

UNION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Joseph Building Annex Conference Room
Regular Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 20, 2025

Present: Commissioner Paul Anderes, Chair
Commissioner R. Matthew Scarfo
Commissioner Jake Seavert

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

AGENDA REVIEW

Administrative Officer Burgess requested to remove the FAA Grant Agreement – RW 12-30 Project as the document is not yet ready.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Anderes reminded the audience that the public comment period is not a time for debate or a time to engage with the Commissioners.

Diana Asher, Elevation Court, La Grande, addressed the Commissioners regarding fireworks in her neighborhood. Ms. Asher also attended a La Grande City Council meeting to address the council with the same complaint. She said they typically start the day before July 4th and continued for an additional 8 days. Ms. Asher and her neighbors have called law enforcement to complain about the issue. She feels it may be time to ban them completely.

Darren Hansen, 62323 Lower Cove Road, addressed the Commissioners regarding a replacement dwelling issue with the Union County Planning Department. Mr. Hansen's house caught fire on July 11; being the Assistant Fire Chief of Cove he did not call the fire department. The next day he called the insurance company who came out and deemed the house a total loss. He started moving forward with replacement, and was told by a contractor that he would need to go to the Planning Department to obtain a Replacement Dwelling permit, which he qualifies for. He went to the Planning Department last night and was told that is not how it works and he would have to fill out a whole new land use application. The replacement dwelling is going in the same exact place the old house was, it would not disrupt anything. He is currently living in a camper and the winter months are approaching. He can't find a code that says he can't replace a burned down house without notifying his neighbors; and asked if he could have an affidavit signed by them and the answer was no. He has all of the required documentation and qualifies to move forward and will most likely appeal.

Celeste Tate, Union City Administrator, PO Box 113, Elgin, addressed the Commissioners regarding 865 N. 2nd Street, Union. Ms. Tate and City of Union Attorney Paige Sully surveyed the state of the property on August 19, 2025. There is major concern with the amount of flammable fuel on the property. The lot is filled with tires, household garbage, wood, abandoned and occupied trailers. Mrs. Tate recognizes that the city attorney and county attorney are working collaboratively on this issue and the City of Union City Council asks that the county Commissioners stay engaged in the process. Ms. Tate requested to read a public comment submitted from Jack and Elisa Lind, 319 W. Elm Street, Union. Mr. and Mrs. Lind provided comments related to 865 N. 2nd Street, Union, asking for the

Commissioners' assistance in removing the squatters from the property. They stated that the property is a menace to the community, and has impacted their quality of life.

Dan Davenport, N. First Street, Union, addressed the Commissioners regarding 865 N. Second Street, Union. Being a resident of Union for many years, he believes this has been a problem for quite some time and would like to see the property cleaned up. It is much worse since the passing of the owner. The quality of life in Union is suffering.

Lee and Denise Shoemaker, 866 N. Second Street, Union, addressed the Commissioners regarding 865 N. Second Street, Union. He resides directly across the street from the property. He has reported many issues coming from the home and is concerned that nothing is being done about it. He isn't sure who is in charge of the property, but to his understanding the county has foreclosed and has possession of it. He recalls contacting the City of Union multiple times over the past 15 years ago and has kept copies of every complaint he has made. He will get an attorney if it is necessary; something needs to be done.

For the record, Commissioner Anderes asked for confirmation on the number of years he has been filing complaints with the City of Union. Mr. Shoemaker reiterated it has been over 15 years.

Don George, Union City Councilor, addressed the Commissioners regarding 865 N. 2nd Street, Union. Mr. George indicated the fire department has been to the property countless time. There was a garage fire on the property in the garage in the middle of the night a couple of years ago. It was accidentally started by people living on the property. The police have been called there for two DOA's. While Mr. George was providing comment, he noted that Google Maps has the house listed as the "local drug den".

Commissioner Anderes closed the public comment period.

