



## Malheur County Development Corporation

Tuesday, June 18, 2024

10:00am (Mountain Time Zone)

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**Attendees:** Grant Kitamura, Board Chair; Kay Riley, board member; Mike Walker, board member; Shawna Peterson, Executive Director; Taylor Rembowski, Malheur County Economic Development; Antonio Sunseri, Argus Observer

**Online Attendees:** Corey Maag, board member; Pat Caldwell, Malheur Enterprise; Emily Conlon, S Peterson Law

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### 1. Call meeting to order.

Board Chair Grant Kitamura called the meeting to order at 10:00am.

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### 2. Review and acceptance of previous meeting minutes.

Kay Riley made a motion to approve the May 9, 2024, meeting minutes. Mike Walker seconded the motion and all present board members voted in favor.

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### 3. Reports:

#### a. Update from Executive Director Shawna Peterson

Executive Director Shawna Peterson gave an update on her work since the last board meeting. To recap, Peterson met with ODOT Commission Chair Julie Brown on May 8<sup>th</sup>; she later met with Eric Havig and Leah Horner of ODOT on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Discussion at these meetings included the pause on spending, the state of the business plan, and the need for further funding to complete next steps. Peterson reiterated that the critical next step is getting the industry rail connected to the mainline; the cost of this work is approximately \$85,000. They also discussed the Commtrex proposal of \$15,000 to further inform and develop the business plan, complete data analysis, and identify potential operators. Peterson was advised by ODOT to submit these spending requests in writing. ODOT received the request letter on May 29<sup>th</sup> and responded on June 6<sup>th</sup> with approval to proceed with the specified priorities. Since approval, Peterson has been in close communication with RailPros, Union Pacific, and Axiom to remain on track with getting the rail work completed at the north approach so that the switches can be installed when Union Pacific crews are in the area this summer. Peterson also let Commtrex know their proposal has been approved and work can begin; their turnaround is one month.

In ODOT's letter, they noted that in their communication with Union Pacific that there is work to be completed on Tracks B and D. Peterson confirmed with the rail contractors that the work referenced

Unanticipated agenda items may or may not be included.

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includes ballast placement and walkways. The RailPros contract does include this work but it was paused last August. Peterson noted MCDC has paid RailPros partial retainage as the scope of the awarded contract is not completed.

The board discussed refrigerated car and truck freight rates at different times of the year and in different regions.

Executive Director Shawna Peterson informed the board that there are a few items pending ODOT reimbursement. To note, a bill gets approved by the board, the approved bill gets submitted to Lonny Hytrek's office, Lonny Hytrek's office pays this bill out of the line of credit, and Hytrek's office requests reimbursement from ODOT. Last week, the Malheur County Court approved extending the line of credit through the end of 2024 with a \$250,000 cap.

The board discussed renewal of Peterson's contract as Executive Director. Peterson noted that she is open to a restructure as the project moves forward. Kay Riley made a motion to extend Executive Director Shawna Peterson's contract through the end of 2024. Mike Walker seconded the motion and all present board members voted in favor.

Mike Walker encouraged Executive Director Peterson and the board to attend County meetings in person. Peterson also feels face-to-face open communication is important and is open to providing regular updates at their meetings.

#### **4. Discussion and Action Items:**

##### **a. Next Steps**

The board discussed the weed mitigation progress.

Mike Walker asked Executive Director Shawna Peterson what scope of work is included in the \$250,000 estimated amount needed to complete the plans. Peterson stated that it is a ballpark figure from Axiom, it included a rough estimate of getting the site ready to build. Peterson is working with Axiom to refine that with phasing and line items to present to ODOT.

The board discussed next steps and the project as a whole moving forward. Discussion included beginning stages of identifying a project manager and the potential to downsize or reorient building.

#### **5. Next Meeting Agenda Build**

The next board meeting is scheduled for July 9, 2024 at 10:00am at the Malheur County Economic Development Building.

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#### **6. Adjournment.** The meeting ended at 11:39am.

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