



BOARD OF YAKIMA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Regular Meeting

Work Session

Monday, August 8, 2022, at 9:00 am

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

Yakima County Welcomes You to Join Our Open Public Meeting In-Person or Virtually.

Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84767080878?pwd=MjBKcjFsRmpWYlYk1NW9qU1V4VnVFdz09>

Meeting ID:

847 6708 0878

Meeting Passcode:

352892

Meeting Phone Number:

1-206-337-9723 (ID & Passcode Above)

8/8/2022 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting Called to Order at 9:01 a.m.

PRESENT: 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 Thomas "Tommy" Carroll, Human Services Director Esther Magasis, Melissa Holm (Human Services), Human Resources Director Jacqui Lindsay, Lee Murdock (Homeless Network of Yakima County, Director), Financial Services Director Craig Warner, and guests.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

3. PUBLIC SERVICES (15 Minutes)

Tommy explained that about four years ago, the Department of Ecology decided to start creating rules for how to officially address the Model Toxic Control Act (1988), a State law that requires the Department of Ecology to deal with contaminants in the soil as part of the construction/development process. In the past, if a new development required SEPA or noticing, Ecology would send a letter suggesting the property owner have the soil tested for contaminants such as lead and arsenic from old pesticides used on former agricultural land. Their desire now is to move from "suggestion" to "requirement".

Ecology created a work group that met during COVID and came up with the idea of having local jurisdictions handle enforcement of this issue instead. This would mean that local jurisdictions would also have to find a way to handle soil remediation: contaminated soil would have to be removed down to a certain depth and dumped at a particular location, and good soil would have to be resourced from somewhere else. However, Yakima County has by far the largest amount of potentially affected property (agricultural land older than 1959 that would have had the aforementioned pesticides): 58,000 acres. To Tommy's recollection, Chelan County came in second at only 8,000 acres. Ecology and their work group wants affected counties to hold Open House meetings to introduce these proposed changes to the public, likely in October or January. Tommy clarified that no county code or procedures are being changed at this time – his update to the Board is purely informational in case anyone from the public reaches out with questions.

Tommy's frustration is that this appears to be an unfunded mandate with no clear plan or resources for local jurisdictions to be able to handle this issue. He stated that counties should not have to find solutions themselves or defend these matters in court when developers file suit. He is also concerned that asking people to test their soil voluntarily might get mixed in with GWMA issues, and doesn't make sense when there still isn't a framework in place to address the results. Don Anderson concurred with Tommy's legal concerns.

In response to Commissioner Linde's question, Tommy noted that there is currently no data to suggest that Yakima County residents have been or are being harmed by soil contamination. Commissioner Anderson shared that this discussion has continued for many years, including a suggestion that all school playgrounds have their soil remediated; however, that suggestion was dismissed. To his recollection, there was even a study conducted that showed that any potential contamination was so low that a person would have to ingest an entire apple bin of soil before ever becoming sick. He added that irrigation likely would have cleared most contaminants from the soil long ago.

Tommy stated that he would send the "Dirt Alert" map from the Department of Ecology to the commissioners for their review. The potentially affected areas are mostly out in West Valley, north of the river in the Lower Valley, and parts of the Yakama Nation.

4. HUMAN SERVICES UPDATE (120 Minutes)

Annual Point in Time (PIT) Count: Melissa Holm explained that the annual PIT Count is required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to estimate the number of people experiencing homelessness on a single night. A Sheltered Count is taken of those in sanctioned encampments, emergency shelters, and transitional housing. An Outreach Count is taken of those sleeping in areas not suited for habitation, including outside, in vehicles, or in abandoned buildings. The PIT Count does not include those who are doubling or "Couch Surfing", those who may be unstably or poorly housed, or those at risk of homelessness. Esther Magasis added that the PIT Count is not an exact number – it is simply a snapshot of the community for showing percentages and trends. The exact count would be roughly double or triple the PIT Count number. In response to Commissioner Linde's question, Melissa and Esther confirmed that the PIT Count is cross-referenced with HMIS for accuracy and consistency.

Melissa shared a series of statistics about the number of people and households surveyed, all individuals by housing type, households by location, individuals who were homeless in 2022, individuals surveyed by frequency, individuals in emergency shelter, individuals by housing type, households by type, household income source, length of time homeless, age of homelessness, chronically homeless individuals, individuals reporting disability, individuals who are veterans, race and ethnicity of individuals, educational attainment, causes and conditions of homelessness, and notable changes. Commissioner Anderson asked if the PIT Count gives any information about residency. Lee Murdock responded that roughly 85% of people surveyed reported that they became homeless while living in Yakima County. In response to Commissioner Linde's question, Esther and Melissa shared that HMIS helps track people's reasons for exiting homelessness programs – whether to enter into a more stable living environment or otherwise – and can give some insight into why the same individuals appear in consecutive years of PIT Counts.

