



BOARD OF YAKIMA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Regular Meeting

Work Session

Friday, June 2, 2023, at 9:00 am

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

6/2/2023 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting Called to Order at 9:00 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, Building Official Marivel Garcia, Building Program Coordinator Mayra Romo, Public Services Director Lisa Freund, Financial Services Director Craig Warner, and guests.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment Received.

3. HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE (15 Minutes)

Jacqui Lindsay presented a request from Technology Services to eliminate a System Network Administrator position that has been vacant for 18 months. The department is opting not to fill this role. Commissioner McKinney noted that TS Director Dale Panattoni had mentioned this to the Board about a month ago. The Commissioners approved this request.

4. PUBLIC SERVICES (30 Minutes)

Marivel Garcia was present, along with Mayra Romo and Lisa Freund, to report on building permit progress and discuss next steps in using Wednesday closures to help improve processing efficiencies in the Building & Fire Safety Division. She shared numerous statistics comparing work output and customer interactions during the period of October 26, 2021 – June 1, 2022 with October 26, 2022 – June 1, 2023, noting 6 additional vacant positions during the current time period. Two new hires are in training and have proved incredibly helpful, as have the Wednesday closures to catch up on backlogged applications. She noted that due to the backlog, many applicants were turning in incomplete applications in order to “get in line”; however, this actually delayed their progress further as staff had to follow up for the rest of the required information.

In response to feedback from community partners (including Ron Pelson of Traditional Designs, Inc., who was also present), staff eventually implemented expedited processing for simple projects that are complete for submittal, regardless of origin. Community partners also asked that Building staff email customers their case numbers for permit applications submitted by email or dropped off upon case creation. This was implemented by staff on March 16, 2023; however, Marivel would like to explore how to implement an automated version of this process.

Finally, community partners requested that staff resume in-person intakes and completeness reviews at the front counter; this practice was reinstated on April 18, 2023. Marivel also noted that Building has been receiving fewer phone calls with questions during the current time period, likely due to more customers showing up in person or utilizing the division’s new email inbox. She will reach out to Technology Services to see if they can run a report on how many emails have been sent to this shared staff inbox.

Marivel stated that going forward, she is continuing to explore expedited processing options, upgrading permitting software, streamlining processes for better efficiency, creating additional case types in Accela Citizen Access, permit system automation and reporting to streamline processing, recruiting and training qualified staff, and creating hybrid positions and cross-training. The division will also complete testing and training for Electronic Plan Review so they can move forward with implementation, and Marivel will continue to review customer surveys and work with community partners on feedback and suggestions. In response to Commissioner Curtis' question about the County's self-hosted permitting system, Marivel explained that Yakima County is one of only a few counties that still do this, and eventually it will no longer be an option. Commissioner McKinney expressed her desire to see the State Legislature fund a consistent, statewide software program, especially if the Legislature is going to require municipalities to speed up their permit processing times.

The Commissioners went on to discuss whether to continue the division's Wednesday closures, or reopen completely. Marivel explained that they have been beneficial to staff workload and morale. Mr. Pelson spoke favorably of the changes that have been implemented thus far. Commissioner McKinney stated that she would like to see the closures continue until the division is able to implement more automation for productivity.

Commissioner Curtis stated that he would like to see the division completely reopen to the public, perhaps implementing a team system where staff would rotate between helping the public and focusing on processing.

The Board agreed to revisit the discussion at a Work Session in September, allowing more time for staffing levels to increase before making a decision. Lisa Freund and Marivel also clarified that Public Services is open to the public five days a week – it's just the Building Division that is "closed" to the public on Wednesdays, although staff will still make themselves available and not turn away any walk-in customers.

In response to a question from Commissioner Curtis about new requirements from the State Legislature related to building, Commissioner McKinney acknowledged a comment from Andi Hochleutner from the Central Washington Home Builders Association stating that the Building Code Council voted on May 24, 2023, to delay the effective date of the 2021 codes for 120 days. The new effective date for all building codes is October 29, 2023.

Previously, it would have been July 1, 2023. Mr. Pelson also briefly discussed ways that Yakima County could make online application systems more user-friendly for professionals, and commented that Yakima County is actually one of the better jurisdictions that he has encountered in his business.

5. 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 June 6, 2023, Agenda.

Regarding Resolution 145-2023, appointing a new member to the Planning Commission, Commissioner Curtis asked Julie Lawrence to forward a copy of the individual's resume.

Commissioner Curtis also noted that he has a scheduling conflict on Tuesday and will not be present for the Regular Agenda Meeting; however, he stated that he has no concerns about the Agenda.

6. COMMISSIONER UPDATES/ GENERAL DISCUSSION

Following up on a previous Work Session discussion about which employee would attend the NACo Leadership Academy (a self-paced, online course for female leaders) with Commissioner McKinney, Commissioner Curtis randomly drew Stefanie Truex's name from a cup. Marivel Garcia was the other candidate; Esther Magasis had stated that she would like to defer to the others for this year. Julie Lawrence was directed to send Stefanie the link to the online course.

7. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Curtis asked about an invitation the Commissioners had received to an upcoming Water 101 Tour on June 29th. Commissioner McKinney confirmed that she would be attending, but noted that Paul Jewell might offer another water training for commissioners this year like he had last year; Commissioner Curtis would have the option of attending this training instead.

8. ADJOURN

Commissioner Curtis MOTION: To Adjourn

Commissioner McKinney SECOND

Motion Passes to Adjourn. Meeting Adjourned at 9:53 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

JUN 13 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*

