

Union County Board of Commissioners
Joseph Building Annex Conference Room
Regular Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 4, 2026

Present: Commissioner R. Matthew Scarfo, Chair
Commissioner Paul Anderes
Commissioner Jake Seavert (via teleconference)

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

AGENDA REVIEW

There were no revisions to the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Scarfo opened the public comment period and asked that comments be limited to 3 minutes. He also noted he will not be asking those providing public comment to provide their address, but rather their city and county.

Beth Upshaw, Union, addressed the Commissioners with several items of concern related to the property on N. Second Street in Union. She understands that the county is involved in property foreclosure, and there are now additional vehicles on the property. There is another property on Main Street, that is in disarray and recently burned down; which is all connected to the properties not being maintained. She understands that the City of Union is involved and would hope that the county would address the issue. It is very concerning as a community member of almost 50 years to see this kind of behavior in Union. Ms. Upshaw provided an example from the City of Baker who condemned a home that a woman was living in. She hopes that law enforcement will address the continued drug issues as well.

Her second concern is the overturn of the term limits for the Board of Commissioners. She is aware that the decision was made by the circuit court judge to remove the term limits, and she would have to disagree with this. Her biggest concern is that it was the will of the people to put the term limits in place. If she were bringing a petition forward and it passed by majority, is the outcome going to be changed somewhere down the road again. There is "county road talk" as she likes to call it, that this might be self-motivated and she can't get her head wrapped around why the Commissioners would change it. Ms. Upshaw quoted former Commissioner Beverage, "I am honoring the will of the people," and was willing to move on and try something different. She hopes somewhere down the road the Commissioners can think about that. She has brought this up several times and hopes that it is on the record.

Community Connection of Northeast Oregon, Inc. (CCNO) Title VI Plan

Kane Lester, CCNO Transit Manager, La Grande, presented the proposed CCNO Title VI Plan to the Commissioners for their consideration. The Plan is designed to ensure that no person shall on the grounds of race, color or national origin be excluded or discriminated against in services or programs offered.

The Civil Rights Title VI plan is associated with public transit especially in Union County which holds the funding for 5310 and STIF. As the subrecipient, CCNO combined Baker, Union and Wallowa County's Title

VI plan along with CCNO to cover their 5311 and other federal funding. CCNO has taken the demographics from each county and created one document. Nothing has changed in the plan with the exception of combining the demographics in the back of the plan.

The plan has been approved by ODOT and the CCNO Board of Directors.

Commissioner Anderes made a motion to approve the CCNO Title VI Plan as presented. Commissioner Seavert seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

MERA Forest Management Plan

Josh Ford, Parks Coordinator, provided a brief summary to the Commissioners for their information, as the plan had already been presented to the Commissioners at the previous meeting.

Commissioner Anderes indicated that he has sat down with Mr. Ford prior and asked questions he had related to the plan. He also thanked DK for the work he did on the forestry plan specifically, as it was very detailed and practical.

Commissioner Seavert spent the last couple of weeks reviewing the plan and is very thankful that it was put together. The efforts planned in maintaining MERA are well documented.

Commissioner Anderes made a motion to adopt the MERA Forest Management Plan as presented by Parks Manager Ford. Commissioner Seavert seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Sheriff Update

Sheriff Bowen apologized for not attending the department head meeting and provided a staff update to the Commissioners for their information.

As of last week, the Sheriff's office received a new SWAT vehicle from Deschutes County through the law enforcement surplus program. This will replace the previous SWAT vehicle that had a serious mechanical issue. He noted that there are a couple of upcoming retirements, Brad Workinger and Travis Schaad. Travis Schaad will be taking over the work crew with Brad's departure. Which will result in a patrol opening.

Commissioner Scarfo noted that he would be sure and thank Deschutes County for the vehicle.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Anderes moved approval of the consent agenda which included the January 21 & 28, 2026 claims journals and December 17, 2025 and January 7 & 21, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Seavert seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

NEXT MEETING

The next special meeting is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, February 11, 2026 at 9 am on the Idaho Borders matter.

The next regular Commission meeting is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at 9 am.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Commissioner Anderes noted AOC Days are next week in Salem where there will be a meeting with the Governor. He also noted that he will not be in attendance for the first Commission meeting of March as he will be having a knee replacement.

Commissioner Seavert noted that he attended the Economic Roundtable last week and is happy to welcome the new La Grande Main Street Executive Director, Allison Hardy who relocated from Wisconsin. He also noted that the short session has started at a rapid rate. He will be testifying on several bills.

Commissioner Anderes noted he has submitted written testimony on the TLT Bill and will testify via Zoom this afternoon.

Commissioner Scarfo said that it will be strange not going to Salem asking for fair funding. However, he is focusing on policy updates and house bills.

Executive Session ORS 192.660(2)(f) Exempt Records

The Chair called an executive session under ORS 192.660(2)(f).

The Chair reconvened the regular meeting at 9:48 am

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Scarfo adjourned the meeting at 9:49 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Allison Moore
Senior Department Specialist