



## Minutes – Board of County Commissioners

Regular Board Meeting  
Benton County Courthouse, Prosser, WA  
Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 9:00 a.m.  
*Meeting provided in-person, by Video Live-Broadcast and Telephonically via/WebEx*

**Present:** Chairman Jerome Delvin  
Commissioner Michael Alvarez  
Commissioner Will McKay  
County Administrator Jerrod MacPherson  
Clerk of the Board Amanda Pearson

**Benton County Employees Present During All or a Portion of the Meeting:** Deputy County Administrator, Matt Rasmussen; Information Technologies Manager, Robert Heard; Human Resources Manager, Carlee Nave; Community Development Director, Greg Wendt; Clerk, Josie Delvin; Finance Manager, Linda Ivey; Sustainable Development Manager, Adam Fyall; Security Program Manager; Steve Caughey, Prosecuting Attorney, Eric Eisinger; Public Works Operations Manager, Matt Mahoney

### Pledge of Allegiance

The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 were approved.

### Review Agenda

Jerrod MacPherson added the following:

- Letter to the US Environmental Protection Agency regarding the National Priorities List.

### Public Comment

In Prosser, Ilene Alexander shared her continued concerns about current goals regarding animal control and the capacity at the shelter to house dangerous dogs. She also requested that the county complete a comp study to look at other counties for solutions.

In Prosser, Sherry Elizabeth stated that she doesn't have any obligation to pay county taxes per RCW, relating to taxing authority. She shared that her name is now trademarked and requested it be removed from the tax rolls.

## **Consent Agenda**

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

### **Auditor**

- a. Accounts Payable ~ Check Posting List for 04/19/24
- b. Precinct Boundary Changes Due to State Voting Rights Challenge

### **Commissioners**

- c. Line-Item Transfer, Fund No. 0010, Dept. 115 to 116 for the Shoreline Master Plan Grant Funding
- d. Appointment of Bradyn Leyde to the Mid-Columbia Libraries Board of Trustees

### **Juvenile**

- e. Contract with Amy Campbell, LLC for Functional Family Therapy and Family Counseling Services

### **Public Works**

- f. Line-Item Transfer, Fund No. 1010, Dept. 500 to Move Funds for Purchase of Drone

### **Purchasing**

- g. Contract with Meier Enterprises, Inc. for Application of Private Well for the Rattlesnake Mountain Shooting Facility Training Center

### **Sheriff**

- h. Purchase of Four Drones from Night Vision Outfitters, LLC

## **Scheduled Business**

### **Request for Step Increase**

#### **Prosecuting Attorney, Eric Eisinger**

On March 7, 2023, the Board of County Commissioners adopted Resolution No. 2023-225 and 2023-226, eliminating a legal secretary position to increase pay for the hiring and retention of deputy prosecutors, including the therapeutic court prosecutor (line 1365). The therapeutic court prosecutor position has been occupied by Michelle Morales since that time. However, Ms. Morales recently left her employment with Benton County and deputy prosecutor Annie Chau has since moved into her position.

Ms. Chau is an experienced prosecutor who has been employed with the county since 2013. Due to her level of experience and her increased responsibility, the Prosecuting Attorney requests board approval for a step increase for Ms. Chau that is commensurate with her new responsibility; Ms. Chau’s salary should be adjusted from 22G to 22H.

Commissioner Alvarez clarified he was using Commissioner McKay’s screen to read the email that was provided as he was having technical difficulties.

Commissioner McKay asked about this being budget neutral in relation to it occurring out of the budget cycle.

Commissioner Alvarez called up Human Resources Manager, Carlee Nave, and requested her recommendation on the issue. She shared her concerns with the board. Commissioner Alvarez also shared his concerns approving of the step increase.

Commissioner McKay asked questions related to the Deputy Prosecuting Attorney III (DPAIII) position.

Commissioner Delvin brought up that the Commissioners had to say no at this time based on their previous decisions on the topic.

Commissioner Alvarez clarified that the Wage and Compensation Study won't be rolled out all at once but will need to wait for the findings to know what that looks like.

**Agreement with Washington State Department of Commerce for the Premera Crisis Stabilization Grant**

**Deputy County Administrator, Matt Rasmussen**

In December of 2020 Benton County applied for a grant to construct a Crisis Stabilization facility as part of the Columbia Valley Center for Recovery project. Due to unforeseen delays related to the COVID pandemic and getting the design of the facility to a point that project funds could be spent the agreement has been on hold.

