



ONEIDA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Bill Lewis, Chairman – Ken Eliason – Brian Jeppsen

Meeting Location: Event Center, 459 South Main, Malad City, Idaho 83252

Minutes - Commissioners Meeting - 25 August 2025 - 9:00AM

* Recording # 250825-0150 & 250825-0151 *

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

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

Approve Agenda

*Commissioner Eliason motioned to accept the agenda as presented.
Seconded by Commissioner Jeppsen. All ayes. Motion carried.*

Consent Agenda, Payment of Claims, and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Jeppsen motioned to accept the consent agenda, which includes the payment of claims, a certificate of residency, and approval of meeting minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Eliason. All ayes. Motion carried.

Total # of Payments	Fund Description	Amount Paid
51	GENERAL FUND/CURRENT EXPENSE	\$ 15,918.13
28	ROAD AND BRIDGE	\$ 62,915.18
6	AIRPORT	\$ 4,273.74
12	AMBULANCE	\$ 5,303.81
3	DISTRICT COURT	\$ 722.51
34	FAIR, COUNTY	\$ 44,115.24
9	JUSTICE FUND	\$ 12,794.34
3	PARKS & RECREATION	\$ 1,835.68
1	TORT	\$ 2,736.80
4	WEEDS	\$ 802.99
2	CONSOLIDATED ELECTIONS	\$ 19.05
1	OPIOID SETTLEMENT	\$ 1,000.00
4	DRUG COURT/SPC C.T. COORDINATOR	\$ 1,483.27
TOTAL:		\$ 153,920.74

Budget Hearing

Commissioner Eliason motioned to move into the budget hearing. Seconded by Commissioner Jeppsen. All ayes. Motion carried.

No one present had anything to comment, for or against, regarding the budget and commissioners moved forward with approving the county budget for fiscal year 2026.

Commissioner Jeppsen motioned to move forward with approving the budget as presented as Resolution No. 2025-08-01. Seconded by Commissioner Eliason. All ayes. Motion carried.

The Commissioners reconvened the regular meeting following the conclusion of the budget hearing.

L2 Extensions (if requested)

Clerk Lon Colton informed the Board that there have been no extension requests received for the L-2 property tax certification deadline, which is September 4, 2025. Due to the timing of the next scheduled commissioner meeting, there will not be sufficient opportunity to approve any extension requests that may come in after today. Clerk Colton therefore requested that the Board pre-approve a potential 7-day extension for any taxing districts that may submit a request before the deadline.

Commissioner Jeppsen motioned to approve an L2 extension for the allotted 7-days in anticipation of any requests that may be received. Seconded by Commissioner Eliason. All ayes. Motion carried.

AlSCO Floor Mat Agreement

The Board reviewed the proposed agreement with AlSCO for floor mat services. The contract includes a 30-day cancellation clause if issues aren't resolved, a 3-year term with a 5% annual increase, and then moves to month-to-month.

Separate contracts will cover the Courthouse, Annex, Event Center, and Road & Bridge building. Once signed, Building Maintenance Manager Tory Richardson will send cancellation notice to the current provider, Mountain Valley Floor Mats. AlSCO service is set to begin October 1, 2025.

Commissioner Eliason motioned to accept the contract with AlSCO for rug services in the county buildings beginning October 1, 2025 and the County Commissioner Chairman Lewis will be the designated signer of the contract. Seconded by Commissioner Jeppsen. All ayes. Motion carried.

Summit Road & Old Hwy 191 Speed Limits – Laurene Semrad

Jeff and Laurene Semrad spoke with the Board about growing traffic and safety concerns along Summit Road from Exit 22 to the county line. Increased use by ATVs, RVs, semis, trailers, and farm equipment has led to higher speeds and more congestion. Pedestrians, cyclists, deer, and cattle also use the road; two animals were hit in the past week. The Semrads noted there is only one speed limit sign and one caution sign on the curve, and most drivers exceed 55 mph. On garbage day, the road narrows due to trash cans placed along the roadway, adding to the safety risk. Mrs. Semrad submitted a petition signed by residents requesting the speed limit be reduced to 45 mph and additional signage for deer and cattle crossings.

