

WALLOWA COUNTY  
BOARD of COMMISSIONERS  
STATE of OREGON

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TERA ELLIOTT E.A.

COMMISSIONER LISA COLLIER  
COMMISSIONER JOHN HILLOCK  
CHAIR - COMMISSIONER SUSAN ROBERTS

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**May 7, 2025**

Wallowa County Board of Commissioners (BOC)  
Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes  
9:30 a.m. Thornton Conference Room  
VIA Zoom Meeting  
Wallowa County Courthouse

MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioner Lisa Collier  
Commissioner John Hillock

STAFF PRESENT: Brenda Micka, Administrator  
Amanda Piper, Admin. E.A., Policy Compliance Manager  
Ryan Moody, Sheriff  
Kyle Hacker, P&P Lieutenant  
Tony Boyd, Fair Manager  
Tera Elliott, BOC E.A.

OTHERS PRESENT: Bill Bradshaw, WC Chieftain  
Tracy Christopher, EMG  
Deanna DeMelo, WC Stockgrowers  
Reiner Goertzen, Rancher  
Shane Koyle, USDA Wildlife Services  
Mildred O'Callaghan  
Gary Parmenter  
Nancy Parmenter  
Cynthia Warnock, Wallowa SWCD  
John Williams (at 9:24)

ZOOM: Rawley Bigsby  
Mike Eng  
Ellie Gage  
Jeff Yanke

9:30 a.m. – Commissioner Collier opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and prayer

**Consideration and/or approval of Consent Agenda**

Consisting of:

1. **Payment of Claims on County Funds**
2. **Minutes:**  
**April 23, 2025** – BOC Regular Meeting  
**April 30, 2025** – BOC Special Meeting
3. **Employee Action Notice(s):**  
**Jeremy Dodd** – Salary Increase, DPSST Advanced Certification Pay, 911 Dispatch  
**Marylou Guentert** – New Hire, Museum  
**A Minor Employee** – Separation from Service, Custodian  
**Judy Wandschneider** - Separation from Service, Museum  
**Sawyer Wick** – New Hire, Patrol Deputy, WCSO
4. **Resolution(s):**  
**None**
5. **Order(s):**  
**Order 2025-2415** – Adopting Unanticipated Revenue, Grants, \$32,267.00

**Order 2025-2416** – Adopting Interfund Transfer, WC  
General Fund/Youth Services, \$9,000

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|---------------------------------|---|
| 6. Contract(s):                 | None  |
| 7. Easement(s):                 | None  |
| 8. Permit Application(s):       | None  |
| 9. Agreement(s):                | Wallowa County Health Care District, Medical Examiner<br>Services |
| 10. Grant Initiation(s)         | None  |
| 11. Letter(s)                   | None  |
| 12. Policy/Plan                 | None  |
| 13. Capital Expenditure Request | None  |

*Commissioner Hillock moved to approve the Consent Agenda  
Commissioner Collier seconded*

*The vote:*

*Commissioner Collier – aye  
Commissioner Hillock – aye  
Commissioner Roberts – absent, excused*

*The motion passes*

**Agenda Items:**

**Funding Request – Cross the Divide**, 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Kokanee Derby, \$5,000.00. Commissioner Hillock advised the revenue from this event helps Veterans.

*Commissioner Hillock moved to approve the \$5,000.00 request to  
be paid from the Transient Lodging Tax*

Commissioner Collier remarked we have supported this event in the past, and it is a good event that supports veterans.

*Commissioner Collier seconded*

*The vote:*

*Commissioner Collier – aye  
Commissioner Hillock – aye  
Commissioner Roberts – absent, excused*

*The motion passes*

**Wildlife Services and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) Updates** – Commissioner Collier explained that, due to the recent increase in wolf activity, the Commissioners cleared today's schedule to ensure transparency and receive updates from the agencies involved.

Commissioner Collier advised the first contact they received about the elevated numbers was from Senator Todd Nash, followed quickly by Jeff Yanke of ODFW. The Sheriff's Department, USDA Wildlife Services, and local ranchers have all been actively involved in ongoing, in-depth discussions—planning daily actions, assessing developments each morning, debriefing each night, and preparing for the next day. Many of these meetings extended late into the night, often lasting until 10 p.m. or even midnight. Today's update is to share what actions have been taken, highlight what's working well, outline our successes, explain the decisions made and the reasons behind them—including both what we did and why, as well as what we chose not to do and why.

Commissioner Collier then gave the floor to Jeff Yanke, District Manager of ODFW.

Mr. Yanke gave a summary stating he learned of the first depredation in the Zumwalt area on April 22. As of this morning, there are nine confirmed wolf depredation events, two probable and several interactions with livestock. Lethal removal of wolves was first authorized on Friday, April 25. This was the day after the second qualifying event, fulfilling the two confirmed depredations within a nine-month period per the Wolf Plan. Joint efforts with Wildlife Services included aerial removal, traps on the ground and landowner permits to four producers who suffered loss due to wolf attacks. As of this morning, six wolves have been removed from the conflict area, with only one further depredation occurring this week. Mr. Yanke expressed his gratitude to the producers and the cooperation with the ranch community, his staff and Shane's staff who have been working long and hard hours. Mr. Yanke confirmed there have been two active hot spots with the second being in the Bear Creek area of Wallowa. It was stated again how crucial daily communication was to make the best decisions for that day. Discussion continued stating there is only one wolf still on the authorization list to be administratively removed or removed by landowner permit.

