

MALHEUR COUNTY SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Pursuant to Initiative Measure No. 23-64
Meet to Promote Relocating Oregon-Idaho Border Ordinance
May 12, 2025

The Special Meeting of the County Court was called to order by Judge Dan Joyce at 9:00 a.m. with Judge Joyce presiding and Commissioner Jim Mendiola present. Commissioner Ron Jacobs was absent. The Special Meeting was held pursuant to Initiative Measure 23-64 and Malheur County Meet to Promote Relocating Oregon-Idaho Border Ordinance 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, Bob Doughty, Charles “Chuck” Pike, and Brent Grasty. Present electronically was Gary Thompson for the first approximate 45 minutes of the meeting. Notice of the meeting was emailed to the Argus Observer, Malheur Enterprise and posted on the Courthouse bulletin board and County website. The meeting was audio recorded. The agenda is recorded as instrument # 2025-1363

Judge Joyce asked for comments from the public.

Bob Wheatley: Just a few things I wanted to do to just kind of catch up a little bit. First item I wanted to discuss with you, after the last meeting you had requested some copies of letters that other county commissioners had sent in support of the Movement, we were having some trouble getting that through – do you know if you ever got that material?

Judge Joyce: Not that I know of.

Bob Wheatley: Okay. I ran off some

Judge Joyce: You got some hardcopies

Bob Wheatley: A copy, yeah, should I leave those with Kim?

Judge Joyce: Yes, leave them with Kim.

Commissioner Mendiola: Introduce yourself first Bob.

Bob Wheatley: I’m sorry. Bob Wheatley from Ontario. And I guess you could say I’m representing the Greater Idaho group at this meeting. And I just, right now with the legislature in session, that’s where all the emphasis is and so I just thought I would bring you up to date on some things that have happened, just to catch us up on things that are going on. One of the things that I came across, I was reviewing some material and I was looking, and back in July of 2024 the Greater Idaho Movement leaders sent an invitation to Governor Kotek to sit with them and just discuss the issues and talk about this. The invitation was to be at time and place that would be agreeable to her. It’s been 305 days since that invitation was issued and there’s been no response from the Governor’s Office. So, I think that kind of highlights some of the problems that we feel in Eastern Oregon. And you know, we’ve had enough meetings you fellows all are aware of what we’re fighting against and why. We’re trying to get some more information going. But it turns out that we’re not the only ones in the country that are doing some things. Both in Iowa and Indiana, those two

legislatures are considering border relocations, and I just looked up an update on that and as of April 19th of this year, 2025, the Indiana and Illinois border bill has been passed in both chambers and the Governor, Mike Brown, of Indiana intends to sign that bill, and that is a bill that would incorporate 33 counties in Illinois into Indiana. So of course, I don't think, Illinois Governor's is probably running the other way. But I think that it's significant that one state has already passed bills in both their houses and the governor is going to sign that bill in support of that.

Interesting, just to update you on some of the things that the Greater Idaho Movement is doing, prior to the legislative session taking place, there were billboards running in Salem so that the lawmakers would be able to get a greeting, roadside messages, encouraging them to look into and support the Greater Idaho Movement.

On January 27th in the Senate there was a joint memorial, it was Joint Memorial 7 was introduced in the Oregon legislature. On February 4th, the second Greater Idaho bill was introduced in the House side, that was House Bill 3488. And both of these bills would be to create a taskforce between Idaho and Oregon's legislature to meet and discuss the issues and see what's going on there. The Movement, you know like I said, it seems kind of quiet right now, but there are a lot of things going on. On February 17th Fox News had an informational news piece and it was looking at not only the Eastern Oregon movement but also the ones that were taking place in Illinois, and also a bill, there's also been a movement started in what would be upper New York I guess you would call it, but there are counties in the state of New York who also are interested in finding a better way to get better representation. Also, as far as members of, the leaders of the Greater Idaho Movement in February, Matt McCaw, who is the executive director, was on the Steve Deace Show and talked about Greater Idaho and just border relocation in general.

We talked about the Illinois bill that's going on, things there. Another member of the Greater Idaho leadership had a meeting in Multnomah county with a Professor Wall and discussed the issue with them. There's a lot of people around the country, not only the news media, but there are several studies that are being done in universities looking at the overall discontent, I guess we could say, throughout the United States. It's not just an Oregon issue. It's happening all over the country. There was another meeting they had with another group that were looking at that. That one was kind of interesting. I didn't get a chance to look for more details but the gentleman who is behind that meeting, his name is Monsieur Z and he's the founder of the idea of Utahism; it's a group that advocates for relooking at state lines and borders.

And so, there are different areas throughout the country, different media and different groups that are looking at these ideas. There was another meeting on a YouTube channel that they discussed some of these similar things. They also spoke in, were invited to speak in Concord, New Hampshire at a meeting of the Liberty Forum. And again, same type of topics, looking at this and so. I think we covered what's going in Indiana and Illinois, what's looking on there. There's also another group that's meeting in, I'm trying to think, that's Minnesota, and I believe it's, I'm thinking that, well, I'm going to stay away from that, but there is another group in the Midwest that is looking at moving, making some changes in the border. And in that, they had kind of an interesting approach at that. There were several counties that were wanting to move from one state to another. And the state that was being looked at to relocated to, their legislature had already

started the discussions about coming up with ways to reimburse, if you will, the other state should that come to fruition and those counties would move. So, there's a lot of things going on there.

