



BOARD OF YAKIMA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Regular Meeting

Work Session

Monday, August 14, 2023, at 9:00 am

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

8/14/2023 - 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, Deputy Clerk of the Board Erin Franklin, Human Services Director Esther Magasis, Solid Waste Manager Karma Suchan, Public Services Director Lisa Freund, Environmental Services Director David Haws, Curt Wilson (Executive Director of the Downtown Association of Yakima), Financial Services Director Craig Warner, and guests.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment Received.

3. EXECUTIVE SESSION (15 Minutes)

The Board met in executive session for 14 minutes at 9:01 a.m. to discuss current litigation allowed by RCW 42.30.110(1)(i). Commissioner Linde returned at 9:15 a.m. to extend the session another 10 minutes. The Board returned at 10:25 a.m., and no further action was taken.

(Commissioner Linde also noted that the Courthouse experienced a brief power outage during this time, and thus staff had to reopen the Zoom meeting.)

4. HUMAN SERVICES (15 Minutes)

Discussion Regarding Agreement 210-2023: Esther explained that this agreement with Northwest Community Action Center for an extreme winter weather shelter in the Lower Valley is a renewal (year two) of an existing contract, and is not connected to the Toppenish building that was utilized last year – that is a separate project. Commissioner Linde also asked about the difference between Agreement 209-2023 and Agreement 211-2023, noting that they both involve rental assistance. Esther explained that the primary difference is funding source, but Agreement 209-2023 also includes funding for “housing and essential needs”, meaning that in addition to rental assistance, it can cover costs for essential items such as diapers. It also comes with the requirement that recipients meet certain DSHS qualifications. Agreement 211-2023 is solely focused on rapid rehousing. Esther explained that different programs either cover full rent for a limited time, or reduce the amount of assistance over a longer period of time in order to help recipients become more independent.

Commissioner McKinney asked about the level of data tracking written into these contracts. Esther confirmed that all of these programs utilize HMIS for data tracking, and while this system doesn't follow recipients over years to measure outcomes, it does maintain their original profiles if they return for services at a later date. The Commissioners asked Esther to find out how long profiles are maintained in the system and to ensure that there is no automatic delete/purge feature, although she did note that there is a timeline for when a profile will automatically switch to “inactive” status. Commissioner McKinney also asked Esther to look into how to print a report from HMIS that would detail how much funding has been dispersed to recipients over the last 10 years,

broken down by individuals. She would like to be able to determine any generational reliance on social services in order to assess whether these programs have been effective in helping people. She acknowledged that staff may require the State's assistance to create such a report over the next couple months. Commissioner Curtis noted that the Yakima County Homeless Coalition has had similar discussions, and acknowledged that it can be frustrating to have so much data available in HMIS but no clear way to access it and put it to use. He expressed his thankfulness that Esther has hired a staff member specifically devoted to data, and suggested quarterly reports so that Yakima County can more readily identify and assess trends.

Discussion Regarding a Complaint: Commissioner McKinney stated that she had received a complaint that an agency partner might be bringing people from other counties to Yakima County to provide them services with Yakima County funding; this may be happening in other communities in Central and Eastern Washington, as well. She hopes to ensure that there is something in the County's contracts that prohibits this. Esther stated that one exception would be Triumph Treatment Center, which does have a statewide program for which they take referrals. However, in general, she does not believe the County's contracts contain any specific verbiage regarding recipients' residence, and confirmed that she would work with Don Anderson over the next 2 weeks to develop some enforceable language to this effect. Commissioner Curtis also suggested reaching out to service providers in good faith to ensure they are only engaging with people already residing in this community. He confirmed that he would work with Esther this week on a draft email to which providers could then reply with some kind of attestation to this end.

5. PUBLIC SERVICES (60 Minutes)

Free Dump Day Discussion: Following up from a previous Work Session, Karma Suchan clarified that Douglas County offers two free dump days per year, for which residents can sign up a month ahead of time. There is a limit of 100 people per event, and anyone registering is checked against a list from GIS to confirm residence. If Yakima County implemented something similar, Karma proposed that residents be limited to 1 ton of garbage, 1 appliance, or 4 tires; for residents who are over the limit, the County could charge the difference instead of turning them away. She suggested dates in November and December to ensure that repairs to the landfill and completed before any major influx of people, but noted that these event costs have not been budgeted for in 2023. She also shared observations from staff that this would seem to undermine the County's push for residential pickup instead of self-hauling. Karma, Craig Warner, Commissioner Linde, and Commissioner McKinney briefly discussed some of the benefits and challenges of these options. Commissioner Curtis asked why counties tend to only offer a free dump day to residents in unincorporated areas of the county; Karma explained that most cities already have mandatory garbage collection.