ELECTED OFFICIAL, DEPARTMENT HEAD & EMPLOYEE COMMENTS

Medical Service Contracts

On behalf of Nick Huelter, Jail Commander, Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented the Medical Service Contracts to the Commissioners for their consideration.

This is a renewal contract between the Union County Sheriff's Office and Missi Brown for Mental Health Services within the Union County Jail. The period of the contract is July 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025. The contract that was previously in place expired on June 30, 2025.

The cost of the contract is included in the FY 2025-26 adopted budget.

Commissioner Scarfo made a motion to approve the Mental Health Services Contract with Missi Brown as presented. Commissioner Seavert seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The second contract for consideration is for Medical Services in the Union County Jail. This is a renewal contract between Union County and Western Skies Medical Center and will run from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

The cost of the contract is also included in the FY 2025-26 adopted budget.

Commissioner Seavert made a motion to approve the Medical Services Contract with Western Skies Medical Center. Commissioner Scarfo seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

True Subdivision Plat II

Jeff Hsu, Union County Surveyor, 2006 Adams Avenue, presented the True Subdivision Plat II to the Commissioners for their consideration.

This is the second phase of the True Subdivision off of 16th Street, La Grande that will finish filling up the back side of the property.

Commissioner Scarfo asked if the Commissioners are the last to sign the plat. County Surveyor Hsu indicated that is correct; the plat has been approved by the City of La Grande.

Commissioner Scarfo made a motion to approve the True Subdivision Plat II as presented by Union County Surveyor Jeff Hsu. Commissioner Seavert seconded.

Commissioner Seavert drives by the subdivision daily and is happy to see that there is new housing going up in La Grande.

Motion carried unanimously.

FAA Grant Agreement – RW 12-30 Project

This agenda item has been postponed until further notice.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Scarfo moved approval of the consent agenda which included August 6, 7, 13 & 14, 2025 claims journals and July 2, 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Seavert seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Resolution 2025-16: In the Matter of Elimination of Unnecessary Funds

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented Resolution 2025-16 to the Commissioners for their consideration.

During the previous budget process, the budget committee discussed there are three (3) funds that are currently not used and haven't been for some time. It was a recommendation from the budget committee to eliminate the unnecessary funds.

ORS 294.353 allows for the elimination of unnecessary funds by resolution of the Board of Commissioners. It also states that any balance of funds be transferred into the general fund. The following funds will be ceased; Fund 270 Ambulance, Fund 272 Library Fund and Fund 315 Map Fund.

Commissioner Seavert made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-16; In the Matter of Elimination of Unnecessary Funds as presented. Commissioner Scarfo seconded.

Commissioner Anderes thanked the budget committee members for volunteering their time in making this decision.

Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 2025-17: In the Matter of Transferring Appropriated Funds

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented Resolution 2025-17 to the Commissioners for their consideration.

Funding for cybersecurity monitoring was approved during the August 6, 2025 Commission meeting. Funds are needed to be moved from Contingency to Computer Services Department to cover the cost of the monitoring.

Approval of this resolution would authorize a transfer in the amount of \$11,772 to finalize the Cybersecurity Monitoring finalize.

Commissioner Seavert made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-17; In the Matter of Transferring Appropriated Funds. Commissioner Scarfo seconded.

Commissioner Scarfo reiterated his comment from the last Commission meeting; this is another unfunded mandate that is costing the county money.

Motion carried unanimously.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Commissioner Seavert attended the Safe Communities Coalition meeting last night. He reported that the registration for the Drug Free Run is open and is a great event to be apart of.

Commissioner Anderes reported that Wallowa County Commissioner Susan Roberts Celebration of Life is this Saturday, August 23rd at 5 pm.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next regular Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 3, 2025 at 9 am.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Anderes called an Executive Session under ORS 192.660(2)b and instructed the media not to report on the discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Anderes adjourned the meeting at 10:00 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Allison Moore
Senior Department Specialist