

MALHEUR COUNTY COURT SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Pursuant to Initiative Measure No. 23-64
May 9, 2022

A Special Meeting of the County Court was called to order by Judge Dan Joyce at 9:00 a.m. with Commissioner Ron Jacobs and Commissioner Don Hodge present. The Special Meeting was held pursuant to Initiative Measure No. 23-64 to discuss how to promote the interests of Malheur County in any negotiations regarding the relocation of the Oregon-Idaho border. Present in the meeting room were public members Bob Wheatley, Chrystine Wheatley, Judith Kerby, and Paul Skeen. Present electronically were various members of the public and members of the media including: Bob Doughty, Stuart Reitz, Matt McCaw, Ruth Rubelt, Mike McCarter (Citizens for Greater Idaho) and Leslie Thompson of the Argus Observer. Notice of the meeting was emailed to the Argus Observer and Malheur Enterprise and posted on the Courthouse bulletin board and County website. The meeting was audio recorded. The agenda is recorded as instrument # 2022-2433

Judge Joyce asked for public comments.

Bob Wheatley: The first thing that I would like to find out – I had a number of friends that I’ve talked to over the weekend and that would’ve liked to have been here in person this morning but due to other things going on in their lives they could not be here, but I do have a list of 12 of our friends that have authorized me to submit their names so that you have it on record.

Judge Joyce: That’s perfect, yes, thank you, did you want to read the names?

Bob Wheatley: I can do that. Those that have authorized me to let you know that they are in support of the move the Oregon border movement: Elaine Camp, Art Camp, Duane Anderson, Khris Anderson, Steve Burton, Arvina Burton, Gary Thompson, LaRaine Thompson, Robert Wheatley, Chrystine Wheatley, Charles Pike, and Verna Pike. See instrument # 2022-2437

Multiple talking, leaving list, and asking Mr. Wheatley to sit at the table and to continue his comments.

Bob Wheatley: Some comments, some questions, things that I would like to discuss that have been out and about in the community and especially reported in the newspapers that I have some questions about. I think one of the primary things, and this is the message that I’m getting from people that I know that were active in getting this initiative passed in Malheur county. I was part of the grassroots movement that got the signatures to get it on the ballot and since that point the, one of the main things that we, as a group in Malheur county, and this is, I’m just speaking for the people that I have direct contact with, but one of our feelings was that the real point of the initiative was to get you as a group, the commissioners, Malheur County, to listen to the voice of those people, those in favor, and those who are not. But it seems to me, from what the figures I see, that the majority of voters in the county have expressed their desire to see this movement move

forward, to have questions answered that have come up, and eventually get this to the Oregon and also the Idaho legislatures. Because in the end they are the people who will make the decision on where we go and what we do. And they will be the ones that will need to answer the questions about, you know, what happens if. What happens to the people who are enrolled in PERS (Public Employees Retirement System), what happens to Snake River Correctional facility, what happens to state employees? There are obviously a number of questions that will have to be answered before this ever gets to the point where any final decisions are made. The thing that seems to be lacking is any movement, and so we would like to know what we can do to help. I can understand that you as commissioners and the county judge need information in order to make decisions, these types of things, and if there are things that we can do as citizens to provide you, to help provide that information, we'd be more than happy to. I know I was involved in the meeting last September, it was done virtually, and I know at that point, and since then, I have heard comments, both by this group and by our state representatives, that, first of all, that this initiative doesn't really require you to do anything other than to hold this meeting. And I would question that. It seems to me there's been people who also question how many people in the county really support the movement, they cite the turnout for the vote, the small percentage of margin in the vote supporting it, and I really think that those need to be better analyzed. At the meeting last September there was a big point made about there was only, I think, a 35% turnout of the registered voters on that May election. Okay. But at that point I asked, and was answered, I asked what the average turnout for that type of a vote, where it's a non-presidential election, and the average turnout for that type of election was something like 34.5%. So that was an average vote; and I think that we need to take that for what it's worth. And there was a margin, I think it was 54% for it, 46% against. So, there was a positive margin that those who voted in that election did want to see this movement move forward. Now I understand the way of the wording in the initiative is not such that you can absolutely state that those who voted yes are in favor of actually moving the border, but I would like to testify here, that as a person who worked on the grassroots, went out throughout the county with other members and got signatures, the people that we talked to face-to-face, what they were signing up for was to see positive movement towards seeing a moving of the border if it was reasonable or not and to get answers for these questions that have to be answered before anything would really go forward. I know this commission has said that you don't feel that you are required to initiate any kind of statement to our representatives to take this forward to the state legislature, but I would just remind you that already three counties, Harney, Grant and Lake county, their commissions have already sent letters, and Baker county is expected to do so, their commissioners, this month. This movement continues to move in a positive direction. There are three more counties I believe that will be voting on it in this May election. The feeling is very much that it will be a positive result and we're looking at 11 or 12 counties in eastern central Oregon where the people are saying something's wrong here, we need to look at it, and it needs to go to the Oregon legislature. Ultimately, they're the ones that's going to make the decisions. There is already support in the Idaho legislature to look at the issue. In fact, there have been surveys done in Idaho and Oregon that show that people do support looking at this issue. There was a recent study done and there were two questions that I found very interesting, I don't know if you've seen it or not, this was a poll that was done with Willamette Valley voters and the first question was: Should Oregon state government look into what the effect on Oregon would be if Oregon counties became

