

Union County Board of Commissioners
Joseph Building Annex Conference Room
Special Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 12, 2024

Present: Commissioner R. Matthew Scarfo, Chair
Commissioner Donna Beverage
Commissioner Paul Anderes

Commissioner Scarfo opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was given with all three Commissioners in attendance.

Staff Report

Commissioner Scarfo asked Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, to provide a staff report regarding Ballot Measure 31-101.

Administrative Officer Burgess reported that Ballot Measure 31-101 was referred to the voters of Union County on November 3, 2020 as a result of an initiative petition. The measure was passed by voters with 7,435 yes votes and 6,753 no votes, a difference of 682 total votes. The measure requires the Commissioners to meet on the 2nd Wednesday of every February, June and October to discuss how to promote the interest of Union County in any negotiations regarding relocating the state border of Idaho to include Union County.

Civil penalties are provided for anyone who willfully prohibits, cancels or hinders any of the prescribed meetings of the Board of Commissioners. A civil offense against this measure is punishable as a class D violation, subject to a maximum fine of up to \$125 and is enforceable by any peace officer. In accordance with the approved measure, meetings have previously been held by the Board of Commissioners on February 10, June 9 and October 13, 2021, February 9, June 8, October 12, 2022, February 8, June 14, October 11, 2023 and February 14, 2024.

Public comment opportunities have been offered at each of the previous meetings and written public comments have also been accepted.

At the February 8, 2023 meeting, a motion was passed by the Commissioners to send a letter memorializing the Greater Idaho Movement ballot measure results to State Representatives. On February 9, 2023, a letter was sent by the Commissioners to Representative Bobbie Levy, and Senator Bill Hansell officially informing them of the November 3, 2020 ballot measure results.

The meeting today has been advertised as required and is for the purpose of discussing the ballot measure.

Public Comments

Commissioner Scarfo asked that public comments be limited to 3 to 5 minutes.

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, read out loud public comments received by email.

The first public comment read out loud was submitted by email from Maxine Hines on June 11, 2024. Ms. Hines is opposed to the Greater Idaho Movement and will continue to support Oregon remaining Oregon.

Steven Veal, 202 Oak Street, La Grande, provided public comment to the Commissioners regarding the Greater Idaho Movement and his opposition to succession movements. He was born in La Grande in 1955, grew up in Umatilla County and spent the summers with his grandparents in La Grande. Mr. Veal expressed concerns about economic, social, medical treatment and education issues. He provided statistical information related to taxes, wages, and medical services. He feels this is a purely hypothetical situation that will never happen.

Chris Espisido, 2706 N. Greenwood Ave, La Grande, provided public comment to the Commissioners regarding the Greater Idaho Movement and his opposition to the movement. Mr. Espisido is a teacher at Eastern Oregon University and has spoken with his students of the LGBTQ community, who have expressed their fear in the thought of being accepted in Idaho. He was not living in La Grande during the time of the election, or he would have voted against it. He agrees with Mr. Veal's comments and concerns.

Kenneth Parsons, 63970 McDonald Lane, La Grande, provided public comment to the Commissioners regarding the Greater Idaho Movement. Mr. Parsons is the former spokesman for the movement. If this topic was on the ballot today, he is unsure that he would vote yes or no because the facts have not been laid on the table by either side. He is disappointed to see that after 4 years, there hasn't been a committee formed and research done to sort the pros and cons out for the constituents information.

Chris Espisido, addressed the Commissioners a second time and provided information related to newspaper publishings.

Matt McCaw, Crook County, Executive Director for Greater Idaho Movement, addressed the Commissioners informing them he is available to provide an update and answer any questions the audience may have.

Commissioner Scarfo closed the public comment period.

Commissioner Remarks

Commissioner Anderes thanked everyone for attending the meeting whether they are here to provide public comment or are here to listen and learn.

Commissioner Beverage echoed Commissioner Anderes' comments and encouraged constituents to continue informing the Commissioners with any issues that arise.

Next Meeting Date

The next special Commission meeting on this topic will be held on Wednesday, October 9, 2024 at 9 AM.

Adjournment

Commissioner Scarfo adjourned the meeting at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,



Allison Moore
Senior Department Specialist