

**Morrow County Board of Commissioners Meeting
December 17, 2025
Don Adams Conference Room, Irrigon Government Center
Irrigon, Oregon**

Present In Person Chair David Sykes, Commissioner Jeff Wenholz, Commissioner Gus Peterson, Matthew Jensen, Valerie Ballard, Kevin Ince, Amanda Kendrick, Tamra Mabbott, Robin Canaday, Sarah Rea; non-staff: Heather Baumgartner

Present Via Zoom Sandi Pointer, Patrick Keely; non-staff: Kevin Miracle, Brandi Sweeney

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

9:00 a.m.

Public Comment

No comments

Consideration and Adoption of Agenda

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

Department Reports

The Veterans' Services report was presented by Amanda Kendrick

The Planning Department report was presented by Tamra Mabbott

The Sheriff's Office report was presented by Brian Snyder

The Treasurer's report was provided by Jaylene Papineau

The Accounts Payable report was provided by Kevin Ince

The County Administrator's report was presented by Matthew Jensen

Consent Agenda

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

Recess

9:55 a.m.

Resume

9:59 a.m.

Public Hearing

Application to amend the County Comprehensive Plan to add the Dougherty Quarry to the Goal 5 inventory and identify the quarry as a Large Significant Site in accordance with OAR 660-023-0180

Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director

*Chair Sykes read the following statement: **Goal 5 Aggregate Resources Amendment: AC-161-25, Comprehensive Plan Amendment.** Cliff Dougherty, Applicant; Patricia Dougherty, Owner. The application is to identify an existing Goal 5 aggregate resource as a Large Significant Resource in the Goal 5 inventory. Criteria for approval include Morrow County Zoning Ordinance (MCZO) Article 8 Amendments, ORS 215.298, and OAR 660-023-0180(3)(5)(7), OAR 660-023-040, and OAR 660-023-060.*

Persons who wish to provide testimony may do so orally or in writing. Testimony and evidence must be directed toward the applicable criteria. Failure to raise an issue accompanied by statements or evidence sufficient to afford the decision maker and the parties an opportunity to respond to the issue precludes an appeal to the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) on that issue.

Please sign the sheet at the back of the room or make a note in chat (if you are participating via Zoom) if you would like to present testimony. Please speak only when identified by the Chair and begin by giving your name, the spelling of your name, and your address. If you have exhibits for our consideration, please provide a copy to the Staff.

If you would like to request that the Board hold open the record or continue the hearing, you must make that request before the public portion of the hearing is closed.

No abstentions or conflicts of interest were raised by the Commissioners.

Staff report: Presenting a vicinity map, Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director, reviewed a rock quarry off Spur Loop Road that has existed for many years. In 2019, the Planning Commission approved the site for aggregate extraction and concrete batch plant under a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) with a goal 5 understanding in aggregate inventory in the comprehensive plan. The CUP limited extraction to 500 tons of material. The applicant is approaching the 500-ton limit and would like to extract beyond it which would require conducting material analysis and declaring it a Large Significant Site. While a designated flood plain goes through the property, the quarry has a culvert system allowing for drainage and the Planning Commission unanimously recommends approval.

Testimony and Evidence:

No testimony or additional evidence was provided.

Chair Sykes asked if anyone would like to continue or hold open comment to which there was no response.

Hearing Closed

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve the Goal 5 application including adopting findings, including the aggregate site as a Large Significant Site in the list of Goal 5 Significant Aggregate Resources in the Comprehensive Plan, apply the Aggregate Resources Overlay Zone to the

quarry area boundaries, and acknowledge that the Conditional Use Permit for the concrete batch plant remains unchanged and may continue.

Commissioner Peterson seconded.

Votes in favor: Sykes, Wenholz, Peterson

Votes against: none

Motion carried.

Business Items

Adoption of Morrow County Public Health Modernization Plan

Robin Canaday, Public Health Director; Sara Rea, Communicable Disease and Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

The Public Health Modernization Plan is Oregon's statewide effort to ensure every county has the core capacity to deliver essential public health services, regardless of size or location.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to adopt the Morrow County Public Health Modernization Plan for 2026-27 as presented. Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Second Reading of Ordinance ORD-2025-03 Farm Forest Code Update

Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director; Clint Shoemake, Planning Technician

Ordinance No. ORD-2025-03, first read at the December 3 Board of Commissioners meeting, implements new Oregon Administrative Rules for farm and forest lands and includes a minor amendment to the flood hazard zone and some other housekeeping measures.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve the second reading of Ordinance ORD-2025-03, amending the Morrow County Zoning Ordinance to implement new Oregon Administrative Rules for farm and forest land and in the flood hazard overlay zone and adopt other minor amendments, County File number AZ-195-25. Commissioner Peterson seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Second Reading of Ordinance ORD-2025-04 to Adopt New Solar Siting Rules

Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director

Ordinance No. ORD-2025-4, first read and unanimously approved at the December 3 Board of Commissioners meeting, implement new Eastern Oregon Solar siting Rules which were adopted by the Land Conservation and Development Commission, effective January 1, 2026: local file number AZ-160-25.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to approve the second reading of Ordinance ORD-2025-04, an ordinance amending the Morrow County Zoning Ordinance to implement new Eastern Oregon Solar Siting Rules adopted by the Land Conservation and Development Commission, county file number AZ-160-25. Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Appointments of Planning Commission Members

Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director

Two positions on the Planning Commission end December 31, 2025, and the openings have been advertised with no responses. Karl Smith, Boardman and Liz Peterson, of Lone have asked to be reappointed to their positions.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve Karl Smith and Liz Peterson to serve another term on the Planning Commissioner. Commissioner Peterson seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Public Transit Service Changes for 2026

Steven Davis, Transit Manager

The proposed route changes, unanimously approved by the Transit Advisory Committee, are based off observed trends, patterns, and community growth. Updates to routes include increasing trips between Heppner and Hermiston to twice daily, Monday through Friday, adding a third opportunity to travel from Boardman to Hermiston, and expanding service to cover the Green Acres and Columbia Avenue area. The demonstration route between Lone and Heppner will become a regular part of the route on the last Tuesday of each month.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve the 2026 Morrow County Public Transit Service Update Recommendations to go into effect January 5, 2026. Commissioner Peterson seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Approval to Terminate ODOT Grant Agreement for Transit Facility

Steven Davis, Transit Manager

In 2022, the County was awarded Grant no. 35339 by Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) for a new transit facility. Due to unresolved National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) requirements and an approaching deadline for the grant, staff suggest terminating the grant to allow the funds to be reallocated.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to terminate Grant No. 35539 funds for a transit facility. Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Morrow and Umatilla Counties Bi-County Letter to Oregon Department of Agriculture

Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director; Gus Peterson, Commissioner

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) developed a set of rules for the Lower Umatilla Basin Ground Water Management Area (LUBGWMA) as a part of the State of Oregon Nitrate Reduction Plan. The letter presented to the Board for consideration of co-sponsorship has been signed by Umatilla County Commissioners and expresses concerns over the new rules and the lack of data showing their benefit.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve and sign the attached letter. Commissioner Peterson seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Consideration of Approving Fairgrounds Projects for Grant C2023251

Matthew Jensen, County Administrator

In the summer of 2023, Morrow County was awarded a grant through Business Oregon with a completion deadline of February 2026. The grant was initially intended to be used for upgrades to the exhibit hall and annex, but progress was delayed. In 2025, part of the grant was instead used for the new Sheep Show Ring Shelter and improvements to the arena wall leaving a remainder of \$26,277.

Business Oregon has allowed for a small deadline extension to April 2026, and staff are requesting the Board approve a revised project list for the fair grant.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve the revised fair grant project list and direct staff to proceed with projects using prevailing wage procurement requirements and prepare the necessary budget adjustments. Commissioner Peterson seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Consideration of Request for Support Facilitation Costs for LUBGWMA Advisory Committee
Gus Peterson, Commissioner

Morrow County has been asked to continue to support the facilitation costs for the Lower Umatilla Basin Ground Water Management Area (LUBGWMA) Advisory Committee. Costs would be split between Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Oregon Water Resource Department and Morrow and Umatilla Counties with Morrow County's share estimated between \$1,708 and \$2,254.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approved continued participation of the Facilities Support Services for the LUBGWMA Advisory Committee and direct staff to engage with and document as necessary for the County's participation in this service. Commissioner Peterson seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Correspondence

None

Commissioner Reports

Brief reports on Commissioner activity were provided.

Recess

10:53 a.m.

Resume

11:00

Executive Session

The Board of Commissioners met in executive session pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(d), which allows the Commission to meet in executive session to conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to carry on labor negotiations

Return to Open Session

11:43 a.m.

Potential Decision or Action Item as a Result of Executive Session

Commissioner Peterson motioned that the County make an exception to policy in the case discussed in executive session and:

- 1. Pay any overtime wages that would have been due to represented sergeants under the prior practice that was the status quo of their working conditions at the time they unionized, and as a part of maintaining the legal status quo.*
- 2. Maintain that exception and practice for the future until either a collective bargaining agreement with the Sergeants Union is ratified or the County has been able to provide the Union notice and opportunity to bargain over proposed changes to the practice and that the County Administrator and/or the appropriate department be authorized to take all actions necessary and appropriate to implement this motion.*

Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Adjourn

11:45 a.m.