On this Wednesday, May 14th, again, leaders from Greater Idaho will be meeting in the Oregon legislature and will be discussing with various legislators again about the issues that we face and the reasons that we're trying to do these things. I think it's important at this meeting to discuss first of all the importance of now that we have 13 counties that have, the voters have voted to continue the Greater Idaho Movement, look at moving the border. It's important, I think for each of the counties that have voted for that, to make sure that they let the legislators know that they are supporting their constituents. And that's why I brought up about the letter. There have been a number of county commissioner groups who have sent letters already to the legislature and I will submit and leave with you copies of those letters. Last in January, we talked about the possibility of you guys getting together and discussing that and seeing if there was something along those lines that you might want to do. And so, I just wanted to follow up on that, touch bases with you, see if there's any questions that I could try and answer for you at this time.

Commissioner Mendiola: Has anybody at the Greater Idaho border movement figure out what the financial impact to Idaho is going to be for taking over all these highways and prisons and

Bob Wheatley: No and that's part of the problem. That is the big question

Commissioner Mendiola: Who's going to pay for it?

Bob Wheatley: And it's going to impact a lot of people and different things and

Commissioner Mendiola: I'm kind of thinking that

Bob Wheatley: Those questions can only come if we get the two legislatures to come together and discuss it. They would be the ones that would get together and come up with the answer to those questions.

Commissioner Mendiola: I'm just afraid that our property tax is going to go way up to pay for some of this stuff and I think it's going to be a detriment to the county, or to Malheur County's people anyway, if they've got to take on the state prison without taking some of those jobs away

Bob Wheatley: Well, I'm not sure

Commissioner Mendiola: And who's going to maintain all the highways that the Oregon State, I mean, it's going to be millions and millions and millions of dollars difference.

Bob Wheatley: I understand that, but it's not the county, individual county that's going to be paying those it would be the state of Idaho if it were to happen.

Commissioner Mendiola: But they're going to impose a tax on the new part of Idaho to take care of those.

Bob Wheatley: It would be a tax on the whole state of Greater Idaho.

Commissioner Mendiola: They're going to bring up, they're going to add on to a lot of money that we don't have already.

Bob Wheatley: Well, they're going to be picking up a lot of assets if they were to bring in all 13 counties that have voted to have the border moved. There's a lot of assets there that are going to come to the state of Idaho as well. But again, I can't directly answer those questions because those questions are going to have to be met by a group from the two states legislatures and discuss those. Idaho has already moved to form a committee and is willing to have those discussions, but until the Oregon legislature is willing to move forward and form a similar committee, those answer are, we're not going to be able to come up with those answers.

Commissioner Mendiola: I just want to make sure everybody knows what the ramifications are here.

Bob Wheatley: There are a number of studies that are being done and looked at, and there are pros and cons on both sides. There's no doubt about that.

Brent Grasty: Bob, can I ask you a question? What did you mean when you said there's a number of studies?

Bob Wheatley: There are studies that are being done by various groups to look into this. I don't have that information off the top of my head. But like I mentioned earlier, there are universities, professors from universities, throughout the country that are looking at that. I have had meetings over the phone with a couple of professors from other states that are looking at, simply, what they're basically looking at, and this point again, it's not looking specifically to what's happening here in Oregon and Idaho; they're looking at why is this happening throughout the country and trying to come up with some things. Once, you know, again, my feeling is, and it makes sense, I think, is that if we could ever get the Oregon legislature and the Idaho legislature to form a joint committee to address these issues, then we could start getting some answers. You know, I'm sure they'll be asking for input from not only their state departments that would be involved, but also from the voters in the two states and how that it might impact them as well. And so that is where it's got to go at this point. That's the best that I can see right now.

Brent Grasty: I should have said, this is Brent Grasty. One of the things that's consistent since we first started meeting was there's been a list, including what Jim just brought up, of a mile long from the Oregon side only. And it's always been frustrating that the Greater Idaho group hasn't accumulated that list.

Bob Wheatley: I'm not sure what you're

Brent Grasty: Matt and I were talking across the internet on, he suggested, well, send me the list. I said, no, Matt, it's in the minutes of these meetings. You know, it runs the gamut. Jim brought up, you know, prisons and roads

Bob Wheatley: I put together a list myself a couple of years again that was three pages long

Brent Grasty: I remember that, yeah

Bob Wheatley: And so, it's been looked at

Brent Grasty: But what I'm curious about

Bob Wheatley: There are questions out there, there are lists out there, but until you can get somebody with authorization and authority to look at those, you're not going to get the answers, I can't give you those answers.

Brent Grasty: I think another way to approach it though, you don't have to reach that benchmark of both legislatures agreeing to set up a committee to get TVCC (Treasure Valley Community College), an economist there, or at Portland State University, or whatever, to run through each of those questions and say, a high low, is Oregon, Malheur County, pick a county, do it by county, to get some initial numbers together to be able to share with, like you suggest, people in the county and get their input on what the impacts would be. I read through the minutes from January, I missed that meeting, and there were about four topics that really stuck out to me. It was the death tax; it was competitiveness between Malheur County, Payette, Canyon County on agricultural product, talking about tractors and that effort a few years ago that I felt like was misguided on a timeframe that was impossible for farmers and ranchers to meet and that got shot down and because there was so much negative response on that for the rural counties, and that list of things are things that I don't think you need to wait for. You may be waiting a long time before you get both legislatures to address this issue. Seems like, the question I've been raising with Matt and Mike all these meetings is, don't wait, take that list, get some people working on that. They don't have to be, you could get U of I to do it for the Idaho side. I don't think you need to wait because those numbers will start showing up. Some people will start being more familiar with the issue and being concerned about it. Then you've got what Matt and Mike have always said, we just want to have a conversation. And it's always been my take that the Malheur County Court has done exactly what they, what the voters now twice have said we want you to do, carry on a meeting once every four months to discuss the issue. Not to send a letter, I mean it's the Court's decision to send a letter if you're going to send it, but that's above and beyond what we voted for. So, I mean, send a letter, Judge, you know, if that's what the Court decides, you're independent.

