

July 10, 2023

The Board of Garfield County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday July 10, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Chambers at the Garfield County Courthouse.

Present were: Chairman Justin Dixon, Member Larry Ledgerwood, Member Jim Nelson, Clerk of the Board McKenzie Lueck and the public.

The Board started the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Board opened the meeting for public comments. There were no public comments.

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the previous meeting as presented to the Board. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Chairman Dixon brought up discussion regarding changing the regularly scheduled board meetings from every Monday to every other Monday for the summer. It was agreed upon that the Board would meet on Monday's to coincide with voucher approval days. They plan to continue this new schedule through fair weekend before re-evaluating.

Road Supervisor Steve Gormsen gave the road report. Due to the Board not meeting for the week of July 3<sup>rd</sup> through July 6<sup>th</sup>, Steve gave a two week report. For the week of June 26<sup>th</sup> through June 29<sup>th</sup> the crew graded Falling Springs, Breakdown, Wildhorse, Pomeroy Hill, Lynn, East Lynn, Eureka Road, Tramway, Debow, Neber, Skyhawk, and Gieger Road. They hauled rock on Skyhawk and McKee. The crew also cleaned out culvert that was plugged due to spring flooding. Magnesium Chloride was put on a few county roads that are notorious for degrading with summer and harvest traffic in hopes of helping the road withstand the traffic better. In the shop multiple vehicles and a trailer were worked on, including; a pup trailer, a dump truck, the county's Chevy Trailblazer, and a Chevy pickup.

Steve continued with the road report for July 3<sup>rd</sup> through July 6<sup>th</sup>. He stated that it was a short week due to the holiday. The graders ran on Lynn Gulch, Wawawai, East Wawawai, Fairview, Eureka, Rains Road, Malone Hill, Bounds, and Kuhl Ridge Road. There was culvert that was worked on, on Lynn Gulch Road.

Steve stated that they are currently working with the City of Pomeroy on patching, they are going to start chip sealing next week. Steve pushed that up earlier because they are going to lose people for harvest and he needs the whole crew.

Commissioner Nelson stated that he spoke with Brad Gingerich regarding the path at the golf course and the need to place concrete barriers to help the bank from sluffing off. There was discussion stating that the project will like be a city project, but Commissioner Nelson stated that he invited Brad to come to a meeting to bring the discussion up again.

Treasurer Tereasa Summers joined the Board to discuss the proposed tax software contract. She stated that Prosecuting Attorney, Matt Newberg, had reviewed the specification sheet for the

proposed tax software and didn't have any issues with it. She also stated that there were thirteen counties in Washington that have this program and others are in the process of getting it. While discussing the cost, she informed the Board that the map sifter/tax sifter wasn't included in the first quote, so the final amount was a little more but residents have requested taxes to be online for easy access. Chairman Dixon asked how the annual fee will be covered and Treasurer Summers stated that the annual fee will be covered through the REET fund. Assessor Brian Bartels joined the Board. Assessor Bartels stated that it is something that will need to be upgraded because it isn't sustainable to continue with the outdated software they have. Commissioner Ledgerwood made a motion to approve the purchase of the tax software with State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF/ARPA) covering \$82,000.00 of the purchase and the remaining funds being covered by Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Funds (LATCF) which will be approximately \$20,000. Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. The contract was signed.

Chairman Dixon brought up discussion regarding a quote from Tyler Technologies; Auditor/Clerk of the Board, McKenzie Lueck, stated that previously the county purchased software that would provide a platform to put commissioner minutes, resolutions, ordinances, ect. online. This will allow the public, as well as, county personnel to search these documents when the need arises. She further stated that the county did not receive the software they were expecting when they previously approved the purchase and instead received upgraded accounting software. The quote before the Board was for the software that was intended to be purchased originally to get those documents recorded and online. McKenzie stated that after speaking with the sales representative, as well as, multiple county personnel, including Commissioner Ledgerwood, the previous amount paid will be credited to the correct software. Commissioner Ledgerwood made a motion to sign the updated quote and Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

County Engineer James Wege came to give the Board an update of his activities. He stated that he received a conditional use permit for the Appaloosa project and that it is in progress. He also informed the Board that he plans to advertise for consultants soon. There was discussion regarding the requirements for advertising for consultants and whether it needs to be by project or if it can be one blanket advertisement for all projects. He also stated that there will probably be a paving project next year. There was discussion regarding crushing rock next year and Chairman Dixon asked if there was an updated inventory of the current rock supply to make sure that the inventory on the books is accurate when compared to the actual inventory. Engineer Wege finished his update with the Board stating that he is working on the Dutch Flat Road vacation.

The Board opened bids at 9:30 a.m. for surplus vehicles/equipment. The advertised vehicle was a yellow one-ton service body 1994 pickup. There was one bid for this vehicle from John Bucksas for \$505.99. There was one piece of equipment advertised which was a 1991 Case Roller. There was one bid on the roller and it was from M&M Rock in the amount \$2,520.00. Those were the only bids presented. Commissioner Ledgerwood made a motion to accepted the bids that were presented for the roller and pickup. Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion. The motions passed unanimously.

