



ONEIDA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Bill Lewis, Chairman – Ken Eliason – Brian Jepps

459 South Main St, Malad, ID 83252

Commissioner's Meeting

14 APRIL 2025 – 9:00 AM

REGULAR

* RECORDING# 250414-0122 & 250414-0123*

IN ATTENDANCE: Commissioner Chairman Bill Lewis, Commissioner Ken Eliason, and Commissioner Brian Jepps.

Commissioner Lewis opened the meeting and led all in the pledge and a prayer.

Agenda Approval

Commissioner Jepps motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Eliason. All ayes. Motion carried.

Consent Agenda, Payment of Claims, and Approval of Temporary Overweight Permits, and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Eliason motioned to approve the consent agenda as presented, which includes the payment of claims, approval of two temporary overweight permits, and approval of meeting minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Eliason. All ayes. Motion carried.

Total # of Payments	Fund Description	Amount Paid
50	GENERAL FUND/CURRENT EXPENSE	\$ 66,374.08
27	ROAD AND BRIDGE	\$ 16,566.96
4	AIRPORT	\$ 3,064.13
1	AMBULANCE	\$ 34.87
3	DISTRICT COURT	\$ 126.48
6	FAIR, COUNTY	\$ 2,497.95
35	JUSTICE FUND	\$ 20,833.17
1	HEALTH DISTRICT	\$ 15,442.50
1	PARKS & RECREATION	\$ 10,015.19
12	WEEDS	\$ 331.42
12	E-911	\$ 5,196.48
2	DRUG COURT/SPC.CT. COORDINATOR	\$ 300.00
1	LATCF FUNDING	\$ 83,053.75
TOTAL:		\$ 147,147.71

Adult Probation – Katie Avichouser & Jared Marchand

Approval is requested for funding to support Melissa Peck's attendance at the National Drug Court Conference in Florida, scheduled for May 27 – June 1, 2025. Ms. Peck serves as Oneida County's Felony Probation Officer and is responsible for supervising the majority of participants in the county's treatment court program.

Attending this conference will provide Ms. Peck with access to current best practices and skills that can be applied directly to her work, enhancing outcomes for both the treatment court and the probationers it serves.

The total cost of attendance includes the conference registration, airfare, lodging, and per diem for meals. These expenses will be jointly funded by Oneida County and the Idaho Department of Corrections (IDOC). Oneida County will specifically cover hotel accommodations and up to \$799 of the flight cost.

Commissioner Eliason motioned to pay for hotel room for \$624.25, and the flight of \$799.00 for a total of up to \$1,424 to come out of the Drug Court Coordinator fund for Oneida County Felony Probation Officer Melissa Peck. Seconded by Commissioner Jeppsen. All ayes. Motion carried.

Road Discussion (Arbon Valley Road, Hess Road) – Steve Hess

Steve Hess shared photos documenting damage and wear along Arbon Valley Road, particularly near Highway 38 and Hess Road. He raised concerns about several safety issues, including the road's narrowness, deterioration, and a raised cattleguard that could damage vehicles.

Road & Bridge Supervisor Dianna Dredge participated in the discussion and agreed to add road base around the cattleguard to "feather" the transition and reduce the height difference, improving drivability.

The group also discussed the possibility of placing temporary road signage in areas of concern. However, signs would only be installed when cattle are not present, to avoid damage caused by animals rubbing against them.

Plans to upgrade sections of Arbon Valley Road are in progress but are expected to take several years, as the project is part of a larger, statewide list of infrastructure priorities. Ms. Dredge assured Mr. Hess that her department will continue to make improvements as resources allow. She also noted the ongoing challenges her team faces, including water runoff, underlying clay soils, and increased wear from heavy, fast-moving vehicles on roads not originally designed to support such loads.

Aquifer Recharge Project – Added Expense

At the last commissioner meeting, five culverts for the ITD pit and two culverts for the Ward pit were approved but the county was charged for nine. Both Terry Davis with Malad Valley Irrigation and the county road & bridge department confirmed seven culverts were picked up and installed. Commissioner Lewis contacted the vendor to discuss the discrepancy and they will review their records.