a part of Idaho? And this is voters in the Willamette Valley – 68% of them said yes. A second question asked: Should Oregon state government look into the causes of discontent in eastern and southern Oregon? 81% answered yes. So, it's not just a few rebels in central and eastern Oregon, but there are people in northwestern Oregon that realize that there is a problem and that it should be addressed, whether it's moving the border or not, we need to find out. Maybe there's better ways to resolve it; and I am not against that at all. We do feel that our areas of the state need to have a better voice. We need to be heard. The issues that we face are much different than what the people in the Portland - Salem, areas face, and too, let's face it, what 78% of the voting population lives in that Portland - Salem corridor. So that leaves three quarters of the state, as far as landmass goes, being dictated by that small amount of part of the state but where the majority of the population or the majority of the voters are. So, we would like to see a more equitable situation than that. I don't have the answer to that. I don't, I'm not politically minded. This is the first time in my 74 years that I've become politically involved.

Commissioner Hodge: Bob, did you say, on those two questions, that was a poll question? It wasn't put to a vote was it, it was a poll?

Bob Wheatley: No, no, no, it was a poll.

Commissioner Hodge: Okay.

Bob Wheatley: I just would remind you that at the current time there are eight counties that have already passed this initiative, Malheur county being one of those. Douglas, Josephine and Klamath counties will be voting on it in May. There are two or three other counties that have petitions going and are interested. And I think it's, it's really interesting to me that, I don't know if you can see this map very well, but

Commissioner Hodge: Is Deschutes in there?

Bob Wheatley: No, Deschutes is not

Commissioner Hodge: Lakeview and Klamath and

Bob Wheatley: If you'd like that, maybe you guys can look at it closer. But the interesting thing to me, and I think that something that is important for you to consider is that the majority of counties in eastern Oregon that directly border Idaho are all in favor of this type of movement. And I think, my true feeling is the people in those counties have voted and have spoken their wishes to have this looked at, it's time to move forward and do something with this. And I would ask the commissioners at the end of this meeting, to look at this really strongly and think about whether you would be interested in doing something as these other counties have. Have you seen the petition, or I guess I don't know whether you call it a petition, but I do have a copy of the letter that was sent by the Harney county commissioners?

Commissioner Jacobs: I haven't seen it.

Commissioner Hodge: I haven't seen it either.

Bob Wheatley: They indicated that the citizens of Harney county have requested to have our state senator and district representative acknowledge the desire for the state of Oregon's border to be moved and investigate the possibility. Okay. They also have said that they have heard many concerns about how this would affect PERS, water rights, prison populations, road authorities, these types of things. These are all questions, I understand, they have to be answered. But we need to start answering those questions, and the people, in my opinion, and this is just my opinion, but those that I've spoken to, and who favor this motion, want to move on, they want to move ahead. If you have any questions of me, I'd be glad to

Commissioner Jacobs: Bob, I think the last time that we met, you know, we suggested, or I did, suggested that you guys get organized as a group, and do just this, come to us with, you know, your feelings and your desires, what you're doing right now. And so, that's what this meeting, this bill was for, was to have this, have these meetings. But you mentioned you thought we should do more, more being requesting our representatives to move forward?

Bob Wheatley: Let me share with you this comment from one of the persons involved in the Citizens for Greater Idaho organization. He said, the only way for these counties to actually vote on moving a border would be a state initiative or a plebiscite ordered by the state legislature. Okay, so our feeling is that is what the next step needs to be, and that's what I'm asking for, and that's what these other counties are asking their commission to do. Let's move this to where it has to go, to our state legislature. They are the ones that, I know that you guys aren't required to form a committee and study this and answer these questions. You shouldn't have to. In my opinion, that is a duty of the state legislature, but we have to let them know, and it has to come from you, that your citizens in Malheur county, along with these other counties, want the state legislature to form a committee, to look at this issue, to find out what the answers to these questions are. And to also work with the Idaho legislature. As I mentioned, there are people, legislative people, in Oregon and Idaho, who are in favor of this initiative and in seeing movement on it. So that would be my request to this point of what I would be asking of you, as a commission, is to take that next step, to move this forward to the state legislature where it belongs and let's push a little bit on them, let's put a little bit of pressure on them to look at this. Now their answer might be, when they form a committee, their answer might be to look at our issues, what's bothering us. If that happens, I think that's a great step too. But we would really like to see some movement forward and we would like to hear some people who have legislative and governmental power listen to what our desires are and what our needs are in eastern Oregon. The only other comment I would make is that I have talked to a lot of people in Malheur county who are involved in agriculture, our farmers and ranchers, and I'm telling you, they tell me that they are on the verge, a lot of them are looking or have already moved their operations to Idaho. And others are saying, that if things continue the way they are going, with the bills that are being passed that are affecting agriculture, they will not

be able to continue in business. And without our farmers and ranchers in Malheur county, we will not have Malheur county.

