

**Klickitat County
Board of Commissioners
Minutes – Meeting of Tuesday, August 9, 2022**

Morning Workshop Session

Chairman Jacob Anderson called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. Commissioner Anderson and Commissioner Anderson were present. Commissioner Christopher was absent due to a previous commitment.

Workshop Session Agenda

10:00 AM – Public Works/Road Department Update:

Attendance: Public Works Director Gordon Kelsey, Deputy Director Jeff Hunter, Emergency Management Director Jeff King, various County elected officials, employees, and members of the public present in person and via Zoom.

Director Kelsey reported there is one (1) item on the consent agenda, a Final Acceptance and Release of Retainage for the Klickitat County Courthouse Improvement Project. Director Kelsey provided updates on the Roosevelt Grade Road paving, Guardrail project, and Courtney Road. The Board discussed a change order for fuel escalation costs which is included in the Courtney Road contract. Mr. Hunter advised that Public Works is not asking for additional funding, they are asking the Board to sign the change order. Following further clarification and discussion, Chairman Anderson noted for the record that the bid was \$2 million dollars under the next bid and the project is still under the original engineers estimate.

Director Kelsey reported on the Annual Striping, Guardrail Repair, and the Klickitat path projects. Director Kelsey advised that Public Works will be recommending rejecting the bid on the Klickitat path because the bid was double the estimate and County crews will do the paving of the path. Public Works will also be recommending to reject the bid for the Courthouse Parking lots because it was \$400,000 over the estimated budget. Updates on road maintenance tasks and updates on facilities maintenance and repair projects followed.

Mr. Hunter provided an update on construction at the Satus Pass Radio site. Director Kelsey provided a follow up on an email from French's Farms concerning speeding and parking near the cross walk on Highway 14. Commissioner Sauter noted the best thing to do might be to pass the State contact information to French's Farms to speak to the contact person directly.

The Board reviewed and discussed a spread sheet of proposed maintenance, needed repairs and upgrades for the Dallesport Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Board indicated user rates have never covered the expenses of the plant and rates need to be increased. Mr. Hunter advised the most important matter is to renew the discharge permit at this time. Following further discussion, the Board indicted they would like Mr. Hunter to prepare a Landfill Gas Improvement Fund grant application for \$250,000 to be used toward upgrading the east clarifier.

10:30 AM – Emergency Management Department Update/Report:

Attendance: Emergency Management Director Jeff King, various County elected officials, employees, and members of the public present in person and via Zoom.

Director King provided updates on the public safety radio system, radio site lease agreements, Fire District user agreement renewals, and the Satus Pass radio site. Director King reported on E/911 Dispatch calls and staffing, advising that staffing remains critical, however Communications Officers are in good spirits despite the number of extra shifts having to be covered.

Director King commented on the new critical response provider who was called out twice this weekend. Director King indicated the critical response provider responded quickly and service was far superior to the old provider.

Director King provided reports on wildfires, EOC/MCP trainings and exercise, Emergency Management grants and public educational outreach activities. Discussion followed concerning fire conditions and resources.

Motion (M/Sauter, S/Anderson. Passed unanimously). To recess for lunch at 11:17 AM.

Commissioner's Business Meeting

Chairman Anderson reconvened the Regular Meeting for Tuesday, August 9, 2022, at 1:00 PM, opening with the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioners' Anderson and Sauter were present, Christopher was absent.

Agenda:

***Approved (M/Sauter, S/Anderson. Passed unanimously).** Business Agenda with one (1) Add-on under Unfinished Business: Agreement between Klickitat County (Public Health Department) and Chris Devilleneuve for the purpose of providing expertise and technical guidance on Community Based Behavioral Health Service in Klickitat County.

Approval of Commissioner Meeting Minutes

The Board deferred approval of the August 2, 2022 meeting minutes to next week when all three (3) Commissioners will be present.

Citizen Comment: Comments will be limited to three (3) minutes per individual.

Del Eldred commented on the taxing structure for renewable energy projects. Mr. Eldred stated that when Assessor Johnson changed the assessment method from income to cost it shifted the tax burden to the people. Mr. Eldred stated that 80% of natural resources used to make renewable components come from China and that money is going to enrich the Communist Party.

Sheri Bousquet commented on the Under Canvass conditional use permit appeal by the citizens and again, incorrectly stated that citizens will have to pay for the road to be upgraded to handle the increased traffic impact to residential and forest resource lands. It is a waste of money to go against the citizens to give these corporations conditional use permits for projects the citizens oppose.

Dave Barta commented on proposed Washington State Department of Health rule changes related to keeping of animals and the disposal and handling of animal excrement, which will be more restrictive and can impact property owners down to five (5) acre parcels. He encourages the Board to investigate and comment on the proposed rule changes.