Bob Wheatley: I guess our position would be is that, as you mentioned, twice the voters have stated in Malheur county that they do want this issue to move forward. And in January's meeting, the county commissioners here agreed that their constituents did want that to move forward and did indicate that you would be willing to indicate that to the leaders of the two legislative bodies in Oregon. They are not going to move forward until they hear, I think from the leadership of the 13 counties. They know what the voters have stated, now they need to hear that the county leaders are willing to support what their constituents have said they desired. The other thing is, your point is well-made and I will certainly pass that thought along, yeah, anybody that could come out and be willing to do a study, that can do nothing but help decide whether it's worthwhile or not. And I think a study like, the thing that we keep talking about, the two legislative bodies getting together, talking about it is that ultimately any agreement that is going to be formed has to be through the two legislatures, right?

Brent Grasty: Agreement wise, yes.

Bob Wheatley: Okay, so we need to know that they are willing to do that and get input, whatever it may be. And they, I'm sure they will request input from some of these places that you're talking about. If it was already in motion, that would be even better, I totally agree with that. So, I guess in short, I'm just saying that yeah, I support what you're saying, would love to see that happen, but we also need to keep pushing on these other issues as well if we're going to. And I've stated this from the very beginning, and this is just me personally, and I think any time we get groups like that together for discussion, you know, there may be other ways to accomplish what we're trying to do here, even just getting legislators together to talk and discuss the issue, some of the issues, has got to be a positive and if somebody comes up with a better idea how this could be resolved, you know, I personally am all, I can get behind that one hundred percent.

Brent Grasty: Bob, let me just check on one thing, the 13 counties, does that exclude Harney county since they reversed the vote?

Bob Wheatley: When did they reverse that vote?

Brent Grasty: May of last year. The County Court in Harney county raised a referendum, if that's the right word, and there was a ballot measure in May last year, June or May last year, that the voters of Harney county voted it down to continue the same question that Malheur county is addressing.

Bob Wheatley: Did they vote to stop meetings, not to stop the Movement?

Brent Grasty: It was just about what the Court was required to do.

Bob Wheatley: So, Harney county's voters have still, the vote that they made to pursue moving the border, that's not been reversed.

Brent Grasty: Yes, that was reversed last year, a year ago.

Bob Wheatley: I'm not familiar with that, so I'd need to see that too.

Brent Grasty: They did the same thing, so the Harney County Court, I don't have the right words, Judge and Jim, but the Court can put something on the ballot measure, can bring it to a vote in any election for any issue. And the other way that Malheur County did was with the Greater Oregon Movement, raised petitions. And both those things came to a vote and Harney county voted in a majority to terminate those meetings. So, they're not meeting in the same schedule. For the Court.

Bob Wheatley: We're talking about two different things. So, when you say the 13 counties, whether Harney county is still included, I would assume so, since, as I am understanding what you're saying, the only thing that was voted down was to stop the meetings, not to stop moving the border. I guess I would have to see the, I'm not familiar enough with it, so I can't really answer your question.

Brent Grasty: Okay.

Multiple talking

Brent Grasty: So, we talked about it in the September meeting you guys and this meeting, and it had passed then by Harney county.

Commissioner Mendiola: I would recommend working on the death tax and inheritance tax in Salem, because that's going to affect, doesn't matter if you're red white or blue, it's going to affect everybody that's got children or grandchildren. This Greater Idaho thing is one thing, but I think they're pushing too much stuff uphill to get anything going. If we could separate some of that stuff, like the inheritance tax – change that, change the death tax, I think that's what a lot of these guys are worried about, not all, but a lot of these guys are worried about it. If we could get some of that stuff repealed or changed or taken off the books, so I'm not giving my money to the State of Oregon just because it's on the books, you know, that's why everybody's migrating to Idaho right now is they can take their money and give it to their kids. But there's a lot of people who want to live in Oregon too.

Brent Grasty: Another point, one of the things that concerns me the most about this is, a lot of the communication from attendees and folks that called in over the last three years, has been about farming and the impacts and competition across the state line. And one of the things that, this Court strongly used Oregon land use planning to stop the Boardman to Hemingway power line from going right next to the Butte, that was 10 years ago, and used land use planning to protect farmland to get it out on public lands. And now that thing, if it goes through, it's going to go out here on Vines Hill from the dam and Hemingway and then cross country, across Tub Mountain, and up 84 and on to Boardman. But in Idaho, we've lost over 60,000 acres of prime farmland here in the valley to residential home construction; that couldn't happen in Oregon. The prediction is we're going to lose another 110,000 acres by 2030; that couldn't happen in Oregon. I mean, this landscape and this economy in Malheur county is all about ag (agriculture). That's the drive. Federal employment, I suppose, and ag. So, I mean, that's one of the things that we've always tried to you know, include in the conversation, I say we, us, coming to these meetings, is to get that list together. And the other counties probably have other things, forestry is probably stronger in Grant county, and that list is what I keep saying, there's got to be, I think it's the responsibility of Greater Idaho to make some headway on that, and as far as I can tell, most of what they're doing is just trying to do communication to cause the legislatures to do the work. I don't see that as the responsibility of the legislatures, but I support what you're saying about getting the message

Bob Wheatley: Aren't they voted to office to represent the needs and the wants of the voters?