Judge Joyce: So, a follow-up to Ron's question is, my understanding at our last meeting you and another gentleman were going to come together with answers for us.

Bob Wheatley: We volunteered to do that, but the answer, I stated that I would be happy to be on a committee that would look at those issues for you. What I heard in those, and you can go back to the minutes, was, is that was not something that this initiative forced you to do. That you did not need to form a committee to look into it. All you needed, all this issue did was cause you to meet three times a year to discuss possibilities. But it didn't require you to really form any investigative committees. And in truth, the information that I've gotten since then indicates to me that really, I think we'd have a tough time answering most of those questions. Again, like I said, those questions are going to have to be answered by the state legislature and committee that they would form.

Commissioner Hodge: Well you know, we have a Eastern Oregon Counties Association (EOCA), and I wonder if, well I think we have a meeting the 26th maybe of this month, and they've been in John Day, and you went to the last one, I wonder if we shouldn't, that should be presented at, because that's all of the eastern Oregon counties, like, you know, Wallowa, Union, all the way across. I wonder if we shouldn't present that to them, you know, put it on the agenda and talk and see, at least get a conversation going.

Bob Wheatley: Sure, that'd be great.

Commissioner Hodge: And see what their thoughts are, because they're the ones who pass the regulation, or that voted it in, they're under the same obligation we are to meet three times a year. And I haven't, personally, I haven't read anything in our EOCA minutes or meetings that we've talked about it, and we do have them on the phone once in a while, I haven't heard anybody say a thing about it, have you?

Commissioner Jacobs: Well I discussed, actually discussed this with some of the commissioners when I was in John Day the other day, and especially the ones that have already submitted their letters. I sat with the Harney County commissioner and the Lake County commissioner, and so we did discuss this some. And you know, I've talked to Senator Findley about this some, and we've discussed, just briefly, some of the concerns you have. But, you know, I think I'm sitting here feeling the same way you do is that we're not being heard from Salem, you know, we don't have a voice over there out of eastern Oregon, and that's something that we need to push for is to try to get our viewpoints heard and be able to have more effect. But that's only change with the legislatures, if we get more people from the east side and more conservative people in the legislature. So that's one thing. Personally, I feel the same way you do Bob. We will continue to discuss this as a group and determine whether or not we want to, I don't think it's that we don't want to actually submit a letter or something to the legislatures, but, I think we want to have these,

at least the first three meetings, and get the viewpoints of those that come in and talk. Because we're going to have some people that are for it and some people against it. So, we just feel like we need to listen to everybody that has an opinion on this to start with.

Bob Wheatley: That's very fair.

Judge Joyce: And back to your point, I think we're really well represented on this side of the state, they just get outvoted every time they get in the legislature, and that's the real issue, that part of it.

Commissioner Hodge: And they're pretty frustrated by that

Judge Joyce: Really frustrated

Commissioner Hodge: They go to those sessions and they're barely heard because they just shut them down. I have no idea what we can do about that, other than they just get up and talk, and then they're just, you know, their bills and stuff they put up and they try to get through to help, that's going to help our area, eastern Oregon, and man they don't even get a review or look at.

Bob Wheatley: What you're saying, I mean, that's the feeling, that's why this whole thing ever got a start, that's the feeling of the majority of the people I believe. And these counties in eastern, central Oregon, so eventually, I think you're right. Pressures got to be put on the legislature and those people in the legislature.

Commissioner Jacobs: One more thing. When we talked about not forming a committee, we were discussing that we weren't going to form a committee as the county. But, if individuals want to go out there and form a committee and start trying to push things forward and make sure that we know that the majority of the people are in favor of this; and I think at one point we're going to want to make the decision of issuing a letter to the legislatures and our representatives. But they know how we feel about it right now.

Commissioner Hodge: And I don't know how big of a committee you need, and it might be where, I think I see Leslie Thompson is listening, might be where you go to the paper and ask or put some type of article in the paper and you said you were willing to volunteer on that committee, maybe having some people give, put it out, some verbiage, and then have your contact information where they can get back to you and then you can setup, start setting up some type of committee to have these conversations. And then have forums throughout the county, you know, like in Ontario, Vale, Nyssa, and even, you know, the Jordan Valley area. Or have them all meet in a central location. But I think that would have to, you know, you'd have to get something in the paper. And then you're going to want to restrict your committee; you might have a thousand people contact you wanting to be on the committee, so how that could grow or how it could develop is going to be in your hands.

