to approve the letter to Energy Facility Siting Council Staff regarding Notice of Intent for Heppner Lena Wind Project. Chair Sykes seconded. Vote: 2 aye, 1 recused. Motion passed.

Contract Amendment: GSI Stage 3 Scope of Work

Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director; Ronan Igloria, GSI Water Solutions

Funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the drinking water research project has completed stage 2 and is ready to begin stage 3. Stage 3 will see continued communication and outreach, water tests will be focused on areas further out from cities, and stage 3 will end with developing engineering concepts and feasibility of options.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to approve amendment 2 of the professional services agreement between Morrow County and GSI Water Solutions for consulting services and authorize the Chair to sign. Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Congressionally Directed Spending Phase 2

Matthew Jensen, County Administrator

Morrow County was previously awarded \$1.32 million through Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) to explore expanding municipal water systems and connect residents in unincorporated Morrow County affected by nitrates in their well water. The City of Irrigon requested CDS funding to construct a new well because the current well doesn't produce the volume of water the city has a right to, however that request was denied. At the June 18 meeting, the Board of Commissioners approved directing the County's CDS funding to the City of Irrigon to improve its water system and this has been deemed an appropriate use of funds.

There are two options for distributing the funds. The first option is to designate the City as a subrecipient with the County auditing and managing the process. The second option is to make a technical correction to the grant allowing the funds to go directly to the City. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Senator Merkley's office support the technical correction option. The Board would then need to sign a letter requesting the technical correction and then go to the EPA for approval before signing an IGA with the City.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to approve the letter to EPA Region 10 requesting a technical correction on CDS Phase 2 funding designating the City of Irrigon as the recipient for \$1.32 million. Commissioner Wenholtz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Recess

10:48 a.m.

Resume

10:54 a.m.

Correspondence

None

Commissioner Reports

Brief reports on Commissioner activity were provided.

Executive Session

10:58 a.m.

The Board met in executive session pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(a), which allows the Commission to meet in executive session to consider the employment of a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent.

Resume Open Session

11:18 a.m.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to approve the exception to the County Employee Policy and authorize hiring a County Clerk at grade 11, step 4. Commissioner Wenholtz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Adjourn

11:19 a.m.