

WEEKLY REVIEW

BENTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

November 3, 2020



This document is a weekly review of the Board of County Commissioners' meeting, Tuesday, November 3, 2020. Information related to agenda changes, Consent Agenda, and Public Comment are on the [County website](#).

Scheduled Business

Revised Equipment Rental & Revolving Fund Policy – Robert Blain and Michael McGhan

The Benton County Road Department operates the Equipment Rental and Revolving (ER&R) Fund, through which vehicles and equipment are purchased, maintained, and replaced. The Board adopted the current policy in December 2019. Since then, the Department identified ways to improve departmental costs while maintaining the fund with respect to state statutes. Additionally, the policy has been updated to require the Fleet Superintendent to manage all County owned vehicles and equipment. It is expected that this revised policy will help normalize ER&R costs over time. **The Board moved and seconded to rescind the existing ER&R Fund Policy and adopt the revised Policy effective January 1, 2021. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

Trust Water Right Agreement w/WA State Dept. of Ecology – Greg Wendt and Ryan Brown

The Yakima Basin has been involved in a water rights adjudication process for more than 40 years. In 2017, Benton County received a letter from the Washington State Department of Ecology giving the County notice that rural water supply is at risk of impairment to senior water right holders and encouraged the County to take steps to develop a rural water supply program along the lines and similar to Kittitas and Yakima Counties.

In 2018, Futurewise challenged the compliance of the Benton County Comprehensive Plan and associated development regulations with the Growth Management Act and filed a Petition for Review to the Eastern Washington Region Growth Management Hearings Board. In 2019 Futurewise and Benton County negotiated a settlement and Futurewise agreed to dismiss the Petition for Review if the Board of County Commissioners adopted certain amendments to the Benton County Comprehensive Plan and additional development regulations. This agreement was adopted by Resolution 2019-276. On January 14, 2020, for the protection of the quantity and quality of ground and surface water, Benton County adopted a Rural Water Supply Program that requires new housing units (associated plats and building permits), relying on permit exempt wells, located in a certain portion of WIRA 37, to fully mitigate the impacts of such wells on the main stem of the Yakima River. If requirements are satisfied, an applicant may acquire a required mitigation certificate for each parcel from the Benton County Water Bank. Three different mitigation packages are begin offered, depending on whether the applicant is located within the boundaries of an irrigation district. The applicant will be required to install metering equipment to be approved before a certificate of occupancy is issued for the dwelling unit.

The final step of the settlement agreement is to enter into an agreement with Ecology that will govern the management of separate water rights acquired by Benton County and ensure the water rights will be held by Ecology in trust in the Yakima River Basin Trust Water Rights Program. Placement in the Trust will provide a way for Benton County and Ecology to jointly manage water placed in the Program for the future success of the Benton County Rural Water Supply Program and other future potential Benton County water resource needs. **The Board moved and seconded to approve the Master Trust Water Right Agreement between Benton County and the Washington State Department of Ecology for Yakima Basin Groundwater and Surface Water Mitigation of Rural Domestic Uses and authorize the Chairman to sign. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

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