

WEEKLY REVIEW

BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

March 8, 2022



This document is a weekly review of the Board of County Commissioners meeting, Tuesday, March 8, 2022. Information related to agenda changes, Consent Agenda, and Public Comment are on the [County website](#).

Public Hearing

Amending Ordinances 404 & 226, Chapter 7.30 Prohibiting the Use of Fireworks During Periods of Extreme Fire Danger – Greg Wendt, Community Development Director & Ryan Brown, Chief Deputy Civil Prosecuting Attorney

Under [RCW 70.77](#), State law governs the regulation of fireworks, including which fireworks are legal, licensing for public fireworks displays and for fireworks sellers, and when fireworks may be discharged. However, it leaves some room for local regulation, such as when and what types of fireworks may be sold or discharged, and for cities and counties to completely prohibit the sale and discharge of fireworks.

Regulations for unincorporated Benton County are included in [Benton County Code \(BCC\) Chapter 7.30](#). Last summer, the Board requested staff and legal counsel research potential options regarding the use of fireworks during unusually hot, dry summers and during periods of extreme fire danger.

Staff is bringing forward an amendment to Ordinance 404 and Ordinance 226 and adding a new section to BCC Chapter 7.30 prohibiting the use of fireworks during periods of extreme fire danger. After meeting with the Fire Marshal and local fire chiefs, the following change/new section is proposed to Chapter 7.30 BCC:

FIREWORKS USE PROHIBITED DURING PERIOD OF EXTREME FIRE DANGER. (a) Effective June 28, 2023 and each year thereafter, the discharge of all fireworks, regardless of type, is prohibited between June 28th and July 5th of any year that the Energy Release Value for the Southeast Washington Region is determined by the Department of Natural Resources or any other agency of the State of Washington to be valued at 17 or higher at any time on or after June 19th in a particular year and the Benton County Fire Marshal subsequently publishes notice of a Fire Danger Classification of Extreme on the Benton County Website.

In accordance with [RCW 70.77.250\(4\)](#), the proposed change to the BCC 7.30 (local fireworks ordinance) is not able to take effect until at least one year after adoption. In this case, any changes made will become effective in on March 8, 2023. **The Board moved and seconded to adopt the ordinance and approve the resolution amending Ordinance 404 and Ordinance 226 and adding a new section to BCC Chapter 7.30 prohibiting the use of fireworks during periods of extreme fire danger. Motion carried.**

Other Business

Amending the Benton County Roadmap to Recovery Reopening Guide – Matt Rasmussen, Deputy County Administrator

On February 17, 2022, Governor Inslee announced that the Washington State Indoor Mask Requirements would be lifted. Beginning March 12, 2022, face masks are no longer required in many indoor settings, including K-12 schools, restaurants, gyms, grocery stores and retail locations. Masks will still be required in some settings, including (but not limited to) medical facilities, long-term care facilities, and public transit. Benton County is amending its reopening guide to reflect these changes in requirements for face coverings. These changes apply to all departments under the Commissioners' Office/Administration and to the public areas of County facilities. Elected officials who wish to maintain more restrictive masking requirements may continue to do so as they see fit. **The Board moved and seconded to approve the Benton County Roadmap to Recovery Reopening Guide for County Facilities as amended. Motion carried.**

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