

*Union County Board of Commissioners*

Joseph Building Annex Conference Room

Regular Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 18, 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.

Commissioner Seavert asked for permission to provide an update on the furniture in the Commissioners board room. Oregon Corrections Enterprises has a program that provides adults in custody (AIC's) the opportunity to develop real world job skills, build strong work ethics and prepare for a successful return to their communities by fostering growth opportunity in hopes they help people transform their lives and strengthen Oregon communities. It is very similar to the Prison Blue's program in Pendleton, where inmates make jeans. The cost for the furniture was only for the materials; the labor was not included.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

There were no public comments at this time.

**Keelie Jones – Eastern Oregon Livestock Show Queen Candidate**

Keelie Jones, Eastern Oregon Livestock Show Queen Candidate, introduced herself to the Commissioners and presented her candidate speech to the Commissioners for their information. Her focus was on agriculture in Union County.

All three Commissioners thanked her for presenting; she did a wonderful job.

**Fee Waiver Request**

Mike Boquist, Community Development Director, provided a staff report to the Commissioners regarding a fee waiver request from the City of La Grande.

There is a joint management agreement between the City of La Grande and Union County. Mr. Boquist is preparing a Union County Planning Department application that requests the Union County Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners' consideration to co-adopt the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment, which requires a \$300.00 application fee.

In the past, the Board of Commissioners have waived that fee as part of the joint management agreement. That is Mr. Boquist's request today, to waive the application fee.

**Commissioner Anderes made a motion to approve the Fee Waiver Request as presented by Community Development Director Boquist. Commissioner Seavert seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

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

True Addition Plat

Jeff Hsu, Union County Surveyor, presented the True Addition Plat to the Commissioners for their consideration.

Mr. Hsu is before the Commissioners requesting approval of the addition to the True Subdivision. Any subdivision built in Union County requires Commission approval. This will be the last phase.

The plat has been approved through the City of La Grande and the Commissioners are the last to sign.

**Commissioner Anderes made a motion to approve the True Addition Plat as presented by Union County Surveyor Jeff Hsu. Commissioner Seavert seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**Commissioner Seavert moved approval of the consent agenda which included the March 4 & 11, 2026 claims journals and February 11, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Anderes seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

Court Order 2026-10: In the Matter of Appointment to the Union County Fair Association Board of Directors

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented Court Order 2026-10 to the Commissioners for their consideration.

Heather Rajkovich has resigned from the Union County Fair Association Board of Directors leaving an unexpired term. The open position has been advertised and applications have been received from individuals expressing an interest in serving on the Union County Fair Association Board of Directors

The Commissioners reviewed the applications submitted and chose Carrie Lane to fill the unexpired term.

Her term will expire on December 31, 2029.

**Commissioner Anderes made a motion to approve Court Order 2026-10; In the Matter of Appointment to the Union County Fair Board Association Board of Directors as presented. Commissioner Seavert seconded.**

Commissioner Anderes thanked both applicants. It is nice when we have more interest than we have had. Both are very qualified candidates.

Commissioner Seavert also thanked both applicants. He hopes the other applicant stays involved in the fair. He is excited to see all the changes at the fairgrounds over the next few years.

Commissioner Scarfo said it is a nice time to be on the fair board with all the exciting changes.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

Quitclaim Deed – Frisch

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented the Quitclaim Deed to the Commissioners for their consideration.

This quitclaim deed is between Union County and John and Dian Frisch. This deed has to do with the realignment of Booth Lane done many years ago resulting in surplus property. The first quitclaim deed was done several months ago with the assistance of county legal counsel Wyatt Baum. This section of property was overlooked at that time.

**Commissioner Seavert made a motion to approve the Quitclaim Deed for John and Dian Frisch as presented. Commissioner Anderes seconded.**

Commissioner Anderes is glad that this is getting cleaned up. He was not heavily involved, however a couple of different attorneys contacted him and the Public Works Department. He stated that this should have been done 40-50 years ago.

Second Reading Continuation: Ordinance 2026-01; In the Matter of an Ordinance Amending the Union County Zoning, Partition, and Subdivision Ordinance to Revise Articles 12, 13 and 21 to Provide Clarification and to Include the Addition of a Temporary Workforce Housing Conditional Use

Staff Report

Inga Williams, Planning Director, addressed the Commissioners regarding the continuation of Ordinance 2026-01. Director Williams indicated that nothing has changed since the last reading on March 4, 2026.

