



## BOARD OF YAKIMA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Regular Meeting

Work Session

Monday, May 8, 2023, at 9:00 am

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

5/8/2023 - 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 Stefanie Weigand, Clerk of the Board Julie Lawrence, Deputy Clerk of the Board Erin Franklin, County Prosecutor Joe Brusich, Human Services Director Esther Magasis, and guests.

### 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Linde read aloud written comment that had been sent via email by Elizabeth Hallock. She detailed her concerns about how the potential expansion of Yakima Air Terminal might affect the community and the environment, including pollution, noise, public health, traffic, property values, etc.

Commissioner McKinney asked that Julie Lawrence brainstorm something to add to the Commissioners' website explaining how to submit written public comment if a constituent is unable to be present in person. Commissioner Curtis suggested using a similar format to the City of Yakima.

### 3. EXECUTIVE SESSION (15 Minutes)

The Board met in Executive Session at 9:05 a.m. for 15 minutes for a discussion with legal counsel about legal risks of current or proposed action, as allowed by RCW42.30.110(1)(i). Commissioner Linde returned at 9:20 a.m. to extend the meeting by an additional 10 minutes. The Board returned at 9:30 a.m. as agreed upon, and no further action was taken.

### 4. DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS (30 Minutes)

Commissioner Linde stated that this item would be deferred to a future meeting.

### 5. DRUG POSSESSION ORDINANCE UPDATE.

Commissioner Linde explained that a Law & Justice Committee meeting was held last week, and it was decided that a Law & Justice Working Group be formed to handle the drug possession ordinance issue specifically; this group will include Commissioner Linde, County Prosecutor Joe Brusich, Sheriff Bob Udell, Department of Assigned Counsel Director Paul Kelley, Department of Corrections Director Jeremy Welch, and District Court Administrator Therese Murphy (or one of her designees). Joe continued that he had met with the Legislative Committee of the Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (WAPA) last Friday, and they will hold another meeting this Friday. On Thursday, they will also meet with both city and county prosecutors to talk about the process of drafting an ordinance. They are still hopeful that the Legislature might be able to find a solution, instead of local jurisdictions having to create a patchwork solution themselves. Commissioner Linde noted that the Legislature has been called back into special session by Governor Inslee to work toward a statewide solution (possibly around May 16th), but other entities will continue moving forward pursuing their own solutions, just in case. Commissioner McKinney concurred with this course of action and stated that WAPA has done well taking the lead on this issue. She asked that Joe provide another update next Monday so that the Board can determine next steps.

Commissioner Curtis stated that the Board would need to decide whether to move forward with an ordinance by June 6th, in order to allow adequate time for the public hearing process.



## 6. HUMAN SERVICES (60 Minutes)

Funding for Broadband Website: Esther Magasis stated that her department had been awarded \$40,000 for broadband work through a Washington State University grant, but the grant contract paperwork has not yet been finalized, and they have already received an invoice for their broadband website. She explained that Financial Services Director Craig Warner had suggested billing the invoice to the ARPA funding set aside for broadband in the meantime. The Board approved this request. Esther also announced that she had received a phone call from the Washington State Broadband Office this morning informing her that Yakima County has received contingent approval of its broadband application. She is expecting a confirmation email later today, and also confirmed that she would inform Commissioner McKinney of the application score.

Answer BOCC Questions Regarding Agreement 120-2023 & Agreement 121-2023: In response to Commissioner Curtis' question, Esther explained that Human Services had received additional federal and state funding for rental assistance programs. Commissioner Linde noted that this appeared to be the case for Agreement 119-2023, as well. Commissioner McKinney asked why applications are still being submitted for these programs if there is no direct connection to COVID (restrictions have been removed, wages are higher, unemployment is lower, etc.). Esther stated that this funding will be ending, but residents are still eligible in the meantime due to income; she confirmed that she would look into this further. Commissioners McKinney and Curtis also asked that she find out whether there is any data being collected on what reasons residents are citing for applying for these funds. Commissioner McKinney added that the state's push to take away affordable energy options and require residents to purchase electric vehicles does not help or even take into account their current financial struggles. Commissioner Linde concurred, noting high fuel prices and referencing a recent statistic indicating that more people are moving out of Washington State than moving into Washington State.

Mental Health Sales Tax RFI Discussion: Esther provided an overview of the Request for Information that was sent out to community partners recently to gather information to be used to plan and understand price, delivery, and industry capabilities as it relates to the use of the Mental Health Sales Tax. She noted that this was not a grant application; an RFP would be sent out to community partners at a later date. This RFI was purely to give outside context to the internal applications the Board had already received for review. Esther added that the County had received about \$10.2 million in external requests for one year of funding, but the largest request may not be eligible.