Commissioner Jacobs: And I guess one thing that I would like to see is people from both sides on that committee. So that when you meet you can talk about the pros and cons, because, you know, if you and I met we'd probably only talk about the pros. But other people are going to have other ideas, that the legislators are going to want to be familiar with and know about as well when they have to make their decision.

Bob Wheatley: Great suggestions

Commissioner Jacobs: I do think the counties need to do their due diligence in bringing that stuff forward, the pros and the cons, so that the legislators are familiarized with those.

Commissioner Hodge: I think what Ron's saying, you'd want to probably, or my estimation, think you'd want to get representative, Mark involved, and Senator Findley involved, at least talking to your group or your committee for some direction. And just like Ron said, you'd want pros and cons on there, so you can come to some kind of understanding of a direction to go.

Bob Wheatley: I appreciate your time and input; I really appreciate your suggestions and input.

Commissioner Jacobs: We appreciate you coming in and talking about this because this is what we need is to have more of the citizens I think getting involved and talking about this issue.

Mike McCarter: Can I give you a little bit of input into this issue that might clarify some things?

Judge Joyce: Sure, we're looking for information.

Mike McCarter: I've talked to a lot of state representatives this year and one of them is Representative Gomberg out of the Tillamook area. When I made the comment to him that you're not listening to our legislators from eastern or southern Oregon, his response was we hear everything they're saying but we're outvoting them. That is just how blatant it is in the Oregon legislature and even if we get a red way pushback, which I hope we do, I believe it's only going to be a temporary thing because a majority of the vote is coming out of the Willamette Valley and they're dictating everything that the state is doing. So, our suggestion is, if the state of Oregon wants to treat us this way, like they've already let us go, then let us be part of Idaho. Don't sit there and try to control us and pass mandates and state legislation that affects us negatively because it helps the Willamette Valley. Just let us go. In Measure 23-64, that is your county measure that was passed there, in the summary part, it says, if passed the petition requires the Malheur County Court to meet once every January, May, and September to discuss how to promote the interests of Malheur county in any negotiations regarding the relocation of the Oregon Idaho border. I heard you mention already that it's got to be picked up in the state legislature; and we agree with that wholeheartedly. But to get it into the state legislature we've got to contact our state representatives, our state senators, and have them push towards the legislative process. Because, that's where the decisions are going to be made and that's where all of the inquiry needs to take place as to the benefits, plus or minus, of moving the border. Now what's important for Malheur county is if there

are specific issues, and I've heard a lot of the issues that have come out of Malheur county, the minimum wage, the sales tax, marijuana issue, all of those there, if they're important, the best thing for Malheur county and for you, the commissioners, is to have that information ready to go so that when the negotiations get started in the state legislature, you make sure that those important things are mentioned. And remember, in a negotiation, everything's up for negotiations. Certain things can be grandfathered in, whether it's water rights, whether it's licensing or whatever. So everything's out there on the table to be talked about. But if it's not talked about from the county level, on important issues that you have in your county, and I know that Malheur county's got different issues than say Harney or Baker or Lake or all the way over to Josephine and Douglas. Those issues need to be in the negotiations, otherwise they could be forgotten. And that's not good. So our recommendation is, even though you may not be in favor individually, which I think you are, that something needs to be done, it's important that a letter goes to Senator Findley and Representative Owens saying our people voted, we would like you to take that vote up to the state legislature, and that's all we're asking the counties to do, is to take it up there. Because you're right, it's got to be talked about in the state legislature.

Commissioner Hodge: Thank you for your comments.

Mike McCarter: And I thank you for holding these meetings three times a year, it, you know, it's a pain, I understand that. We offered in the beginning as a suggestion that you put it on as an advisory question which wouldn't have mandated any of these meetings like this. But, for whatever reason, that suggestion was not responded to. Josephine county has put it on their ballot as an advisory question, because if it passes then they're not mandated to do anything with it. But now that we're in this mandate, and this is the way that the state elections said the only way you can get this legislative, get this process going is on a legislative to create a law. And we had to do it.

Commissioner Jacobs: So, Mike, what is the advisory question, what do you mean, we could've done that instead of having the meetings?

