

Union County Board of Commissioners
Joseph Building Annex Conference Room
Special Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 9, 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 Allison Moore, Recording Secretary, to provide a staff report regarding Ballot Measure 31-101 on behalf of Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer.

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, February 14, 2024 and June 12, 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

Jake Seavert, 60042 Wright Road, La Grande, indicated this is the second Idaho Border meeting he has attended and appreciates the Commissioners holding these meetings required by Union County voters. He also took the time to express his appreciation to the Commissioners for keeping an open mind about the discussion.

Sheriff Bowen, addressed the Commissioners on behalf of Angela Grove, Director of Friends of the Children, who was not available to attend today's meeting. She expressed concerns that it would be extremely difficult to raise similar funds if the border was moved to Idaho. She stated Friends of the Children would lose the majority of all their donors and state funding. He is a firm believer that this is going to be an outstanding program for Eastern Oregon, especially for La Grande to start it off. While he understands the concerns and frustrations of those feeling Eastern Oregon is not heard by the rest of the state, he would not want to lo programs like Friends of the Children.

Vivian Young, 1201 10th Street, La Grande, addressed the Commissioners regarding her opposition on the Greater Idaho Movement. She has attended many of these meetings, and read through past minutes of meetings she has not attended. She has yet to hear how the movement would benefit Union County citizens. She expressed concern for Idaho's policies regarding women's health and the losses of maternity units and OB/GYN physicians they have experienced.

Commissioner Scarfo closed the public comment period.

Commissioner Remarks

Commissioner Anderes indicated during the February 2025 meeting, the Commissioners should circle back to the letters that have been sent to the Legislators. Senator Hansell will be retired and a new Senator should be informed of the ballot measure.

Commissioner Beverage referred to the resolution sent by the Union County Republicans to the Commissioners intended as informational, not a public comment. She referred to the last paragraph of the resolution that states the Union County Republican Central Committee supports further discussions between Idaho and Oregon officials to move their respected border to the west, in line with presently Oregon counties that have voted by majority to explore a change. Further, the Union County Republican Committee recommends Union County Commissioners to officially asks Elected Officials to introduce legislation to investigate border changes as instructed by Union County citizens. She indicated that is not what our letters have done, they have informed Legislators of the voters request to discuss negotiations, not to introduce border change legislation as that was not what was included in the ballot measure.

Next Meeting Date

The next special Commission meeting on this topic is scheduled for February 12, 2025 at 9 am.

Adjournment

Commissioner Scarfo adjourned the meeting at 9:11 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Allison".

Allison Moore
Senior Department Specialist