

Morrow County Board of Commissioners Meeting
January 7, 2026
Upper Conference Room, Bartholomew Building
Heppner, Oregon

Present In Person Chair David Sykes, Commissioner Jeff Wenholz, Commissioner Gus Peterson, Matthew Jensen, Valerie Ballard, Justin Nelson, Kevin Ince, Vince Guerrero, Robin Canaday, Rory Rowlette, Eric Imes, Tylynn Cymiyotti, Tamra Mabbott; non-staff: Jerry Conklin, Linda Kenny, Mollie Rhea

Present Via Zoom Deona Siex, Sabrina Bailey-Cave, Rose Kylo, Raymi Cain, Stephen Wrecksics, Sarah Rea, Clint Shoemake, Angel Stanger, Yvonne Morter, Erin Anderson, Bobbi Childers, Steven Davis; non-staff: Dan Kearns, Andrea Di Salvo, Julie Jensen, Griffin Beach, Kelly Doherty, Karen Pettigrew, Andrew Huston, Maggie Hodny

Call to Order 9:01 a.m.

Chair and Vice Chair Election Pursuant to R-2023-2

Commissioner Jeff Wenholz motioned to elect Commissioner David Sykes as Commission Chair. Commissioner Sykes seconded.

Discussion: Commissioner Peterson stated he would like to see some rotation from year to year.

Vote: 2 in favor (Sykes and Wenholz), 1 opposed (Peterson). Motion carried.

Chair Sykes motioned to elect Commissioner Wenholz as Vice-Chair. Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: 2 in favor (Sykes and Wenholz), 1 opposed (Peterson). Motion carried.

Public Comment

No comments

Consideration and Adoption of Agenda

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve the agenda with removal of 6.a Maverick Substation Easement from the consent agenda and move it to Business Items as item 8.I. Commissioner Peterson seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Department Reports

The District Attorney quarterly report was presented by Justin Nelson
The Public Health quarterly report was presented by Robin Canaday
The Fair quarterly report was presented by Tylynn Cymiyotti
The Public Works report was presented by Eric Imes
The Administrator report was presented by Matthew Jensen

Consent Agenda

- a. ~~Maverick Substation Easement~~
- b. Property Tax Refund
- c. Property Tax Refund 25-86
- d. Community Counseling Solutions Allotment 1-5 Payment

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve the consent agenda items b-d. Commissioner Peterson seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Public Hearing

Adopt Road Names for Five (5) Roads Owned by the Port of Morrow and One Road Owned by Cleaver Land LLC

Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director

Staff Report (Stephen Wrecsics, GIS Analyst): Port of Morrow is requesting to rename roads within the Boardman Airport vicinity including a westward extension of Kunze Lane and four new roads: Boeing Road, Krebs Road, Dallas Road, and Bristow Road. Notice has been sent to all affected agencies in the County, and the Planning Department has not received any responses.

Troy Road is the result of land partitions for future residential construction. Affected agencies have been notified and no objections were received.

Chair Sykes asked the Board for abstentions or conflicts of interest to which there were none. Chair Sykes asked for public testimony and there was no public testimony.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve Findings and adopt Port of Morrow road names as follows: Boeing Road, Krebs Road, Dallas Road, Bristow Lane, and Kunze Lane. Commissioner Peterson seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned approve Findings and adopt road name for land owned by Cleaver Land LLC as follows: Troy Road.

Business Items

2026 Board of Commissioner Committee Assignments

David Sykes, Commission Chair

Commissioner Peterson motioned to approve the 2026 committee assignments as presented. Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

South Morrow County Seniors Matter Update

Jerry Conklin, Board Chair; Molly Rhea, Vice-chair; Linda Kenny, Treasurer

South Morrow County Seniors Matter (SMCSM) is a non-profit organization, operated by volunteers, providing seniors with weekly meals, programs, and activities at the St. Patrick's Apartments in Heppner. SMCSM was originally approved for funding by the Board of Commissioners in 2023 and receives \$40,000 from Morrow County annually. Additional grant funding from other groups and organizations include Lamb Weston, Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group, JTMF, AARP, and Wildhorse Casino. Some funding is for specific

programs, such as AARP and emergency preparedness training, and the monthly veterans lunch funded by a grant from Wildhorse Casino.

Second Reading of Ordinance ORD-2026-01

Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director

Commissioner Peterson motioned to approve an ordinance amending the Morrow County Comprehensive Plan to designate Dougherty Rock Quarry as a Large Significant Site, county file number AC-161-25 by title reading only. Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to approve an ordinance amending the Morrow County Comprehensive Plan to designate the Dougherty Rock Quarry as a Large Significant Site, county file number AC-161-25 Ordinance number ORD-2026-01. Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Sunstone Mitigation Advisory Committee

David Sykes, Commission Chair

Pinegate Renewables, parent company of the Sunstone Solar project, committed to a mitigation fund for the local agriculture industry and community to alleviate the negative financial impact of losing productive farmland to the Sunstone Solar project. The mitigation fund is to be accompanied by an advisory committee to ensure funds are properly distributed and used.

