



BOARD OF YAKIMA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Regular Meeting

Work Session

Friday, March 3, 2023, at 9:00 am

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

3/3/2023 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

PRESENT: Chair LaDon Linde, Commissioner Amanda McKinney, Commissioner Kyle Curtis, Legal Counsel Don Anderson, Clerk of the Board Julie Lawrence, Human Resources Director Jacqui Lindsay, Naches Fire Chief Alan Baird, Environmental Services Director David Haws, Water Resources Strategic Manager Joel Freudenthal, Human Services Director Esther Magasis, District Court Administrator Therese Murphy, Financial Services Director Craig Warner, and guests.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment Received.

3. HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Jacqui Lindsay presented a request from Human Resources to eliminate a recently-created temporary overfill for a managerial position in Public Services Code Enforcement. The retiring employee has recently provided a date for his retirement, so now HR can put that date in their system, and the temporary position is no longer necessary. The Commissioners approved this request.

4. NACHES FIRE DISTRICT

Chief Baird began by the Board for their recent allotment of ARPA funds to fire district projects. He then explained the need for an MOU so that the Naches Fire District can continue to provide service to no-man's land in the White Pass area. An MOU has not been in place in the past, but the need for service in that area has increased over the years.

Commissioner McKinney thanked the fire district for being responsive in the past simply because it's the right thing to do, despite the liability. However, she questioned whether Yakima County should be party to the agreement, or if it should help the fire district pursue such an agreement with other agencies because some of that area is actual State or Federal land. Don Anderson raised the question of what agency ought to pay for the service; Yakima County taxpayers should not be responsible for the cost of servicing land that is not part of the County. He confirmed that he would do more research on instituting some kind of communication or inter-local agreement (ILA) with the State or other agencies if the Board would like to go that route. Commissioner McKinney expressed the need to discuss with the State the many other areas of no-man's land that the County's fire districts have been servicing in the past.

Commissioner Linde asked Chief Baird if the fire district has had any conversations with the Department of Natural Resources, as they have an office in Naches. Chief Baird explained that they just have some fire crews there; however, he has talked with the U.S. Forest Service in the past, and the Federal government did not appear interested in setting anything up at that time, despite the fact that an MOU would actually offer liability protection to both parties. He noted for Craig Warner that there is currently an EMS mechanism that allows the fire district to submit for expenses after being called out to no-man's land.

In response to Commissioner Linde's question, Don confirmed that he has gathered some MOU's as potential templates that can be tailored to Yakima County's needs. Commissioner McKinney suggested looking in particular

at what Kittitas County has set up, as they have similar struggles with no-man's land; additionally, she acknowledged a comment in the Chat Box suggesting a transportation taskforce in Kittitas County that might be of help.) In response to Commissioner Curtis' question, Commissioner McKinney offered to continue to work with Don on this issue, as she is also involved in the Wildfire Protection Plan Updated. Julie Lawrence was directed to set up another Work Session to discuss this topic in a month or so.

5. PUBLIC SERVICES

"Free Dump Day" Discussion: Commissioner Linde suggested the idea of instituting a "Free Dump Day" at the landfill to encourage residents to clear out trash and other "junk" items sitting on properties or being improperly disposed-of around the County. It is his belief that such an incentive would contribute to the cleanliness, health, safety, and even potentially the economic development of Yakima County. He noted that others had voiced concerns about whether or not this might constitute the gifting of public funds, but observed that in 2022, the Board had authorized some funding to cover tipping fees for community cleanups. Craig Warner explained that at that time, the appropriate city also contacted the County to communicate the groups involved and the areas being cleaned up. Commissioner McKinney stated that she would like to partner with the various cities in the event of a "Free Dump Day", as much of the waste from any cleanups would likely come from areas within city limits. Commissioner Curtis noted the value for people to potentially rectify their Code Enforcement violations.

David Haws explained the County's original reasons for discontinuing an annual "Free Dump Day" after its original run in 1985-2003. There were safety concerns due to the overcrowding of customers converging on the landfill, some of whom had been saving up their garbage for an entire year and thus took longer to dispose of it, creating lengthy backups. In addition, all Solid Waste staff would need to be called in to work that day to cover the volume of customers and garbage. This meant a higher cost for the County, on top of the cost of lost revenue throughout the year and on the "Free Dump Day" specifically. David suggested focusing on offering vouchers for community cleanups throughout the year instead. Commissioner McKinney expressed her desire to implement something to this end that would be organized, require submitted plans from people in order to receive a voucher, focus on problem areas, and have the appropriate "guardrails" to prevent issues. Commissioner Linde stated that he would reach out to David for further discussion; noting that Solid Waste, Code Enforcement, and the various cities would need to be involved and informed in developing a plan.