With the recent progress on design of the facility the County is ready to begin executing the various grants it has received through the Department of Commerce. This grant has the earliest expiration date, so it is being processed first.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Alvarez moved to approve an agreement with the Washington State Department of Commerce for the Premera Stabilization Grant in the amount of \$ 1 million. Commissioner McKay seconded and upon vote, the motion carried as presented.

**Presentation from the Benton Franklin Recovery Coalition**

**Michelle Gerber, Jason Bliss, and Nancy Roach**

Members of the Recovery Coalition shared information about the status of the Recovery Center and presented ideas to the board regarding the 1/10<sup>th</sup> tax and Opioid Settlement funds. Michelle Gerber stated that they came to the board to publicly request this money be used for the Columbia Valley Center for Recovery.

Jason Bliss shared that he sat on the fentanyl taskforce and provided statistics related to drug use in the area:

- In the 1980s drug use in individuals 12 or older was around 15%
- In the 1990s it dropped to 6%
- As of 2021 it was back up to 15%
- At least 1 in 8 teenagers in the US have abused an illicit drug in the last year
- Since 2016, drug use in 8<sup>th</sup> graders has increased by 61%
- Teens in the State of Washington are 33.36% more likely to have used drugs in the last month
- In the past year, more than 110,000 Americans lost their life to a drug overdose
- More than 4,000 of those lives were lost in Washington State

Drug overdoses per county in 2023:

- Yakima – 93
- Benton – 46

- Grant – 40
- Franklin – 27
- Okanogan –22

Jason also spoke about his concerns regarding budgetary setbacks.

Nancy Roach shared how the goal right now is to raise money for “betterments” that would make people want to stay at the facility 30 days or longer; things that might not be covered by grants. She also asked the board to consider allowing naming opportunities that would bring in additional funds.

Commissioner Delvin shared he doesn’t have any reservations relating to having a donor wall or naming rights. He shared his thoughts on the Opioid Settlement lump sum going to construction of the facility and ongoing funds to go into operational costs.

Commissioner McKay commented that he was in approval of moving forward with naming rights as well. He also had questions related to the design build process and funding related to unforeseen building challenges.

Deputy County Administrator, Matt Rasmussen, clarified that the design build contract will have built-in contingencies for these potential building challenges.

Commissioner Alvarez shared that he was okay with naming but asked for suggestions on dollar amounts.

Matt Rasmussen clarified that there is a Memorandum of Agreement with the Recovery Coalition that can be amended to include naming rights. They will update it and bring it back to formalize.

### **Other Business**

Commissioner Alvarez shared that he attended a workshop program regarding the Wellness Program through the Sheriff’s Office. He explained that he supported the program and there is a funding source, but some parts still need to be worked out. He also commented on national spending in relation to Stagflation and that the County Sales Tax revenue was down for the month of April.

Commissioner McKay shared his concerns regarding budgeting with court cases—keeping roads and neighborhoods safe.

Sustainable Development Director, Adam Fyall, brought up a letter before the board regarding the Upper Columbia River Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was to put Lake Roosevelt on the list of cleanups for the national priorities list; this is a letter opposing that.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Delvin moved to sign the EPA letter regarding the upper Columbia River Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study. Commissioner Alvarez seconded and upon vote, the motion carried as presented.

### **Accounts Payable**

Check Date: 4/19/2024

Warrants #: 256071-256186

Total of all funds: \$1,557,875.40

EFT's #: 883-885

Transfers #: 1785-1792, 1800, 1802-1803

Total of all Funds: \$60,013.68

**Resolutions**

- 2024-0300 Precinct Boundary Changes Due to State Voting Rights Challenge
- 2024-0301 Line-Item Transfer, Fund No. 0010, Dept. 115 to 116 for the Shoreline Master Plan Grant Funding
- 2024-0302 Appointment of Bradyn Leyde to the Mid-Columbia Libraries Board of Trustees
- 2024-0303 Contract with Amy Campbell, LLC for Functional Family Therapy and Family Counseling Services
- 2024-0304 Line-Item Transfer, Fund No. 1010, Dept. 500 to Move Funds for Purchase of Drone
- 2024-0305 Contract with Meier Enterprises, Inc. for Application of Private Well for the Rattlesnake Mountain Shooting Facility Training Center
- 2024-0306 Purchase of Four Drones from Night Vision Outfitters, LLC
- 2024-0307 Agreement with the Washington State Department of Commerce for the Premera Stabilization Grant

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at approximately 9:57 a.m.

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Clerk of the Board

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Chairman