



BOARD OF YAKIMA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Regular Meeting

Work Session

Friday, March 10, 2023, at 9:00 am

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

3/10/2023 - 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, Human Services Data & Finance Manager Lance Larsen, Water Resources Strategic Manager Joel Freudenthal, Joe Poire (Broadband Consultant), Nick Guy (BAT Team Regional Coordinator), Kittitas County Commissioner Cory Wright, and guests.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment Received.

3. HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Jacqui Lindsay presented a request from Financial Services to reinstate the PTO accrual level of a former employee rehired for a new position. He worked in the Treasurer's Office and Financial Services from 2018 to 2022, and has now returned to a new role in Financial Services. This request would reinstate his previous accrual rate of 13.34 hours per month, instead of the new hire rate of 10 hours per month. In response to Commissioner Curtis' question, Jacqui explained that this type of request is infrequent but not uncommon, and there is no official policy reinstating the benefits of rehired employees. The Commissioners approved this request.

Jacqui also shared two requests from the Sheriff's Office for continued out-of-class pay for a Dispatch employee and a financial employee. However, the Commissioners asked Jacqui to reach out to the Sheriff for more information on both of these requests before they would be ready to make a decision. She and the Commissioners agreed to try to revisit this subject at Monday's Work Session if possible.

4. AGENDA ITEM REVIEW

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

The Commissioners had no changes for the March 14, 2023, Agenda.

Lance Larsen was present to discuss Agreements 55-2023, 56-2023, and 57-2023 from Human Services. He explained that Agreements 55 and 56 are only reducing contract funding from one source with the intent of switching to another funding source. This allows Human Services to maximize available funding as much as possible within the required deadlines for use. Lance went on to explain that Agreement 57 is due to the Department of Commerce opening up a new funding source – Foundational Community Support – and Yakima Neighborhood Health Services is the only local partner with a Housing & Essential Needs program that is eligible for this funding, so that is how it will be utilized. This funding appears to be intended to bridge the gap between qualifying for assistance from DSHS, and being truly stabilized. The Commissioners asked Lance to reach out to Esther Magasis and Melissa Holm to answer additional questions at Monday's Work Session about the criteria and timeframe for use of these funds.

Joel Freudenthal was present to discuss Resolution 67-2023 from Public Services, accepting a U.S. Department of Fish & Wildlife service grant award. The County was simply awarded the grant without applying, but Joel will need to fill out an application for federal assistance in order to move forward, and this will require BOCC approval. Per

Commissioner McKinney's request, Joel briefly described the South Fork Tieton Bridge and Fish Passage Project, which will benefit from this grant.

Commissioner Curtis had additional questions about the regional crime lab assessment (Agreement 63-2023 from the Prosecutor's Office), whether the BOCC Chair would eventually make a statement on the new union contracts, and what level of public notice is required for the public hearing on the proposed Lower Valley Public Hospital District.

5. BROADBAND DISCUSSION

Joe Poire led a discussion on how the BOCC might want to structure the process of getting under contract to build broadband infrastructure, and how to frame up business operations from there. The County could operate a municipal broadband company, giving the County local control of all aspects of operation as a public service; conversely, the County could contract operations to an outside source, in which case the County would set performance standards, and the business would be run by the private sector.

Joe went on to explain the decision to be made on the procurement process and grant administration. Under the Classic Model, the County would solicit design, and then either County staff would build the infrastructure, or the County could solicit construction of infrastructure. Afterward, the County could either maintain the fiber network or outsource this task to a contractor. Under the Design, Build, Maintain Model, the County would solicit for qualified companies to perform all three tasks in the Classic Model: design, building, and maintenance. Joe compared the benefits and risks of each of these models, noting that an open access policy for all interested companies to utilize the broadband system works under both models.

Joe further described the network layout, using the example of the proposed initial project area around Tieton. He explained the differences between a Lit System and a Dark Fiber System, noting the 15% cost differential between the two. In response to Commissioner McKinney's question, he shared that the Federal Communications Commission has instituted a \$30 subsidy against residents' broadband bills under the Affordable Connectivity Program. Providers will be encouraged to offer a product that only costs around \$30-35 in order to keep this service affordable, and all providers will be required to be part of the ACP. This subsidy currently only has funding through 2028. In response to Commissioner Curtis' question, Joe noted some examples of counties that are looking at handling their own infrastructure.

Nick Guy shared from his experiences as a network engineer for a communications company. He also spoke about options like Starlink and other services, in response to Commissioners Linde and McKinney's questions. Kittitas County Commissioner Cory Wright advised the Board to get their policies set as early as possible, ensure open access and competition, maximize the "surge premises" by maximizing grant efficiency, and minimize public risk and cost. His encouragement was to find qualified providers in the private sector, give them the right parameters/policies, and allow them to find the efficiencies in the best pursuit of public benefit. He noted that the County would still gain revenue from a private sector provider, and that money could be invested back into the network.

In response to Commissioner Linde's question, Joe stated that the Board should try to be ready to make a decision about how they would like to structure this process at the time the grant is awarded (likely sometime in April). Commissioner McKinney suggested that each Commissioner should make time to ask individual follow-up questions of Joe as needed within the next week, and then reconvene as a Board for discussion at a Work Session the following week. Commissioner Wright offered to be a resource, as well. Julie Lawrence was directed to forward Joe's PowerPoint to each of the Commissioners for their further review.

6. COMMISSIONER UPDATES/ GENERAL DISCUSSION

Letter of Interest – Cooperating Agency for Bureau of Land Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement: Commissioner McKinney stated that this letter is just a formality to confirm that Yakima County interested in participating in these discussions, and to submit her name as the County's contact person. In response to Commissioner Curtis' question, she affirmed that these discussions give the County a voice in green energy policies and policies relating to YBIP. She would be able to provide updates to the Board at Commissioner meetings.

Commissioner Curtis MOTION: To Approve the Letter of Interest as Shown Onscreen

Commissioner Linde SECOND

Motion Passes Unanimously.

7. NEW BUSINESS

Julie Lawrence presented an additional, time-sensitive letter submitted by Joel Freudenthal earlier in the morning, for "Support of Full Removal of the Bateman Island Causeway." Commissioner McKinney noted that this has the support of all YBIP membership, due to the damage the causeway has done to the fish population and natural flow of river.

Commissioner Curtis MOTION: To Approve the Letter of Support as Shown Onscreen

Commissioner McKinney SECOND

Motion Passes Unanimously.

Commissioner Linde followed up on a previous discussion with Esther Magasis about submitting questions for the Mental Health Sales Tax public RFI's. Commissioner Curtis observed that the discussion planned with Craig Warner at the upcoming Monday's Work Session would provide additional insight on this topic; Commissioner McKinney concurred. Commissioner Linde also noted some upcoming legislation that might correct the oversight of only allowing cities (not counties) to use Mental Health Sales Tax funds for facilities or capital projects.

In light of the earlier broadband discussion, Commissioner McKinney thanked the Board again for setting aside a portion of ARPA funds to be used as broadband grant match funds.

8. ADJOURN

Commissioner Curtis MOTION: To Adjourn

Commissioner McKinney SECOND

Motion Passes to Adjourn. Meeting Adjourned at 10:43 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 11 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*