R&B – Skid-Steer Loader Purchase

Road & Bridge Supervisor Dianna Dredge discussed the potential purchase of a skid-steer loader, explaining that it would be particularly useful for work on culverts and road shoulders due to its lighter size. This equipment would also allow the department's larger loader to remain at the pit, increasing efficiency. Given the extended lead time for ordering, Ms. Dredge proposed placing the order now with payment scheduled upon delivery in October, using funds from the next fiscal year's budget.

Because the anticipated cost exceeds \$75,000, questions were raised regarding compliance with Idaho's public purchasing laws. Under Idaho Code § 67-2803, counties are required to follow formal bidding procedures for purchases over \$75,000 unless the purchase is made through an approved cooperative purchasing program.

Sourcwell was identified as one such program, which provides access to pre-bid contracts that meet competitive bidding standards. County Attorney Lyle Fuller confirmed that other jurisdictions, such as Pocatello, have successfully utilized Sourcwell contracts and that it may be possible to "piggyback" on their bid process to meet legal requirements.

Further review will ensure the proper purchasing procedures are followed in compliance with Idaho Code.

Commissioner Eliason motioned to approve the bid from Western States for a 2025 Caterpillar 265 Compact Track Loader Skid-Steer, including an 86-inch general purpose bucket and a RW RH Slider machine road widener in the amount of \$147,627.12 using funds from the 2026 budget, as long as the purchase fulfills the bid requirements. Seconded by Commissioner Jeppsen. All ayes. Motion carried.

R&B – Bereavement Time for John Thomas

Commissioners discussed a request made by a supervisor on behalf of a Road and Bridge employee, following the passing of the employee's longtime partner. Because the couple was not legally married and Idaho does not recognize common-law marriage, the county's current bereavement policy—

which defines immediate family as spouse, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, siblings, and in-laws—does not clearly apply in this situation.

Legal counsel Lyle Fuller advised against making exceptions outside the written policy, noting that any changes would need to be clearly defined and applied consistently across all policies. While the Commissioners expressed sympathy for the employee's loss, Mr. Fuller emphasized that legal constraints may limit the County's ability to offer bereavement leave in this case.

PacifiCorp Judgement / Tax Cancellation

Treasurer Leigh Love informed the Commissioners of a recent District Court ruling in Ada County, which—similar to the Idaho Power judgment discussed in December 2024—reduced the assessed value of PacifiCorp properties as originally determined at the state level by the State Tax Commission. This ruling impacts all local taxing districts.

To address the required refund of \$17,613.49 to PacifiCorp, Treasurer Love recommended issuing a revised tax bill reflecting the reduced assessment. Each taxing district's portion will be adjusted accordingly. Treasurer Love will cancel the affected amounts for each code area and send explanatory letters to the respective districts.

Commissioner Jeppsen motioned to approve the court ordered tax cancellation for PacifiCorp for the amount of \$17,613.49 for the second half of the 2024 tax year. Seconded by Commissioner Eliason. All ayes. Motion carried.

Treasurer – Auditor Joint Quarterly Report

Treasurer Leigh Love presented the Treasurer – Auditor Joint Quarterly Report to the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Lewis expressed appreciation for the inclusion of the cash statement, noting that it provided a clearer breakdown of the county's funds and account balances. The county is seeing strong performance in investments, particularly in certificates of deposit (CDs) and bonds. Additionally, the county has realized savings in bank fees since transitioning to a credit union for its primary banking services.

In response to the upcoming closure of the US Bank branch in Malad, the county has established a new account with Ireland Bank to facilitate immediate or local banking transactions as needed.

Commissioner Jeppsen motioned to accept the Treasurer-Auditor Joint Quarterly Report. Seconded by Commissioner Eliason. All ayes. Motion carried.

Sheriff – Opioid Funds

The Oneida County Sheriff's Office will participate in National Drug Take-Back Day on April 26, 2025, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, in partnership with the DEA, Idaho Office of Drug Policy, and Southeastern Idaho Public Health.

Sheriff Doug Williams requested \$350 in opioid settlement funds to cover overtime for two Sheriff's Office staff members. Sheriff Williams confirmed the expense qualifies under Section G, Subsection 4 of the Approved Opioid Abatement Strategies. The event aims to help prevent the misuse of prescription drugs, including opioids like Fentanyl and Oxycodone.