Mike McCarter: What Josephine county and Douglas county did it too on it, basically, the most recent one coming out of Josephine county is asking the citizens, in your opinion, should Josephine county, along with other rural counties, separate from Oregon and become part of Idaho? Now, from the citizen level we could not put that on a ballot; the only way we could get a measure on the ballot according to the Secretary of State from the people is to create a legislative bill. And that legislative county bill turned out to be Measure 23-64. So, the other way that commissioners can do it, and we're still talking to commissioners in some of the counties that haven't got it on the ballot, why don't you just ask the people with an advisory question? It's that simple. But again, I don't know what their reason is, why they don't want to do it. Maybe they feel that they don't agree with it or whatever the case. But when we went county by county, we were not trying to tie the hands of county commissioners and require issues to be done. Our goal was to find out in each rural Oregon county, how do you feel about this issue? What do you want somebody to do about it? Just like this question in Josephine county, do you want to see something happen here? Now the polls say, out of northwest Oregon, in January, 81% of the people that responded on that poll,

Survey USA, said the state legislature needs to pick this up and talk about it. They even realize there's an issue going on, but we've got to push in every way we can to get our legislators and every legislature to take it up, to the legislative process and at least start talking about this. That's our goal there.

Commissioner Jacobs: Thank you.

Judge Joyce: Appreciate that insight.

Mike McCarter: Your welcome, and I apologize, I wanted to be there in person today, but all of a sudden, I had a state representative said, would you come to Salem and talk to us? And so as soon as I get off the phone I'm heading for Salem to start talking to the legislature about this. And that's where it needs to be taken.

Commissioner Hodge: Well thank you.

Judith Kirby: I want to alert the county commissioners, the major concern I have are three. One is the school curriculum. Our schools are propagandizing to our kids. I mean, my 10-year-old brought home last semester environmental studies, social studies, he had to describe how agriculture hurts the environment. Agriculture!

Commissioner Hodge: How it hurts the environment?

Judith Kirby: How it hurts the environment. Since second grade he's been coming out of school and telling me, grandma, you've got to get an EV (Electric Vehicle). I said, Colton, grandma doesn't have the money to buy an EV. I said, Colton, they are brainwashing you to, you know, in the future buy an EV but poor people like your grandma and other people that don't have the money, especially in poor countries, third world countries, and even here, they don't have the money for EVs. But what's coming, even more violent than that, is when our schools were closed in 2020, and I don't know if you realize this, the State Department of Education, nonelected bureaucrats, imposed in their social studies curriculum, basically what's called Critical Race Theory, they're not talking about it, nobody knows about it, especially the low-income people do not know what this stuff is that the schools are going to teach our kids. But basically, if you look at it through the Heritage Foundation, its Marxism. I put the standards where you can find them in my letter, but you can go on the Oregon Department of Education, Social Studies, and by 2026 every school district in Oregon is mandated to start doing this curriculum in our schools. First grade kids have to divide themselves on the basis of sex, gender, identity, and disability. By third grade they're taught to be activists for the things that the group is discriminated against. It's against the Constitution. It's against the Bill of Rights. It's against free speech. And basically, this is being pushed by a lot of people with money. And the way I see it is they want puppets. They want our kids to think like they do so they can control them. And it's scary to me. I want my kid so badly to be able to go to Fruitland or to Idaho to school it's not even funny. Some of the people with more money than we do actually they can pay \$800 a child and go to the Fruitland Charter School;

and they are if they have the money. Other people that have money are moving across the river to get their kids away from this stuff. It's lethal. Schools, more than anything else, the way that they're indoctrinating our kids in school is lethal to the freedom and the thinking of our kids. And most people don't even know what's coming down, especially low-income people that don't afford a paper. And I put where you can find the standards in my letter because you need to look them up because one of the standards is kids are supposed to be taught that people working in agriculture, like packing sheds and the fields that I did are being repressed and therefore they shouldn't be doing that. I mean the stuff that they're going to teach our kids are anti-agriculture, they're anti-freedom, they're anti-law, they're anti-constitution, and I am just very fearful about what my grandson who's 10 is going to be subjective to because of the crazy thinking on the other side of the state. And I so much want him to be able to get out of this school system. The other thing you need to know, is when our schools were shut down by our governor, the Ontario schools only offered two 45-minute sessions a day. Two 45-minutes for education. The schools were shut down in March, there was no school from March through the rest of that year, except paper packets. And the governor dictated that no child could advance in education for that period of time. So, what they got in the paper packets were, write a sentence, write a story, color this, color that, have your grandma read a book. It was worthless. Most of those bus drivers were dropping off lunches, some kids were getting lunches, but they weren't getting education. Then when schools did start, we got two 45-minutes. I offered to help two kids, 10 years old, my grandson and another boy, online and we did it for four weeks. And this one little boy turned to me and said, he said, Judith, he says, this is first grade math and we're in fourth grade. And he said, I know this stuff, they're telling us to go to see the counselor, to go to see the PE (Physical Education) teacher, he said this is garbage. I mean this is from a 10-year-old. And so, we got homeschool books and off I went as a 74-year-old grandma with a stroke, teaching two little 10-year old's third grade and fourth grade. And those boys got, had to go back and relearn their third grade and learn their fourth grade and they're doing fine. But most kids did not get that help. They did not get caught up. And now our schools are just continuing with some of those kids two years behind. It's a travesty. I mean our education in Oregon stinks.