Brent Grasty: Right, right, but

Bob Wheatley: That's their job.

Brent Grasty: I think it's, you know, to me it's something you can accomplish, like what Jim suggested on the inheritance, the death tax

Bob Wheatley: That's fine too, yeah

Commissioner Mendiola: It doesn't matter if you're Republican, Democrat, Independent, Green, you know, everybody's got inheritance tax and death problems. There's no problem with the death, but you kind of hate to give all your hard-earned savings

Brent Grasty: And be able to pass it on to your kids.

Bob Wheatley: Paul Skeen's a real advocate

Commissioner Mendiola: He's a great example

Bob Wheatley: He knows exactly what you're talking about

Commissioner Mendiola: And he's mad as hell about it too

Bob Wheatley: I guess the question that I would have about that, what I would like to see is some ideas on how we can accomplish that. Because obviously it's been an issue for a number of years. With our limited representation, again, we're talking taxation without representation

Commissioner Mendiola: And it doesn't matter if you're in Malheur county or Multnomah county, you're going to have death tax. So, if you can get everybody together and say hey, this isn't right, you guys are taking this money for no reason, they might get it changed, you've got to have some common ground to make something work.

Bob Wheatley: Yeah, that's what we're saying. That's exactly what we're saying.

Commissioner Mendiola: And I kind of like the way Oregon's doing the land use. I get comments all the time from kids that I went to school with that live in Weiser and they say, don't move that border, we like to come to Oregon and see what it used to be like. Because there's nothing in the upper Treasure Valley that looks like anything like it did 30 years ago, or 20 years ago.

Bob Wheatley: At the same time, we have to realize, I mean, Malheur county is the poorest county in the state of Oregon.

Commissioner Mendiola: I'd rather be poor than be in Idaho is what I'm trying to say. I kind of like what we've got going on here.

Bob Wheatley: Okay. I disagree with that, but you certainly are entitled to that opinion, there's no doubt about that. I would like to see some growth, both economically and also socially for Malheur county. All I see happening is our farmers and our large businesses moving across the border into Idaho.

Commissioner Mendiola: A lot of small businesses too, just because it's easier to do business over there. But I think we can change it without moving the border.

Bob Wheatley: So, we're losing people and businesses across the border. So there has to be something that's attractive to those people to make that move. I'm sure they'd rather stay put too if we could move the border.

Bob Doughty: I think one thing we have to remember, all of us, and I appreciate your opinion there, too

Judge Joyce: Bob, would you state your name for the record.

Bob Doughty: I'm Bob Doughty of Ontario. I'm aware, myself, been watching it for about 60 or 65 years now, of us trying to get the legislative people on the other side of the mountain to give us consideration over here. They refuse to do that. All the power and all the money is in the northwest corner of Oregon; they establish the laws. And the rest of us over here, like we've just discussed, we're poor. They're not really interested in us, what we think. They're interested in what's going on over there, and we have to go along with it, like it or not. And it's just, as far as us thinking, oh we're going to kiss up over there now and start getting things better across the mountain over there, on the other side of the Cascades, no, we don't want to kid ourselves there. That is not going to happen. The only way we're ever going to get that done is to move that border and let them stay over there and do whatever they want to do and we stay over here and do what we want to do. And with your consideration Jim, we can then start working with Idaho's legislative power, the powers to be, to get some of these things changed that we all in Eastern Oregon want to change. We need to get it changed.

Commissioner Mendiola: I don't know, I think it'd be easier to create your own Eastern Oregon state than to try to get into Idaho. There's too many people that have to, and even if the Oregon and Idaho decide to go ahead and do it, it's got to go through the federal government too. And you know exactly what that's going to happen. That's going to take 20 years to even get it on the docket back there.

Bob Doughty: Well, the job to create a whole new state is a lot tougher than to move the border between two current states.

Commissioner Mendiola: I don't know.

Bob Doughty: It's tough.

Commissioner Mendiola: It's tough either way. It's going to be hell trying to get those guys in Washington to say

Chuck Pike: What you've got is two different settings. You've got residential and that kind of thing, and the farming industry. There's where the difference is, right?

Commissioner Mendiola: But the problem is a lot of that stuff in Idaho used to be farming and now it's not.

Chuck Pike: It's going to be the same way in Boise too, because that's the city. We're farming out here.

Commissioner Mendiola: Yeah, but they're a lot closer to us if we move that border, they're a lot closer to us coming this way, than worry about those guys in Portland coming this way.

Chuck Pike: I can't disagree with that, that's true.

