

**MALHEUR COUNTY COURT MINUTES**  
**January 15, 2025**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Court was called to order by Judge Dan Joyce at 9:00 am with Commissioner Jacobs and Commissioner Mendiola present. Members of the media, public and staff had the opportunity to join the meeting electronically or in-person. Present in the meeting room were: Economic and Community Development Director Taylor Rembowski and Administrative Officer Lorinda DuBois. Notice of the meeting was posted on the County website, Courthouse bulletin board, and emailed to the Argus Observer, Malheur Enterprise and those persons who have requested notice. The meeting was audio recorded. The agenda is recorded as instrument # 2025-0105

**MALHEUR WATERSHED COUNCIL**

Meeting with the Court from the Malheur Watershed Council were Executive Director Ellie Hanson, Chair Andy Bentz, and Office Manager Jesse Prentiss. Mr. Bentz introduced Ms. Hanson and Ms. Prentiss to the Court. Malheur Watershed Council partners with landowners and local businesses as well as numerous agencies. During the 2023-2024 period 34 existing and new projects aimed at watershed improvement were worked on; these projects represent more than \$10,413,217 in outside funding with landowners contributing an additional \$794,452. Some of the projects worked on were conversion from flood irrigation to sprinklers; installation of fencing; enhancement of streambank; and removal of invasive juniper. In 2024 the Council secured \$7,097,608 in new grants; of this \$6,121,238 is going towards the Vale Lateral Pipeline Project (piping 10.4 miles of irrigation laterals in the Graham Blvd. area). Those present answered questions from the Court members. See instrument # 2025-0106 for the written report.

**COURT MINUTES**

Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve Court Minutes of January 8, 2025 as written. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed.

**CONTRACTS WITH PERS RETIREES**

The Court further discussed the request made last week by the PERS (Public Employees Retirement System) retiree employees concerning the compensation policy for PERS retirees. Commissioner Jacobs noted that historically, employees retired and might continue to work for a limited period to help train someone into the new position; with the changes to the PERS requirements employees are now retiring and continuing to work for an indefinite amount of time. The County is required to continue to contribute to PERS even though the employee has retired. Currently, for a PERS Tier 1 employee the County pays 22% and that amount is going up to 27%. The Court does appreciate the long-term employees continuing to work for the County; although from a financial aspect, it is better to hire new employees. Commissioner Jacobs was supportive of paid holiday leave for the PERS retirees; paid holiday leave will enable the employees to use their vacation leave on other workdays instead of on holidays. Commissioner Jacobs made a motion to include paid holiday leave for PERS retiree employees beginning July 1, 2025. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

### **BUDGET COMMITTEE VACANCY**

There is one vacancy on the County Budget Committee.

### **EOCCO AGREEMENT**

Commissioner Jacobs moved to approve Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization (EOCCO) Community Benefit Initiative Reinvestment Program Agreement with the Health Department. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Grant funding is in the amount of \$50,000 and is to be used to increase access to dental care for children from preschool to adolescence, specifically EOCCO eligible children. See instrument # 2025-0108

### **FAIR BOARD**

Commissioner Jacobs moved to reappoint Leanna Elguezabal and Dave Tschida to the Fair Board. Commissioner Mendiola seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Terms are for three years.

### **AGREEMENT WITH NEY**

Commissioner Mendiola moved to approve Agreement for Temporary Environmental Health Specialist Services - Restaurant Inspections and Consultant to Environmental Health Department with Melissa Ney. Commissioner Jacobs seconded and the motion passed unanimously. See instrument # 2025-0107

### **COURT ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Mendiola moved to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Jacobs seconded and the motion passed unanimously.