Commissioner Jacobs: Did you have other points?

Judith Kirby: No. But, just that, the other thing is our state is anti-business. Every Student Succeeds Act, it takes .56% of everything that's sold in Oregon; it's supposed to collect \$2 billion. The reason that that was passed supposedly was that every Oregon child was supposed to get free preschool. In the bill, sadly, there was no money for buildings. How do you implement universal preschool if there's no money in it for buildings? All of the money goes to more people being hired by the school district. There is absolutely no money in that bill for preschool. I mean, we fought to find a preschool for our little one because he didn't qualify for Head Start. So, what they promised, they broke the promise and all they're doing using that money for is hiring more people, some of them not even needed in the schools. And its anti-business, our state is more anti-business when you compare it to Idaho that's pro-business our state is very anti-business. For example, we got some help from the federal government because of COVID to keep our employees, well that money is being taxed on as a sale by the state under the Every Student Succeeds. Our state is anti-

business, I so much, I look all the time at real estate in Idaho because my husband said, you can never take me over there because I'm going to stay in Oregon, because that's where I'm known and that's where I'm civically active. But our kids so badly want to move to Idaho but can't afford it. The schools are terrible, they want to move partly because of the schools.

Commissioner Jacobs: You mentioned you had three things, so you have

Judith Kirby: Agriculture, the curriculum of our schools, the anti-business and the anti-agriculture. I mean our kids are being taught that agriculture is negative. And then our governor tells us that she flies to Belgium and then comes home, did you see it in the paper where she said that we ought to farm less by a third when our people are hungry, farm less by a third after she's flown to Belgium. I mean, they don't have a clue how we live out here. They don't have a clue of our values. They don't have a clue and the other thing with Critical Race Theory, its not to help civil rights of any one group. It is to mind control everybody so that they can be used. The kids can be used against their own rights and their parents' rights. They want to control the kids, it's not about helping a group of kids. It's like what's called equity in this bill, an educator can be hired, a consultant can be hired to help a group of kids under one of these groups, but if a kid has the same need that's in a different group, that kid does not get studied. So basically, it's reverse discrimination in disguise. Thank you. See instrument # 2022-2436 for written comments.

Commissioner Jacobs: Thank you.

Judge Joyce: Thank you Judith.

Paul Skeen: Farmer in Nyssa. I really agree with everything that's been said today, but there's a couple other things that I want to talk about. Before this meeting's over I'm hoping that you will do exactly what we want you to do which is send it to both of our legislators and get this moving. One of the greatest things about all of this, whether it all comes to fruition or not, by the way Hi Leslie, is it causes them to look and see. We are a pain in their side. But a pain in their side that they don't have to worry about because we can't outvote them. I've got 2.5 miles of river frontage where I'm 800 feet away from a really, really conservative agricultural based state. And then I get to deal with this. I spent 37 years as the, 37 years on the board and 23 years as either the president or vice president of the Malheur County Onion Growers Association. And to be truthful with you, all I do is play defense. I've now stepped down so it's a different deal and Cory's going to have all he can handle. But as we push forward on all this stuff, it may help to change some of the thoughts over there. Some of you know that I have pushed because I have people in the Idaho legislature that I know, let's just get Malheur county in right now, let's not worry about everybody else. That's me speaking, that's not Greater Idaho. But it needs to be for all of you. I've known you guys for a long time and I believe that you feel the same we do. I can't tell you, and she brought it up, I can't tell you how many people are moving to Idaho that are fantastic community members, taxpaying people. The people that I work with, we own part of that Baker-Murakami situation and we've had three that are getting ready to move over there and I'm one of them; well four, and I'm one of them, I just can't find a lot because I'd kind of like to be close back to my farm. But the

way that this state has lined things up, and that's another thing I want you to push forward on this, is there's only 13 states in the United States that have a death tax. And I like being number one in everything except death tax, and we're number one with Massachusetts and death tax. Idaho doesn't have a death tax. If I die, and it's not like I got money just sitting in the bank, I'm trying to keep two boys farming. They won't be farming because I gotta give it all to the State of Oregon, we've gotta get something done. Now the natural resource that Congressman Bentz, when he was actually a state legislator was 7.5 million if one of your relative's comes back in and actually farms behind you. That was put in 13 or 14 years ago, and the problem we've got is land prices have skyrocketed. So, Senator Findley has been working on trying to even get it into the legislature over there and he can't even get it in to the legislature. We need your help. We are losing good people in the state of Oregon, specifically out of Malheur county in to Payette and Canyon county and what we're getting in return is looking for stuff that they can buy over in Ontario that probably doesn't bring the best citizens into the county. CRT, she's probably right, I've probably said something I shouldn't have said. We've got to wake up here or we're going to have a county that's really going to be in trouble. I've lived here all my life, born in Holy Rosary Hospital, used to beat him up when, no he was always smarter than me when we were in school. Anyhow, I guess that's the point that I want to say, I want you to worry about the rest of the state, but I really want you to concentrate on Malheur county, let's get this into our two legislative people and let's start pushing on this, and I would really like you to do this on this natural resource (inaudible) well Owens is part of it too, but it's mainly Senator Findley. And hey, I want on record they are two of the finest people you'll ever, ever see but you talk about showing up to a gun fight and you've got a BB gun, that's what they deal with every day and the times that I've gone over there and testified, I'll tell you I tell them they deserve heaven because they're in an uphill every single day that they're there, fighting everything.

