

*Union County Board of Commissioners*  
Joseph Building Annex Conference Room  
Regular Commission Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 7, 2026

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

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 revisions to the agenda.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Commissioner Scarfo opened the public comment period and asked public comment to be limited to 3 minutes.

Andrew White, 60236 Bushnell Road, La Grande, addressed the Commissioners with his comments related to the Blue Mountain Translator District. In 1962, there was installed what they call drop cable which was buried in some locations but not others. They provided power to a number of things in that time period, Starkey being one of them. What they are trying to do as a board at this moment, is to bring to code a power line that services many things. Mr. White provided names of businesses that will benefit from this power line. Mr. White provided a print out to the Commissioners for their information. They have reached out to Senators, Representatives and local officials as well as the Emergency Manager. They are needed \$400,000 for the project.

Jim Mollerstrom, 812 Ponderosa Street, Independence, Oregon, Director of the Union County Citizens for Good Government, addressed the Commissioners with a brief introduction. Mr. Mollerstrom indicated that they were pretty active years ago on some local issues on good governance. He indicated on behalf of 5,578 voters, the group is working on a couple of initiatives to discuss with the Commissioners. He asked how he would need to approach the Commissioners and get on the agenda.

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, indicated that Mr. Mollerstrom had reached out to her related to being added to the Commission meeting agenda. She informed him of the public comment period during a Commission meeting because meetings with three Commissioners constitutes a public meeting that has to be noticed and open to the public. If the topic is about a specific item, they could make the request to be listed as an item. That request would come to either herself or Allison who would verify with the Chairman and Commissioners if it should be placed on the agenda.

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

**MERA Master Plan**

Josh Ford, Parks Coordinator, addressed the Commissioners regarding the MERA Master Plan.

Mr. Ford indicated that he would not be going through the entire plan as it is a very large document. He started in his position as the Parks Coordinator a little over 3 years ago and stumbled upon the MERA master plan in his file cabinet and noticed that it was not complete.

At that time, the advisory committee and Mr. Ford took it upon themselves to review the plan, and add things that were missing and revise things that weren't necessarily correct anymore. As the years go on, we move in different directions and start planning into the future. He and the advisory committee broke it up into sections and looked at a couple of pages or sections at each of their MERA advisory committee meetings and came to a consensus of what the master plan should say, approved that section and moved on. Once the plan was completed, the committee did one final viewing and approved it.

Once it was approved by the advisory committee he advertised the plan for public comment for 90 days. The plan was advertised on Elkhorn Media a few times, and received one comment that the committee reviewed and continued to move forward with the plan.

Mr. Ford said the biggest piece of the master plan is the forestry plan, which was written for the county by a local forester funded through Wallowa Resources.

Commissioner Anderes indicated that he met with Josh Ford this morning and apologized for not getting back to him sooner and relayed that he would like to table this until next month. He was able to review, but has a lot of questions that would help make it clearer to the public.

Commissioner Seavert was able to get through a bulk of it and nothing jumped out at him. He did go through the before and after photos and thought that was a crucial piece to show the public. He would like to see him continue to do that as they complete projects up at MERA to have the documentation. In order to dissect the plan a bit more, he would also like to postpone the plan until next month.

Commissioner Scarfo thanked Josh and the advisory committee for taking the lead on this and getting it updated. It is a lot of work, and most people would just put it on a shelf and get to it the next year.

Commissioner Anderes would like to reiterate the thank you to Wallowa Resources and especially the hard work that DK did as our forestry consultant.

**Commissioner Anderes made a motion to postpone the MERA Master Plan until the February Commission meeting. Commissioner Seavert seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

Commissioner Seavert asked Parks Coordinator Ford to provide an update on parking permits. Parking permit sales from March to date has generated approximately \$20,000.

All three Commissioners thanked Mr. Ford for everything he does.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Seavert moved approval of the consent agenda which included the December 16, 23 & 30, 2025 claims journals and November 5, 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Anderes seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

**Wolf Management Grant Recommendation**

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented the Wolf Management grant recommendations to the Commissioners for their consideration.

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The Union County Wolf Depredation Compensation Advisory Committee met on December 16, 2025 to review applications for funding under the non-lethal management and/or wolf deterrent techniques category. Union County has available \$53,196.31 in grant funds received through Oregon Department of Agriculture.

The funds must be awarded prior to January 31, 2026 or they will need to be returned to the State.

Funding recommendations were: Bar V Cattle Co. for \$28,137.27; Eric Harlow for \$12,148.55; Cameron Krebbs for \$9,677.07 and Colby Thompson for \$3,233.45.

Commissioner Seavert hopes to see more funding after the short session, but it is good to have the funding available.

**Commissioner Seavert made a motion to approve the Wolf Management Grant Recommendations as presented. Commissioner Anderes seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

**NEXT MEETING**

The next regular Commission meeting is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, January 21, 2026 at 9 am.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Commissioner Anderes expressed his condolences to Lincoln County regarding the loss of Commissioner Clara Hall.

Commissioner Seavert is excited to welcome Shannon Stockwell as the new Director for Tri-County Weed Management program that takes care of Baker, Wallowa, and Union County. She was hired back in November, worked remotely in Wyoming and has recently relocated to La Grande with her partner. He has also been paying attention to wildlife damage; which has been light being that we've had a mild winter. He will be preparing for short session in the coming weeks, seeing what bills are going to be introduced by our local legislators, as well as state legislation that will affect our county here.

Commissioner Scarfo met with the Fair Board and Becker Construction and we are underway with putting water and sewer across 1-84 and the Grande Ronde River. He is very excited to see this get going this year.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Scarfo adjourned the meeting at 9:28 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Allison Moore  
Senior Department Specialist