Greg Wagner provided a time line of the first wind projects coming into the County and how they were assessed by using the income based method, noting that the assessment method changed in 2013 when Assessor Johnson changed to a cost method and corporations started receiving 8.5% depreciation. This change impacted the Bickleton School District who had based their building bond on anticipated tax revenues and the Commissioners did not take any actions to correct this. Since that time corporations have been getting a tax break and the tax burden has shifted to the citizens.

Mr. Wagner stated that Assessor Schroder has stated she can change the assessment method, there is no one (1) method mandated by the Department of Revenue, which the Department of Revenue has confirmed. Mr. Wagner cited RCW 36.32.120 and claimed again that the County Commissioners have the authority to direct the Assessor to change the assessment method and levy rates and it is time the Commissioners start putting citizens first instead of corporations.

Ron Kinsella commented on how he used to interact with past Commissioners, noting that he hears good ideas coming to the Commissioners from Sheri, Greg and Del but no good replies, indicating the citizens have to win sometimes. Mr. Kinsella encouraged the Commissioners to listen and give answers sometimes.

Commissioner Sauter stated there have been good ideas, but some folks have a certain point of view that is not correct and he used Ms. Bouquet's comments as an example. The County spending money against citizens appealing Under Canvas is not correct, the people are appealing a Superior Court decision and before that it was a Hearings Examiner decision, they just didn't like the decisions made and they have every right to appeal.

Commissioner Sauter indicated that Ms. Bousquet makes it sound like Oak Ridge Road was added to the 6 Year Road Plan because of Under Canvas, that is also not correct, Oak Ridge Road has been on the Road Plan for twelve (12) years, long before Under Canvas, those allegation have been made dozens of times and we have answered them. Commissioner Sauter stated that the Board has listened but he doesn't think there is a lot of listening on the other end and when the same comments, which have been addressed, are made week after week it is hard not to give up.

Mr. Kinsella said, don't give up, I think there is a lack of trust. Commissioner Sauter stated that he disagrees, it has been character assassination the last two (2) years.

Chairman Anderson addressed the time it took for the back and forth conversation between Mr. Kinsella and Commissioner Sauter, which prevented three (3) other citizens from being able to comment. Mr. Kinsella commented that he liked the back and forth and he doesn't want to wait for 20 minutes for a reply.

Ms. Bouquet clarified one of her comments, the citizens appealed the Planning Director's approval of the Under Canvas SEPA determination and that is a County decision.

Commissioner Sauter responded to Mr. Eldred, noting the Board was aware when Assessor Johnson changed the assessment method from income to cost there would be impacts, but that is the Assessor's decisions not the Commissioners. Commissioner Sauter noted that Assessor Schroder is on the agenda today to discuss how renewable energy projects are assessed and he encouraged Mr. Eldred to listen.

Commissioner Sauter responded to Mr. Wagner's remarks about the Board not taking action on levy rates, indicating that the Commissioners do not have the authority to change a taxing district's levy rate, County Commissioners have the authority to certify final levy rates but Mr. Wagner is assuming Commissioners have authority they do not have. Commissioner Sauter stated that Mr. Wagner can respond next week as to what the appropriate action that Board should have taken was.

Chairman Anderson responded to Mr. Eldred, stating that Commissioners do not have the power to tell private companies where to buy solar panels, we have a free market society. Chairman Anderson clarified a statement made by Ms. Bousquet regarding forest resource lands and other matters related to the SEPA process. Chairman Anderson stated that you have asked the Commissioners over and over again to disallow proposed business developments and that would be taking people's rights away before they could go the process.

Chairman Anderson advised that he also has concerns regarding the Department of Health's proposed rule changes that Mr. Barta brought to the Board's attention and feels that it will steam roll all agriculture eventually. To Mr. Wagner, Chairman Anderson encouraged him to look at not only RCWs but WACs as well. Chairman Anderson explained the budget process and the Board's authority related to levy certification and approval of the County budget.

Public Meetings/Public Hearings/Bid Openings:

Public Meeting to consider approval of Short Plat SPL2021-28, Parcel No. 04-16-3207-7503/00 in the Goldendale vicinity; Applicants: Jim & Patrica Farrer.

Associate Planner Denise Lee reported that Short Plat No. SPL2021-28 is a short plat creating three (3) lots from Parcel No. 04-16-3207-7503/00, which is located in the Goldendale vicinity. Ms. Lee advised that an administrative review of the short plat has been completed and all conditions attached to the preliminary approval have been met. If the Board finds that it is in the public's interest to approve this short plat, a motion needs to be made to grant final approval.

