



**BOARD OF YAKIMA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Regular Meeting  
Work Session

Monday, July 17, 2023, at 9:00 am

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

7/17/2023 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

PRESENT: Chair LaDon Linde, Commissioner Amanda McKinney, Commissioner Kyle Curtis, Legal Counsel Don Anderson, Clerk of the Board Julie Lawrence, Deputy Clerk of the Board Erin Franklin, County Engineer Matt Pietrusiewicz, Facilities Services Director Brian Griff, Elections Manager Kathy Fisher, Environmental Services Director David Haws, Financial Services Director Craig Warner, and guests.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment Received.

3. COUNTY ROADS (10 Minutes)

Matt Pietrusiewicz was present to answer the Board's questions regarding Resolution 180-2023, setting a public hearing date to consider a franchise agreement with Flock Safety to construct, operate, and maintain automatic license plate reading equipment in certain areas of unincorporated Yakima County. He stated that this process is pretty routine for utilities inside rights-of-way. Commissioner McKinney clarified that this company will need right-of-way access to install the necessary equipment. The County does not charge a fee to house these cameras; they were purchased via other contracts. Franchising will mean that this company only has to approach County Roads about installing any additional cameras at new locations in the future; they will not need to bring a new request before the BOCC for each new location.

4. FACILITIES SERVICES (30 Minutes)

2023 REET Fund Request: Brian Griff requested the use of Real Estate Excise Tax funds to cover the cost of two capital projects: a jail generator, and emergency elevator power to two jail elevators. The jail generator is still in the design phase, but will cost around \$500,000 or less for design and construction. The emergency power will cost around \$58,000. Brian stated that Facilities is short on revenue for capital projects at the moment due to the lack of rent coming in from the vacant YCCC building over the past few years. The Board approved the use of REET funds for other capital projects in the past. Craig Warner shared the amount of available REET funding for 2022 and 2023, noting that after these projects, the Board would have approximately \$1.2 million left. Brian continued that due to his department's budget shortfall, he is not planning on doing any additional capital improvements next year, other than for emergencies. Craig also reminded the Board that use of REET funds requires that the projects involved be listed in the County's Capital Improvement Plan. The Commissioners approved this request and agreed that these projects are especially prudent after a recent power outage at the jail.

5. SPECIAL DISTRICTS DISCUSSION (30 Minutes) - Commissioner Linde

Commissioner Linde explained that the BOCC is again being called upon to find and appoint members to a special purpose district – this time Drainage District 16A in the Lower Valley. The drainage district board no longer has any members, so the BOCC must appoint two members who can then appoint a third for a full board. He also

explained that the clerk and treasurer of this board recently resigned from this drainage district and others in which she served, further complicating the issue. Commissioner Linde invited Kathy Fisher and David Haws to provide additional information on this situation, and discuss how the BOCC can be more proactive with these special purpose districts.

Kathy explained that elections for special purpose districts are based on property ownership, not just voter registration, and as such, have specialized rules that are different from other elections. Her office utilizes a list of voters provided by either the Assessor's Office or the district itself. She noted a general lack of communication from these districts overall during her time in the Elections Department, stating that her department has not held an election for the district in question since the early 1990's, although part of this is due to election costs, and the fact that (under their specialized election rules) if only one person files to run, that person is automatically elected. In the event that no one runs for election, these districts are also supposed to inform the BOCC if a new member needs to be appointed. There are only 5 of these districts left, as many have been declared inactive and dissolved by Public Services, which used to manage some of them; some others have merged with Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District.

David explained that drainage districts are usually pretty old (around 100 years or so), born out of farmers flood-irrigating and creating problems downstream. They began installing pipes and ditches (similar to French drains) instead that would help lower groundwater and manage runoff. There used to be about 50 districts, but for many of them, as farms were turned into subdivisions and some pipes were eliminated or abandoned, their original function has largely disappeared. Other districts, as Kathy stated, became intermingled with irrigation districts. Don Anderson chimed in that some of the ditches were replaced by pressurized pipes in the 1980's and 1990's, and he remembers working with Joel Freudenthal in 2015 to dissolve 9 of them. Some were being managed by the County Engineer, or were working with the cities because they were within city limits.

The Board agreed to sign and send out letters to the property-owning voters in Drainage District 16A to see if anyone is interested in being appointed to their district board. Julie Lawrence was directed to send these letters, utilizing a list of property owners from the Assessor's Office crossmatched by Kathy with a list of voters from the Elections Department. If no one responds, Commissioner Linde offered to reach out personally to people he knows in the area who might be interested. David Haws noted that Water Resources also has a website for these districts that lists contact information for the district supervisors. County staff try to keep these lists updated, and could also reach out to the various districts proactively to ensure they all maintain quorums on their boards. Kathy stated that candidate filing for these districts is in December of every odd year, and she already reaches out to these Board about candidate filing; her department could further inform the BOCC if no one files to run and there are board vacancies. If a special purpose district cannot find anyone to appoint or elect and is eventually found to be inactive, the Board can then take steps to dissolve it. Don clarified that RCW 36.96.010 defines "inactive" as not having carried out their purposes or functions in the last 5 years, or not having held elections in the last 7 years (acknowledging the possibility of automatic elections of single candidates, or new members being appointed by the BOCC), or having been determined to be unauditible by the State Auditor.

## 6. COMMISSIONER UPDATES/ GENERAL DISCUSSION

Proclamation Request – Payroll Week 2023: The Board received a proclamation request from County Auditor Charles Ross, in honor of Payroll Week. In response to the Commissioners' questions about precedent for the various departments, Matt Pietrusiewicz clarified that other than this year's proclamation honoring all County employees during Public Works Week, specific departments like Public Services or County Roads have simply received recognitions at Agenda, not proclamations. Based on this precedent, and a desire to limit proclamations in order to keep them more meaningful, the Board agreed to maintain one proclamation honoring all County employees. However, they made note to recognize Payroll staff during the appropriate week.

The Commissioners gave updates on individual committee/board assignments for the week of July 10, 2023 – July 14, 2023.

## 7. NEW BUSINESS

No New Business.

## 8. ADJOURN

Commissioner Curtis MOTION: To Adjourn

Commissioner McKinney SECOND

Motion Passes to Adjourn. Meeting Adjourned at 10:41 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

AUG 15 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*

