

WEEKLY REVIEW

BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
May 10, 2022



This document is a weekly review of the Board of County Commissioners meeting, Tuesday, May 10, 2022. Information related to agenda changes, Consent Agenda, and Public Comment are on the [County website](#).

Public Hearing

Community Development Block Grant – Kyle Sullivan, Human Services Manager

Benton County Department of Human Services is applying for Washington State Department of Commerce's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for funding assistance in the amount of \$65,884.00, to be utilized by Benton-Franklin Community Action Connections for new and increased public services. The services will benefit approximately 133 people and will target low- and moderate-income residents. **The Board moved and seconded to close out Contract # 20-62210-002 CDBG Public Services Grant and apply for 2022-23 CDBG Public Services Grant between Washington State Department of Commerce, Local Government Division and Benton County. Motion carried.**

Ordinance Relating to BCC Title 11 Zoning: OA 2022-001 – Greg Wendt, Community Development Director

The Benton County Zoning Ordinance currently allows an agricultural stand as a permitted use in Red Mountain Agricultural District (BCC 11.19.040(d)), provided the stand is located on a parcel of land of least 20 acres or more in size. An agricultural stand is defined in BCC 11.030.010(10) as a structure up to 1,000 square feet in area used for the retail sale of agriculture products, excluding livestock, grown on the premises. The applicant is requesting to amend the zoning text in the Red Mountain Agricultural District to allow agricultural stands as a conditional use permit option provided the stand would be located on a parcel at least two (2) acres in size but less than twenty (20) acres. The proposal adds the following to 11.19.070- USES REQUIRING PERMITS--CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT REQUIRED: (j) Agricultural stands, as defined under BCC 11.03.010(10), on a parcel at least two (2) acres in size but less than twenty (20) acres. The application has been reviewed by Planning staff and Prosecutor's Office and has received a positive recommendation from the Red Mountain AVA. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on April 12, 2022, and after taking testimony and discussion among the Commission members they voted unanimously to forward a recommendation for approval of the proposed amendments subject to five (5) Findings of Fact. **The Board moved and seconded to adopt the Planning Commission's Findings and Conclusions as their own and approve the application for the Ordinance Amendment as noted in Casefile CPA 2022-001 and authorized the Chairman to sign the Notice of Approval for the Comprehensive Plan Amendment. Motion carried.**

Scheduled Business

Justice Center Tenant Improvement Discussion – Robert Blain, Director of Operations & Capital Programs

The Administration and the Commissioners' offices moved into the Administration Building in October of 2021, leaving open space in the Justice Center. Several departments need additional space and on January 25, 2022, the Director of Operations & Capital Programs began working with CKJT Architects on designing the Justice Center Tenant Improvement Project. After numerous meetings with Elected Officials and Department Managers, a map has been prepared to show the proposed areas to be assigned to each department and was presented to the Commissioners. **Commission direction/vote.**

Parks Comprehensive Master Plan Contract – Adam Fyall, Sustainable Development Manager

Comprehensive parks plans are common for cities and counties. In Washington, these are generally produced and renewed on 6-year cycles. A certified parks plan is required to remain eligible for state grants, and plans' certifications expire after 6 years. Benton County's most recent Comprehensive Parks Plan lapsed in 2020 so we are overdue. Staff and the Park Board are excited for this project as we will address many issues of policy and projects. The current parks ordinance is outdated, and a big part of this project will be working through revisions to the ordinance. Staff will also be

reviewing partnerships, maintenance, acquisitions, and capital improvements. The Benton County Purchasing Department solicited proposals for this plan, with four (4) respondents. A committee, comprised of three (3) staff members and three (3) Park Board members, reviewed and scored the responses, resulting in a unanimous recommendation. The full Park Board endorses the recommendation of Beckwith Consulting Group out of LaConner, Washington. A contract with Beckwith has been negotiated, signed, and approved as to form by the Prosecutor. Of note, Beckwith was our second choice in 2021 for the Fairgrounds Master Plan project, and staff has very high confidence in the working relationship and product with this consultant. The project will be paid for from the Park Development Fund with an anticipated cost of \$140,505.00 plus Washington State Sales Tax. **The Board moved and seconded to approve the contract between Benton County and Beckwith Consulting Group for development of the Comprehensive Parks Plan for the Benton County Parks System. Motion carried.**

Public Safety Sales Tax Hiring Funding Request – Corrections Department, Clerk’s Office, Office of Public Defense, District Court, and Prosecuting Attorney’s Office

Elected officials and department managers for offices/departments with Public Safety Sales Tax (PSST) funding have requested the Board set aside funds within the PSST Fund for hiring bonuses for new employees, to use as a tool to fill currently vacant positions. The Clerk’s Office has five (5) open positions, the Prosecutor’s Office has two (2) open felony prosecutor positions that were approved approximately 8 months ago, Corrections has five (5) open positions with an additional three (3) potential vacancies in August, District Court has three (3) open positions, and the Office of Public Defense expects to have one (1) vacancy soon. The Sheriff’s Office also has staff in the PSST Fund but has chosen not to seek funds for hiring bonuses at this time. The open positions are contributing to local issues in the criminal justice system, including trial backlog and delays. Funds may be requested for a similar purpose in the next budgeting cycle, but the current request is only for payments in the current budget cycle to help fill currently open positions. The request is for a total of \$142,000 of Public Safety Sales Tax funds to be to be available as soon as possible to fill currently open positions. The requested funding would be allocated as follows:

- Clerk’s Office: The request is for \$20,000 to help fill five (5) existing openings, if necessary. The hiring bonuses are expected to be \$2,000 upon start of work and \$2,000 after one year anniversary.
- Prosecutor’s Office: The request is for \$20,000 to help fill two (2) existing criminal prosecutor openings. The hiring bonuses are expected to be \$5,000 upon start of work and \$5,000 after one year anniversary.
- Corrections Department: The request is for \$80,000 as soon as possible for use to help fill eight (8) existing openings for correctional staff. The hiring bonuses are expected to be \$5,000 upon start of work and \$5,000 after one year anniversary.
- District Court: The request is for \$12,000 as soon as possible to help fill three (3) existing openings. The hiring bonuses are expected to be \$2,000 upon start of work and \$2,000 after one year anniversary with the office.
- Public Defense: The request is for \$10,000 to be available to fill up to one (1) possible upcoming opening for an attorney position. The bonus is expected to be \$5,000 upon start of work and \$5,000 after one year anniversary

The Board gave staff direction to evaluate potential options and report back at a later date.

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