Bob Doughty: I think another thing we really have to think about, I think about it a lot, the crime level in Ontario, Oregon is one hell of a lot more stringent right now, more prevalent, than it was just a short few years ago and it's Oregon's liberal drug laws that's done all that so, what the rest of us have to put up with. A couple days ago some idiot fired a bunch of shots there next to Alameda school, went across the street and fired a few more. I live pretty close to there and we saw the damnest conversion of state police, Malheur County deputies and Ontario police to investigate that silently, no sirens, they just sneaked in there and found the guy in a house across the street making himself a sandwich. They arrested him and hauled his ass off and he's facing numerous charges.

Commissioner Mendiola: Well, he should be facing numerous stuff, that's crazy.

Bob Doughty: And here we have now, last report I heard, 13 different dispensaries now in Ontario. What are they in Ontario for? They're tapping that Boise market

Commissioner Mendiola: That's just because it's legal in Oregon and it's not legal in Idaho.

Bob Doughty: Correct.

Commissioner Mendiola: They've got the same crazies over there though. They had that one guy that shot up a bunch of stuff right there in Meridian, so, I mean, you've got crazies everywhere.

Bob Doughty: I bet if you moved those liberal drug laws further that way it's going to help us a lot on this side of Oregon, I strongly feel that

Commissioner Mendiola: Yeah, I agree

Bob Doughty: And we're dependent on them over there to do that

Commissioner Mendiola: They finally figured out that that drug law wasn't as nearly as cool as they thought it was going to be. They put some more teeth in it a little bit. They need to put more teeth in it too.

Bob Doughty: Yes, they do. Yes, they do.

Chuck Pike: The last time we talked, that's what we talked about, is it's a way of life is basically what the differences is

Commissioner Mendiola: Quality wise

Chuck Pike: And Boise would do the same thing because that's where the population is

Commissioner Mendiola: And they just love the growth

Chuck Pike: What you're going to have to do is figure out how to monopolize that to make that fairer. The farmer feeds the world. That's true. We know that. All of us. They don't even realize that. Some of them, I don't think they think. But the farmer has to exist too. And being unfair because of the population. Like they was talking about changing the voting rules so that it would

be not by population, but by area or so, which makes more sense to me. Then you would equalize all of this out.

Bob Doughty: A real powerful thing though that comes to play here is the cultural differences. And we always have to remember now that Idaho is red, red, red, and conservative

Unknown: That's true

Commissioner Mendiola: But it's getting more

Bob Doughty: And push some of this crap over and let Salem and Portland have it, if that's their way of life, let them have it. We don't need to have it here. And trying to get those legislators over there to give us a fair shake, they're not going to do it. I've been watching it, like I said, for 60 or 65 years. It's not better now, it's worse than it was before.

Commissioner Mendiola: There's too much money in the building of the state coffers from the death tax and inheritance tax, they don't want nothing to do with it. That's kind of like taboo to mess with, but that's where we need to be beating on the door on over there, to see if we can get some of those people on both sides of the aisle to make it work.

Brent Grasty: One of the things that I struggle with what you're saying is, when do we stop, because Idaho was democratic in the '60s, and here you are, they're red, deep red, right? There's two pieces of blue, Ada county and (inaudible). And that wasn't the way it was when we were kids. And so, it switches. So, do we change the state boundary again in another 60 years when we're gone and our kids are grown? And that's, I mean, you were right, Bob, I mean this rural urban thing, it's been here forever and we got the numbers, you know, people are thinking about, how does my kid, a kid in the middle of the city's not going to be able to get a job at 12, like we all were moving sprinkler pipes and bucking bales, and a kid out here in farmland's got a chance to do it, even though we've got the poorest county in the state.

Chuck Pike: It all boils down to that way of life.

Unknown: That's right.

Brent Grasty: It's just, we've got to find a better way to work together. And Bob, I've always appreciated how you've approached it that way. You don't really care what happens as long as we get a better standard of living and more opportunities and that's the struggle we're all trying to get through.

Commissioner Mendiola: And they're not going to realize what's going on in Nampa, Boise, Caldwell area until they're out of food, until they're out of acres, they're going to have to import all their food in there sometime, and they're going to wish, man, I wish we hadn't done that.

Bob Wheatley: That's the only reason why the 13 counties in Oregon will be attractive to Idaho, maybe. Well, let's not, you know, the Boise Valley is not the only farming area in Idaho. So, there's a lot of rural areas in Idaho that are still farming and doing fine. I just, before we come to a close, I just, and maybe you can find some more information Brent that, I looked up on that ballot measure in Harney county and it says it was measure 31-26 and you're right, it was May of 2024.

A yes vote supported this ballot measure to eliminate requiring annual meetings specifically dedicated to discussing moving the Oregon-Idaho border and instead making the topic a potential agenda item in the regularly scheduled county court meetings when requested. So, it's the same measure that Malheur county had. And so, their yes vote, let them stop having the meetings, but it did not stop the discussions about moving the border.

Brent Grasty: It didn't stop the opportunity to discuss those

Bob Wheatley: Correct.

Brent Grasty: To bring it up

Bob Wheatley: So, they had voted previously, their voters voted previously, the majority that they wanted the border moved.

Brent Grasty: No, that they wanted to talk about it

Bob Wheatley: (inaudible) it did not do away with that one iota. The other thing that I would only mention is that if you'll look at it, in both Harney county and Malheur county, that measure was not opposed by Greater Idaho. We do not have a problem if you as commissioners desire to reduce the number of meetings, eliminate the meetings, as long as we have an opportunity to request the meeting from time to time. There's not a fight there. And I think answering your question Brent, from my way of thinking and I think from the way of thinking of the Greater Idaho members, Harney county is still one of the 13 counties that is interested in moving the border.

