

MINUTES

BOARD OF BENTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Regular Board Meeting

Benton County Courthouse, Prosser, WA

Tuesday, March 14, 2023, 9:00 a.m.

Meeting provided in-person, by Video Live-Broadcast and Telephonically via/WebEx

Present: Chairman Will McKay
Commissioner Jerome Delvin
Commissioner Michael Alvarez
County Administrator Jerrod MacPherson
Clerk of the Board Marilu Flores

Benton County Employees Present During All or a Portion of the Meeting: Deputy County Administrator Matt Rasmussen; Robert Heard, IT Manager; Treasurer Ken Spencer; Fairgrounds Event Manager Tom French; Clerk Josie Delvin; Finance Manager Linda Ivey; HR Manager Carlee Nave; Sheriff Tom Croskrey; Sheriff CFO Katie Gillies; Auditor Brenda Chilton; Corrections Chief Guerrero; District Court Judge Jennifer Azure

Pledge of Allegiance

The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of March 7, 2023 were approved.

Review Agenda

The following items were added to the agenda:

- Executive Session – Union Negotiations
- Executive Session – Review Performance of a Public Employee

Public Comment

None.

Consent Agenda

MOTION: Commissioner Delvin moved to approve the consent agenda items “a” through “n”. Commissioner Alvarez seconded and upon vote, the Board approved the following:

Commissioners

- a. Opioid Settlement Agreements w/Teva, Allergan, CVS, Walgreens and Walmart
- b. Updating Signature on File for E911 Contract w/Washington State Military Department

Human Services

- c. Agreement w/Safe Harbor Crisis Nursery for the Five-Year Homeless Housing Plan

Information Technology

- d. Purchase of a 12-Month GrayKey Mobile Device Forensic Software License From Grayshift for the Sheriff's Office
- e. Purchase of a Laptop, Thunderbolt 4 Dock & Laptop Accessories from Dell, Inc. for the Planning Dept.

Public Works

- f. Appointments to the Solid Waste Advisory Committee
- g. First Amended Agreement w/WA State Department of Ecology for the Solid & Moderate Risk Waste Program

Purchasing

- h. Contract w/Qal-Tek Associates for Calibration of Two Nuclear Density Gauges for Public Works
- i. Contract w/Intermountain Cleaning Services, Inc. for Janitorial Maintenance Services
- j. Purchase of Motor Grader From Western States CAT & Surplus of Equipment #540 Motor Grader
- k. Contract w/GMCO Corporation for Magnesium Chloride for Public Works

Risk Management

- l. Washington Counties Risk Pool Appointments

Sheriff

- m. Purchase of Four Stalker Lidar Handheld Units From Applied Concepts, Inc.
- n. Surplus and Disposition of Personal Property

District Court Update

Judge Jennifer Azure provided an update and introduced new leadership

- 2023 Welcomes New Leadership
 - Judge Dan Kathren, Presiding Judge
 - Judge Jim Bell, Assistant Presiding Judge
 - Amanda Watts, Administrator
 - Judy Docken, Assistant Administrator
 - Rachel Phillips, Judicial Assistant
- DC Hearings by the Numbers in 2022
 - Civil/Small Claims ~ 3,686
 - Infractions ~ 6,711
 - Criminal Caseloads ~ 5,675
 - Therapeutic Courts ~ 94
- The Civil Side
 - Contract Actions

- Personal Injury Damages
- Personal Property Damages
- Writs of Attachment, Garnishment & Replevin
- Civil Enforcement of Money Judgments
- Civil Protection Orders
- Therapeutic Courts
 - 184 Participant Referrals in 2022
 - Mental Health Court has 58 participants
 - Veteran’s Court has 21 current participants
 - Recovery Court has 15 participants
- District Court Accomplishments and Goals for 2023
 - Improved Access & Administration of Justice
 - Paperless/Fileless Court/eFiling
 - County Courts Collaboration
 - Reduced Recidivism/Increased Public Safety
 - Continued Community Collaboration
 - Full Therapeutic Courts by end of 2023

Commissioner Alvarez mentioned that Amanda Watts attempted to contact him last week.

Commissioner Delvin appreciated the annual reports and noticed a trend for the number of cases being filed and inquired whether the trend was changing as he was seeing this was affecting revenues. Judge Azure said filings have been lower over the last couple years but said legislation has indicated they were not a revenue generating function but that she understood the concern.

Countywide Compensation Review Strategy

Benton County Administrator Jerrod MacPherson and HR Manager Carlee Nave presented a resolution to conduct a county-wide compensation review study and implement a freeze for reclassifications on standalone positions until the study was complete. Mr. MacPherson indicated that over the past several months, they have discussed making decisions at the Board level with regard to compensation with some of the bargaining units and associated non-bargaining supervisors. Mr. MacPherson said they have been discussing potential long-term strategies to address these compensation issues by doing a comprehensive county-wide salary survey as HR has seen an increase in “one off” classifications and/or reclassification requests for standalone positions. Mr. MacPherson indicated that these would be counterproductive in light of a possible wage analysis which has not been done in almost 30 years.

