



BOARD OF YAKIMA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Regular Meeting

Work Session

Thursday, February 1, 2024, at 1:30 pm

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

2/1/2024 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting Called to Order at 1:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair Amanda McKinney, Commissioner Kyle Curtis, Commissioner LaDon Linde, Legal Counsel Don Anderson, Clerk of the Board Julie Lawrence, Deputy Clerk of the Board Erin Franklin, Joel Freudenthal (Water Consultant), Human Resources Senior Manager Judy Kendall, Technology Services Director Dale Panattoni, Fire Chief Nathan Craig, Building Official Marivel Garcia, Financial Services Director Craig Warner, and guests.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment Received.

3. DRAFT LETTER REGARDING EFSEC/BENTON COUNTY CONSERVANCY BOARD (15 Minutes)

Joel Freudenthal explained that his draft contains more of an emphasis on maintaining the agricultural land base and economy, water resources, etc. He confirmed that he would finalize typographical edits and closing statements before this letter is placed on BOCC letterhead. The Board requested that copies of this letter also be sent to Paul Jewell (Washington State Association of Counties), the Board of Benton County Commissioners, Kittitas County, Klickitat County, Yakima Basin Integrated Plan partners, and the Washington State Department of Agriculture.

Commissioner McKinney MOTION: To Sign and Send This Letter, With Final Edits

Commissioner Linde SECOND

Motion Passes Unanimously.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE (15 Minutes)

Judy Kendall stated that Human Resources had nothing to present.

5. RADIO PROJECT UPDATE AND EXTERNAL GROUP LEAD (5 Minutes) - Commissioner Curtis

Dale Panattoni explained that the YCIC group (YAKCORPS Communications Interoperability Committee) has been working on new countywide radio communications project for first responders. The group is currently undergoing a final review of their FAQ draft, and Dale recently met with a marketing firm that the group could potentially use to inform the public of the need for this new communications system. At the next YCIC meeting on Tuesday, Sean Douglas (Engineering Network for the Puget Sound Emergency Radio System) will be sharing lessons that his team learned as they went through this same process 10 years ago. YCIC is hoping to propose a sales tax on the November ballot to fund the capital expenditures and operating costs for this project. Commissioner McKinney noted (and Dale acknowledged) that public funds cannot be used for marketing this issue. Commissioner Curtis

asked which Commissioner might like to take the lead on the external group that will work to promote this project. Commissioner McKinney volunteered, since Commissioner Curtis and Commissioner Linde will both be involved in their own campaigns this fall.

6. RESIDENTIAL BURN BAN DISCUSSION (60 Minutes) - Commissioner McKinney

Nathan Craig explained that over the past few years, Yakima County experienced quite a few fires from residential burning into June. The fire districts then requested an emergency residential burn ban, which was approved for June 27th – October 2nd last year. The Yakima County Fire Chiefs Association has been discussing this issue for a number of years now. While there aren't usually many problems with agricultural burning or ditch burning, people burning residentially aren't quite as careful to pay attention to red flag warnings, etc. Thus, Chief Craig proposed an ongoing summer burn ban (sample range: June 1st to September 15th), which would prevent burning during the drier, windier season when burning tends to be most dangerous. This would give residents time to prepare and plan their burns in the spring and fall, and prevent frustration from residents paying for burn permits and then finding out that an emergency burn ban has been implemented shortly thereafter. He noted that Grant County has already implemented such an ordinance, and that Yakima County has already implemented a fireworks ban due to fire risk. He asserted that the issue is not just clean air, but life safety, property conservation, and financial implications. He suggested that the County could go back later and work with Yakima Regional Clean Air Agency to update the burn permit process in order to find a balance that works for all parties' needs.

Commissioner McKinney stated this she is supportive of providing clarity and mitigating loss, but expressed concern about arbitrarily limiting residents' ability to burn. She suggested starting by amending the burn permit application process with YRCAA to make it more nimble and include exemptions, as well as to include more involvement from the fire districts. She and Chief Craig also clarified that while the Fire Marshall, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Ecology (in the case of the Yakama Nation) can issue burn bans, only YRCAA can issue burn permits, and even that only relates to air quality. This further confuses the public. In response to Commissioner McKinney's comment about looking at interfacing opportunities in the existing permit, Marivel Garcia noted that Commissioner Curtis had previously suggested adding a website dashboard that would interface between the different agencies regarding burn bans. She also spoke in favor of an ordinance adding clarity to the burn ban issue.

Commissioners Curtis and Linde stated that they would prefer to move this issue forward to a hearing to receive public comment, which would require a draft ordinance for review. Commissioner McKinney directed Julie Lawrence to set up a meeting for her with Chief Craig, Marivel, and Marc Thornsbury (YCRAA) beforehand to discuss some different ideas and options for a potential ordinance. Marivel also asked that Chief Craig forward her the fire data to which he had referred, which would help determine potential dates for an annual burn ban.

7. 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 February 6, 2024, Agenda.

8. COMMISSIONER UPDATES/ GENERAL DISCUSSION

Commissioner Curtis discussed noticing, agenda, and minutes requirements for the SIED Board. He also suggested that the Commissioners share individual feedback with the Directors ahead of their formal meetings with the BOCC to discuss each Director's 2024 objectives/priorities.

Commissioner McKinney expressed relief that most of the highly concerning bills before the State Legislature are either not moving forward or are being mitigated by various amendments.

9. NEW BUSINESS

No New Business.

10. ADJOURN

Commissioner Linde MOTION: To Adjourn

Commissioner McKinney SECOND

Motion Passes to Adjourn. Meeting Adjourned at 2:13 p.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

FEB 20 2024

BOARD OF YAKIMA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Amanda McKinney

Amanda McKinney, Chair

Kyle Curtis

Kyle Curtis, Commissioner

LaDon Linde

LaDon Linde, Commissioner

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