Approved (M/Sauter, S/Anderson. Passed unanimously). Motion granting final approval to Short Plat SPL2021-28, which creates 3 lots from Parcel No. 04-16-3207-7503/00; Applicant: Jim & Patricia Farrer.

New Business:

Human Resources Manager KC Sheridan and Juvenile Department Director Tom Adkins: Requested verbal approval for a Personnel Authorization to begin the advertising process to fill a vacant Juvenile Department Office Manager position. The Board unanimously approved.

Elected Official –Report/Update:

Attendance: Assessor Crista Schroder, Chief Assessor Billi Bare, and various County elected officials, employees, and members of the public present in person and via Zoom.

Assessor Crista Schroder provided an overview of the Department of Revenue’s (DOR) recommended method of assessment for renewable energy projects. If a landowner leases farm and ag property to a solar developer, the property is removed from the current use classification, and the code is changed to utility, all equipment, buildings, etc., on leased lands are assessed as personal property like any other business. Wind projects are different, the underlying property can still be used for agricultural uses and the same applies, the lessee pays personal property taxes on buildings, equipment. Assessor Schroder advised that the Assessor’s Office works to assess all property equitably, uniformly and fairly pursuant to DOR’s recommended method and statute. Further discussion, clarification, questions and answers followed.

Voucher Certification and Approval

***Approved Warrants (M/Sauter, S/Anderson. Passed unanimously):** Accounts Payable: (#315667 – 315766) for a total of \$451,857.70, for the date ending August 8, 2022.

Consent Agenda:

***Approved (M/Sauter, S/Anderson. Passed unanimously):** Consent Agenda with four (4) items

- 1) ***Interagency Reimbursement Agreement Amendment 1 (C15422)** between Klickitat County and Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) for the purpose of bringing the existing Agreement in line with the amended budget provisos in ESSB 5693; to continue to make reimbursements of costs and LFO payments; and, when appropriate, to change the amount available for reimbursements, all with the objective of assisting Counties that have reimbursed or will reimburse LFOs to defendants whose convictions or sentences in Superior Court and District Court are affected by the State v. Blake decision, effective July 1, 2021, and ends on June 30, 2023.
- 2) ***Final Acceptance and Release of Retainage** in the amount of \$23,911.69 to Lee Contractors, LLC, for the Klickitat County Courthouse Improvement Project (C06821).
- 3) ***Resolution No. 06922** in the matter of revising the Senior Services Department organizational chart to reflect combing the Casual Cook position and Casual Van Drive position to create a full time benefited 35 hour per week position and increasing the Case Manager position from a .6 FTE to a 1.0 FTE, effective August 1, 2022.
- 4) ***Personnel Authorization** to begin the advertising process to fill a vacant Accounting Administrative Assistant/Clerical Administrative Assistant II position at Grade 35, Step 1-3 within the Department of Emergency Management.

Unfinished Business:

***Approved (M/Sauter, S/Anderson. Passed unanimously):** Agreement (C15522) between Klickitat County (Public Health Department) and Chris Devilleneuve for the purpose of providing expertise and technical guidance on Community Based Behavioral Health Service in Klickitat County. The Contractor will be paid at a rate of \$125/hour at approximately 20 hours a week not to exceed a contract maximum of \$78,000, effective beginning August 1, 2022 and end January 1, 2023.

At 2:33 PM the Board recessed until 2:36 PM.

Elected Official –Report/Update:

Prosecuting Attorney David Quesnel noted he had no items for discussion at this time.

Board Pending:

The Board briefly discussed a proposal to provide public defender services.

At 2:42 PM Chairman Anderson announced the Board would be going into an Executive Session in accordance RCW 42.30.110(1)(d) to discuss negotiations on a publicly bid contract as long as they determine a public discussion would cause a likelihood of increased costs. Chairman Anderson stated the Executive Session would last ten (10) minutes.

The Board convened back into regular session at 2:52 PM. No action was taken.


Board Correspondence for the Record:

*Letter to the Columbia River Gorge Commission expressing Klickitat County’s concerns regarding the Commission’s Draft Climate Change Action Plan, dated August 9, 2022.

* Letter to the Washington State Department of Ecology commenting on the Goldendale Energy Storage Project draft Environmental Impact Statement.

(2:53 PM)(M/Sauter, S/Anderson. Passed unanimously). There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned. There are no scheduled workshops for Thursday, August 11, 2022.

* Reference Document on File. The Board of Commissioners’ minutes is action minutes. A digital recording is on file as part of the official record and available on file 8.09.2022 Board of County Commissioner’s Meeting. Please Note: All Commissioner meetings and workshops are open to the public to attend. Meetings are recorded, Workshops are NOT recorded.


Approved: **Jacob Anderson**
Chairman of the Board



8-23-22
Date