MINUTES

NORTHWEST OREGON WORKS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING

January 23, 2026

Benton County Kalapuya Building

Present:
Board:
Tony Erickson, Oregon AERO, Chair; **Angeline Chan-Pepper**, Oregon Employment Dept.; **Eric Sherman**, IBEW Local 932; **Kirstin Salmi**, WCT Marine; **John Hawkins**, Service Employees International Union; **Chad Fenison**, Local 737; **Ann Buchele**, Linn-Benton Community College; **Linda Dugan**, Linda Dugan Insurance; **Lisa Avery,** Linn-Benton Community College; **Carrie Norris,** Samaritan Health Service; **Than Tussing**, Fast Lube and Oil; **Heather Taksdal,** Zwald Transport Inc.; **Lauren Smith**, DHS, Vocational Rehabilitation; **Paul Davis**, JBT Lektro; **Terre Cooper,** Tillamook County Economic Development; **Whitey Forsman**, Pacific Oyster;

Excused: Greg Morill, Bergson Construction Inc.; **Gabe Gurule**, Corvallis Fire Department; **Zach Poole**, Pig' n Pancake, Vice Chair/Secretary; **Todd Simmons**, Tillamook Peoples' Utility District;

Consortium Guests Present:
Pamela Wev, Clatsop County Commissioner; **Casey Garrett,** Columbia County Commissioner; **Gabe Shepherd,** Benton County Commissioner;

Staff:
Heather DeSart, Executive Director; **Jason Swain**, NOW CCO; **Katrina Sturgeon**, Workforce and Community Development Manager; **Logan Garner**, Youth Programs Manager; **Brittney Lane**, Office Manager; **Aylee Rhea,** Program Director; **Kortnie Williams**, Behavioral Health Program Manager; **Ferdinand Richter**, Youth Program Data Manager;

1. **CALL TO ORDER, CONFIRMATION OF POSTING, and ROLL CALL**
   Chairman Erickson called the Meeting to order at 10:03am.
   Chairman Erickson asked for confirmation of the public posting of the meeting; Ms. Lane confirmed; Roll Call taken, quorum was established.

2. **REVIEW and APPROVE AGENDA**
   No changes were made to the agenda.
   MOTION: Lisa Avery **SECOND: Paul Davis** **MOTION CARRIED.**

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION**

No public comment was made.

4. **CONSENT CALENDAR**
   Accept Staff's recommendation to approve the Minutes of the October 24, 2025 Joint Board and Consortium Meeting Minutes.
   FIRST: Paul Davis **SECOND: Eric Sherman** **MOTION CARRIED.**

5. **INFORMATION** – Lisa Avery, President, Linn-Benton Community College
   LBCC Update

6. **INFORMATION** – Christopher Jacobs, Economic Development Manager
   Economic Update

7. **INFORMATION** – Shaun Barrick, Oregon Employment Department
   Benton County Update

8. **INFORMATION** – Rick Reid, WCT Marine & Construction
   Information and updates

9. **BOARD CHAIR REPORT** – Tony Erickson, Chair
   Tony talked about a movie called Paradise Records and suggested that everyone take the opportunity to watch it. The film was recorded in St. Helens, Oregon and was highly recommended to watch.

10. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT** – Heather DeSart, NOW Executive Director
    Heather stated that the Consortium will be appointing two new board members: Corey Habiger and Remi Augustine. There were also comments made about Aylee Rhea stepping down as Program Director and stepping into a different role. NOW is also going to be working with Oregon Coast Community College for an apprenticeship grant. There's a CVI assessment that the NOW Staff have taken and that the staff would like the Board Members to also take the CVI. More details to come soon. The last statement that Heather made was a thank you and farewell to Diana Nish, who has worked for Equus for a long time and has been an incredible partner and inspiration to our community and team.

11. **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS** – Roundtable
    Commissioner Gabe Shepherd made an announcement that he and Commissioner Garrett are working on some legislation together and that they are excited to announce its progress in the near future.

12. **SECOND PUBLIC COMMENT SECTION**
    Paul Vogel announced that Columbia Economic Team is being dissolved and that they are trying to redirect all their programs and fundings. He wanted to express appreciation for the board and its involvement in their programs and that even though they are unsure of next steps, he is hopeful everything will work out great.

13. **ADJOURN**
    The meeting was adjourned at 11:36 am.