Water Issues Discussion: Joel Freudenthal provided a YCWRS update, detailing the Water Bank Proviso language currently being discussed by the Legislature, an intra-county charter for acquisition and management of mitigation water rights, trust water rights agreement descriptions, and issues relating to transfers/changes. Regarding proviso language surrounding the permanent change of water rights to municipal, Joel noted that Commissioner McKinney had similar questions as the Department of Ecology. He also explained that Chelan County is the only other county besides Yakima County that is not currently in litigation over water rights, and therefore Yakima County might want to join in on some of Chelan County's meetings with Ecology to learn more about how they're handling this issue.

Joel also shared concerns about current water banking rules that require water rights to go into trust with Ecology; if the County could instead acquire water rights as municipal rights, the County would maintain management of those rights. This would even help with approving land use permits much more quickly without the need for outside input. Commissioner McKinney additionally observed that when trying to acquire water rights for municipal purposes, Ecology always requires that so much water goes back to instream flow for fish restoration, making it that much harder to ensure adequate water for residents. The Board agreed to have Joel and Commissioner McKinney reach out to their counterparts in Chelan County for more information, and to reach out to Selah Moxee Irrigation District about purchasing water rights. Commissioner McKinney also confirmed that she is working on talking with the Legislature about municipal rights, and adding proviso language that would clarify whether it can be considered a municipal purpose to buy water rights in order to satisfy the Growth Management Act.

6. HUMAN SERVICES

Esther Magasis was present to discuss law and justice projects for BOCC consideration for funding. She reviewed the proposed process timeline for the Mental Health Sales Tax, and then gave an overview of project submissions from County departments, including Medication Assisted Treatment Services, Yakima County Family Treatment Court, the Mental Health Supervision Team, Yakima County DUI Court, Yakima County Superior Drug Court, Yakima County Therapeutic Courts/ITA Courts, and Therapeutic Court Defense Services. District Court Administrator Therese Murphy provided further information on the MHS Team. The Commissioners stated that they would be interested in finding additional community partners for Family Treatment Court, and asked Craig Warner to find out if there is adequate departmental budget available to cover additional staff for the Therapeutic Courts/ITA Courts. Finally, Esther addressed ongoing questions about Trueblood funding, and details up the upcoming Public RFP.

The Board agreed that they would like to have a better idea of what programs are already in place in these departments in order to ensure that new ideas and strategies are being developed instead of simply expanding on old ones. They also agreed that they would like to move forward with public RFP's as soon as possible before completely finalizing approval for internal projects. Commissioner Curtis suggested starting with an RFI to gather information about potential project ideas in the community more quickly; Esther confirmed that she would start this process. Commissioner McKinney asked to discuss funding with Craig at an upcoming Work Session. Esther suggested that the Board also discuss potential RFI questions at next Friday's Work Session, after which she could provide an update on the RFI next month, and then the Board could proceed with allocations.

7. AGENDA ITEM REVIEW

Julie Lawrence reviewed for the Board all Agenda items submitted for Tuesday's Regular Agenda Meeting.

Julie made note to change a "Human Services" heading to "Human Resources", per Commissioner Linde. Commissioner Curtis requested that Public Services' Agreement 46-2023 be moved to Regular Agenda.

8. COMMISSIONER UPDATES/ GENERAL DISCUSSION

The Commissioners did not discuss any updates.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Julie Lawrence presented a Meals With Meetings Authorization Form for \$123.55 from a recent Human Services retreat. Esther Magasis explained that Human Services does this retreat twice a year. Craig Warner added that this form used to be utilized more frequently by past programs that are no longer run by the County; Julie noted that in present times, it's rarely seen. The Commissioners approved this request.

Craig showed the Board his draft ARPA applicant approval letter, which the Board summarily approved. He also noted that the denial letters are complete and ready for assembly and mailing.

10. ADJOURN

Commissioner Curtis MOTION: To Adjourn

Commissioner McKinney SECOND

Motion Passes to Adjourn. Meeting Adjourned at 12:09 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

APR 04 2023

BOARD OF YAKIMA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

LaDon Linde, Chair

Amanda McKinney, Commissioner

Kyle Curtis, Commissioner

*Constituting the Board of County Commissioners
for Yakima County, Washington*

