UMATILLA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION - MINUTES
Meeting of July 13, 2026
9:00 am, Room 130, Umatilla County Courthouse
Pendleton, Oregon

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Commissioners Present:	Chair Dan Dorran, Vice-Chair John Shafer and Commissioner Cindy Timmons
County Counsels:	Doug Olsen, Nicholas Warner
Guests Present:	Jennifer Blake, HR Director; Robert Pahl, Umatilla County Chief Financial Officer; Jason Jensen, CFO; Robert Waldher, Community Development Director; Mike Duffy, Echo Heritage Association (EHA); George Murdock, EHA; Phyllis Shovelski, EHA; Kevin Miracle, Sanitary Disposal; Shaina Lilley,
Video link or Calling in:	Derek Ranta, Waste Management;

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CALL TO ORDER: Chair Dorran called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. He reminded all that the meeting is a public forum and there is a call-in option provided. The meeting is being video and audio recorded and minutes will be taken. Also, meetings are now live-streaming. Comments will become part of the meeting record and ask that they be three minutes or under. If persons wish to speak before the Board, please identify yourself and state where you live in order to be heard on the record – also note if you are speaking on behalf of others.

Pledge of Allegiance - led by Chair Dorran.

Additions to Agenda – None

Business Items

1. Echo Heritage Association – Presented by Mike Duffy, Echo Heritage Association (EHA), has requested an opportunity to provide the Board with a project overview involving St. Peters Church. He presented a slideshow that provided a history of the organization, which began in 2015, to restore a historic, non-denominational church outside of Echo. They secured a deed for the property, which is located in the County's jurisdiction. A financial overview revealed EHA has grown from zero funds to a stable position through an annual fundraiser, open houses and a newly established endowment. They rely greatly on volunteers and donated items. Since the acquisition of three lots behind the church, EHA proposed building a senior and community center on the property. EHA inquired about potential funding options. Bob Waldher explained that the County receives state lottery funds that are required to be spent on economic and community development projects and this would fall under community development. Funds are awarded twice a year with the application deadline for the fall cycle occurring on the First Friday in October and they were encouraged to apply. With the area being zoned as EFU, they would likely need to apply to replat the subdivision in order to vacate the roads around the properties, this can be done through the land use process.

2. Sanitary Disposal Rate Increase - Presented by Bob Waldher, Community Development Director, Kevin Miracle, Sanitary Disposal, 81144 N Hwy 395, Hermiston OR, Shaina Lilley, Sanitary Disposal, 456 23rd Ave, Longview WA. Waste Connections of Oregon DBA as Sanitary Disposal, Inc., having a solid waste franchise through Umatilla County, proposes to increase their rate within its franchised area of unincorporated Umatilla County by 14.0%. If approved, the proposed rate increase will go into effect on July 1, 2026. On April 14, 2026 the Umatilla County Solid Waste Advisory Committee met and voted to recommend approval of the proposed rate increase requested by Sanitary Disposal, Inc. A 14-day public notice (comment period ending May 13, 2026) was published in the East Oregonian and three prominent public places in the service area. No written comments or remonstrances were received during the public comment period. This pinkie was continued from the May 18, 2026 Work Session.

   In response to a letter sent to Sanitary Disposal from the Board of Commissioner, the “drive-in” fees have all been credited back to the customers and is no longer being charged. It was noted that across the different franchises there is different terminology for this extra service. Bob Waldher will take this to SWAC and attempt get unification on the name of this fee.

   Waste Connections maintained that it is requesting a 14% rate increase to achieve a reasonable rate of return equal to the industry standard, a consistent 8-12% margin. Commissioner Dorran felt that the lengthy meetings in the previous year that dove into the financials of the company that last year’s rate increase would get them to that 10% margin. Derek Ranta, Waste Connections, 808 Washington St, Vancouver, WA, last year’s request was for a 30% rate increase to achieve a “reasonable rate of return” per the franchise contract. The Board approved 15% at which point Sanitary Disposal said they would be back this year with another large increase request to get to that reasonable rate of return.