Melissa explained that "chronically homeless" is defined as having a current disability, residing in a place not meant for human habitation or an emergency shelter, for at least 12 months or cumulative 12 months on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years. All three of these conditions must be present to meet the definition.

Melissa noted that although programs can increase the number of emergency shelter beds, people will remain in a limbo of crisis until they are actually housed. Yakima County needs more transitional housing and permanent supportive housing to move people through the system into a more stable situation as quickly as possible.

Esther reminded the Board that data percentages based on households tend to be much more stable than data percentages based on individuals, which can fluctuate easily. She shared that the public can view the information from the Point in Time report on the Human Services page of the Yakima County website. She noted that the Homeless Coalition would be receiving the same report at an upcoming meeting. Melissa stated that she would send a copy of her presentation to the Board for further review.

Systems Map Presentation: Esther presented an overview of the Behavioral Health Systems Mapping Workshop results. All three reports were created in partnership with Policy Research Associates, for the purpose of determining the immediate and achievable behavioral health needs within three of the primary systems of interest in Yakima County: Criminal Justice, Homeless Response System, and Youth Systems of Care. Criminal Justice priorities include: 1) sustaining activities funded by Trueblood, 2) coordinated systemic approach to Intercept 0 (Community Services), and 3) access stable and affordable housing for those with criminal justice system involvement, including reentry housing and permanent supportive housing. Homeless Response System priorities include: 1) explore increasing affordable housing broadly, including but not limited to: increasing stock,

incentivizing new housing development, addressing small housing owners selling rental units, increasing affordable housing for special populations and people who don't meet the low-income limits, and strengthening collaborations with landlords; 2) increase available housing and services in Lower Valley; and 3) increase prevention and diversion strategies for those with mental health, substance use disorders, or who are dually diagnosed, in particular. Youth Systems of Care priorities include: 1) workforce capacity issues, including the need to recruit and retain the sufficient workforce needed to provide services, 2) information sharing around what services are available to support youth in the community, creating a directory of all available youth-specific services in Yakima County, 3) more preventative programming/recreational activities for youth, and 4) services for youth who are lower-risk – youth who are not prioritized for immediate crisis care, but are still in need of accessible behavioral health support. Esther further broke down each priority with specific objectives and detailed action steps. She also provided data on the workshop participants.

Esther went on to outline the allowable uses of the Mental Health Sales Tax: operation or delivery of chemical dependency or mental health treatment programs and services, and operation or delivery of therapeutic court programs and services. Next steps include completion of the Yakima County Behavioral Health Coalition Charter, increasing staff capacity to facilitate the Yakima Behavioral Health Coalition, launch of the Coalition, and BOCC decisions around use of funding.

5. COMMISSIONER UPDATES/ GENERAL DISCUSSION

The Commissioners gave updates on individual committee/board assignments for the week of August 1, 2022-August 5, 2022. They then opened the discussion to New Business.

Jacqui presented a request from the Sheriff's Office for a new dispatcher being hired from SunComm (15 years of experience) to start at Increment 14 on the temporary pay plan with an accrual advancement of 18 hours leave, as has been done for other dispatchers. This individual would start in August, and the accrual would be "frozen" at 18 hours until the time at which it would have been accrued naturally. The commissioners approved this request.

County Roads also submitted a request to revive an Assistant County Engineer position, which would be covered by Fund 121 (Public Services, County Roads). The goal would be to start this position in September. There is already internal interest, but the position will be posted for fair recruitment. Jacqui noted that this position would be good for future training. The commissioners approved this request.

Public Services Natural Resources requested an open position be downgraded in order to hire an internal applicant at a lower level, with the intention of growing and training the applicant to eventually take on more responsibility. The applicant in question is currently at an Increment 2 at the same job level in another Public Services unit, and the request is to maintain that increment since the job level will remain the same. The commissioners approved this request.

Don Anderson mentioned an upcoming meeting with WAPA that will provide additional information on the Opioid Distributors Washington Settlement. A related resolution has been submitted for the August 16, 2022, BOCC Regular Agenda Meeting.

6. ADJOURN

Commissioner Anderson MOTION: To Adjourn

Commissioner Linde SECOND

(Commissioner McKinney ABSENT.)

Motion Passes to Adjourn. Meeting Adjourned at 11:01 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

AUG 16 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*