



BOARD OF YAKIMA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Regular Meeting

Work Session

Monday, July 11, 2022, at 9:00 am

BOCC Conference Room, Room 232, 128 N 2nd Street, Yakima, WA 98901 or Zoom

7/11/2022 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting Called to Order at 9:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Chair Amanda McKinney, Commissioner LaDon Linde, Commissioner Ron Anderson, Legal Counsel Don Anderson, Clerk of the Board Julie Lawrence, Deputy Clerk of the Board Erin Franklin, Planning Official Tommy Carroll, Financial Services Director Craig Warner, and guests.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

3. YAKIMA COUNTY SOLAR/GREEN ENERGY PROJECTS MORATORIUM DISCUSSION

Commissioner McKinney stated that the State is required to create a plan by December 31, 2022 for how site studies must be conducted for approval of energy projects; however, since those guidelines have not yet been finished, EFSEC continues to approve a multitude of projects in the meantime. She noted that in terms of the High Top and Ostrea projects, the land in question has been identified as a potential water storage site or additional agricultural land (if irrigation is extended). She also noted that EFSEC does not consider all of these projects and their effects/impacts together cumulatively – they only approve projects individually.

Don Anderson explained that per RCW, the County could pass a moratorium ordinance on green energy projects for 60 days, and then keep renewing said moratorium for additional 60 day periods, if the moratorium goes through a hearing process each time and the County is able to give a legitimate reason. However, companies could still go through EFSEC for approval, and EFSEC and Governor Inslee have yet to deny a project, to Don's knowledge.

Commissioner Anderson reasserted that local government should be involved in the siting and approval process for projects in local areas; Don confirmed that EFSEC is supposed to have a local representative.

Tommy Carroll said that putting a moratorium in place would make it clear that the County is not wanting to unilaterally ban green energy projects – it would just make it clear that we want all projects to be properly evaluated before receiving approval. He added that we could also define various standards and approved areas for these projects. EFSEC could then see that we have a defined plan and might even begin to require a locational study if companies request approval for a project that doesn't meet our criteria. Commissioner McKinney shared a study that came out of UC Berkeley stating that these green energy projects take up vastly more land for inefficiency in production of energy per square acre than nuclear energy does. Commissioner Linde brought up how green energy is rarely clean energy, and can even create an additional fire hazard in our dry landscape.

Don Anderson explained that there are two steps going forward: passing the moratorium and then putting together development regulations to govern the siting of these projects. Tommy confirmed that he has a lot of the information already "queued up" for drafting. He added that it seems interesting that a farmer can lease his agricultural land to energy farms and receive approval from EFSEC, but if that same farmer had come to the County to get approval to build residential housing, the GMA would not allow for it.

Commissioner Linde MOTION: To Instruct County Staff, Including Corporate Counsel, to Adopt a Moratorium on Green Energy Projects in Yakima County and Adopt a County Ordinance to Address These Concerns.

Commissioner Anderson SECOND

Motion Passes Unanimously.

4. COMMISSIONER UPDATES/ GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. The Commissioners gave updates on individual committee/board assignments for the week of July 4, 2022-July 8, 2022.

2. Commissioner Linde confirmed his desire to create an initial screening committee for ARPA applications to assess project eligibility; he added that he would like to have a list of all the projects. Erin Franklin confirmed that all the application file downloads are virtually complete. Craig Warner showed the Board how to access the project list spreadsheet he'd already begun compiling. Craig added that he will create two additional columns showing total cost of each project and how much funding each applicant is requesting. Commissioner McKinney asked for an additional column to define the project's general category (e.g. infrastructure, public safety, etc.). She also noted that Petrichor had previously advised the Board to set aside a 25% match of their estimate for the Broadband Project, although a 5-10% match may be all that is needed. The idea had been to use some ARPA funding for this, which at a 25% match would equal about \$25 million.

5. ADJOURN

Commissioner Anderson MOTION: To Adjourn

Commissioner Linde SECOND

Motion Passes to Adjourn. Meeting Adjourned at 9:51 a.m.

All work sessions are recorded and will be available to view on the BOCC website at <https://www.yakimacounty.us/AgendaCenter/Board-of-Commissioners-2>

APPROVED DATE
DATE/Minutes JUL 19 2022

BOARD OF YAKIMA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Amanda McKinney, Chair

LaDon Linde, Commissioner

Ron Anderson, Commissioner
*Constituting the Board of County Commissioners
for Yakima County, Washington*