

Union County Board of Commissioner
Joseph Building Annex Conference Room
Regular Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 2, 2026

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

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, requested the addition of a letter of support for Worksource La Grande's application for the Performance Incentive Awards Program under Administrative Matters.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments at this time.

ELECTED OFFICIAL, DEPARTMENT HEAD & EMPLOYEE COMMENTS

MERA Programmatic Agreement Renewal

Josh Ford, Parks Coordinator, presented the Programmatic Agreement Renewal to the Commissioners for their consideration.

Mt. Emily Recreation Area (MERA) has a programmatic agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR). The agreement defines how they manage the archaeology areas within MERA in a 5-year duration which expires in October 2026.

If approved, Mr. Ford drafted a letter for Commission signature acknowledging the extension of the agreement. If something needs to be changed, it can be done in the 5-year duration period of the agreement.

Commissioner Anderes thanked Mr. Ford for cultivating a good relationship with both SHPO and CTUIR.

Commissioner Seavert asked if it is standard business from the time the county took over MERA. Mr. Ford indicated that it didn't start when the county took over the property, it was first introduced 5-years ago to better manage the archaeology areas.

Commissioner Seavert asked if the agreement impacts the use of MERA. Mr. Ford indicated it does have impacts if there is erosion on a trail, they have to either close the trail or fix it. He also stated it would be minimal impact to the whole area.

Commissioner Anderes made a motion to approve the MERA Programmatic Agreement as presented. Commissioner Seavert seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Seavert moved approval of the consent agenda which included the August 19 & 26, 2026 claims journals; August 19, 2026 meeting minutes and Lynch v. Multnomah Co. et al Settlement Agreement as presented. Commissioner Anderes seconded.

Roll call vote: **Commissioner Anderes, no. Commissioner Seavert, yes. Commissioner Scarfo, yes.**

Commissioner Anderes explained his vote as being disappointed in the Court making the Lynch v. Multnomah Co. retroactive. It costs every county money and falls under the category of unfunded mandates.

Motion carried.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Court Order 2026-18: In the Matter of Appointment to the Union County Local Public Safety Coordinating Council

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented Court Order 2026-18 to the Commissioners for their consideration.

There is a vacancy on the Union County Public Safety Coordinating Council for a Lay Citizen. The vacancy has been advertised and an application has been received from Javan Ireland expressing an interest in serving on the committee.

Daisy Duren is now serving as the Mental Health Director for the Center for Human Development. In her role as Mental Health Director, she becomes an appointed member of the Union County Public Safety Coordinating Council.

Commissioner Anderes made a motion to approve Court Order 2026-18; In the Matter of Appointment to the Union County Public Safety Coordinating Council as presented. Commissioner Seavert seconded.

Commissioner Anderes thanked both parties for volunteering their time.

Motion carried unanimously.

Court Order 2026-19: In the Matter of Appointment to the STIF Advisory Committee

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented Court Order 2026-19 to the Commissioners for their consideration.

The terms for Brian Blais, Kane Lester and Ann Bushraka are due for renewal and all three parties have expressed interest in continuing to serve.

The new term is set to expire on September 30, 2030.

Commissioner Seavert made a motion to approve Court Order 2026-19; In the Matter of Appointment to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) Advisory Committee for Union County as presented. Commissioner Anderes seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Airport Hangar Lease Agreement

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, presented the Airport Hangar Lease agreement to the Commissioners for their consideration.

This lease is between Union County and Brandon Hiller who leases Hangar #1 located in Tan Hangar Building owned by Union County. The hangar lease previously belonged to Mr. Patterson who has sold his airplane and vacated the hangar.

The airport maintains a list of those interested in hangars when they become available and Mr. Hiller was first on that list.

The lessee shall pay rent in the sum of \$160 a month for the term of the lease. The term shall begin September 1, 2026 and continue through February 28, 2030.

Commissioner Anderes made a motion to approve the Airport Hangar Lease Agreement as presented. Commissioner Seavert seconded.

Commissioner Anderes expressed his thanks to Public Works staff Kim Rainey and Rex Harden for putting the lease together, as their office has been short staffed.

Motion carried unanimously

Letter of Support for Worksource Oregon

Shelley Burgess, Administrative Officer, introduced the letter of support of Worksource Oregon for a Veteran Incentive Award.

Stephanie Hansen, Worksource Oregon is applying for a Veteran Incentive Award which would bring additional funding to Worksource La Grande to assist with support of Veterans. Administrative Officer Burgess read the letter out loud for the record.

Commissioner Scarfo confirmed that Ms. Hansen reached out to him last week requesting the letter.