Shane Koyle, District Supervisor USDA, spoke next stating he has had eight staff members helping, with four working today. Efforts have been made to maintain night patrols. Mr. Koyle expressed appreciation for the team's collaborative effort made possible through effective communication.

Commissioner Collier stated one option available to the County is to declare a State of Emergency which could supply funding to keep the trappers on the ground. The Commissioners have decided not to make that declaration at this time but requested Wildlife Services keep trappers on the ground and funding will be determined.

Deanna DeMelo, President of The Cattlemen's Association, spoke next expressing appreciation for how ODFW and Wildlife Services have coordinated the response, and issued the permits, providing the needed tools to mitigate the situation.

Cynthia Warnock, Chair for the Committee for Compensation, stated the compensation will be large this year due to the depredations and echoed appreciation for the coordination between agencies and the support for producers.

Commissioner Collier noted Senate Bill 777 was being discussed during this time and their conversation was that Wallowa County only puts in for 6% of losses for compensation – the thought is that if every loss is reported, even if there are no funds for compensation, it will help to identify what is needed for future asks. Sheriff Moody encouraged producers to call the Sheriff's office so they can also document the numbers and locations, including them in their year-end statistics.

Millie O'Callaghan asked if more than one pack was involved in the recent kills. Mr. Yankee advised this area can be utilized by up to 4 different packs of wolves, but they suspect the deprivation has been caused by groups of wolves associated with two of the packs.

Ellie Gage of Western Landowners is also grateful for the agency response and producer involvement bringing the best-case scenario into a really difficult situation and expressed appreciation to all involved.

Rawley Bigsby thanked ODFW and Wildlife Services for their efforts and expressed his appreciation for the open forum allowing all to participate. In the last two weeks, Mr. Bigsby advised he has spent approximately 120 hours at night flying drones and feels there is still an issue to deal with, but hopefully not as bad as it has been in the last 10 days.

Commissioner Hillock addressed Mr. Yankee inquiring about the possibility of being pro-active in coming years by issuing tags during the Spring to push the packs around. Mr. Yankee stated the Wolf Plan criteria must be met with 2 depredation events within 9 months. Without meeting that criterion, they cannot legally authorize the removal of wolves, but stated they are willing to discuss anything they can do to be more

proactive, while staying within the constraints of the Wolf Plan. Discussion followed on the process for changing or amending the Wolf Plan. Mr. Yankee advised the Wolf Plan is renewed every five years, with the last renewal in 2023.

Commissioner Collier welcomed John Williams and stated he has been crucial in the talks over the last two weeks. Mr. Williams stated the extreme difficulty of updating the Wolf Plan which is reviewed by the ODFW Commission. Conversation continued with Mr. Williams stating another option outside the 2-in-9 depredation is when wildlife populations are being impacted negatively allowing for decision of lethal control to protect wildlife. Mr. Yanke confirmed depredations do tend to spike in the spring as fawns and elk calves have not dropped yet. Mr. Williams stated wolves eat approximately 22 elk/year – causing concern as wolf packs are growing.

Circling back, in talking with Lake County, Commissioner Collier stated their case for declaring a State of Emergency differed from Wallowa County in that they were not receiving the support from State entities as Wallowa County is, and the wolves in their area are still in a protected classification. ODFW was leading the fight in our event, and through close communication with Wildlife Services and the ranchers, the Commissioners allowed them to decide not to make an emergency declaration at this time.

The Commissioners again thanked all the producers and agencies who came together during this time and stated the need to be proactive in managing the number of wolves in our area. They also thanked Senator Nash and Representative Levy for their involvement in this matter.

**Other Business:**

None

**Public Comment:**

It was asked where Senator Nash's bill is in the state process – SB777 Relating to the Depredation of Livestock is awaiting a House work session.

It was asked if the county has resources available for monitoring the wolves – yes, we do have 4-wheelers, side-by-sides and people available, all of which were offered during this increased activity. Wildlife Services also has a non-lethal range rider.

Commissioner Collier expressed appreciation to those who participated in today's informational update and encouraged them to help dispel any misinformation that may appear on social media.

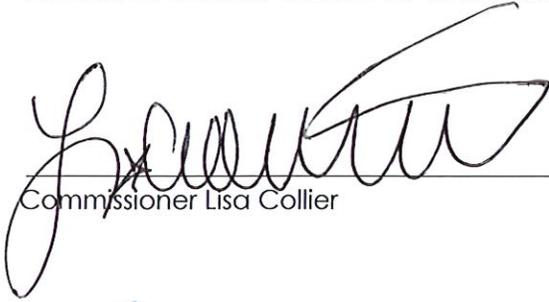
**Adjournment:**

A final thank-you was extended for allowing the Commissioners to adjust today's agenda, and to all involved in a response that demonstrated an unprecedented level of cooperation. With no further comment, the meeting adjourned at approximately 9:44 a.m.

**Respectfully submitted by:** *Tera Elliott, Executive Assistant*

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WALLOWA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



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Commissioner Lisa Collier

Absent

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Commissioner Susan Roberts



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Commissioner John Hillock



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ATTEST: Tera Elliott, Executive Assistant