Commissioner Eliason motioned to approve the request of \$350 through the Opioid Settlement Fund to be used to cover overtime officer pay during the DEA drug take back drive on April 26, 2025. Seconded by Commissioner Jeppsen. All ayes. Motion carried.

Review County Credit Card Policy

Commissioners briefly discussed the potential need for a written policy outlining credit card use, handling, and the use of cashback incentives. The topic was tabled for future discussion.

Extension – Office Hours

County Extension Agent Sawyer Fannesbeck requested year-round office hours of 8:00am to 4:00pm, as the current winter hours have worked well. He stated that the Extension staff is willing to accommodate late afternoon or evening activities on a case-by-case basis.

Commissioner Eliason motioned to approve the County Extension Office's permanent office hours of 8:00am – 4:00pm. Seconded by Commissioner Jeppsen. All ayes. Motion carried.

Property Tax Exemptions

The Commissioners reviewed and approved property tax exemption requests. As per Idaho Code Title 63, Chapter 6, annual applications must be submitted by April 15, and decisions must be notified to the taxpayer and county assessor by May 15. Exemptions are not automatically carried over from previous years, and organizations are responsible for reapplying each year.

Commissioner Eliason motioned to accept the property tax exemption for the following list:

RP0005201	American Legion Post 65
RP0005601	First United Presbyterian Church of Malad
RP0008800	Iron Door Arts & Theater Foundation, Inc

RP0002801A	Malad Lodge #51 Ancient Free & Accepted Masons of Idaho
RP0330107	Oneida Crisis Center, Inc.
RP0000100	Oneida Pioneer Museum
RP0256802A	Malad Valley Heritage Square
RP0317408	Faithful Followers of Fatima – St. Paul Catholic Mission
RP0046400	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
RP0046502	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
RP0047001	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
RP0066523	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
RP0066525	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
RP0086701	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
RP0087301	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
RP0098202	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
RP0147601	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
RP0084500	Victory Baptist Church
RP0322500	Victory Baptist Church

Seconded by Commissioner Jeppsen. All ayes. Motion carried.

Annual Financial Audit Report 2024 – Searle, Hart & Associates

Dana Izatt of Searle, Hart and Associates presented the independent audit report for Oneida County. The County received a "Good Opinion" rating on its financial statements for fiscal year 2024. Commissioners signed a letter of representation, and read a letter from the auditors which confirmed there were no issues working with county staff or obtaining necessary information.

Attorney Lyle Fuller asked the auditor a question related to another agenda item concerning the county's credit card policy and cashback usage. The auditor advised that the County should have clear policies in place and ensure regular review of credit card statements. It was also noted that, under Idaho Code, interest earned on funds may be used as a revenue item in the County's general fund.

Commissioner Eliason motioned to sign the letter of representation and accept the audit reports from Searle, Hart and Associates. Seconded by Commissioner Jeppsen. All ayes. Motion carried.

Fair Board – Bids for Barn Extension and Building Permit Fee Cost

Fair Board Member Ken Moss presented commissioners with two bids for the previously approved barn extension project at the fairgrounds. The fair board would like to get started as soon as possible in order to have the project completed by the fair events in August. The first bid is near the approved

amount for the project and the other bid is for a metal building and is significantly higher. The bids do not include gates or electrical work, and commissioners requested Mr. Moss obtain quotes for those two items. Mr. Moss also requested the board also approve having no charge for the necessary permit process.

Commissioner Eliason motioned to accept the full bid from Double O Construction for the fair barn extension for the amount of \$41,500. Seconded by Commissioner Jeppsen. All ayes. Motion carried.

Commissioner Lewis motioned to waive the permit fees for the fair barn extension project. Seconded by Commissioner Eliason. All ayes. Motion carried.

ADA Training – Counties & Sheriff Departments – Jennifer Putnam

Jennifer Putnam, a speech and language pathologist with years of experience in Oneida and Bannock counties, addressed the Commissioners following concerns related to the recent fatal police shooting of a young man with limited abilities in Pocatello. She noted that while facility accessibility is important, true ADA compliance also involves communication and response protocols.

Commissioners invited discussion between Ms. Putnam and Sheriff Williams, who shared information regarding ongoing ADA training and response planning. Sheriff Williams also addressed Ms. Putnam's idea of a voluntary information system, explaining that the Spillman dispatch software allows for limited flagging and storing critical data. The possibility of involving trained crisis intervention personnel in future responses was also discussed. No action was taken.

