

MINUTES

BOARD OF BENTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Regular Board Meeting
Benton County Courthouse, Prosser, WA
Tuesday, September 26th, 2023, 9:00 a.m.
Meeting provided in-person, by Video Live-Broadcast and Telephonically via/WebEx

Present: Chairman Will McKay
Commissioner Michael Alvarez

Deputy County Administrator, Matt Rasmussen
Clerk of the Board Amanda Pearson

Absent: Commissioner Jerome Delvin (Excused)
County Administrator (Excused)

Benton County Employees Present During All or a Portion of the Meeting: Robert Heard, IT Manager; Tim Brown, Information Technology Analyst; Greg Wendt, Community Development Director; Clerk, Josie Delvin; Linda Ivey, Finance Manager; Auditor, Brenda Chilton

Pledge of Allegiance

The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of September 19, 2023 were approved.

Review Agenda

Deputy County Administrator, Matt Rasmussen added the following to the agenda:

- Follow-up regarding Tri City CARES

Commissioner Alvarez added the following to the agenda:

- Discussion on Benton County Emergency Services (BCES)

Public Comment

Jim Atkins of Prosser referred to the meeting on August 29th. He stated that Commissioner McKay told him that he didn't agree with the things he talked about. He wanted it on the record that

Commissioner McKay told him that there was no legal reason to speak with him. He referred to three agenda item contracts that have start dates in July but were being approved during this meeting. He requested an answer regarding questions he had about the Fairground Commission and the feasibility study. He stated that they charged the fair board too much money to have the fair, but they are making some progress. He suggested the Board offer RV storage access in winter to make extra income for the county.

Consent Agenda

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

Auditor

- a. Payroll ~ Check Posting List for 09/15/2023
- b. Accounts Payable ~ Check Posting List for 09/19/2023
- c. Line-Item Transfer, Fund No. 1110, Dept. 000

Commissioners

- d. Organization of Benton County Commissioners for Year 2023; Rescinding Resolution 2023-265

District Court

- e. Agreement w/WA State Administrative Office of the Courts for Reimbursement of Interpreter Costs

Human Services

- f. Agreement w/Columbia Industries for Developmental Disabilities Support Services
- g. Agreement w/Entrust Community Services for Developmental Disabilities Support Services
- h. Contract w/Washington Initiative for Supported Employment for Developmental Disabilities Support Services
- i. Agreement w/Compass Career Solutions for Developmental Disabilities Support Services

Information Technology

- j. Purchase of Two Laptops & Docks & Four Monitors from Dell, Inc. for Public Works
- k. Lease Agreement w/Ricoh USA, Inc. for Office of Public Defense Copier; Amending Resolution 2023-509

Purchasing

- l. Contract w/DLR Group for the Jail Door System Upgrade, Remodel of the Interview Area & Laundry Security Upgrade Project Located in the Jail
- m. Contract w/Meier Enterprises, Inc. for Architectural & Engineering Services for the Moderate Risk Waste Facility Ventilation System Upgrade

Superior Court

- n. Agreement w/WA State Administrative Office of the Courts for Reimbursement of Interpreter Costs

Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) siting of Alternate Energy Industrial Complexes in Ag Lands Discussion

Yakima County Commissioner Amanda McKinney led the discussion regarding solar power production facilities and their impact to homes in Eastern Washington. She stated that there has been an influx of solar and wind facilities. One of the aspects of the Growth Management Act that she agrees with is that it protects Agriculture Land. She pointed out that an important feature of the Growth Management Act is that it does not differentiate the quality of Ag Land, and that Washington State views apple farms and grazing land as having the same value. She referred to a case in Kittitas County where the state law was broken but ended up getting approval by the state courts to violate state law. She clarified that Benton and Yakima County do not have that same authority to break state law and culpability would fall onto the county.

Another important aspect of her concerns related to the lack of protection against fire that these facilities have. Commissioner McKinney explained her conversations with Department of Natural Resources and fire commissioners who say there should be at least 20 feet of gravel around these facilities. EFSEC currently doesn't permit gravel around these facilities to allow for the weeds and brush to grow to provide habitat for dwarf pygmy rabbits. She stated her concerns regarding the focus on the rabbits, rather than public health.

