

**Morrow County Board of Commissioners Meeting
September 3, 2025
Upper Conference Room, Bartholomew Building
Heppner, Oregon**

Present In Person Chair David Sykes, Commissioner Jeff Wenholz, Commissioner Gus Peterson, Matthew Jensen, Valerie Ballard, Bobbi Childers, Eric Imes, John Bowles, Kevin Ince, Steve Freeland, Brian Snyder

Present Via Zoom Sandi Pointer, Rose Kylo, Amanda Kendrick, Vince Guerrero, Raymi Cain, Sabrina Bailey-Cave, Steven Davis, Mike Gorman, Mindy Wilson; non-staff: Andrea Di Salvo, Brenda Profitt, Kaleb Lay, Julie Jensen, Griffin Beach, Calvin Bennett

Call to Order

9:02 a.m.

Public Comment

No comments

Consideration and Adoption of Agenda

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

Department Reports

The Clerk's report was presented by Bobbi Childers

The Public Work's report was presented by Eric Imes

The Sheriff's Office report was presented by Brian Snyder and Steve Freeland

The Administrator's report was presented by Matthew Jensen

Consent Agenda

- a. Minutes: August 20, 2025 Regular Session; August 20, 2025 Land Use Hearing; August 29, 2025 Special Session
- b. OHA IGA 185824 Amendment 1
- c. Oregon Water Resources Department IGA
- d. Payment Authorization: Granite Construction
- e. Approval of Purchase: 950 Wheel Loader CAT
- f. Approval of Purchase: Tractor Truck Chassis Replacement

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

Business Items

Heppner Daycare Update

Katie Murray, Heppner Daycare Board Chair; Jessica Britt, Director; Lindsay Grogan, Board member

The Heppner Daycare has been looking for a new, larger site for two years. After exploring various options and over 25 locations, the Daycare approached City of Heppner to acquire a portion of Hager Park. Initially, the city was hesitant but decided the long-term goal of childcare services and economic development were worth it. The proposed location will allow for an expansion to include infants and increase the age limit for after school care from 8 years to 12. Some community members have expressed concern about the loss of the soccer field and impacts to local soccer practice. Willow Creek Park District is working to create a seasonal, semi-permanent soccer field near the water park.

The daycare has approximately 50% of funds needed for the project, largely due in part to donations and will be applying for grants to additional funding.

Eastern Oregon Counties Association

Commissioner Wenholtz motioned to continue membership with Eastern Oregon Counties Association and pay the \$2,500 dues. Commissioner Wenholtz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Letter to Energy Facility Siting Center (EFSC) Regarding Umatilla Morrow Connection

Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director

As a member of Umatilla Electric Coop Board of Directors, Commissioner Wenholtz recused himself from the discussion and vote.

The Umatilla Morrow Connect Transmission Line Project is a ten-mile long, 230 kilovolt project crossing Morrow and Umatilla Counties. Tamra Mabbott, Planning director raised concerns that a portion of the transmission line will cover an overlay zone which has additional requirements beyond that of regular zoning. It is the County's obligation at this point in the application process to bring the overlay zone issue to EFSC.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to approve attached EFSC letter for Umatilla Electric Coop preliminary application for Site Certificate. Chair Sykes seconded. Vote: 2 in favor, 1 recused. Motion passed.

Strategic Investment Program Intergovernmental Agreement

David Syke, Board Chair

At the August 20 Board of Commissioners meeting, the Board expressed concerns over wording of the proposed Strategic Investment Program (SIP) Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the Port of Morrow (POM). After review of the new draft, Commissioner Peterson expressed discomfort in the Scope of Agreement item b, which states "[...] Properties outside of industrial lands will not be included in Port SIP projects", preferring different wording and gave the example "located on Port Industrial Property in Morrow County" as not all industrial zoned land is Port Industrial and referenced an area recently rezoned Industrial from Exclusive Farm Use. Commissioner Wenholtz questioned the language of the section v. termination, "This Intergovernmental Agreement terminates upon the expiration of any SIP approved during its existence." There was discussion around rewording the sentence or removing it entirely.

Commissioner Wenholtz motioned to approve the IGA with the removal of “This Intergovernmental Agreement terminates upon the expiration of any SIP approved during its existence” Chair Sykes seconded the motion.

There was further discussion around the author of the IGA and then if Space Age Industrial should be included in the IGA.

Commissioner Wenholtz amended his motion and motioned to include Space Age Industrial with Port Industrial and Industrial. Chair Sykes seconded. Vote: 2 in favor, 1 opposed (Peterson), motion carried.

Recess

10:19 a.m.

Resume

10:22 a.m.

Strategic Improvement Plan Resolution R-2025-08

Matthew Jensen, County Administrator

Commissioner Peterson motioned to adopt R-2025-08. Commissioner Wenholtz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Correspondance

None

Commissioner Reports

Brief reports on Commissioner activity were provided

Executive Session

10:27 a.m.

Pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(b), to consider the dismissal or disciplining of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, employment of a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent who does not request an open hearing.

Return to Open Session

11:18 a.m.

No action Taken.

Adjourn

11:19 a.m.