P&Z – Codification Questionnaire and Amended Agreement

At a previous meeting, the Board of Commissioners approved and signed the codification agreement. However, a separate page requiring initials was inadvertently left incomplete. Upon further review, a few clerical errors were identified and corrected to reflect the original terms agreed upon by the Board. Because the updated agreement did not materially change the substance of what was previously approved, a new motion was not required. Attorney Lyle Fuller confirmed that re-signing the corrected agreement falls within the scope of the original motion in accordance with Idaho Code.

Additionally, a questionnaire was included with today's agenda item. By completing it during the meeting, the Board was able to help expedite the codification process, which is expected to shorten the months-long timeline by a few weeks.

Clerk – 2026 Budget Discussion

County Clerk Lon Colton has prepared budget worksheets for each county department, which are due back by May 19. After the worksheets are submitted, Clerk Colton will compile the information and prepare it for review by the Board of Commissioners.

Before sending out the worksheets, the Clerk's Office plans to meet with department heads to go over the process and answer any questions. The goal is to help make the process as smooth and straightforward as possible for everyone involved.

Clerk Colton also recommended a slight adjustment to this year's budget process. In addition to in-person discussions, department heads are encouraged to include a written summary of their budget needs. These summaries can be reviewed by the Board in advance, helping to keep the budgeting process focused and efficient. It was suggested that the May 27 and June 9 commissioner meetings—being the first two after the May 19 deadline—be used for initial budget discussions with department heads.

ChatGPT as a Potential Resource for Grant Writing

Commissioner Jeppsen opened the discussion about using artificial intelligence (AI) to assist the county with finding and writing grants. Doing a brief search using ChatGPT, an AI platform with information up-to-date through June 2023, Commissioner Jeppsen was able to identify a handful of available grants and information about them within a few minutes. A few questions about using AI were asked, but more information is needed. No decisions were made.

In-Depth Planning & Zoning Training with Seth Griggs (Multi-County)

The Board of County Commissioners expressed interest in hosting a multi-county, in-depth Planning and Zoning training in partnership with Seth Griggs of the Idaho Association of Counties (IAC). The training is scheduled for May 14 from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Commissioners discussed meeting logistics, including the location, food arrangements, and invitations. It was agreed to invite the County Board of Commissioners and the Planning and Zoning Board, along with any other county officials who may benefit from the training.

An invitation will also be extended to neighboring counties, including Power, Bannock, Caribou, Franklin, Bear Lake, Cassia, and Minidoka. Final plans will be finalized and approved at the May 12 commissioner meeting.

Contract for Fair Board & Airport Maintenance Positions

Historically, the fair board and airport maintenance positions—both filled by independent contractors—have not operated under a formal written agreement. The proposed agreement will help define the contractor's responsibilities, clarify the County's liability, outline whether the position is seasonal, and specify qualifications, compensation, and other essential details.

The newly hired independent contractor for the fairgrounds begins work today and will need to sign the agreement within the week. Attorney Lyle Fuller will prepare the necessary documents, and the Board plans to hold a special meeting on Thursday, April 17, to review and approve the agreements.

Commissioner Lewis moved to hold a special meeting on April 17 at 9:00 am to approve the independent contractor agreements for the Airport and Fairgrounds maintenance positions. Seconded by Commissioner Jeppsen. All ayes. Motion carried.

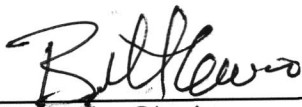
Event Center Policy

A few edits were made after the last board meeting. One change is that payments for the event center rental will be made to the clerk's office. The board also discussed how rental security deposits would be handled and refunded, particularly if they were made with a credit card. It was determined that refunds would be made by county check, even if paid with a credit card. Wording regarding the audio and visual equipment was approved and a few grammatical edits were made.

Commissioner Jeppsen motioned to approve the Event Center rental agreement with the amendments made. Seconded by Commissioner Eliason. All ayes. Motion carried.

Commissioner Eliason motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Jeppsen. All ayes. Motion carried

***** Meeting adjourned by 2:30pm*****



Bill Lewis, Chairman



Shanci Dorius, Deputy Clerk