Given the number of outstanding classification review requests, and the unbalanced nature of current classifications, Mr. MacPherson was requesting that the Board consider contracting with a consultant to conduct a County-wide compensation study to review all non-interest arbitration positions in the County. He also indicated that in order to allow staff time to find a consultant, as well as begin the work of updating the County’s job descriptions to prepare for a compensation review, he was also requesting the Board implement a compensation review freeze, where positions would remain in their current pay grade, and no new position classifications created.

Mr. MacPherson indicated that one of the goals coming out of the compensation study was to publish a more robust Salary Administration and Compensation Review Policy to include the procedures for re-classification requests that have been historically captured in standalone resolutions. He said that departments should contact HR if they have questions on what constitutes a freeze or other related compensation questions.

Commissioner Alvarez said that he brought this up a few weeks back and understands that it was frustrating, but this was something that would fix issues which have been broken. He indicated that this would benefit some employees as well as the taxpayers of Benton County. Commissioner Alvarez recommended HR look into who the City of Richland utilized for this study and suggested doing a performance analysis for all departments after this study was complete.

Commissioner Delvin agreed.

MOTION: Commissioner Delvin moved to approve the resolution directing staff to begin the process of finding a contractor to conduct a Countywide compensation study and implementing a standalone compensation review freeze as presented. Commissioner Alvarez seconded and upon vote, motion carried.

Executive Session – Review Qualifications of an Applicant for Public Employment

The Board went into executive session at 9:23 a.m. for up to five minutes with Corrections Chief Robert Guerrero to review the qualifications of an applicant for public employment. Also present were Jerrod MacPherson, Matt Rasmussen and Marilu Flores. The Board came out at 9:26 a.m. No decisions were made in executive session.

MOTION: Commissioner Delvin moved to approve the salary request form as presented for Chaplain Wayne Jenkins. Commissioner Alvarez seconded and upon vote, motion carried.

Executive Session – Union Negotiations

The Board went into executive session at 9:27 a.m. for up to 10 minutes with HR Manager, Carlee Nave to discuss union negotiations. Also present were Jerrod MacPherson, Matt Rasmussen and Marilu Flores. The Board came out at 9:32 a.m. No decisions were made in executive session, but direction was given.

Executive Session – Review Performance of a Public Employee

The Board went into executive session at 9:33 a.m. to review the performance of a public employee for up to 15 minutes with Sheriff Tom Croskrey. Also present was Carlee Nave. The Board came out at 9:49 a.m. No decisions were made in executive session.

Other Business:

Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services Tour

Commissioner Alvarez indicated that he, a judge and Franklin County Sheriff Raymond toured a county run as well as a private facility for sobering services in Spokane. He noted that he was impressed how efficiently and simplified the county run facility operated and said that he obtained contact information.

Payroll

Check Date: 03/03/23

Payroll Checks

Total all funds: \$2,880,261.47

Warrant #: 244038-244074

Direct Deposit #: 178177-178790

Payroll Deduction Transfers

Total All Funds \$2,502,024.43

EFT #332-338

ACH #544-556

Payroll Deduction Warrants

Total All Funds \$110,892.33

Warrants #243425-243436

Accounts Payable

Check Date: 03/07/23

Warrants #: 243437

Total all funds: \$1,625.00

Check Date: 03/10/23

Warrants #: 243526

Total all funds: \$12,490.46

Check Date: 03/10/23

Pcards #: 580

Total all funds: \$426,565.67

Resolutions

2023-228: Opioid Settlement Agreements w/Teva, Allergan, CVS, Walgreens and Walmart

2023-229: Updating Signature on File for E911 Contract w/Washington State Military Department

2023-230: Agreement w/Safe Harbor Crisis Nursery for the Five-Year Homeless Housing Plan

2023-231: Purchase of a 12-Month GrayKey Mobile Device Forensic Software License From Grayshift for the Sheriff's Office

2023-232: Purchase of a Laptop, Thunderbolt 4 Dock & Laptop Accessories from Dell, Inc. for the Planning Dept.

- 2023-233: Appointments to the Solid Waste Advisory Committee
- 2023-234: First Amended Agreement w/WA State Department of Ecology for the Solid & Moderate Risk Waste Program
- 2023-235: Contract w/Qal-Tek Associates for Calibration of Two Nuclear Density Gauges for Public Works
- 2023-236: Contract w/Intermountain Cleaning Services, Inc. for Janitorial Maintenance Services
- 2023-237: Purchase of Motor Grader From Western States CAT & Surplus of Equipment #540 Motor Grader
- 2023-238: Contract w/GMCO Corporation for Magnesium Chloride for Public Works
- 2023-239: Washington Counties Risk Pool Appointments
- 2023-240: Purchase of Four Stalker Lidar Handheld Units From Applied Concepts, Inc.
- 2023-241: Surplus and Disposition of Personal Property
- 2023-242: Countywide Compensation Study; Implementing a Standalone Compensation Review Freeze; Rescinding Resolution 2012-263

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at approximately 9:51 a.m.

Clerk of the Board

Chairman