Sheriff Doug Williams confirmed a recent traffic study and patrol surveillance showed vehicles traveling at high speeds. An earlier speed counter may have underreported speeds due to its placement near driveways instead of near Bissell Road. The Board confirmed that any changes must follow traffic study results and LHTAC recommendations.

The road & bridge department was contacted regarding the results of that study, which were provided later in the meeting. The county must base any changes on the results and LHTAC recommendations of that study. The traffic study report was brought to the meeting later and commissioners revisited the discussion. Road & Bridge Supervisor Dianna Dredge will prepare and submit the report to LHTAC for review.

No decisions were made.

Emergency Communications Mass-Mailer

The Board discussed the use of remaining 2023 SHSP (State Homeland Security Program) funds—over \$1,100—to cover the cost of a mass mailer aimed at reaching every household in the county. The mailer would promote emergency alert options and encourage residents to sign up for AlertSense, the county's current emergency notification system. Currently, only 160 residents have opted in. Sheriff Williams noted that the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) system is still pending setup.

The discussion was prompted by the recent water emergency in Malad City, during which many residents did not receive timely notifications. The goal is to improve outreach and ensure better communication during future emergencies.

Commissioner Lewis raised the issue of how to reach elderly residents or those unfamiliar with technology. Suggestions included having a designated phone number in the mailer and possibly organizing youth volunteers to assist with sign-ups. The county also has an emergency services number that could help connect callers with the emergency services council.

Commissioner Jeppsen motioned to approve sending out a mass mailer to county residents outlining how they can register for emergency communications and designated the use of up to \$700 from the 2023 SHSP funds to pay for printing costs. Seconded by Commissioner Eliason. All ayes. Motion carried.

P&Z - County-Wide Water Study

The contract for the water study is not yet ready for signature. Planning & Zoning Administrator Rhonda Neal presented a letter outlining the study's scope, cost, and review process. The proposal aligns with previously identified county needs and is considered one of the most critical projects in coming years, as reliable water data is

essential for responsible planning. Clarification is needed on the county's requirements for the study and what the consultant needs from the county to ensure comprehensive data collection. The contract is currently under legal review, with Attorney Lyle Fuller noting concerns raised by the Board of Commissioners.

Of the 12 applicants for the water study, Great West was the only company meeting all requirements. Engineer Steve Freiburger assisted in evaluating the proposals and emphasized the importance of reviewing the contract carefully. There is increasing interest from landowners wishing to develop in the area. The Board expressed conditional support and awaits further updates.

America 250 Years Celebration

Treasurer Leigh Love, who had previously been assigned to lead the planning committee for the America 250 celebrations in Oneida County, informed the Board that due to an increased workload, she will be stepping down from the role. Clerk Lon Colton has agreed to take over as chair of the committee, which will be made up of community members. The Board expressed appreciation for Treasurer Love's initial efforts and Clerk Colton's willingness to lead the project moving forward.

Commissioner Jeppsen motioned to relieve Treasurer Leigh Love of the responsibilities related to the America 250 Years Celebration and delegate that assignment to Clerk Lon Colton and his office. Seconded by Commissioner Eliason. All ayes. Motion Carried.

Deputies Bike-a-thon (Shield 616 Project)

Interfaith Council member Toni Werk informed the Board about an upcoming multi-agency bike ride across Idaho and Utah, where participants collect sponsorship funds to purchase bulletproof vests, helmets, and related safety equipment for their local sheriff departments. The ride begins in St. Anthony and continues to Blackfoot, where riders spend the night. The following days include rides from Blackfoot to Malad, then through Tremonton, Ogden, and Salt Lake City over four days. The group has requested a place to stay and two meals while stopping in Malad. It was suggested that the Event Center could be used to provide overnight accommodations and dinner and breakfast for the riders on September 26-27. There are approximately 50 participants.