   Chair Dorran suggested having a third-party audit to interpret the numbers that are being debated today. He also suggested granting a smaller rate increase in the interim, possibly the 3% (CPI) increase since the July 1, 2026 effective date has already been delayed. This would have to be decided by the Board in a regular Board meeting. Derek points out that SWAC has reviewed the financials and recommended the requested rate increase of 14%. Waste Connections would not be opposed to a third party audit. The concern expressed repeatedly by the Board is that each year Sanitary Disposal requests large rate increases making affordability difficult for constituents. There will be further discussion at the BOC meeting where hopefully a SWAC representative will be present.

   On the transportation side Sanitary Disposal has made some route efficiencies and realigned driver hours resulting in a 12.5% reduction in hours. The commissioners question how a savings in hours justifies a 14% rate increase. Kevin explained that last year they asked for a 30% rate increase, which only 15 % was granted. So they did announce they would return with a request for the other 15% plus CPI this year. Now they are here asking for 14%, less than anticipated due to those efficiencies that were implemented. Shaina added that the rate model that they calculated still puts them at 7% below industry standard. Kevin asked for a 7% increase until the third-party audit is completed. Derek commented that there are experienced individuals in this field that could likely complete this in a month or two. This will be added to the BOC meeting agenda.

Commissioner Shafer asked if there was printed educational material for recycling that could be delivered to those that may not use the internet often. Kevin offered to bring in materials and announced that they hired a recycle coordinator to help promote educational outreach. Kevin, Derek and Shaina left the meeting at 10:14 am.

3. Review July 15, 2026 BOC Meeting Agenda - Presented by Nick Warner and Doug Olsen, there will be pinkies added for the discussion items above.
    1. PATH CDBG Project – Public Hearing, project completion
    2. IT Payable – Controlled Access Fob System – subscription/annual fee
    3. Fair Purchase – Eli Young Band
    4. Fair Purchase – OrCal Parking
    5. Fair Purchase – OrCal Ticket Scanning
    6. Fair Purchase – Portable Restrooms – this may be moved to the next meeting
    7. UCSO RFP – Jail kitchen floor
    8. Admin Services Purchase – Courthouse Basement Signs - $6,098
    9. Bridge Purchase – Public Works
    10. ATV Purchase – Chair Dorran will discuss this with the Sheriff's Office, it may be delayed due to questions on accepting the highest bid. There is a grant from OPRD.
    11. Board Payable – July 4th concert Inland NW Musicians
    12. Public Health – Nurse Supervisor
    13. Public Heath – Nursing Family Partnership
        **Add PH FTE for the Hermiston School-based Health Center
    14. DD Payable
    15. Real Estate Agent RFP
        **Add Emergency Management grant
        **Add Engagement with Auditor
        **Add Sheriff's Office Payable.

    Bob – There is work being done to establish an Enterprise Zone out at the CDA property. The required meeting with the taxing districts went well. Hermiston School District is working to establish their school support fee and will provide a resolution to be included in the application. The next steps would be for County and Port to adopt the enterprise zones. The next BOC meeting should have this on the agenda.

    Jason – He inquired about deadlines for pinkies – they should be turned in by the Thursday prior to the Board meeting.

    Robert – It was good to hear that there are accountants that do audits for the specific industry, collection and disposal franchises. He warned that the audit could be costly. He felt that it is important to consider the impact of multiple increases per year to constituents. He also expressed concerns with the Fair entertainment purchases and reiterates advice he has offered recently and that is to contract the budget not expand it.

4. Executive Session – Employment/Real Property – ORS 192.660(2)(a,b,e,h) – None

Commissioner Reports:

Commissioner Shafer: He will be attending the NACO Conference 7/16-7/22.

Commissioner Dorran: None

Commissioner Timmons: None

Meeting adjourned by Chair Dorran at 10:37 am.

Kelsey Bailey

Executive Secretary – Board of Commissioners