

WEEKLY REVIEW



BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

March 23, 2021

This document is a weekly review of the Board of County Commissioners meeting, Tuesday, March 23, 2021. Information related to agenda changes, Consent Agenda, and Public Comment are on the [County website](#).

Public Hearing

Short Plat Vacation – SPV 2021-001 – Michelle Cooke, Assistant Planning Manager

On October 24, 2005, Short Plat 2906 was recorded under Auditor's File Number 2005-036701, creating two residential lots off Griffin and Buena Vista Roads in the Prosser area of unincorporated Benton County. The short plat also created the following easements: 1) an irrigation easement on the north 10 feet of Lot 2, the north half of the west 10 feet of Lot 2; 2) a 100 foot x180 foot irrigation pond easement located in the center of Lot 2; and 3) a 10-foot irrigation easement approximately 704 feet in length connecting the pond easement to the western irrigation easement. The applicants are requesting the vacation of the easements and are proposing to replace the vacated easements with new irrigation easements as described in the Board of County Commissioners' (BCCM) Exhibit 1.3 – Survey Map of the Proposed Vacation. Owners of property within 300 feet of the subject parcel and all concerned agencies, including Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District, were notified of the proposed vacation and no objections or concerns have been received to date. **The Board moved and seconded to approve the vacation of the irrigation easement along the north 10 feet of Lot 2, the south 107' feet of the 10 foot irrigation easement on the western property line of Lot 2, the 100 foot x 180 foot irrigation pond easement located on Lot 2, and the 10 foot irrigation easement approximately 704 feet in length running through the western half of Lot 2.** This motion is conditioned upon the applicant recording new irrigation easements as shown in green and legally described in BCCM 1.3, with the Benton County Auditor. The applicant shall provide the Benton County Planning Division with a copy of the recorded document(s), prior to the signing of the resolution by the Board of County Commissioners. The document must be recorded within 1 year of the date of approval by the Board or this approval will be null and void. Motion carried.

Scheduled Business

Hanford Briefing – Adam Fyall, Sustainable Development Manager; David Reeploeg, Hanford Communities Executive Director; Bob Suyama, Benton County HAB Representative; & Pam Larsen, Benton County HAB Alternate Representative

The Board held a discussion and general informational update with the County's representatives from Hanford Communities and Hanford Advisory Board. Benton County is a founding member of Hanford Communities (HC), a local information sharing and advocacy coalition comprised of local governments; and the County has representation (primary representative and alternate) of the "site specific advisory board" which locally is the Hanford Advisory Board (HAB). The HAB advises the Department of Energy on matters of policy and cleanup. **No Board direction or vote.**

Scout Clean Energy's Application to EFSEC for the Horse Heaven Wind Farm – Jerrod MacPherson, County Administrator & Greg Wendt, Community Development Director

Staff was directed to prepare a letter for the Board's review and approval, at the direction of Commissioners, to address the Horse Heaven Wind Farm project. The public has flooded the Commissioners' Office with hundreds of calls, emails, and comments with an overwhelming majority (approx. 93%) of people stating their opposition to the project. Concerns range from loss of habitat, agriculture, and wildlife to the negative impact the 244 wind turbines will have on ecological aesthetics, visual resources, and rural character of Benton County and the Tri-Cities area. **The Board gave staff direction to draft a letter for the Board's review and consideration at the March 30, 2021 Board meeting.**

Supplement Requests for Public Hearing – Linda Ivey, Finance Manager

The Benton County Finance Manager presented six (6) requests for budget supplement, to be authorized by the Board to go to public hearing on April 13, 2021.

1. Human Services: Fund 018101 (Human Services) was awarded four (4) new grants for COVID-19 relief that were not included in the 2021-2022 budget process: 1) \$11,768,419 through Washington State Department of Commerce from the US Treasury for rent and utility assistance, and by and for agencies (C-TRAP); 2) \$1,444,491 through the Eviction Rent Assistance Program (ERAP); 3) \$1,571,502 from Washington State Department of Commerce to help develop and expand shelter programs and bring unsheltered people inside, with the goal of exiting participants to permanent and positive outcomes; and 4) \$6,162,170 from the US Treasury for rent and utilities assistance (TRAP). A budget adjustment is needed for the Human Services Fund in the amount of \$20,946,582 to create the necessary line items to expend the additional revenue.
2. Coronavirus Response & Relief Supplemental Appropriation Act (CRRSAA): Benton County was awarded over \$39,000,000 in the CRRSAA in response to the public health emergency due to COVID-19. The award was received after completion of the 2021-2022 budget process, and therefore requires a budget supplement. The award must be used by December 31, 2024 and staff is requesting a partial budget adjustment of \$20,000,000 at this time to expend the additional revenue.
3. Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) Technology Fund: The Assessor's Office and Treasurer's Office are requesting a budget adjustment for the REET Technology Fund No. 0129101, in the amount of \$300,000, for the following programs: 1) Spatialest (\$60,000) is an enhancement for the parcel information software; 2) Harris Govern Online (\$60,000) is an enhancement of the software for assessment and tax information/collection; 3) QLUE (\$100,000) is a co-development and software maintenance to enhance internal processes and efficiency; and 4) ESRI (\$5,000) for the Assessor's Office to move from Auto CAD to ESRI to streamline functions.
4. Protective Inspection Services Fund: Benton County evaluated and increased building permit feeds on March 16, 2021 which will bring in an additional \$135,000 in revenue to the Protective Inspection Services Fund No. 0149101. As such, the department requests to move \$78,418 from the Beginning Fund Balance to cover the cost of hiring a new Building Inspector I, purchasing an additional vehicle, and other associated costs. The supplement request is partially funded by an increase in revenue from fees and partially by beginning fund balance for a combined total of \$213,418.
5. District Court CARES Act: Benton County was awarded \$49,203 from the Washington Administrative Office of the Courts Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act for Security/Bailiff Services. The award was received after completion of the 2021-2022 budget process and requires a budget supplement.
6. Cash Carry Forward: Per Budget Policy (2019-753), in order to meet operational needs the Board shall maintain a minimum unassigned fund balance range of 10-13% of the year's (in the case of biennium, only one year) General Fund appropriated expenditures. Any cash carry forward that would bring the General Fund in excess of 13% may be transferred into one the following funds: Park Development, Capital Projects, Fairgrounds Operating, or Sustainable Development. A budget supplement is necessary to complete the cash carry forward, in the amount of \$6,215,000 to the Capital Projects Fund.

The Board moved and seconded to approve going to Public Hearing on April 13, 2021 for the potential approval of the request for a budget adjustment for the six (6) items as presented by the Finance Manager. Motion carried.

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