



BOARD OF YAKIMA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Regular Meeting

Work Session

Friday, May 5, 2023, at 9:00 am

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

5/5/2023 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

PRESENT: Commissioner Amanda McKinney, Commissioner Kyle Curtis, Legal Counsel Stefanie Weigand, Clerk of the Board Julie Lawrence, Deputy Clerk of the Board Erin Franklin, Human Resources Director Jacqui Lindsay, Human Resources Senior Manager Judy Kendall, County Auditor Charles Ross, Solid Waste Manager Karma Suchan, Financial Services Senior Manager Stefanie Truex, YCDA Director Jonathan Smith, Yakima Airport Terminal Director Robert Hodgman, and guests.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment Received.

3. HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE (15 Minutes)

Judy Kendall presented a number of action memos to the Board. The first was to reclassify a vacant position in the Prosecutor's Office from an Office Specialist 1 to a Program Representative 2. The upgrade is due to anticipated work volume, as the employee eventually hired to fill this role would primarily be responsible for reviewing and redacting bodycam footage as part of the Civil Division's public records group. Commissioner McKinney noted that the Board had anticipated this need would arise, and the Commissioners summarily approved this request.

The second request was to reclassify a vacant position in County Roads from a Heavy Equipment Operator down to a Road Maintenance Technician, in order to take advantage of the current abundance of quality applicants for Road Maintenance Technician positions. The Commissioners approved this request.

The third request was to add a new temporary Financial Specialist 1 position in the Auditor's Office to help cover the workload while two other employees are out on medical leave. This position would last up to six months, or as soon as one of the employees returns and extra help is no longer needed. Charles Ross stated that this is separate from the passport services project, but noted that advertising for this temporary position could unearth a quality employee who might eventually be interested in applying for the permanent passport services role instead. The Commissioners approved this request.

Public Services Solid Waste submitted requests for four new Maintenance Specialist positions, due to new legislative requirements and increasing demand at the Terrace Heights and Cheyne Landfills. Each position would cost \$42,000, which Solid Waste already planned for in their 2023 budget. In response to Commissioner McKinney's question, Karma Suchan confirmed that the State Legislature had not provided funding for these new positions. The Commissioners approved these requests.

Finally, Judy explained that 11 positions from various departments (primarily Public Services and County Roads) need to have their ID numbers updated to reflect the department through which each position is primarily funded. Some positions are funded by multiple departments, but the ID number should reflect the primary department. This is standard "clean up" in preparation for the creation of the 2024 budget. The Commissioners directed Judy to draft a resolution to this end instead of reviewing each position individually; they will review the full list prior to taking action at a future Agenda.

4. AGENDA ITEM REVIEW (10 Minutes)

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

The Commissioners had no changes for the May 9, 2023, Agenda.

Commissioner Curtis requested that someone from Human Services be present at Monday's Work Session to clarify Agreements 120-2023 and 121-2023.

5. COMMISSIONER UPDATES/ GENERAL DISCUSSION

Small Community Air Service Development Program Letter of Support: Commissioner Curtis explained that this was a request from the City of Yakima for a letter from the BOCC expressing support of their application to this program. This letter would be consistent with a letter previously sent by the Board.

Commissioner McKinney MOTION: To Approve, Sign, and Send the Letter of Support

Commissioner Curtis SECOND

Motion Passes. (Julie Lawrence noted that Commissioner Linde had also stated that he was in favor of this letter.)

Commissioner McKinney stated that Jonathan Smith and Robert Hodgman were also present for an update related to the Yakima Air Terminal, specifically the possibility of adding new flights and trying to bring in a regional airport. Robert explained that prior to the pandemic, Yakima Air Terminal provided several flights to and from Seattle each day, but as a result of the pandemic, flights were reduced, and Yakima has since lost business to the Tri-Cities. A recent poll from the City of Yakima has indicated that residents are most interested in adding flights to Seattle and Las Vegas. The primary goal is to at least reintroduce an additional morning flight from Yakima to Seattle, and an additional night flight from Seattle to Yakima. This would result in the creation of 75 jobs and an estimated \$5.7 million in local revenue. However, as this would also result in additional cost to Alaska Airlines, they are requesting a \$500,000 minimum revenue guarantee until these flights prove sustainable. Rob noted that Walla Walla and Wenatchee have each already made this guarantee. The other available option is funding through the SCASD grant, which is highly competitive, requires a minimum 30% local community contribution, and could take some time to be awarded. Alaska Airlines needs a response by May 15th in order to potentially restore flights by September, so a community event with partners in both the public and private sectors will be held Thursday at 4 p.m. at the Convention Center.

Commissioner McKinney noted that this situation highlights the need for a port district in Yakima, and expressed her desire to see a port district appear on an upcoming ballot measure due to the many economic benefits. Both Walla Walla and Wenatchee received significant funding from their port districts; Jonathan Smith noted that aside from Spokane, every other commercial airport in Washington State is supported by a port district. He stated while Yakima Air Terminal could support additional flights, it will take a great deal of funding to restore each of those flights. Commissioner McKinney and Robert noted that the funds from the minimum revenue guarantee would be held in reserve by YCDA's foundation in case costs are not covered – they might not even need to be utilized that heavily as long as the flights are adequately filled.

In response to Commissioner McKinney's question, and in the absence of Financial Services Director Craig Warner, Stefanie Truex confirmed that she would look into what type of funding the County might be able to offer in support of restoring flights to Yakima Air Terminal. Commissioner McKinney and Commissioner Curtis asked that she look into ARPA funding (with COVID being the clear reason for the original decrease in/loss of flights), ARPA interest earnings, SIED funds, and the General Fund. Commissioner Curtis and Stefanie Weigand suggested reaching out to Clifton Larson Allen for their expertise on ARPA funding guidelines. Commissioner McKinney explained that she would like to immediately commit to providing some amount of funding, in order to encourage additional funding from both the public and private sectors prior to Thursday's gathering; she noted that she would be willing to utilize some of her remaining pool of ARPA funds, if necessary.

Commissioner McKinney Final Revised MOTION: To Commit \$100,000 in Funding from Yakima County to Support the Effort to Restore Flights at Yakima Air Terminal

Commissioner Curtis SECOND

Motion Passes.

As Craig Warner will not return to office until May 15th, Commissioner McKinney asked Stefanie Truex to have an update on possible funding sources prepared by next Friday, and directed Julie Lawrence to add this topic to Friday's Work Session. Stefanie Truex noted that she would need Craig's input regarding SIED funds, if that turned out to be the only option.

Commissioner McKinney additionally asked that Julie work with Jonathan and Robert to set up a time to discuss the possible creation of a port district. Commissioner Curtis shared that an economic study would need to be conducted before placing this item on the ballot, partly to garner voter support; Robert explained that this study could last up to a year, depending on its scope. He briefly discussed how the creation of a port district would be vital to Yakima Air Terminal's chances of becoming a regional airport.

Commissioner Curtis asked to attend next Thursday's gathering on behalf of the BOCC and update the rest of the Board on next steps at a future work session; Commissioner McKinney concurred. She also asked that Julie draft a letter to be sent to Robert, confirming the County's commitment of funds. Commissioner Curtis stated the Board could discuss and vote on the draft at Monday's Work Session. Julie noted that Commissioner Linde would also be present at that Work Session.

6. NEW BUSINESS

No New Business.

7. ADJOURN

Commissioner Curtis MOTION: To Adjourn

Commissioner McKinney SECOND

Motion Passes to Adjourn. Meeting Adjourned at 9:59 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 **MAY 23 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*

