

WEEKLY REVIEW

BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

October 4, 2022



This document is a weekly review of the Board of County Commissioners meeting, Tuesday, October 4, 2022. Information related to agenda changes, Consent Agenda, and Public Comment are on the [County website](#).

Public Hearing

Level 3 Communications, LLC Franchise Renewal – Cristina Woods, Engineering Technician III

The County received an application for a Franchise Order and Agreement for a fiber optic cable system and facilities from Level 3 Communications, LLC to be located in County road rights of way. **The Board moved and seconded to approve the Franchise Order and Agreement with Level 3 Communications, LLC. Motion carried.**

Scheduled Business

Public Safety Sales Tax Funding Recommendations Discussion – Matt Rasmussen, Deputy County Administrator; Linda Ivey, Finance Manager; & Shyanne Palmus, Communications Coordinator

Staff presented an update to the Board on the status of the 2023-2024 Public Safety Sales Tax Round 2. On August 9, 2022, the Board of Commissioners gave staff direction to open a second round of funding to receive additional requests and reconsider previously submitted requests that were partially funded or unfunded. The Request for Proposals for Round 2 was opened August 9 and closed August 31, 2022. New requests were presented to the Board in a special meeting on September 27. Afterward, an in-depth review of the applications was conducted, and the recommended funding determined. A more detailed press release will be sent by the County later this week regarding the approved funding. **The Board moved and seconded to approve the funding recommendations as presented and gave staff direction to proceed with the budget process for the approved requests. Motion carried.**

Public Works Organizational Chart Update – Matt Rasmussen, Deputy County Administrator

On September 16, 2022, the County Engineer resigned their position with Benton County. As is normal when a higher-level position becomes vacant, administration takes an opportunity to evaluate if the current department structure is the most desirable. The Public Works Department has historically struggled to find licensed engineers to fill positions that require the Professional Engineering license. The County Engineer is one such position. For the past 8 years, the County Engineer has served as the department head for the Public Works Department. That has been met with some success, however, it can be difficult to find licensed engineers who are also excellent department managers. On evaluation of the Public Works structure, administration feels it may be best to return to the staffing model where the Public Works Manager serves as the department head with the County Engineer reporting to them and filling in as the Department Head when required. This should make it easier to find a qualified County Engineer. In order to make this change, the Operations Manager (Manager Salary Schedule Grade 9) position will be eliminated and replaced with the Public Works Manager (Manager Salary Schedule Grade 11). The incumbent Operations Manager has significant experience as a public works department head and will make an excellent Public Works Manager. It is also desirable to change an existing, current vacant, Engineering Associate 1 position to an Engineering Technician 3. The grades for these positions are the same so there is no budgetary impact. **The Board moved and seconded to approve the resolution updating the Benton County Public Works Organizational Chart, to approve the resolution to place the Public Works Manager as a grade 11 on the Benton County Administrator's Managers & Assistant Managers salary schedule, and to approve the resolution to establish the Public Works Manager classification description. Motions carried.**

Payment to Strata for Material Testing on Plymouth Rd Overlay Project – Matt Mahoney, Public Works Manager

Public Works needs to test material used in their road projects in compliance with WSDOT standards. The Public Works department negotiated an on-call county wide contract with Strata, a company qualified to perform material testing, via Resolution 2022-334 in an amount not to exceed \$50,000.00, which expired on August 31, 2022. Additional costs were incurred due to the breakdowns at the asphalt plant which resulted in delays and impacts to Strata's schedule, causing additional time and overtime expense which exceeded the contract amount. The work was performed prior to the Board approval by Resolution. The Public Works Manager is seeking authorization by the Board for payment to Strata in the

amount of \$40,963.50 excluding WSST. **The Board moved and seconded to approve the payment of \$40,963.50 to Strata of Richland, Washington for material testing. Motion carried.**

Benton County Juvenile Justice Center Feasibility / Space Needs Report – Robert Blain, Director of Operations & Capital Programs & Erica Loynd (FAIA, WELL AP) Principal Justice & Civic Leader, DLR Group

Per Resolution 2022-297, the Board approved the Professional Services Contract between Benton County and DLR Group for the Benton-Franklin Counties Juvenile Justice Center feasibility/space needs assessment. A representative from the DLR Group presented the final report that was prepared, which identifies the most effective solution for the facility's future remaining at the current location. A detailed cost estimate was provided for three (3) different scenarios, with one (1) recommended and two (2) alternatives. A progressive design-build process is recommended for this project. **No Board direction or vote at this time.**

Other Business

Public Safety Sales Tax Public Information & Outreach Update – Shyanne Palmus, Communications Coordinator & Matt Rasmussen, Deputy County Administrator

On July 12, 2022, staff presented to the Board requesting approval to move forward with contracting with Desautel Hege (DH) of Spokane, WA for assistance in public information, education, and outreach efforts surrounding the Public Safety Sales Tax. An RFP was issued on May 20, 2022, for said services and only one response was received (from DH). The original proposal was approved by the Board for \$40,000 and included fees for creation of a series of informational videos. After further discussion with the County's legal team, we were advised to remove the informational video aspect of the project and replace it with a hard-copy mailer that will be sent to every household in the County. Removing video and replacing it with a hard-copy mailer has subsequently increased the cost to the overall project by approximately \$20,000, which we wanted to bring forward to the Board for approval before proceeding. A detailed cost breakdown was provided. **The Board moved and seconded to proceed with contracting DH for revised services as outlined and print/postage for a hard copy mailer, with a total project cost not to exceed \$60,000. Motion carried.**

Request for Proposals for Behavioral Health Services for Three Rivers Behavioral Health Recovery Center – Matt Rasmussen, Deputy County Administrator

Staff discussed with the Board the upcoming Request for Proposals (RFP) that the County will issue seeking a behavioral health service provider to operate the planned Recovery Center. The RFP is nearly ready to go, pending legal review, and has been reviewed multiple times by the Benton Franklin Behavioral Health Advisory Committee for completeness. **The Board gave staff direction to proceed with advertising the Request for Proposals once legal review was completed.**

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