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to appoint the following to the Sunstone Mitigation Plan Advisory Committee: Miff Devin and Colin McElligott to represent the Soil & Water Conservation District, Colin Anderson and Vern Frederickson to represent Morrow County Grain Growers, Eric Orem and Jon Jinnings for the Energy Facility Siting Counsel, Larry Lutchter representing Academic Agriculture, Clint Carlson as Dryland Farm Producer, and Gus Peterson as Morrow County Commissioner. As per the previously approved Sunstone Mitigation agreement. Commissioner Peterson seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Fair Board Member Appointments

Tylynn Cymiyotti, Fair Manager

Two positions on the Fair Board are set to expire, and both incumbents have expressed interest in renewing their terms. There was one application submitted after the deadline as well as an individual who expressed interest in participating.

Commissioner Peterson requested that future vacancies and deadlines are advertised and all submitted applications are provided for the Board of Commissioners to review.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to reappoint Shelby Schoenfelder, and Brittany Szasz to the Fair Board. Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Budget Committee Member Appointment

Kevin Ince, Finance Director

Notices were published in the Heppner Gazette-Times and on the county website that a term is expiring on the Budget Committee. One application was submitted, and it's from the member who's term is expiring.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to appoint Kim Coil to position 1 on the Morrow County Budget Committee. Commissioner Wenholtz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Adjustment

Kevin Ince, Finance Director

According to Oregon Budget Law, a supplemental budget and public hearing is not required for the requested budget adjustment as the adjustments fall within 10% of fund expenditures. The biggest adjustment is due to a variance in the estimated beginning balance of the general fund which was off by approximately \$1.9 million.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to approve Resolution R-2026-02, making adjustments to the budget and appropriations to the Fiscal Year 2026 County budget as presented. Commissioner Wenholtz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Project Management Consulting Services Change Over

Kevin Ince, Finance Director

BerryDunn is contracted to facilitate and assist with project management for the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) project. Due to the previously selected vendor being unable to meet some needs, the County has pivoted to Tyler Technologies as the system vendor. This has caused significant delays in the project and BerryDunn is requesting a change order to meet the extended timeline and additional consulting and project management hours required to complete the project.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to approve Change Order No. 1 to the original Implementation Project Management Services agreement with BerryDunn and authorize the County Administrator to sign. Commissioner Wenholtz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Audit Readiness and Technical Accounting Assistance Proposal

Kevin Ince, Finance Director

The Finance Department has faced ongoing staffing issues and delays with the ERP project, exceeding the workload capacity of staff. BerryDunn has an Assurance and Accounting division which can assist with monthly accounting support. The Finance Department budget is in excess of \$100,000 due to position vacancies and does not anticipate requiring a budget adjustment for these services.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to approve the proposal for Audit Readiness and Technical Accounting Assistance provided by Berry Dunn and authorize the Finance Director to accept and sign the engagement letter. Commissioner Wenholtz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Review of Auditor's Post Statement of Auditing Standards Communication

The Auditor's Post Statement of Auditing Standards Communication is required to go before the Board of Commissioners to fulfill the Board's oversight responsibility. Typically, a time is scheduled for auditors to present on the process, findings, and issues which is anticipated the first week of February.

No action taken.

FTE Request for Public Health Access Specialist

Robin Canaday, Public Health Director; Chelsey Gover-Price, Human Resources Director

This is an out-of-cycle FTE request for a Public Health Access Specialist. Funding for the proposed position is provided through Oregon Health Authority and reliant on grant funding.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to approve the out-of-cycle FTE request for a second Public Health Access Specialist under the Public Health Department. Commissioner Wenholtz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Maverick Substation Easement

Justin Nelson, County Counsel

The easement is owned by the County but the land has been tilled as farmland. The landowner, Kilkenny Hale Trust, is in agreement of the easement as a part of the project already. County Clerk, Bobbi Childers, found issues with the initial easement documents having terminology of a tentative partition which has been corrected by PacifiCorp's counsel. County Surveyor, Matt Kenny, had concerns of the survey marker.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to table the Maverick Substation Easement to the next Board of Commissioners Meeting as an agenda item for discussion to clarify what specific route we are going to pursue to clean this up. Commissioner Wenholtz seconded. Vote: Unanimous Approval.

Correspondence

None

Commissioner Reports

No reports were provided

Recess

11:33 a.m.

Resume

11:41 a.m.

Executive Session

The Board met in 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.

Return to Open Session

12:47 p.m.

No action taken

Adjourn

12:47 p.m.