Brent Grasty: So, Bob, I think it's fair to say that Greater Idaho wanted to have this discussion one way or another, and it's not the same in every county, Harney county and Malheur county had the same words, Shall the court meet three times a year? It passed, it's a requirement to meet three times a year. We haven't gotten anywhere that I can see on the discussion. These meetings, these guys and their busy schedule have to meet three times a year. Prepare for it, follow up on it, whatever the activity is. We all come here. We could come every Wednesday and say, I'd like to have it on the agenda, and that's the only thing that ballot measure was doing last year here. Still could have the meetings here if it had passed. It failed. And that's how our system works and I support that, it failed. So that's the only question that was happening. So, I mean, all 36 counties can discuss this at every one of their meetings.

Chuck Pike: What gets me, what is this with Idaho and all these buildings and what have you, there's something wrong there, somethings out of whack.

Brent Grasty: With growing?

Chuck Pike: Yeah, building all these, what are they going to bring a lot more population in?

Commissioner Mendiola: They're growing like cats and dogs over there.

Multiple talking

Bob Wheatley: They have a different way of looking at it.

Chuck Pike: On this side of the state, we're farming industry

Commissioner Mendiola: And on the east side

Chuck Pike: It all boils back down to way of life

Commissioner Mendiola: The southeastern part of Idaho is the same way, they're all ag down there too and they've got pretty good size cities but they don't have a million people.

Chuck Pike: That makes me wonder

Commissioner Mendiola: And they've probably got the same problem with what's going on over there as what's going on in Boise

Chuck Pike: (inaudible) all them buildings that means population somewhere

Commissioner Mendiola (inaudible) covering up good dirt

Chuck Pike: (inaudible) or are they having babies

Commissioner Mendiola: Well there's a lot of growth over there for some reason or another

Bob Wheatley: If you look at the statistics you'll find that a lot of their growth has been from people from other states moving into Idaho.

Unknown: Some of it, yeah

Multiple talking

Bob Wheatley: (inaudible) that's not something you're going to stop. If people want to move they can move

Commissioner Mendiola: 98% of those cars that are doing that (inaudible) down below the dam, those are all Idaho plates. There's more Idaho plates at Bully Creek than there is Oregon

Bob Doughty: You have to remember too (inaudible)

Bob Wheatley: Doesn't that bring income in to Malheur county?

Commissioner Mendiola: Just enough, we don't want them here all the time. We just want their money

(inaudible)

Bob Wheatley: I understand that. If all those Californians (inaudible)

Commissioner Mendiola: (inaudible) because they're overpopulated there so they can't find a camping spot in Idaho

Bob Doughty: It's a national issue

Commissioner Mendiola: It is a national issue.

Bob Doughty: When I started paying attention, I was about 18 years old, the United States had a population of 160 million; now we've got 330 million. So where are all these people going to live? They're going to live somewhere. So that's an issue that we'll have to contend with one way or another.

Chuck Pike: One of the things about the tax structure in Idaho too is they lowered the taxes in Idaho, which is not bad, but who's paying for all of that construction? Where does that come from? But if it's not out of the state, am I wrong? It's the same thing that is happening in Oregon, see, right now, the population over there controlling us.

Bob Doughty: Well you don't have to go very far

Chuck Pike: That's exactly what it all represents, isn't it

Multiple talking

Bob Doughty: Just get to Ontario and take a look. All the new construction in the area is going on on the east side of the river. That's where the construction's taking place

Chuck Pike: Well that's what looks like

Bob Doughty: The problem is regulation

Multiple talking

Commissioner Mendiola: And Washington states got the same problem. Eastern Washington doesn't agree with what's going on in Olympia. Same thing in Idaho. Southeast Idaho's got the same problem with Boise; Twin Falls has probably got the same problem as we've got.

Bob Wheatley: Eastern Washington is doing the same thing that Eastern Oregon is doing

Commissioner Mendiola: Montana's the same way, I mean it's all ag

Bob Wheatley: They're wanting some equalization

Commissioner Mendiola: So, everything on the east side of that's not happy with what's going on in Helena

Chuck Pike: Maybe you better look at the tax structure and what have you a little differently rather than (inaudible) I hate to say that, but that's what it looks like to me, they're building the same thing we got already, that's what all the construction is.

Bob Wheatley: But really, that's why we're wanting these meetings, not only here locally, but at the state level, to get these people together to talk about these things and these issues, and try and come up with some answers. It doesn't necessarily mean we're going to move the border, but we need to answer the questions.

Chuck Pike: All that's going to do is create the same thing we've got.

Commissioner Mendiola: I kind of like what Oregon's, this part of Oregon is doing on their land use stuff.

Chuck Pike: I'm sorry, but that's the way I see it, we've already got that.

Judge Joyce: So, we have a senator in north central Oregon that's proposed putting one senator per county in Oregon, and then there's a follow-up that goes with it that says no bill coming out of Salem if it doesn't pass county-by-county it's not effective.

Bob Wheatley: I like the second idea really well. The first idea, I would love that idea, but that's been struck down by the Supreme Court years ago

Chuck Pike: You look at Harney county and it's all desert, most all of it's desert, why don't they build the homes there and leave the farm, where their building all the houses now, it makes more sense you've got to feed those people

Judge Joyce: Just as long as you get them out of the floodplain.