A free dump day would cost Solid Waste just over \$9,000 per event; Code Enforcement would spend about \$2,300 for the first event, and only about \$800 for each even after that. These costs include staff time, advertisement, and lost revenue; they would have to be covered by reserves, as Solid Waste has had a number of other expenditures this year due in part to unfunded mandates from the State Legislature. Lisa Freund pointed out that Solid Waste is an enterprise fund that brings in revenue from paying customers. Therefore, the division would have to raise revenue somewhere to cover the event costs. She noted that the division was just recently able to make its budget whole by raising rates (although these are still the lowest in the state), and all the local cities and towns have agreed to the new Solid Waste plan. In response to Commissioner Curtis' question about grant funding through the Department of Ecology or other sources, Karma explained that said funding can only be used for cleanups on public land, not private land. Addressing Commissioner Curtis' follow-up question about specifically offering a free dump day to those with code violations, Commissioner Linde stated that the County can notify them specifically, but the opportunity must be made available to everyone in unincorporated Yakima County. However, Commissioner Curtis referenced a program in District Court offering to waive all interest fees in an effort to encourage residents to come in and pay their traffic tickets; Karma suggested he reach out to Corporate Counsel about this.

Commissioner Linde noted that after public safety, cleanliness is the second largest concern voiced by his constituents; Lisa concurred that it is a high priority for Public Services. The Board agreed to try offering one free dump day event on Saturday, November 18th, in the Lower Valley to see if it proves to be a worthwhile solution to the illegal dumping problem; they can then assess putting a line item for future events in Solid Waste's budget for 2024. Commissioner Curtis encouraged Code Enforcement to do as much outreach as possible, and stated that he would like to see before/after photos of properties with code violations, if possible.

Response Letter to Forterra: David Haws stated that he had sent each of the Commissioners a draft letter for feedback. Commissioner Linde had one grammatical change; aside from this, each of the Commissioners stated that they were comfortable with the letter. Commissioner McKinney suggested that David also send out an electronic copy right away to help expedite the process for Forterra's deadline.

Commissioner Curtis MOTION: To Sign and Send the Response Letter to Forterra, As Amended

Commissioner McKinney SECOND

Motion Passes Unanimously.

6. FINANCIAL SERVICES (20 Minutes)

ARPA Discussion: Commissioner McKinney stated that she would like to allocate the remaining amount of her pool of ARPA funds (approximately \$330,000) to the Cowiche Conservancy for trail rebuilding and property acquisition, in keeping with other trail projects the Board approved. While they did not originally apply because they didn't believe they were eligible, they have since applied and been approved by Clifton Larson Allen. In response to Commissioner Curtis's question, she confirmed that there would not be any issues meeting the deadline for funding use.

Commissioner Curtis stated that he would like to allocate the remaining amount of his pool of ARPA funds (approximately \$100,000) to the Downtown Rotary Marketplace to help them cover their remaining costs. They are in need of about \$300,000, but other donors are also stepping up. Curt Wilson, Executive Director of the Downtown Association of Yakima, stated that any excess of funding received will be put toward projects that will expand and enhance the marketplace, such as adding fans for airflow. In response to Commissioner McKinney's question, Commissioner Curtis noted that it would be difficult to use SIED funds for the marketplace since the City doesn't own the property. SIED interest funds could potentially be utilized, but that would mean setting a new precedent for use of those funds.

Commissioner Linde stated that he, too, has a project in mind for his remaining pool of ARPA funds, but isn't quite ready to bring it before the Board for approval as of yet.

Commissioner McKinney MOTION: To Approve the Allocation of Commissioner Curtis' ARPA Funds Toward the Downtown Rotary Marketplace, and the Allocation of Commissioner McKinney's ARPA Funds Toward Cowiche Conservancy

Commissioner Curtis SECOND

Motion Passes Unanimously.

Craig Warner confirmed that Financial Services would move forward with these contracts. He added that there would be some slight adjustments to the flock camera contracts, reallocating funding from one city to another. The original resolution with all the Board's ARPA allocations will be amended at a future Agenda to include all of the updates.

7. DISCUSSION - VOTING RIGHTS LAWSUIT (REYES V CHILTON CASE)

(This discussion was erroneously omitted during the Work Session.)

8. COMMISSIONER UPDATES/ GENERAL DISCUSSION

The Commissioners gave updates on individual committee/board assignments for the week of August 7, 2023 – August 11, 2023.

9. NEW BUSINESS

No New Business.

10. ADJOURN

Commissioner Curtis MOTION: To Adjourn

Commissioner McKinney SECOND

Motion Passes to Adjourn. Meeting Adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

APPROVED DATE
DATE/Minutes

AUG 29 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*