Discussion/Action

Commissioner Scarfo stated the last reading was postponed for Commissioner Anderes to be involved.

Commissioner Seavert thinks it is a good project and will be the first in the state. Director Williams indicated there is one more in Umatilla or Wallowa County.

**Commissioner Seavert made a motion to accept Ordinance 2026-01; In the Matter of an Ordinance Amending the Union County Zoning, Partition, and Subdivision Ordinance to Revise Articles 12, 13 and 21 to Provide Clarification and to Include the Addition of a Temporary Workforce Housing Conditional Use. Commissioner Anderes seconded.**

Commissioner Seavert thanked the Planning Department and Planning Commission for working on this.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

Lease Agreement – Nerd Mentality

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented the Nerd Mentality Lease Agreement to the Commissioners for their consideration.

The Commissioners discussed the potential occupant during a work session held on January 14, 2026. Cody Flower, Nerd Mentality Executive Director, attended the work session and presented his desire to occupy space in the Riveria Activity Center, which the county owns.

During the work session, the Commissioners agreed to consider a lease agreement. The first step in doing that was to make sure the proposed use fell within the City of La Grande's Conditional Use Opportunities. Mr. Flower did submit the required Conditional Use application which was approved through the City of La Grande's planning process.

Administrative Officer Burgess, Mr. Flower and Facilities Manager Will Burns went through the facility a couple times to look at what classrooms they were hoping to use. Administrative Officer Burgess worked with legal counsel to put together a lease agreement. It was discussed to do a short-term lease because it was difficult to determine the actual additional costs that the county might incur due to utilities.

The proposed lease agreement is for a 6-month period and does allow for two 1-year extensions. Nerd Mentality also wanted a "trial basis" to make sure that their endeavor would be successful.

The term of the lease would be effective on April 1, 2026 with a review on the 6<sup>th</sup> month.

Commissioner Scarfo referred to the utilities section of the lease and asked for confirmation that the county would cover all utilities except for the phone. Administrative Officer Burgess confirmed that is correct, but the tenant will also be responsible for internet.

Commissioner Scarfo has concerns with that especially in the winter and summer months. Administrative Officer Burgess indicated that she did go back and look what the costs were when the facility was occupied by Kids Club and translated that into the current cost of the electricity and natural gas. Which is another reason why there will be a 6-month review; to be sure the county is covering the additional costs.

The gym will still be rented out which is where the county is currently generating revenue to offset the costs of the other portions of the facility.

The Commissioners agreed to review the lease on October 1, 2026 and asked Mr. Flower if he is comfortable with that decision. Mr. Flower indicated that would work just fine.

Commissioner Anderes expressed his appreciation to Mr. Flower, Administrative Officer Burgess, Will Burns and county legal counsel for putting this all together. He believes this will be an asset to the community. Mr. Flower indicated by having people in the building, they will be able to advise of any observed opportunities for cost savings.

**Commissioner Seavert made a motion to accept the lease agreement for Nerd Mentality between Union County as presented. Commissioner Anderes seconded.**

Commissioner Seavert is also excited to see the building being used as well; especially for creating this space for youth in La Grande to gather. Anything we can do to help the youth stay out of trouble and off the streets. He believes law enforcement and the Juvenile Department will also be appreciative.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next regular Commission meeting is scheduled to be held Wednesday, April 1, 2026 at 9 am.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Commissioner Anderes is happy to be back after recovering from a knee replacement, playing catch up on emails this week.

Commissioner Seavert noted the weather is outstanding this week, get out and get some vitamin D if you can. He will be attending the Range Land Summit for Eastern Oregon at the armory. He also noted that the Trades Career Fair group is back together to begin the planning process for this year. It is great to have Lori McNeil at the chamber office, she is the new hire and is really excited to assist.

Commissioner Seavert also reported that the Safe Communities Coalition is gaining some traction and received opioid abatement funding from the City of La Grande to help fund the program. The Community Health 412 class at EOU completed interviews locally and concluded that the youth are aware of the drugs and alcohol abuse in Union County.

Commissioner Scarfo and Commissioner Seavert attended the Rainmaker presentation in Umatilla County along with many other Commissioners. They can single out certain areas and make it snow during specific times of the year. He stated they may consider Anthony Lakes if they don't have much snow again next season.

He also stated construction at the fairgrounds is underway and will be excited to see it completed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Scarfo adjourned the meeting at 9:36 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Allison Moore  
Senior Department Specialist