Chuck Pike: That makes more sense to me – don't it

Unknown: Maybe if they were in Greater Idaho

Judge Joyce: That's true

Chuck Pike: The problem is the water, there's no water

Commissioner Mendiola: And there's less and less farmers every day

Chuck Pike: Exactly, and that looks like more sense to me (inaudible)

Judge Joyce: As far as the (inaudible) it's really simple, it's just a law change, the hard part about it is getting all of those legislators on that west side to pass it

Multiple talking

Chuck Pike: (inaudible) the same way in Boise

Bob Wheatley: Both of those issues, they're great, great solutions, but at the way things are right now, probably never would pass the legislature because the Democratic Party would lose their control. And that's the issue that we're fighting against.

Judge Joyce: Same here.

Commissioner Mendiola: Does Idaho have two representatives from every county? They go by population too, right?

Unknown: No

Unknown: Region, district, population

Bob Wheatley: That's a national thing

Commissioner Mendiola: I don't know if we're going to gain anything if we do change the border, we're going to be on the west side of the problem instead of where we're at.

Chuck Pike: All we're going to do is shift it the other way.

Commissioner Mendiola: Yeah, we're just going to hate those guys in Boise instead of hating the guys in Salem. I don't think Idaho's going to be able to afford to buy into what Oregon is going to ask for what they've got for assets over here

Chuck Pike: There's got to be a way to handle that so that the population and the industry side of it can be more equal; that's basically all the whole thing is about anyway.

Commissioner Mendiola: Well good luck on that.

Chuck Pike: You can't say that this industry right here, the farming industry, isn't producing more than those people who are living in that city doing nothing. That's not fair (inaudible) because of population

Bob Doughty: Well, we have to realize too there is going to be change, whether we like it or not, things will change. I grew up down in Jerome, and that Magic Valley area is exploding, I go back to Jerome now, I'm about scared to drive down main street anymore. And the people down there, cussing Sun Valley and all those California movie actors and et cetera et cetera they're building those multi-million dollar homes and blah blah blah and blah blah blah and the older people that have lived in

Commissioner Mendiola: The generational people, yeah

Bob Doughty: They can't find a job in Sun Valley

Commissioner Mendiola: Well they can't afford the property taxes either

Bob Doughty: Can't afford to live there to have that job, it's a vicious circle

Chuck Pike: I'd like to bring out another point too, look what this governments done to this country, the whole thing. Some of that is terrible. I think Donald Trump's found out how to correct it, over this overspending, getting rid of it. That makes more sense. But you know the border, the life should be just as good on this side of the border as it is on the other side. Only difference is, like we talked about, is shift in the population. And which would make more sense as far as being fair with the tax structure, I agree, but it isn't going to correct anything, it's just going to move it.

Bob Doughty: Well, that's what's happened there in Boise is, those California people got fed up with the corruption and et cetera, et cetera, et cetera that was going on there, and hell, I'm moving to Idaho, and they did.

Commissioner Mendiola: Yeah, and they come up here and try to change everything that was going on in California, they bring it right with them.

Chuck Pike: Part of this is the government sets overall all of the states together, part of this problem is. Right now, I listen to the news and I can't believe a third of it, I can't believe a half of it.

Bob Doughty: Well, it's kind of bad when you watch the news and you've got to scratch your chin when it's all over, saying, now how much of that can I believe and how much can I not believe?

Commissioner Mendiola: That's true.

Multiple talking

Unknown: But we need to get even further up

Multiple talking

Commissioner Mendiola: There's a lot of nasty news out there for sure.

Chuck Pike: I hate to say thing about it because I supported this because of the unfairness, but I can also see the point that all you're doing, just like I said, because of the way of life on both sides, you're just shifting it. I believe that.

Bob Wheatley: I would just to get us back on point. I would like to request, once again, that the commissioners please look through the letters that other county courts have written to the legislative leaders and state your points. You don't have to necessarily say that you want the border moved, but you can certainly state your points as to why these issues and these problems need to be looked at and addressed. And I think, I really truly believe, that the only way that we're going to get any movement towards something that would equalize things is to get more of the legislative members on our side, if you will, and I think that can be done by getting them together and having some discussions. If we can agree to support that idea, then I think that's a very positive thing and that's what I would really appreciate from you

Commissioner Mendiola: I agree with that. If we can come together on some smaller items, instead of a whole big, if we can come together on half a dozen items and talk to everybody about it because everybody's going to have inheritance tax and I'm afraid to tell you guys everybody's going to die too. I just hate to see Salem screw around with that money when they need to tighten their belt too. If you think the US government has problems with overspending, every state has problems overspending.

Bob Wheatley: Just to support my request there, I go back to the first thing that I said here today is that more than 300, well now it's 306 days, have passed since the Greater Idaho leadership requested meeting with the governor to discuss the issues, talk about these things, and there still has been no response from her office. One of the things she ran on was that she wanted to reconcile the whole state. And best of my knowledge, she hasn't been to Malheur county at all, and she certainly doesn't seem to be interested in

Multiple talking

Commissioner Mendiola: I think she's been here

Judge Joyce: Twice, three times, at least

Brent Grasty: I do wonder if Harney county's vote slowed down any response, although what's inappropriate to me and impolite is that you didn't get any response and there should be some member of her staff that should be reaching out to say, we're not going to meet with you, or we are, or whatever, but silence is (inaudible)

Judge Joyce: Her chief of staff is from Baker.