Commissioner Hodge: And unfortunately, they know that, they have the sessions, they go there

Paul Skeen: Oh, they know it better than I know it

Commissioner Hodge: and when we have our legislative calls during the session its, we get to hear all of that too.

Paul Skeen: Well you talked about having a meeting with your eastern Oregon people, I'm not sure whether Wallowa county and Umatilla county and those guys are with us, I don't, I'm not up to speed on it, but Malheur county really needs to be in Idaho. I'd even step down and say Treasure Valley needs to be in Idaho. I mean we deal with it every day; 90% of my produce and I grow a lot of seed product, they don't stay in Oregon, they leave Oregon because of all the tax situations. Now I was sitting here thinking is there something that me and Governor Brown agree with? And it was the transload, she did help with that. Other than that, she's on one side and I'm on the other, and the rumors are she's the most hated governor in the United States, I feel bad for her that she hasn't seen the light. Any questions?

Commissioner Hodge: Appreciate you coming.

Judge Joyce: Appreciate your comments.

Commissioner Jacobs: Appreciate your comments Paul.

Paul Skeen: Cory's asked me to stay on the, helping with this kind of stuff, so that's why I'm here.

Judge Joyce: Good, appreciate it

Commissioner Hodge: Like in an advisory

Paul Skeen: Oh, I'm not an advisory, he's way smarter than me, I'm just helping with time and efforts with this stuff.

Commissioner Hodge: Well again, Paul, we appreciate you coming, and appreciate your comments and I think, you know, we agree

Judith Kirby: And along with that Senator Findley was quoted in the paper not too long ago, every single bill in the legislature coming up is anti-rural, anti-rural Oregon, every single one.

Paul Skeen: Just to show you how this, because maybe you don't know and maybe it needs to be on the record, because we are, you get a million dollars, and it sounds like a lot of money for other people but it doesn't take very much land to be a million dollars, a million for your wife, a million for you, and then it's 16% for the state of Oregon. So the federal is not going to hurt me, but I own a lot of land in Oregon, Oregon Slope down to south of Nyssa, it's not like I'm going to use it and spend it on the islands of Hawaii, I'm just trying to keep some boys going that, I'm a fifth generation farmer, and they're sixth, and I'd like to see maybe even a seventh with some of my grandkids. I'll tell you my oldest son was smarter than me and moved to Fruitland so his whole farm operation is in Oregon but he lives in Fruitland and his corporation is in Idaho.

Commissioner Hodge: Is an Idaho corporation?

Paul Skeen: And I have to do that, if I don't I'm going to be in big trouble. So, when she talks about anti-agriculture, these big feed lots or ranches and farms, it doesn't take much and you've got to move to Idaho or you're giving it all to the state. And these smarter guys, that probably have a little more money, have already moved to Fruitland, or already bought it and are already building their houses.

Judge Joyce: True

Paul Skeen: Anything else, thanks for listening to me. I would really like to see you make that motion today before we leave.

Commissioner Hodge: This is information gathering and Paul, appreciate your comments, you're highly thought of in Malheur county and the Treasure Valley, and we hear you and we hear the same horror stories you hear, you know you go to coffee and you've got a coffee group and our county is agricultural based, and just like you said, you're a little bit into (inaudible) and I think you've got three or four of those that are looking at relocating and actually they're already in the process

Paul Skeen: They've already got their lots

Commissioner Hodge: They've got their lots and they're developing it over there.

Commissioner Jacobs: Thank you Paul.

Matt McCaw: I'm here with the Greater Idaho movement. I logged on today to be able to answer questions and just be able to kind of, you know, represent the movement. I thought Bob did an awesome job of basically laying out what's going on statewide and so I don't really want to, you know, reiterate any of that. But I will just say that I would ask you guys, along with all these other folks, as a commission, what voters are saying all across our state when given a chance, is that moving the border is the solution that they want their elected leaders to pursue. And as county commissioners, there's only so much you can do, because you're not really the people that have the ability to do that, to move the border. But what you can do is you can promote the interest of your voters, your county, by writing a letter to Senator Findley, Representative Owens, and asking them to move it forward, because they are the decision makers. So, I just want to encourage you guys to do that, and thanks for having this meeting and it's great to hear all the folks voicing, having a voice.