Commissioner Jeppsen motioned to allow the members of the Shield 616 Project to spend the night at the Event Center at no charge with volunteers putting together the meals and cleanup on the evening of September 26 and morning of September 27. Seconded by Commissioner Eliason. All ayes. Motion carried.

R&B - Belly Dump Trailer Purchase

Road & Bridge Supervisor Dianna Dredge identified a suitable belly dump trailer available for purchase from the father-in-law of county employee Lance Leavitt for \$18,000. Commissioners were informed of this potential purchase at a previous meeting, and legal counsel has been consulted to ensure the transaction complies with county policies.

Commissioner Eliason motioned to approve the purchase of the belly dump trailer for \$18,000 to be paid from the R&B budget. Seconded by Commissioner Jeppsen. All ayes. Motion carried.

Findings of Fact, Conclusion of Law (FFCL) - Vacation of a Portion of Road - Kendell's – 6100 West

A proposed Resolution No. 2025-08-02 was presented to the Board, adopting the Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law (FFCL) related to the approved request by Bart & Julie Kendell to vacate a portion of road on 6100 West. This resolution formalizes the Board's decision made during a public hearing held in July 2025.

Commissioner Eliason motioned to adopt Resolution No. 2025-08-02, approving the vacation of the Kendell's portion of 6100 West and adopting the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law. Seconded by Commissioner Jeppsen. All ayes. Motion carried.

City/County - Area of Impact

City Mayor, Commissioner Chair, and legal counsel teams met last week to discuss the Area of Impact Agreement between the city and county. The city is aware of a few areas just outside city limits where residents want to grow and develop, potentially connecting to the city's water and sewer systems.

The agreement must be completed by the end of the year to avoid significant penalties, which would require starting the process over rather than modifying the existing agreement.

Attorney Lyle Fuller noted that the Board of Commissioners is not required to have the Planning & Zoning (P&Z) Commission review the agreement but may do so if it adds value to the decision-making process. A Land Use Planning Act (LUPA) hearing may be required. Under new statute, the city can only include areas it is very likely to annex within the next five years and must demonstrate this through its comprehensive plan.

A proposed process is to hold one public hearing with the BOCC and allow the P&Z board to present their recommendations separately, avoiding multiple public hearings.

Under the old statute, a five-member committee was required, but this is no longer necessary. P&Z Administrator Rhonda Neal explained that the P&Z board currently uses the old Area of Impact map to identify residential areas and may need to maintain those boundaries to avoid sprawling, un-serviced development around Malad City. The BOCC will rely heavily on expert input in this matter.

It was noted that Bannock County declined a similar provision requested by Lava Hot Springs regarding enforcement obligations and involvement of the city. Legislative changes have made forced annexations more difficult, and county and city P&Z maps do not have to align.

The Mayor will present the agreement to the City Council in September. In October, the Mayor and city legal counsel will meet with the Board of Commissioners to discuss the city's position. If needed, a public hearing will be held in November. The agreement must be finalized by the end of December.

Deputy Coroner

County Coroner Brad Horsley has expressed interest in hiring a Deputy Coroner. Idaho Code 18-1359 prohibits hiring or paying certain relatives from public funds. Mr. Horsley intends to hire Eric Crowther, who is married to the niece of a commissioner.

Attorney Lyle Fuller reviewed the legal and ethical implications. Hiring would be acceptable only if Mr. Crowther is not compensated with public funds. However, there are concerns about the perception of the board potentially circumventing the statute if payment flows through the coroner's office.

Mr. Crowther is currently training in the role. Questions remain about which duties fall under the Deputy Coroner position.