Esther went on to provide summaries of the RFI submissions: Superior Drug Court Improvement Project (in partnership with Comprehensive Healthcare), Probation Mental Health Supervision Team (in partnership with Comprehensive Healthcare), the Mosbrucker Center for New Beginnings (providing staffing for a Comprehensive Healthcare facility onsite at Camp Hope), Diversion & Jail Release Planning (through Comprehensive Healthcare), Target Youth Homelessness (adding a McKinney Vento coordinator and mental health and substance use counselors via ESD 105), Training Next Gen Mental Health Providers (scholarships through Heritage University), Sun Tower (offering affordable housing and mental health services for senior citizens through Human Good SunTower), Help Mental Health People That Are Struggling (Mental Health Outreach; this may have been submitted by a private individual), Support Groups (through NAMI Yakima), Behavioral Service Optimization (occupational therapy behavioral health services through Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences), Behavioral Health Services (services for young people through Rod's House), We Care Initiative (a wellness center in the Lower Valley through The Range, LLC, and in partnership with the Yakama Nation), Youth Intervention Through Triumph's Pregnant & Parenting Women's Program (from Triumph Treatment Services), Substance Use Disorder & Mental Health Treatment Inside the Yakima County Jail (from Triumph Treatment Services), Permanent Supportive Low-Income Housing (from Triumph Treatment Services), Behavioral Health (outreach efforts through Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic for high-risk youth), and YWCA Empowerment Pathways (behavioral health programs for survivors of domestic violence, through YWCA Yakima).

Commissioner Linde noted that the State might have an answer soon regarding Trueblood funding for Designated Crisis Responders. He added that Governor Inslee also signed a bill allowing counties to utilize MHST funds for capital projects, which would then make projects with facilities costs (such as the Permanent Supportive Low-Income Housing project from Triumph) eligible for funding. Additionally, Esther explained that the request from Heritage University may not be eligible for MHST funds: it's essentially a scholarship program aimed at supporting students in the Masters in Mental Health Counseling program (launching in fall 2024). Although this would serve to train up mental health practitioners who could then potentially serve the residents of Yakima County, and the program would involve hands-on internships for a year, the program is not directly tied to services and therefore might not be eligible to receive funding. Commissioner McKinney directed Esther to reach out to Corporate Counsel to see if there is another way the County could support these types of efforts. Commissioner Curtis made note of the submission from Pacific Northwest University that was similar in nature, but had slightly more of a focus on getting students out into the community, and therefore might be more aligned with MHST guidelines.

Looking forward, Esther explained that the Board would next need to revisit the internal program proposals with the context of the RFI; internal proposals need to be prioritized due to the constraints of the internal budget cycle.

Some of these funds could be deployed into projects right away if departments are ready. Afterward, the County can release a public RFP to distribute MHST funds to external projects. The County will also need to complete the expanded Designated Crisis Responder project model and contract. Commissioners McKinney and Curtis noted that the DCR issue is a large component that will greatly inform other spending decisions; Commissioner Linde restated that the Board should find out about Trueblood funding within the next week or two. Commissioner McKinney requested that Esther send the Board a spreadsheet of internal project requests similar to what Financial Services Director Craig Warner created as the Board was allocating ARPA funding; she also asked the Esther include any useful information from the RFI for context. Commissioner Linde concurred. Esther noted that she would be out of office on Monday, but could try to send the spreadsheet to the Board prior to that. Due to scheduling conflicts, the Board eventually agreed to continue the conversation at the Monday, May 22nd, Work Session.

Per Commissioner Curtis' request, Esther stated that she would try to prepare the external RFP to go out in June; she added that Human Services usually tries to give applicants 4-6 weeks to respond. Then a scoring committee reviews the applications over another 4-6 weeks. The Board agreed that they would like to score these applications themselves, because a) it will save time; b) scoring committee members are selected from community partners, and since most of these same community partners will be applying for funding, they will be ineligible for the scoring committee; and c) the Board has been so involved in reviewing the priorities, gaps, goals, etc. for use of MHST funds that they have ample information and expertise to decide on allocations. Commissioner McKinney noted that focusing on preparing the external RFP would also allow for more time to get an answer about DCR's and Trueblood funding.

## 7. COMMISSIONER UPDATES/ GENERAL DISCUSSION

Commitment Letter - Funding for Air Service at Yakima Airport: Commissioner Linde noted that he wasn't part of this discussion at last Friday's Work Session, but stated that he understands the need to invest funds to increase flights. Commissioners McKinney and Curtis briefly recapped the discussion for him. In response to his questions, Commissioner Curtis stated that the City of Yakima and the City of Union Gap are both looking into committing funds. Financial Services Senior Manager Stefanie Truex is also in the process of researching whether the County can utilize ARPA funds, ARPA interest earnings, SIED funds, or the General Fund. Commissioner Linde agreed to add his signature to the commitment letter along with the other Commissioners.

The Commissioners gave updates on individual committee/board assignments for the week of May 1, 2023-May 5, 2023.

## 8. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Curtis noted that the Board would be presenting the "Extra Mile Award" to the selected employees at Tuesday's Agenda Meeting. Light refreshments would also be provided afterward.

Julie Lawrence informed the Board of a last-minute request from the USPS mailman for a replacement badge after his was misplaced. Human Resources directed him to the Commissioners' Office for authorization. The Commissioners approved this request and asked that his misplaced badge be switched off. Julie confirmed that she would reach out to HR with the Board's response.

## 9. ADJOURN

Commissioner Curtis MOTION: To Adjourn

Commissioner McKinney SECOND

Motion Passes to Adjourn. Meeting Adjourned at 11:31 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

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LaDon Linde, Chair

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Amanda McKinney, Commissioner

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Kyle Curtis, Commissioner

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