

# WEEKLY REVIEW

BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

January 24, 2023



This document is a weekly review of the Board of County Commissioners meeting, Tuesday, January 24, 2023. Information related to agenda changes, Consent Agenda, and Public Comment are on the [County website](#).

## Scheduled Business

### *Benton City Revitalization Organization Update – Alex Weber, Chairman*

Alex Weber, Chairman of the Benton City Revitalization Organization (BCRO) gave a periodic update to the Board regarding economic development activities in the Benton City area. BCRO is a recipient of funds from TRIDEC for economic development services and is a sort of successor organization to the former Benton City Economic Development Committee which ceased operations several years ago. **No Board direction or vote.**

### *SUB 2022-003 Preliminary Plat of Dessert Pines – Michelle Cooke, Planning Manager*

An applicant has submitted a preliminary plat application (PCM 1.4) and map (PCM 1.5) to subdivide approximately 4.08 acres into 12 residential lots, known as Desert Pines. The land is zoned Urban Growth Area Residential District. The largest lot area in the development is approximately 20,529 sq feet and the smallest lot area is 7,501 sf. The lots are proposed to be served by a new public road with city services for water and sewer. The site is located west of Gum Street along the north side of E. 23rd Avenue near site address 527 E 23rd Avenue, Kennewick in the northwest quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 7, Township 8 North, Range 30 W. M. (Parcel Number 107803000009000). On December 13, 2022, at the conclusion of the open record hearing, the Planning Commission voted 6-0, with (with one vacancy) to forward a positive recommendation to the Board subject to seven (7) findings of fact and eighteen (18) conditions of approval. **The Board moved and seconded to adopt the Planning Commission's recommendation, findings of fact, and conditions as its own and approve the preliminary plat of Desert Pines – SUB 2022-003 with the seven (7) findings of fact and eighteen (18) conditions of approval as recommended. Motion carried.**

### *Creating Two (2) Facilities Maintenance Worker Positions – Jeff Jones, Facilities Manager & Matt Rasmussen, Deputy County Administrator*

The County acquired the Old Kennewick General Hospital on November 1, 2022. The facility consists of over 193,000 square feet of building space and 8.5 acres of property. The property has been largely vacant for several years with the last of the tenants leaving in August of 2022. Since acquiring the property the County has experienced a rash of break-ins and vandalism that have resulted in significant damage to the property, including rendering the heating system and fire protection systems for a large portion of the building inoperable. The irrigation system at the property also failed in the summer of 2022 which has resulted in much of the landscaping to be dead or dying. The County has invested in boarding up all the accessible windows on the building and added a contract for onsite security services during off hours. This has helped significantly with the vandalism and break-ins.

However, there is still a large need for facility upkeep at the site which is placing a tremendous burden on the existing facility maintenance staff. Work that needs to be completed includes, but is not limited to, repairing the damaged heating system, and keeping it operational; repairing the fire protection system; removing damaged materials (ceiling tiles, flooring, drywall, etc.); repairing the irrigation system and removing dead landscaping; removing furniture, fixtures and equipment that are not necessary for the future use of the facility; surplusung unneeded items; and generally keeping the other building systems operational.

Funds are proposed to be transferred within the Behavioral Health Fund, from Contract Services to the applicable positions line items, in the amount of \$323,000 to fund two (2) new Facilities Maintenance Worker positions, effective February 1, 2023. **The Board moved and seconded to approve the line-item transfer within fund 1600, Behavioral Health, creating two (2) new Maintenance Worker positions as presented. Motion carried.**

### ***Commissioners' Office Administrative Reorganization – Matt Rasmussen, Deputy County Administrator***

In an effort to improve efficiencies and to enhance operations within County Administration, the County Administrator and the Deputy County Administrator are requesting a reorganization, which is budget neutral. An Office Assistant II position in the Facilities Department will be ended/vacated and a new position is requested to be added to the Commissioners' Office, which includes a job classification and establishing the salary grade as a Commissioners' Office Support/Board of Equalization and Disability Board Secretary Position. Department leadership worked with HR to create a position classification description for the proposed Commissioners' Office Support/Board of Equalization and Disability Board Secretary position. The Facilities position will be eliminated, and those Facilities Department administrative assistant duties/responsibilities will be shared amongst the existing Clerk to the Board position and the newly proposed Commissioners' Office Support position. It is recommended that the new Commissioners' Office support position be a direct report to the Clerk to the Board. In working with HR on this restructure/reorganization, their recommendation is that this new position placement be at a Grade 9. The Clerk to the Board position is requested to be increased from a Grade 14 to Grade 15 non-bargaining due to the increased duties and supervisory responsibilities. **The Board moved and seconded to approve classification of a Commissioners' Office Support/Board of Equalization and Disability Board Secretary and salary placement as presented; reclassifying the Clerk to the Board job classification and establishing the salary grade for the Clerk to the Board Position in the Commissioners' Office; and Transfer of Funds within the General Fund 0010, Department 110 Facilities to Department 107 Commissioners as presented. Motions carried.**

## **Other Business**

### ***Comment Letter on Draft EIS for Horse Heaven Wind Project – Greg Wendt, Community Development Director***

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) was issued on December 19, 2022, marking the opening of a 45-day public comment period, which closes on February 1, 2023 at 11:59pm. Under [WAC 463-47](#) and [WAC 197-11](#), EFSEC prepared the Draft EIS to address areas of concern identified during the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) scoping phase, including vegetation, wildlife and habitat, cultural, visual, and recreation resources. A Public Hearing will be held on February 1, 2023 at 5 PM to accept public comment on the project and the Draft EIS. The meeting will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams, and all speakers need to sign up ahead of the meeting. Additional information about the Public Hearing is available here:

[https://www.efsec.wa.gov/sites/default/files/210011/001/20230201\\_HH\\_PublicHearingNotice.pdf](https://www.efsec.wa.gov/sites/default/files/210011/001/20230201_HH_PublicHearingNotice.pdf)

The County is arranging for the Commissioners' Hearing Room in Kennewick to be available for remote testimony as well, for anyone that does not have the necessary technology to participate. Those who wish to provide testimony, will still have to sign up ahead of the meeting with EFSEC (see link above).

Those who are unable to attend the meeting may submit their comments through the comment database at <https://comments.efsec.wa.gov/> or by sending comments in writing to [efsec@efsec.wa.gov](mailto:efsec@efsec.wa.gov) or P.O. Box 43172, Olympia, WA 98504-3172. County staff has begun preparing an official comment letter from the County, which will be finalized and presented for the Board's consideration at next week's meeting (January 31, 2023 at 9 AM). **The Board gave staff direction to proceed with finalizing the comment letter, for Board approval January 31, 2023.**

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**Contact: Shyanne Palmus, Communications Coordinator**  
[Shyanne.Palmus@co.benton.wa.us](mailto:Shyanne.Palmus@co.benton.wa.us) | 509-222-3760