

**UNION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
*Joseph Building Annex Conference Room*  
Regular Commission Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, April 17, 2024

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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 present.

**AGENDA REVIEW**

There were no additions made to the agenda.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Commissioner Scarfo asked that public comments be limited to two-minutes per comment.

Robert Fox, moved to La Grande in 2017 and purchased a home on Gordon Creek Road in 2018. Mr. Fox addressed the Commissioners with concerns regarding fire designation zones. He is curious if it can change his status. Commissioner Anderes indicated that the fire map is completed through the State of Oregon Department of Forestry and he would provide the contact information for the Oregon Insurance Alliance.

Commissioner Scarfo closed the public comment period.

**ELECTED OFFICIAL, DEPARTMENT HEAD & EMPLOYEE COMMENTS**

**Resolution 2024-05: In the Matter of Authorizing Participation in the Assessment & Taxation Grant**

Cody Vavra, Assessor/Tax Collector, 1001 4<sup>th</sup> Street, La Grande, presented Resolution 2024-05 to the Commissioners for their consideration.

This state grant through the Department of Revenue, provides funding for counties to help come into compliance or remain in compliance with ORS 308.232, 308.234, Chapters 309, 310, 311, 312 and other laws requiring equity and uniformity in the system of property and taxation.

Total grant amount requested is \$1,488,363.

**Commissioner Anderes made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-05; In the Matter of a Resolution Authorizing Participation in the Assessment and Taxation Grant as presented. Commissioner Beverage seconded.**

All three Commissioners thanked Tax Collector/Assessor Vavra for his thorough explanation.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Beverage moved approval of the consent agenda which included the April 3, 10 & 11, 2024 claims journals and meeting minutes of April 3, 2024 as presented. Commissioner Anderes seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

There were no Administrative Matters to report on at this time.

The Chair called a recess at 9:06 am.

The meeting was reconvened at 9:15 am for the second reading of Ordinance 2024-02.

PUBLIC HEARING: Ordinance 2024-02 – In the Matter of an Ordinance Regulating Burning Outside City Limits

Staff Report

Nick Vora, Emergency Manager, indicated this is an updated ordinance for open burning outside of city limits in Union County.

Emergency Manager Vora indicated Union County's current ordinance was last updated in 2018. Since then the fire defense board has identified some things they would like see changed such as clarifying definitions. Some of the issues that have been brought up over the last several years, is some challenges faced with enforcement of repeat offenders burning hazardous materials. The current ordinance does not give a provision to enforce.

There is also a need to clarify some of the requirements of the ordinance to facilitate administrative changes to a permitting process down the road.

The Fire Defense Board met and discussed the ordinance with Emergency Manager Vora who incorporated all of the feedback in the current revised ordinance.

The first reading of the ordinance was approved on April 3, 2024.

Commissioner Anderes indicated that all three of the Commissioners were at the 4-H & Extension Service District office for a board meeting and John Panches gave a presentation on the work he is doing, while carrying out prescribed burning on private ground. He is pleased the updated ordinance addresses prescribed burning.

Discussion/Action

**Commissioner Anderes made a motion to approve the final reading of Ordinance 2024-02; In the Matter of an Ordinance Regulating Burning Outside City Limits as presented by Emergency Manager Vora. Commissioner Beverage seconded.**

Commissioner Beverage thanked Emergency Manager and staff for working together in updating the ordinance.

Emergency Manager Vora clarified that the current burn permit process will remain the same through the spring.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Commissioner Beverage reported that they had a good meeting with the 4-H & Extension Service District yesterday. The Place Based Water Planning Committee will be hosting a flood tour on Monday from 11 am to 2 pm, lunch will also be provided.

Commissioner Anderes stated that both La Grande and the City of Cove will be hosting their clean-up day this coming Saturday.

Commissioner Scarfo reminded everyone that the senate Candidate forum will be held on Friday, April 19 at 6 pm. There will also be a Commission candidate forum on May 7 at the LHS Auditorium.

Commissioner Anderes added that MERA is completely opened and that only 200 acres of the total 3700 was closed for a brief period. He also reported that Morgan Lake will be opening this weekend after being closed for six months.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next regular scheduled meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 1, 2024 at 9 AM.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Scarfo adjourned the meeting at 9:41 AM.

Respectfully submitted,



Allison Moore  
Senior Department Specialist