

## MINUTES

### BOARD OF BENTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Special Board Meeting  
Benton County Administration Building  
Commissioners' Hearing Room  
7122 W. Okanogan Place, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, #E303  
Kennewick, WA  
Thursday, August 17, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

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

**Present:** Chairman Will McKay  
Commissioner Michael Alvarez  
County Administrator Jerrod MacPherson  
Clerk of the Board Cami McKenzie

**Absent:** Commissioner Jerome Delvin (Excused)

**Benton County Employees Present During All or a Portion of the Meeting:** Sustainable Development Manager Adam Fyall, Robert Heard, IT; Steve Caughey, Security Program Coordinator.

#### Washington State Association of Counties' Briefing

Eric Johnson, WSAC Executive Director and Spokane County Commissioner Mary Kuney, WSAC President, updated the Board and discussed the 2023 Courthouse Briefing Document as follows:

- Background – primary client is County Commissioners; those that reported to Commissioners were their secondary client; they did not provide support to independent elected officials
- WSAC Board – responsible for the general supervision over the affairs of the Association per WSAC Bylaws and adopted policies/procedures; have a fiduciary responsibility but do not deal with public policy, which is a separate responsibility by the Legislative Steering Committee
- Counties with designated Commissioners and alternates on the Board of Directors
- ARPA Funds – recommend the Counties over-obligate the resources in case there were issues with priority projects. If there were problems, they could the pull money back into a different project
- Finance and Administration – 2023 Action items
- Summary Financials - 2022
  - Heavily dependent on dues, specifically three large counties, and had concerns if one of the counties could not pay or separated from the WSAC organization

- Formalizing the Financial Reserves and Investment Policies was one of the 2023 action items
- Advocacy – 2023 Action Items
  - Legislative Priorities – all four were adopted
    - Modernizing justice to support and promote recovery (Jail Study)
    - Behavioral Health System Improvements – health care authority to adopt network advocacy standards for behavioral health
    - Federal Transportation Fund Exchange – allow projects that have federal funds to swap with state funds
    - Extension of rural sales tax credit
  - Legislative Agenda
  - Legislation & Professional Development
- Federal Priorities
  - Medicaid Inmate Exclusion
  - PILT
  - Secure Rural Schools
  - Active Forest Management and Catastrophic Wildfires
  - Workforce and Homeless Housing
- Litigation and Amicus
  - Trueblood Contempt Sanctions
  - Indigent Defense
  - Blake Decision
  - Amicus Briefs
- Communications and Member Services
- WSAC Programs
  - Columbia River Caucus
  - Counties Coastal Caucus
  - Timber and Public Lands Program
- 2023 County Leaders – November 14-16 in Spokane, WA

Commissioner Alvarez commented on the following two issues facing Benton County:

- Proposed Horse Heaven Hills Wind Farm
- Renewal of Public Safety Sales Tax

Mr. Johnson said they were currently writing a white paper on the tax burden for personal property (wind farms) and would pass that along to Benton County when it was complete.

Additionally, Mr. Johnson announced his retirement at the end of May 2024, and they would be starting the recruitment process in December.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at approximately 11:04 a.m.

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Clerk of the Board

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Chairman