

**Morrow County Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes**  
**November 1, 2023**  
**Bartholomew Building Upper Conference Room**  
**Heppner, Oregon**

**Present In-Person**

Chair David Sykes, Commissioner Jeff Wenholz, Matthew Jensen, Roberta Lutchter, Kevin Ince, Steve Freeland, Justin Nelson, John Bowles, Brian Snyder. Non-Staff: Katie Imes, Veronica Ferguson

**Excused**

Commissioner Roy Drago Jr.

**Present Via Zoom**

Deona Siex, SaBrina Bailey Cave, Lindsay Grogan, Stephanie Case, Valerie Ballard, Kirsti Cason, Mike Haugen, Rose Kylo, Jaylene Papineau, Eric Imes, Bobbi Childers, Robin Canaday, Erin Anderson, Sandi Pointer, Tamra Mabbott. Non-Staff: Erika Lasater, Lisa Pratt, Mike McCarter

**Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance:** 9:00 a.m.

**Public Comment**

Katie Imes, Councilor, Town of Lexington

Veronica Ferguson, Recorder, Town of Lexington

Ms. Imes and Ms. Ferguson provided a brief update on activities and projects in Lexington.

Chair Sykes encouraged them to request to be on the agenda in the future, to allow for more robust discussion.

**Open Agenda:** None

**Consent Agenda**

Chair Sykes removed the minutes of the August 16<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting for additional clarification.

*Commissioner Wenholz moved to approve the following items in the Consent Agenda, noting the removal of the August 16<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting Minutes:*

- 1. Minutes: August 2<sup>nd</sup>, August 16<sup>th</sup> Land Use Hearing, October 4<sup>th</sup> 9:00 a.m. Meeting, October 4<sup>th</sup> 1:30 p.m. Meeting*
- 2. Morrow County Sheriff's Association Collective Bargaining Agreement; effective upon ratification through June 30, 2026; automatically renewed from year-to-year beyond the expiration date unless either party notifies the other in writing prior to January 1 of the expiring year*
- 3. Application for Tax Refund, Amazon Data Services, Inc.*
- 4. Third Amendment, Oregon Health Authority Intergovernmental Agreement #180024 for the Financing of Public Health Services*

*Chair Sykes seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.*

**Business Items**

Discuss Relocation of the Oregon-Idaho State Border

Justin Nelson, County Counsel

Mike McCarter, President, Move Oregon's Border

Mr. Nelson talked about the requirements of Measure 25-88, passed by voters in Morrow County in November 2022. It requires the Board of Commissioners to meet three times a year to discuss how to promote the interests of Morrow County in any negotiations regarding the relocation of the Oregon-Idaho state border. As this was the third meeting of the year, the Board learned the meeting requirement applies to future years, as well.

Mr. McCarter provided a brief update.

Chair Sykes asked for public comment or questions; no response.

Resolution No. R-2023-25: Approving an All-Terrain Vehicle Grant Application to Oregon Parks & Recreation Department

On behalf of the Parks Department, Administrator, Matthew Jensen, reviewed the request. When asked for his assessment of the request, Finance Director, Kevin Ince, voiced a few concerns about the language.

*Commissioner Wenholz moved to approve Resolution No. R-2023-25: In the Matter of Authorizing Morrow County Public Works Department to Apply for an All-Terrain Vehicle Grant from the Oregon Parks & Recreation Department for an Operations & Maintenance Vehicle at the Morrow-Grant County Off-Highway Vehicle Park. Discussion: Mr. Nelson recommended amending the Resolution prior to approving it. Motion died for lack of a second.*

Comment Letter to the Energy Facility Siting Council, Umatilla-Morrow County Connect Project

Tamra Mabbott, Planning Director

Commissioner Wenholz declared he was a board member of Umatilla Electric Cooperative (UEC) and would not participate in the discussion. Since there were only two Commissioners present, he said he would be voting per the clause in Oregon Revised Statute for such situations.