The possibility of holding a public hearing to address ethical concerns was discussed, though it could raise further issues such as fairness to other departments and workers' compensation responsibilities. Recent legislative updates have also expanded coroner duties and imposed new restrictions on funeral home affiliations (Idaho Code 31-2806).

No decision was made at this time.

Chairman Designation on September 8, 2025

Commissioner Lewis will be absent from the September 8 board of commissioner meeting and, as was decided at the January 13, 2025 meeting, Commissioner Eliason will serve as the chairman for that meeting.

Department Updates & Highlights - 10:00am

Law Enforcement (Sheriff, Waterways, E911, Search & Rescue)

Sheriff Doug Williams reported ongoing challenges with deputy wages and lack of available housing, impacting recruitment and retention. Public and officer safety remain top concerns as the department is currently understaffed, increasing risks of burnout and reduced officer presence.

The Sheriff referenced a recent tragic incident in Tremonton, where two officers were killed—a loss that would have reduced the county's staffing by 50%. Deputies are stretched thin and face traumatic situations regularly, including death and abuse cases, which take an emotional toll.

Due to unique circumstances, it is difficult to compare wages with other departments. The Sheriff plans to gather more data at upcoming conferences to propose an enticing starting wage and hopes to develop a five-year staffing and compensation plan.

Chief Deputy Jenny Hawkes was nominated for Idaho's top School Resource Officer award, an honor despite not winning the title.

Planning & Zoning

Planning & Zoning Administrator Rhonda Neal expressed thanks to the commissioners for the ability to hire additional staff, noting it has significantly relieved workload pressures in the P&Z office. The volume of applications is increasing, and outside parties have commended the office for timely processing. Continuous improvements to the application process are being made. Rhonda also handles code enforcement and complaints that come through her office.

The Comprehensive Plan update is underway, with a public hearing scheduled for September 3. Documents will be presented to the Board following the hearing.

The current 1-year plan includes completion of the Comprehensive Plan updates, refining development code provisions, and strengthening enforcement of active violations. Part of the 5-year plan includes anticipating growth which may require expanded staffing and enforcement capacity to meet demand.

Mrs. Neal reported that the current fee schedule is effective, with developers paying fees upon application submission. Assistant Darla Tombaugh manages billing, invoicing, and collections efficiently, aiming to have fees paid or current by fiscal year-end. Some developers opt for a one-time payment upon project completion.

Prosecuting Attorney

Attorney Ethan Rawlings remains very busy, with fellow Attorney Preston Olson assisting frequently, particularly with initial arraignments. The Idaho State Police is a referring agency nearly as often as the Oneida County Sheriff's Office.

On the prosecution side, support continues for Planning & Zoning matters, with Preston Olson working closely with the administrator and attending relevant meetings.

Case dismissals remain low, reflecting thorough preparation and prosecution. One dismissal was due to a victim's refusal to cooperate, which is beyond law enforcement control.

This year, the office has handled a total of 395 adult cases—275 county and 120 city—including 13 felonies, 68 misdemeanors, and 314 infractions. Juvenile cases total 12, with 2 felonies and 10 misdemeanors.

Probation

The Probation Department reports that operations are going well, with any arising issues being effectively addressed. Progress continues in both juvenile and adult misdemeanor cases, though overall numbers remain lower compared to the past year, even as community incidents increase.

Priorities for the next quarter include expanding partnerships with neighboring counties to address resource gaps, continued training in evidence-based supervision practices, and developing a safety equipment policy to be presented once the budget is approved. Tutoring funds remain available to hire someone to take over that role from Gabe.

Kristi Christopherson is also recognized for her exceptional work managing Drug Court misdemeanants in addition to her regular caseload. Her dedication and attention to detail have a positive impact on both client outcomes and team morale. Melissa Peck has also been a valuable addition to the department, bringing professionalism and consistency to felony probation supervision.

