

UNION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Joseph Building Annex Conference Room
Regular Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 3, 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

There were no revisions to the agenda.

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.

Celeste Tate, City of Union Administrator, 310 N. 5th Avenue, Elgin, addressed the Commissioners regarding a public comment submitted by a Union resident during the last Commission meeting related to 865 N. 2nd Street, in Union. Ms. Tate provided a list of enforcement actions taken by the city dating back to 2009. She also provided photos comparing the condition of the property from 2012 to 2025. Ms. Tate asked that the county accelerate the redemption period of this property under ORS 312.122; which give the ability to do so if the property is subject to waste or if the property is not occupied by the owner.

Sarah Stutzman, 821 N. College Street, Union, addressed the Commissioners regarding the property located at 865 N. 2nd Street in Union. She also discussed two other properties that are in the exact same condition which concerns her. She is worried about possible fires, sanitation, and stray cats that live inside the vacant homes.

Steve Boe, La Grande, addressed the Commissioners regarding the Cook Memorial Library. He indicated that the library is engaging in political advocacy and believes the taxpayers and company shouldn't be paying for it. There is an LGBTQ flag next to the front door entrance and that is advocacy for a political organization and knows of no city or county facility that has an LGBTQ flag displayed. The library also has a webpage where the flag is also displayed. He would like to know why the library is granted special dispensation for this kind of political activity.

Commissioner Scarfo noted that the La Grande City Council meeting is this evening at 6 pm at City Hall if Mr. Boe would like to express his concerns regarding the LGBTQ flag to the council.

Bureau of Land Management – Quarterly Update

Sarah Sherman, Baker Field Manager, addressed the Commissioners regarding the BLM Quarterly Report for their information.

On April 1, 2025 the Baker Field Office was notified that their H Street lease would be terminated. In June, the office transitioned operations to co-locate with the Nation Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive

Center at 22267 Oregon Highway 86. The office will still hold the same hours, but encourage people to make an appointment if they choose to come in.

Sarah reported that they are still working on their access project over in Umatilla County; the South Fork of Walla Walla, an area of critical environmental concern. They received lots of impacts from a flood in 2020, so they have been evaluating how they want to restore access within the area and what that will look like. She indicated that it is on their ePlanning website, if anyone frequents the area and would like to know the progress. The public comment period ends on September 10.

ELECTED OFFICIAL, DEPARTMENT HEAD & EMPLOYEE COMMENTS

Circuit Court Judgement

Lisa Feik, County Clerk, provided information to the Commissioners related to the Circuit Court ruling related to Commissioner term limits.

The Union County Circuit Court judge granted the term limits to be unconstitutional. The clerk's office will be able to accept candidate filings if the Commissioners choose and that timeline begins on September 11, 2025.

The Commissioners thanked Lisa for the information.

Cherry Crest Farm, Inc. Quitclaim Deed

Doug Wright, Public Works & Airport Director, presented the Cherry Crest Farm, Inc. Deed to the Commissioners for their consideration.

Director Wright requested to review both deeds for Cherry Crest Farm because they are located in the same area. Director Wright provided a copy of a map to familiarize the area. He explained that the bridge on Booth Lane was replaced in 1965. The configuration of the road was in a curved alignment, so they straightened the road out and put the bridge in. In doing that, there was a lot of correspondence back and forth between landowners in regards to trading property. When that happened, the deeds did not get cleaned up to reflect that.

The deeds have been reviewed by county counsel Wyatt Baum.

Commissioner Scarfo indicated that he read through the deeds and is happy to see that Wyatt has reviewed them as well.

Commissioner Scarfo made a motion to approve the two Quitclaim Deeds for Cherry Crest Farm Inc. and Booth Lane as presented. Commissioner Seavert seconded.

Commissioner Anderes believes the families will be happy to see this cleaned up.

Administrative Officer Burgess clarified for the record that the deeds for Booth Lane are for John and Dian Frisch and John and Trudy Hassinger.

Motion carried unanimously.

Airport Project Bid Awards

Doug Wright, Public Works and Airport Director, presented the Airport Bid Awards to the Commissioners for their consideration.

Union County Public Works went out to bid for the Runway 12-30 Shoulder, Safety Area, Object Free Area Improvements (AIP #3-41-0031-032-2025) and the New Southwest Hangar Taxi lanes (AIG #3-41-0031-033-2025). There are two grants, but they will be combined into one project.

Marcum & Sons, LLC submitted the following bid proposal:

- AIP Project No. 3-41-0031-032-2025 (Runway 12-30)
 - Base Bid Schedule A Amount: \$4,421,811.80
 - Base Bid Schedule A1 Amount: \$1,680,946.40
- AIG Project No. 3-41-0031-033-2025 (SW Taxi lanes)
 - Base Bid Schedule B Amount: \$450,003
 - Additive Bid Schedule B1 Amount \$150,337.80

The total contract is in the amount of \$6,703,099.00.

