

Morrow County Board of Commissioners Meeting
May 20, 2026
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, Justin Nelson, Kevin Ince, George Cress, Corey Sweeney, Brian Snyder; non-staff Greg Barron

Present Via Zoom Deona Siex, Raymi Cain, Mike Gorman, Vince Guerrero, Robin Canaday, Sabrina Bailey-Cave, Sandi Pointer, Michelle Kestler, Latosha Hedeman; non-staff: Nicole Strong, Jessica Jones, Justin Green, Andrea Di Salvo, Jared Tesch, Kaleb Lay, Erika Morton

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

9:00 a.m.

Public Comment

No Comment

Consideration and Adoption of Agenda

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve the agenda as presented with the removal of item 6d. Commissioner Peterson seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Department Reports

Sheriff's Office report was presented by Brian Snyder

Planning Department report was presented by George Cress

Weed Department report was presented by Corey Sweeney

County Administrator report was presented by Matthew Jensen

Recess

9:40 a.m.

Resume

9:43 a.m.

Consent Agenda

- a. Minutes: May 18, 2026 Regular Session; March 18, 2026 Land Use Hearing; April 1, 2026 Land Use Hearing
- b. 2026 Wolf Depredation Compensation and Financial Assistant Grant Agreement ODA-1697-GR
- c. IGA #7146 Department of Corrections Statewide Automated Victim Notification System
- d. Payment Authorization L-145-8 Bouten Construction for Circuit Court Construction
- e. Update to Intergovernmental Agreement for Domestic Relations Mediation Services

Commissioner Wenholz motioned to approve the consent agenda with the removal of the March 18, 2026 minutes and Payment Authorization to Bouten Construction for Circuit Courthouse Construction. Commissioner Peterson seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Payment Authorization to Bouten Construction for Circuit Courthouse Construction

Chair Sykes asked about the 0 amount on retainage and if retainage is required. Matthew Jensen, County Administrator, explained that the Construction Manager/General Contractor has a bond to cover retainage which is why it is not listed on the invoice.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to approve invoice L-145-8 to Bouten Construction. Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Business Items

Northeast Oregon Water Association (NOWA) Color of Water Bill

J.R. Cook, NOWA Director

J.R. Cook, Director of Northeast Oregon Water Association, gave an update on HB 4006, also known as the Color of Water Bill, would make changes to laws regarding some water rights along the Columbia River and allow water diversion for use in areas that don't hold water rights. This bill died in committee but will be brought back to the Oregon Legislature Long Session.

Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Report

Jessica Jones, Administrative Office Manager; Nicole Strong, Regional Director

OSU Extension has locations in counties throughout Oregon providing communities with support in agriculture, forestry, nutrition, 4-H, bi-lingual college and career support, college advising for high school seniors and recent graduate, and more. Funding is provided by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Oregon State University, and local support.

North Morrow Vector Control District (NMVCD) 2025 Annual Report

Greg Barron, NMVCD Manager

Greg Barron, NMVCD manager, gave a report covering 2025 and spoke on upcoming events. Most of 2025 was uneventful for vector control until September when high river levels resulted in a large population of mosquito larvae and mosquito trap counts of up to 6,000 per trap when 3,000 is considered a human health threat. The NMVCD responded with fogging trucks and aerial spraying which resulted in a 98% mortality rate. To prevent another mosquito population boom, Mr. Barron has written to the Army Corps of Engineers requesting they wait until October to raise the John Day Pool.

Appointment Change for Morrow County At-Large Position for Northeast Area Commission on Transportation (NEACT)

Matthew Jensen, County Administrator

Mark Patton with the Port of Morrow is Morrow County at-large position on NEACT. Due to time and job constraints, Mr. Patton would like to step down to be replaced by Jacob Cain, who

is currently the alternate for the position. Tim Helbig, Senior Civil Engineer at the Port, would be the new alternate.

Commissioner Wenholtz motioned to release Mark Patton, with appreciation, as the Morrow County At-Large Voting Member for the Northeast Area Commission on Transportation; and appoint Jacob Cain as Morrow County At-Large Voting Member with Tim Helbig as Alternate. Commissioner Peterson seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Correspondence

No Correspondence

Commissioner Reports

Brief reports on Commissioner activity were provided.

Recess

11:15 a.m.

Resume

11:22 a.m.

Executive Session

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.

Return to Open Session

11:40 a.m.

Action

Commissioner Peterson motioned to authorize District Attorney, Justin Nelson, to offer a position to applicant as Deputy District Attorney at Grade 30, Step 11. Commissioner Wenholtz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Commissioner Peterson motioned to hire Deputy Sheriff Advanced at Grade 22, Step 11. Commissioner Wenholtz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Adjourn

11:44 a.m.