Mr. Nelson said Commissioner Wenholz was correct about the statute, ORS 244.120(2) – Methods of Handling Conflicts. Discussion took place about signing the letter or waiting until the full Board was present.

*Chair Sykes moved to defer this decision to the November 9<sup>th</sup> Special BOC Meeting.*

*Commissioner Wenholz seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.*

Commitment of Columbia River Enterprise Zone (CREZ) III Distribution Revenue

Kevin Ince, Finance Director

Mr. Ince recommended committing the recently received \$1 million from CREZ III to the Circuit Court building project in the Capital Improvement Fund 227.

Commissioner Wenholz said he preferred to use discretionary funds such as these, for things that can only be paid for with discretionary funds. The Circuit Court building can be paid for with General Funds, he added. He said he was concerned there wouldn't be discretionary funds in the future for such things as roads and bridges.

Mr. Ince said during this year's budget process, \$500,000 was put in a reserve in the Road Fund with the plan to carry the same for the next three to five years. If there are other needs or projects, he said, it's always good to have clarity on what they are so the County can add a number in the budget by establishing reserves.

After discussion, it was agreed to hold a work session on December 20<sup>th</sup> or January 3, 2024 to discuss multiple funds and where to dedicate those funds.

*Commissioner Wenholz moved to commit the \$1 million distribution from CREZ III and direct the Finance Director to record as revenue to the Capital Improvement Fund 227. Chair Sykes seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.*

Resolution No. R-2023-26: Defined Benefit Retirement Plan Administration Contracts

Kevin Ince, Finance Director

Mr. Ince explained the Board approved the transition of administration of the Defined Benefit (DB) Retirement Plan to Nationwide at its June 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. If approved, the Resolution authorizes the Administrator to execute the contracts, he added.

*Commissioner Wenholz moved to approve Resolution No. R-2023-26: In the Matter of Retirement Plan Administration Transition. Chair Sykes seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.*

Classification Request, Finance Manager

Kevin Ince, Finance Director

Lindsay Grogan, Human Resources Director

Matthew Jensen, Administrator

The need for the new position in the Finance Department was outlined. Discussion.

*Commissioner Wenholz moved to approve a new employee classification for the position of Finance Manager in the County's Finance Department, and authorize staff to proceed with necessary postings for the position and preparation of necessary budget adjustments for Board of Commissioner consideration. Chair Sykes seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.*

Discuss November 15<sup>th</sup> BOC Meeting

Mr. Jensen explained the Board and certain staff members will be at the Association of Oregon Counties' Annual Conference during the week of November 13<sup>th</sup>. However, a Special Meeting has been scheduled for November 9<sup>th</sup>, which does help if the meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> is cancelled.

*Commissioner Wenholz moved to cancel the November 15<sup>th</sup> meeting due to the fact the Board and multiple staff will be at the AOC Conference in Eugene. Chair Sykes seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.*

**Break:** 10:27-10:39 a.m.

Resolution No. R-2023-25: Approving an All-Terrain Vehicle Grant Application, continued

Mr. Nelson said the requested changes to the verbiage of the Resolution were made during the break.

*Commissioner Wenholz moved to approve Resolution No. R-2023-25: In the Matter of Authorizing Morrow County Public Works Department to Apply for an All-Terrain Vehicle Grant from the Oregon Parks & Recreation Department for an Operations & Maintenance Vehicle at the Morrow-Grant County Off-Highway Vehicle Park. Chair Sykes seconded. Vote: Unanimous approval.*

### **Department Reports**

The following reports were provided:

- Juvenile Department Quarterly Report by Christy Kenny
- Road Department Monthly Report by Mike Haugen
- Sheriff's Office Monthly Report by Brian Snyder
- Justice Court Written Quarterly Report, as submitted by Glen Diehl
- Finance Department Quarterly Report by Mr. Ince
- Administrator's Monthly Report by Mr. Jensen

### **Commissioner Reports**

Chair Sykes and Commissioner Wenholz provided reports.

### **Signing of Documents**

**Adjourned:** 12:15 p.m.