

**UMATILLA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION - MINUTES**

Meeting of August 31, 2026
9:00 am, Room 130, Umatilla County Courthouse
Pendleton, Oregon

Commissioners Present: Chair Dan Dorran and Vice-Chair John Shafer

County Counsels: Nicholas Warner

Guests Present: Robert Pahl, Umatilla County Chief Financial Officer; Jennifer Blake, HR Director; Bob Waldher, Community Development Director;

Video link or Calling in: Commissioner Cindy Timmons; Joe Fiumara, UCo Public Health Director; Ronan Igloria, GSI Water Solutions Principal;

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Dorran called the meeting to order at 9:01 am. He reminded all that the meeting is a public forum and there is a call-in option provided. The meeting is being video and audio recorded and minutes will be taken. Also, meetings are now live-streaming.

Pledge of Allegiance - led by Chair Dorran.

Additions to Agenda – Chair Dorran requested adding Stepping Stones Gala and Halting Winter to the agenda.

Business Items

1. **Morrow-Umatilla Counties Drinking Water Investigation Roadmap Steering Committee** – Presented by Joseph Fiumara and Ronan Igloria, GSI Project Manager. The roadmap project is nearing completion and Mr. Igloria is here to provide an update and answer questions from the Commissioners prior to the finalization of the Action Plan. A portion of the slides from the most recent steering committee meeting were presented to facilitate the discussion and provide information. The presentation highlighted key points and people including members of the steering committee. The purpose today is to provide an overview and findings of the Drinking Water Roadmap and receive input from the Board on the plan document. The project focuses on delivering drinking water to domestic well users within the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area (LUBGWAMA) more so than addressing nitrate source remediation. This was an EPA research grant-funded program led by Morrow County who was joined by Umatilla County and with participation from State agencies. He described how the roadmap works within many other water projects concurrently. The timeline shows wrap-up in the next 4-6 weeks. A map of the focus area was reviewed. The work currently being done was funded by the original CDS grant. Capital and operating cost estimates were reviewed. 172 well owner surveys were completed, the highlights of the survey revealed that Health Departments are the most trusted sources for information and there is increased awareness in potential sources of contamination. There were also concerns about cost and shared ownership of new treatment systems leading to a desire for independence from City systems. It was confirmed that connecting to municipal systems typically requires the permanent decommissioning of existing private wells to ensure financial solvency and prevent the reintroduction of nitrates into the groundwater. Barriers to implementation of a new system include affordability, irrigation demands, City policies, infrastructure, management of treatment residuals,

operational oversight, annexation constraints, water rights and the lack of an existing water hauling market for non-water systems. Establishing a LUBGWMA Drinking Water Board (LDWB) to facilitate outreach, education and guidance of operations would be a priority in moving forward. There were questions from the Commissioners on specificity of what the board do, who would be involved and where would funding come from? Joe Fiumara explains that in order for projects to move forward someone must move them forward, in this instance the LDWB is still hypothetical and funding is uncertain due to the unknown members. It is assumed that if the County is involved some funding would come from the County. The plan lines out strategies, options, challenges, benefits and constraints. At this time there is not a County representative that covers public water system expansions, that is why, if it is decided to move forward that a board would be recommended. It was suggested that the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners (BOC) acknowledge that the report was received and/or reviewed. There are many discussions that need to take place before any decisions would be made. Morrow and Umatilla counties are in different positions at this time. There is not a simple or obvious solution, a project like this will take time, funding and resident involvement. It is anticipated that an updated draft of the Roadmap will be delivered to the BOC after Mr. Igloria's upcoming meeting with Morrow County and then it will be added to the BOC agenda.

2. Stepping Stones Gala – Presented by Chair Dorran. Stepping Stones Annual Gala is scheduled for Saturday October 10, 2026 at 6pm at EOTEC. Kelsey will look into table options for the Commissioners.
3. HaltingWinter – Presented by Chair Dorran. America Runs on Local Government is a national storytelling initiative celebrating the people, places and purpose behind the communities that made America work. HaltingWinter is touring state by state and looking for featured stops. It is a motivational/training podcast showcasing how local governments operate, it includes information on leadership transition, workforce recruitment, burnout and incivility and even the public's perception. Chair Dorran encouraged all to research the tour. There is a cost of \$10,000 associated with being a featured stop in this National podcast.
4. Review 9/2 BCC Agenda Items - Presented by Nicholas Warner, Deputy County Counsel.
 1. Development Code Update – Second Reading
 2. City of Helix and Umatilla County IGA – Bob Waldher explained that the Helix School District re-started their football program, but they do not have a regulation size football field. An opportunity came along with some neighboring farmers that want to donate some land but it lies outside the UGB. An option would be to do a UGB land swap. Community Development is proposing that the County Planners handle the application process due to the City of Helix's small/part-time staffing and that they would have to work closely with the County to do this. The contract would identify that the County would process the paperwork on the City's behalf and the standard fee would apply.
 3. Fee Waiver Request – Community Development is requesting waiver of the Land Use application fee for replacement dwellings for those affected by the Dry Creek Fire. The area is zoned Exclusive Farm Use (EFU). The hope is that waiving the application fee will encourage filing in a timely manner.
 4. UCSO Purchase – Annual RIMS Payment
 5. UCSO Purchase – Annual CivilServe Payment
 6. Public Health Purchase – Radio Contract

7. Records Payable – Helion annual fee
8. CHW Position – This is a request for a Community Health Worker position, this ties into some of the other recent positions Public Health has been requesting.
9. WUMCD Re-Appointments – Mosquito Control District
10. CDA Payable
11. Fair Payables – need pinkies
12. City of Weston – looking for money for some electrical work and a concrete pad
13. ODOT Acquisitions – accessibility work around the courthouse

Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Timmons: The church made an announcement that Commissioner Dorran will be hosting the 9/11 Remembrance event in Hermiston on September 11, 2026.

Commissioner Shafer: Nothing

Commissioner Reports: If anyone has questions on Halting Winter feel free to ask.

Meeting adjourned by Chair Dorran at 10:21 am.

Kelsey Bailey

Executive Secretary – Board of Commissioners