Brent Grasty: I just was going to ask, following up with Bob's request, and Jim saying maybe we could focus on a smaller number of things, I guess I'm not sure, even with my brother, I'm not sure what, when he was judge, I'm not sure what the Court's role is for promoting a legislative action with Mark or with whoever. Can you do that? Does the Court tackle that kind of thing and say, we really are hearing a lot about the death tax, particularly how it hits large landowners in rural counties.

Unknown: True.

Brent Grasty: Because that transition, from what I understand, well, it's guys that have wealth of over \$10 million, \$6 million, whether it's money in the bank or whether it's land. Can the Court do, does the Court do that and say, Mark, we want you to tackle this, because we're hearing this at every meeting. (inaudible) part of the elephant.

Judge Joyce: It depends on the type of meeting. Whether it's a public meeting or a private meeting. We can't talk to you other than a setting like this. If you want to bring something to us, to me individually, or Jim, or Ron, or you know, then you've got to do it individually.

Brent Grasty: And then you'd carry it to the whole Court? or

Commissioner Mendiola: I'm kind of thinking that Mark's hearing the same thing right out his backdoor

Brent Grasty: Yeah, I'm sure. Well he was at the last meeting remotely, wasn't he? January?

Commissioner Mendiola: I don't remember

Brent Grasty: No

Commissioner Mendiola: But, I only own 30 acres and I've got a little nest egg that I'd like to keep for my family. And when I die it might only be a couple hundred thousand dollars, and a couple hundred thousand dollars isn't going to go very far in this kind of economy, but at least it's better than, you know, giving it to them.

Judge Joyce: So, there's a ton of rules that we have to deal with.

Brent Grasty: Yeah, I just don't know what they are. I mean, Bob's point's a good one, some kind of message, whether it's support of, or just a reminder that twists the knife. This passed twice, to continue this discussion, and then at least you're hearing from the county.

Commissioner Mendiola: I am kind of disappointed in the governor not telling you yea or nay on your meeting though. I mean, even a no answer would be better than no answer at all.

Bob Wheatley: Exactly.

Bob Doughty: Well we can all contact our state representatives and our senators individually

Judge Joyce: Well that's true, yeah.

Bob Doughty: Give them a barrage of emails and texts and whatever, they hear about 47,000 with the same thing, they're going to say, gosh, maybe we ought to pay attention to this.

Commissioner Mendiola: I think if we were to concentrate on the death tax and inheritance tax, I think we'd go a lot further than the way we're going now. Because it'd be more of a pinpoint, instead of, like you say, a barrage. You know, use a rifle instead of a shotgun kind of thing so you get more for your buck, more bang for your buck.

Judge Joyce: Well, if they get enough calls, then one of us is going to get a call from one of the reps, you know.

Commissioner Mendiola: That's okay too. I take butt chewings every day, so I'm not afraid of that.

Brent Grasty: Dan, can you reach out directly to the governor's office and say, hey, this group, we're meeting three times a year, passed twice, can you reach and say to the governor's staff, or to the governor, I mean, I'm sure you're on the phone with her once in a while, and just say, you know, it's fair for these guys to get a response. And maybe the next time she's out here, maybe you could get a half an hour, I don't know, I imagine the governor's pretty busy, but you know, I don't know, is that something you could do?

Judge Joyce: Yeah. Absolutely.

Brent Grasty: Seems like that's a fair thing to nudge it along.

Judge Joyce: She was here last summer.

Commissioner Mendiola: During the fires?

Judge Joyce: Yeah, she was here then too, but before that she was here at the Plaza Inn. I introduced her to one of the number one Democrats in the county. She thought that was pretty cool.

Brent Grasty: Simmons?

Judge Joyce: Well, there was a couple more

Brent Grasty: Or was it Lucy?

Judge Joyce: There you go. Just saying.

Bob Doughty: So Kotek was here in Malheur county?

Judge Joyce: Oh yeah

Commissioner Mendiola: She was in Ontario, she wasn't in Vale, but she was in Ontario.

Bob Doughty: Did she bring her wife with her?

Judge Joyce: Yes.

Bob Doughty: Had them both, huh?

Judge Joyce: Yes.

Commissioner Mendiola: Now they know where Malheur county is.

Judge Joyce: Well, she used to come here all the time when her and Cliff worked together, you know, ten years ago.

Brent Grasty: Oh, as the President of the Senate?

Judge Joyce: Yeah. Speaker of the House.

Brent Grasty: Was she that before?

Judge Joyce: She's moved up the chair. Yeah, she wrote most of the bills that took place in Malheur county when she was in the legislature. So that part is, you know, what the response will be, that would be the real question.

Commissioner Mendiola: Yeah. We might get the same response you guys got. Quiet. Silence. But it's worth a shot. I know Paul Skeen would sure appreciate some help with his things.

Judge Joyce: Actually, I think he's had more contact than anybody.

Commissioner Mendiola: That's because he's kind of a bulldog when it comes to something like that.

Judge Joyce: Well guys, I think we've beat this one to death today. I don't think there's anything left. You know, it's been interesting.

Commissioner Mendiola: Sure appreciate your time.

Multiple talking

Judge Joyce: It's a lot different than the past few meetings

Commissioner Mendiola: We just need to grab a chain and all pull together instead of pushing the chain up a tree. We sure appreciate your time.

The meeting was adjourned.