Commissioner Seavert made a motion to approve the Letter of Support for Worksource Oregon as presented. Commissioner Anderes seconded.

Commissioner Seavert thinks it is a great opportunity anytime we can apply for grants; not only to help Veterans in our community, but any of those that may be underserved.

Motion carried unanimously.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Commissioner Anderes attended the Eastern Oregon Women's Coalition (EWOC) Economic Summit in Ontario which had great keynote speakers and great breakout session. He thanked the EOWC for their efforts in putting it all together. It was announced that Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort received an either low or no interest loan from USDA Rural Development to help with construction for their new facility. He reported that he will not be in attendance at the next Commission meeting because he will be in Denmark participating in the Oregon Denmark Industrial Symbiosis tour at no cost to the county. He provided information related to the conference.

Commissioner Seavert also attended the EOWC Economic Summit in Ontario and participated in a water and energy tour. He applied through NACo and was accepted into the Rural and Ag Affairs Policy Committee and was assigned as Vice Chair. Later this month, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission will have their public meeting here in La Grande, September 17-18 where he will provide public comment on a personal level. Lastly, the Trades Talk and Career Fair will be held on September 30 at the Eastern Oregon Livestock Grounds. There are currently 35 vendors.

Commissioner Scarfo also attended the EOWC Economic Summit in Ontario. He thanked Representative Levy and her crew; they did a fantastic job and it was well attended. There are Legislators and Commissioners from across the state, there is so much to learn. He will be attending Legislative Days with District Attorney McDaniel in Salem next week to start working on getting funding for a Residential Treatment Facility in Union County. The Opioid Abatement Advisory Committee has been working on that for the last couple of years.

Commissioner Anderes will not be attending Legislative Days in Salem, he will be testifying remotely to the House Emergency Management Committee about the bill Senator Nash and Representative Owens are putting forward for augmenting the fuel capacity at the Union County Airport.

Commissioner Seavert reminded everyone the Eastern Oregon Ag Research Center in Union is having their 125th year party on Monday, September 14. He also noted the Safe Communities Coalition Drug Free Run will be held on Saturday, September 19. The Housing Tour turned out fantastic, which started in Gilliam County and Condon, went on to the Port of Arlington and the Bumblebee Project in Stanfield. It really mimicked what Senator Nash is trying to develop in Union County for workforce housing. Part two of the housing tour continued in La Grande visiting a couple of sites that could entertain the possibility for workforce housing and ended the tour in Wallowa County.

PUBLIC HEARING: First Reading of Ordinance 2026-02: In the Matter of Amending the Union County Zoning, Partition & Subdivision Ordinance to Co-Adopt the City of La Grande Development Code Ordinance Number 3286, Series 2026

Staff Report

Inga Williams, Planning Director, introduced Ordinance 2026-02 to the Commissioners for their consideration along with a brief staff report. She explained the proposed ordinance would co-adopt the City of La Grande Development Code Ordinance 3286, Series 2026 to be effective in the Urban Growth Boundary area.

Director Williams explained the proposed amendments are required by state statute. New bills have been adopted and state statute updates, mostly the housing code. Other items that came up through code enforcement and other requests from their citizens to change parts of the code.

Mike Boquist, City of La Grande Community Development Director, indicated this process started a couple of years ago as a result of years of code changes or state statutes that were adopted that affect housing codes. The City of La Grande applied for a grant through Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) to do a code audit to figure out if they have been able to keep up.

There was a code audit a couple of years ago that resulted in a few identifications where they've fallen short or have missed items that were in state law. One example was "single family" dwellings has been changed to "single households".

The city adopted the code changes in April, and they were presented to the Union County Planning Commission last month who recommend approval.

Commissioner Anderes asked if any of the changes are more stringent than the State of Oregon's requirements. Mr. Boquist indicated all of La Grande's codes are more stringent than the state requires because the state doesn't adopt a specific standards similar to how they do in the counties. The state adopts the intent that says, "you will do this" and establish a code that meets the statutory intent.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Commissioner Scarfo closed the public comment period on Ordinance 2026-02.

Discussion/Action

Commissioner Seavert noted that his busy schedule didn't allow him to read through the ordinance thoroughly beforehand. He did skim through it and there are some things he will have questions on between now and the second reading.

Commissioner Anderes made a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2026-02 as presented. Commissioner Seavert seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Second reading is scheduled for October 7, 2026 at 9:30 am.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular Commission meeting is scheduled to be held Wednesday, September 16, 2026 at 9 am.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Scarfo adjourned the meeting at 9:41 am

Respectfully submitted,



Allison Moore
Senior Department Specialist