Commissioner Hodge: Thank you for your comments.

Commissioner Jacobs: Thank you.

Judge Joyce: Appreciate that.

Judge Joyce read the written comments the Court received into the record:

Carolyn Taghon, Ontario, Oregon: As a citizen of Malheur County I am very concerned about the Greater Idaho Initiative and would like to express these concerns. 1. If we become part of Idaho, we will be subjected to a sales tax which has been voted down more than once in Malheur County. 2. The sale of marijuana will become illegal and we will lose the tax money from that source. 3. We will lose our work force as our workers will be subjected to the Idaho minimum wage. Idahoans will stay home and save on the time and money of coming this far for work. Oregonians will leave looking for higher wages. I feel this initiative is not well thought out and if passed will not help our community. Please give it more intelligent thought and dismiss it. I'm sure there are more

negative consequences than the three I have mentioned. Thank you for your time. See instrument #2022-2435

Frances R. Lewis and Steven R. Lewis: We are 100% opposed to moving Oregon's border into Idaho for the following reasons: Idaho's sales tax is very hard on fixed income seniors and low-income workers. Idaho's land use laws allow uncontrolled expansion. Good farm ground is being covered over with houses. We live in the country and want it to stay that way, not have a housing project next door. Idaho is near the bottom of the states in education and teacher pay. A low percentage of students go on to higher education. Minimum wage in Idaho is very low and hasn't been raised in over 9+ years, in spite of the cost of living going up each year. Idaho has active laws that allow discrimination. We do not want to live in a state where all people aren't welcome. For the above 3 reasons, we are opposed to and will NOT vote for moving Oregon's border into Idaho. See instrument #2022-2434

Bob Wheatley: Just two short things. Both those letters mentioned the tax situation. There have been studies done and we looked up comparing the tax situation between Oregon and Idaho, and this includes the sales tax, and the studies show that Idahoans individually pay approximately \$1700 less a year than Oregonians, and that includes paying the sales tax. So I understand, that is a great question, but there is an answer to it and it is a positive. The only other thing I wanted to do, in kind of closing out, I just received a text, and I wish I had had this to start with, because I think I could have kept my talk a lot shorter, this is from somebody you guys all know - Tom Butler, Ontario. Tom text me and he said: would love to live in Ontario and be an Idahoan. And gentlemen, that's the feeling I get from most of the people I speak to and you guys all know Tom.

Judge Joyce: That's the bottom line. Thank you, sir.

Paul Skeen: I will tell you for the record, when they talk about 7.5 minimum wage, find somebody in Idaho that's getting that. I can tell you that they're so close to Oregon, if they want people, and we can't even get the people we need, they gotta pay what we're paying. The only difference is their H-2A workers, they don't have to pay as much to them as what we do; we're \$17.40 and they're like \$14.50

Multiple talking

Commissioner Hodge: I was going to say, you go over there, you know, a lot of us spend a lot of time over in the Treasure Valley and looking around you see the help wanted signs and they're saying, starting at \$16, \$17, because, again, they've got to have workers also.

Judith Kirby: And the other thing is a lot of people from the Ontario area or from the Treasure Valley drive to Boise because they've got higher paying wages in Boise proper. I mean there's a transit bus that takes some people that do stock trades. The idea that everybody that's, I mean the workers not getting paid adequately in Idaho is passé, it's not true. To get a worker you've got to pay the wage.

Paul Skeen: One other thing. I have a house that's on 79.5 acres, it's a really nice brick home. I can't sell it.

Judge Joyce: Because you need 80.

Paul Skeen: Because you need 80. And that's fine. I have somebody that I love that's in it, so that's fine. But my point is, Idaho you can split and build, that's probably too extreme but we are one extreme to the other. It's like when I testified in Salem one time and I said, I look across that 800 feet into Idaho and I see Christy Brinkley, she's our age, and I turn around and there's Phyllis Diller standing right next to me. (laughter)

Judith Kirby: And I think the other thing that needs said is, this is splitting the wealthy from the people that can't afford it. I mean, Ontario is getting poorer and poorer because the people that can afford it are moving. (multiple talking) and some of the people that haven't, I mean I know a man that's very wealthy that's staying in Ontario but he's sending his kids at \$800 a month to the Fruitland charter school. But we can't, I mean as older people, we can't afford the \$800 a month; I wish we could (inaudible) going to the charter school.

Commissioner Hodge: Well again thank you all for the comments.

Multiple talking

Paul Skeen: It's probably not politically legal but both of you are running for office again and I've already sent my ballot in and you know how I voted.

Multiple laughing and talking

Judge Joyce adjourned the meeting.

** Staff note: the September meeting Mr. Wheatley refers to in his comments about voter turnout was discussed in the January 2022 meeting, not the September 2021 meeting.