Other bids received were from; High Desert Construction at \$7,325,672. and Moreno & Nelson Construction at \$10,990,555.

Director Wright recommends awarding the bid to Marcum & Sons, LLC.

Commissioner Seavert made a motion to approve the bid award to Marcum & Sons, LLC as presented. Commissioner Scarfo seconded.

Commissioner Anderes is excited that the airport is getting new taxiways and thanked Director Wright.

Motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Scarfo moved approval of the consent agenda which included August 19, 20 & 27, 2025 claims journals and July 16, 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Seavert seconded.

Motion carried unanimously.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Court Order 2025-15: In the Matter of Appointment to the Ambulance Advisory Committee

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented Court Order 2025-15 to the Commissioners for their consideration.

There is currently a vacancy for a member representing the community of Union. An application has been received from Don George expressing interest in serving on the Union County Ambulance District Advisory Committee.

Mr. George resides within the designated Union area and meeting the eligibility criteria for appointment.

Commissioner Seavert made a motion to approve Court Order 2025-15; Appointment to the Ambulance District Advisory Committee as presented. Commissioner Scarfo seconded.

All three Commissioners thanked Mr. George for stepping up to serve on this committee.

Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 2025-18: In Opposition of Reintroduction of Grizzly Bears

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented Resolution 2025-18 to the Commissioners for their consideration.

During the last work session, there was discussion to draft a resolution opposing Grizzly Bear Reintroduction in Northeastern, specifically Union County.

Administrative Officer Burgess read the resolution out loud for the record.

Commissioner Seavert made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-18; In the Matter of a Resolution Opposing Grizzly Bear Reintroduction to the Northeast Region of Oregon, Specifically Union County. Commissioner Scarfo seconded.

Commissioner Scarfo thanked Commissioner Seavert for taking the lead and working on this.

For the record, Commissioner Seavert reiterated that this is a proactive move rather than a reactive move as we should look at all situations that are brought to our attention.

Motion carried unanimously.

Authorization for Submission of Conditional Use Application

Shelley Burgess, administrative Officer, provided a brief staff report to the Commissioners regarding the Conditional Use Application by Cody Flower.

During the August 13, 2025 work session, Cody Flower of Nerd Mentality discussed his interest in renting a portion of the Riviera Activity Center. Prior to considering a lease agreement, a conditional use permit from the City of La Grande is required.

Mr. Flower has begun pursuing the permit and needs authorization from Union County to submit the application. Administrative Officer Burgess has prepared a draft letter which authorizes Mr. Flower to submit the application.

Commissioner Seavert made a motion to authorize signing the letter to Cody Flower making him the Owner Representative of the RAC for the Conditional Use Application with the City of La Grande. Commissioner Scarfo seconded.

Commissioner Scarfo asked for clarification on the steps if Mr. Flower is approved through the City of La Grande. Administrative Officer Burgess indicated that if he is approved, Union County would draft a lease if he wishes to continue to pursue.

Motion carried unanimously.

Clarification of Law

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented the Clarification of Law to the Commissioners for their consideration.

Wyatt Baum, County Legal Counsel, reached out to Administrative Officer Burgess to report that all counties have been asked to join a group letter to the Governor asking for clarity on enforcement of state v. federal law. Specifically seeking clarification of their legal obligations in light of the apparent conflicts between the Oregon Sanctuary Promise Act, Oregon Public Records Act, and federal law.

Marion County has initiated a process and are requesting other counties to join in. There are 34 of the 36 County Sheriff's that have signed a separate letter asking for the same thing.

Administrative Officer Burgess read a draft letter provided by legal counsel for the record.

Commissioner Seavert made a motion to sign the letter addressed to Attorney General Dan Rayfield and Attorney General Pam Bondi as presented. Commissioner Scarfo seconded.

Commissioner Scarfo indicated that it was not a good time for the Commissioners when Union County was accidentally added to the sanctuary list a couple of months ago.

Motion carried unanimously.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Commissioner Scarfo will be attending Senator Nash's townhall this afternoon in Umatilla County.

Commissioner Seavert will be the emcee at Bobby Levy's townhall on Friday at EOU Zabel Hall. He announced that there will be a Trade Career Fair held at the EOLS grounds on October 15 open to all county junior and senior students.

Commissioner Anderes will be in Washington DC along with Jake next week and were able to set up meeting with Senator Wyden, Senator Merkley, Representative Bentz, NACo and hopefully BLM leadership.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next regular Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 17, 2025 at 9 am.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Anderes adjourned the meeting at 9:40 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Allison Moore
Senior Department Specialist