Other points of concerns:

- Potential loss of water rights going forward. Yakima is going to continue pushing to restore river ways and maintaining irrigation.
- Potential change in how the economy is run in Washington when land values continue to increase due to subsidies.

When the state legislator reconvenes, she plans to ask, along with a coalition of counties—if Agriculture land is taken out of production, how much Ag land are we willing to forfeit to Washington State to turn into solar and wind? Her goal is to have 38 counties on this commission.

Commissioner Alvarez agreed with her concerns and offered any help to make the public more aware of this issue. Commissioner McKay agreed with everything she shared and offered support to Yakima County to challenge this issue.

Commissioner McKinley stated her county cell phone number for the record: 509-424-0043

General Fund & Public Safety Tax

Finance Manager Linda Ivey gave a PowerPoint presentation and briefly discussed the following:

- General Fund/Current Expense
 - August 31, 2023 – September 5, 2023 – time elapsed – 33.33%
 - Revenues excluding ARPA funds.
 - Total Revenue received – 30.61%
 - Total Expenditures – 33.36%

- Public Safety Tax
 - August 31, 2023 – September 5, 2023 – time elapsed – 33.33%
 - Revenue – 27.10%
 - Expenditures – 28.28%

Other Business

Deputy County Administrator, Matt Rasmussen, spoke on the inquiry last meeting about the county possibly assisting Tri City Cares to pay for witnesses. The determination was that because it's been completed, it would be considered a gifting of county funds. Going forward, we could make a contractual agreement with them if there is an appeal and go from there.

Commissioner Alvarez spoke about the Benton County Emergency Services Red Mountain Road Project. The difficult roads are creating issues for emergency services. The project was estimated around 2 million back in 2016, but it is significantly higher now. They have been trying to bring costs down but got a firm no. It was suggested that they might want to circle back with staff how to move this forward.

Payroll

Check Date: 9/15/2023

Payroll Checks

Total all funds: \$ 115,464.79

Warrant #: 244222-244223

Direct Deposit #: 183430-183566

Payroll Draw Deductions Transfers

Total all funds: \$ 21,285.22

ACH #: 1160

Accounts Payable

Check Date: 9/15/2023

Warrants #: 249269-249423

Total of all Funds: \$2,869,886.55

Transfers# 1143-1146, 1150-1159

Total of all Funds: \$2,780.11

Resolutions

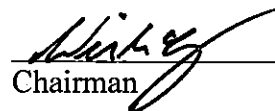
2023-657 Line-Item Transfer, Fund No. 1110, Dept. 000

2023-658 Organization of Benton County Commissioners for Year 2023; Rescinding Resolution 2023-265

- 2023-659 Agreement w/WA State Administrative Office of the Courts for Reimbursement of Interpreter Costs
- 2023-670 Agreement w/Columbia Industries for Developmental Disabilities Support Services
- 2023-671 Agreement w/Entrust Community Services for Developmental Disabilities Support Services
- 2023-672 Contract w/Washington Initiative for Supported Employment for Developmental Disabilities Support Services
- 2023-673 Agreement w/Compass Career Solutions for Developmental Disabilities Support Services
- 2023-674 Purchase of Two Laptops & Docks & Four Monitors from Dell, Inc. for Public Works
- 2023-675 Lease Agreement w/Ricoh USA, Inc. for Office of Public Defense Copier; Amending Resolution 2023-509
- 2023-676 Contract w/DLR Group for the Jail Door System Upgrade, Remodel of the Interview Area & Laundry Security Upgrade Project Located in the Jail
- 2023-677 Contract w/Meier Enterprises, Inc. for Architectural & Engineering Services for the Moderate Risk Waste Facility Ventilation System Upgrade
- 2023-678 Agreement w/WA State Administrative Office of the Courts for Reimbursement of Interpreter Costs

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at approximately 9:43 a.m.


Clerk of the Board


Chairman