Treasurer/ Tax Collector/ Public Administrator

The Treasurer's Office reports strong performance in tax collections. Staff are actively working with parcel owners on Fiscal Year 2022 delinquent taxes to help them pay in full and avoid the tax deed process, which is scheduled to begin in January 2026. As of now, only about \$15,000 remains delinquent across approximately 12 properties from 2022. In July alone, \$90,325.55 in delinquent payments was collected. The total outstanding delinquent balance for tax years 2022, 2023, and 2024 stands at \$163,780.62. The office remains hopeful that no tax deeds will be necessary this year.

Investments continue to perform well. While interest rates have slightly declined, bonds and CDs are still offering favorable returns.

The Treasurer also attended the 100th Anniversary Conference of the Idaho Treasurer's Group. Highlights included a University of Idaho professor speaking on common myths surrounding artificial intelligence (AI), cautioning that AI-generated content must be carefully vetted. A special Olympian speaker emphasized the importance of putting heart and soul into every endeavor, leaving a strong impression on attendees.

County Fair

Ken Moss Jr. of the Oneida County Fair Board reported that the fair was successful and concluded without major issues. The barn extension was completed prior to the fair, with the exception of the gates, which are on backorder. While not fully utilized, the new space was still put to good use. Attendance was strong overall, though Monday's horse pulls had the lowest turnout and cost approximately \$6,000 to host—potential adjustments may be considered for future years. Thursday's rodeo had the lowest attendance of the week, but both Friday and Saturday events were very well attended. Moss noted that the fair follows three consecutive weekends of horse races, and Board members worked extremely hard to make it all happen. The Board of Commissioners expressed their appreciation for the Fair Board's time, effort, and dedication.

Gem Grant Application

The Board discussed the need to obtain a bid for the upcoming GEM Grant application, with the intent to pursue funding for electrical upgrades at the fairgrounds. The focus of the grant request will include vendor power access, RV hookups for both power and water, and electrical improvements to the race horse building.

The GEM Grant requires a 20% match, and all necessary information must be submitted to Molly Beseris with 4CASI prior to the September 8 Commissioner meeting.

Ecyclers of Idaho - Electronic Waste Recycling Facility

Connor Brown, Business Development Manager for Ecyclers of Idaho, provided an overview of the company's services. Ecyclers is a certified R2 V3 electronic waste facility and can currently accept all materials except those containing freon, though efforts are underway to change that. The company ensures secure data handling, meeting NSA standards, and has the capability to wipe data from devices. They accept a wide range of materials including medical equipment, batteries, and televisions. Brown noted the surprising frequency of landfill fires caused by improperly disposed electronics such as refrigerators.

Ecyclers will attend the Four County Meeting with the county's solid waste management group, IDAWY, on August 27 in Soda Springs at the fire station. Ecyclers typically does not charge for services and emphasizes the "Reduce and Reuse" principles of waste management. Mr. Brown requested a backlink from the county transfer station website to improve their visibility via search engines, citing the Bonneville County website as an example.

Executive Session – 74-206 (1) (f)

Commissioner Lewis motioned to move into executive session per Idaho Code 74-206 (1) (f) To communicate with legal counsel for the public agency to discuss the legal ramifications of and legal options for pending litigation, or controversies not yet being litigated but imminently likely to be litigated. The mere presence of legal counsel at an executive session does not satisfy this requirement. Seconded by Commissioner Jeppsen. Roll call vote: Ayes from Commissioners Lewis, Eliason, and Jeppsen. Motion carried.

Commissioner Lewis motioned to move out of executive session. Seconded by Commissioner Eliason. All ayes. Motion carried.

After the Executive Session, the Board of Commissioners reconvened to re-address a previous agenda topic about the speed limits on Summit Road and Old Highway 191 (the speed study information had been provided in the interim).

***** Meeting adjourned by 1:15 pm *****

Ken Eliason, Vice Chairman

Shanci Dorius, Deputy Clerk