Cyndi Holbert, E911 Director for Garfield County, came to the Board to present a contract that needed signed. It was for Fiscal Year 2024, and she stated that the contract was the standard SECO contract which provides funding that helps with training, travel, and salaries for dispatch. The contract is in the amount of \$578,855. She informed the Board that this contract covers about 80% of dispatcher salaries throughout the year. Commissioner Ledgerwood asked if this was a similar amount to last year's amount and Cyndi stated that it was, however, it was a bit of an increase. Commissioner Nelson made a motion to sign the contract and Commissioner Ledgerwood seconded the motion. The motioned passed unanimously and the Board signed the contract.

Danielle Garbe Reeser, the new Executive Director of Blue Mountain Action Counsel (BMAC) joined the Board. Danielle gave the Board a brief overview of her experience working as a diplomat for almost 14 years. She then gave the Board an overview of the services BMAC provides to Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield Counties; they distribute food from Asotin to Benton counties and everywhere in-between, they also help with housing services, energy assistance, pro bono law referral, and other various services. They serve Garfield County out of their Dayton office. Rachel Anderson, the Information Specialist for Garfield County's Aging and Disability Resource Center, serves on the BMAC board and Danielle stated that she is a wealth of knowledge for the County. Commissioner Nelson stated that the Board was glad to have Danielle and thanked her for her work. Rachel stated that Danielle has brought positive change to BMAC. Commissioner Ledgerwood added that the Victim Witness Coordinator has stated that there is a big need for more emergency housing in the community, so if an opportunity arises they would like to work together to help meet those needs. The Board thanked Danielle and Rachel for joining them.

Commissioner Ledgerwood stated that he has had multiple discussions with Greg Sharp, the Information and Technology Coordinator, and he needs a laptop. The Board agreed that Greg could purchase a laptop of his choice to help with his job duties. Commissioner Ledgerwood stated that there has also been discussion regarding switching the County's website domain to '.gov'. Greg researched the requirements to making the switch and discovered that the county first has to fill out an application and it must be approved before moving forward. Commissioner Ledgerwood stated that the website is currently hosted by Intermountain ESD and their services will no longer be available in the next couple of months. Greg is also looking into Microsoft licensing and the 365 multi-authentication. The Board will be updated once more information is available.

The Board recessed from 10:00 a.m. until 10:10 a.m.

There was discussion regarding the Sheriff's sign on bonus. Commissioner Nelson stated that the Board approved a sign on bonus last year for this department to attract new candidates. Commissioner Nelson stated that in light of hearing about a candidate coming back to the County after resigning a few months prior, he does not feel that it would be an appropriate expense of those funds. Commissioner Ledgerwood agreed that if this was a few years down the road, the Board would feel differently, however, with the terms that this individual left on, and the fact that it has only been a few months, he does not feel that this is a new hire, but rather a re-hire. There was discussion regarding whether they would freeze the funds completely or if

voicing their concern was enough and the Board, along with the Sheriff, agreed that it would not be necessary to freeze the funds completely.

Commissioner Nelson stated that he received an email from Paul with WSAC (Washington State Association of Counties) and he would like the LSC (Legislative Steering Committee) members to host a 'show and tell' of their County. He requested that Commissioner Nelson host a 'show and tell' of Garfield County in late September to early October to help get LSC members across the state to get a better understanding of each county.

There was discussion regarding the Shorelines Master program which includes Asotin, Columbia, and Garfield Counties. Chairman Dixon stated that there were several amendments made by the Department of Ecology to the Shorelines Master program, but none of them affected Garfield County. He continued that there are only two spots in Garfield County that meet the qualifications of this plan and one of them is in the wilderness, so this is not a pressing issue for Garfield County. The Board will review the updated program between now and the next meeting where they plan to adopt the new plan.

Representative Mary Dye joined the Board to discuss wind and solar projects that are being proposed in Garfield County. She stated that she received an email from her landlords, in response to them receiving an email from a clean energy company who is proposing a new project named 'Oatie' which includes 60,000 acres of new clean wind energy in Garfield County. Representative Dye stated that the company claims that they want to have the project tied up within three months. She continued that she's looking at the clean energy from a regional perspective, as well as, a political perspective. She stated there is a lack of local input when it comes to this subject. When looking at state legislature and county legislature the county boards are the last voice of the rural areas. She included that our county has decided to participate in growth management, and other counties that are taking part in the wind and solar energy are not growth management counties. She informed the Board that the caucus is not against clean energy, but rather concerned about its effects on rural areas. One of the concerns is how Garfield County's land is used while two-thirds of the County is either federal or state land, how does 60,000 acres of new wind energy affect our land and community? She continued that it will change the view shed, culture, etc. of our community. It may benefit some people in the community, but it may also have a leakage affect; how much of the land is 3<sup>rd</sup> generation owned that have left the community? Representative Dye stated that there has been legislation that passed in HB 1216, specifically sections 307-310, which is language that Governor Inslee and Representative Dye negotiated to put in to help rural communities. She continued that we need the Department of Commerce to produce a report of 30 years to show what affect the new energy will have on the environment. She stated that the prospective project would cause a massive land use change, and that Garfield County will be hosting the energy for the Puget Sound area. She informed that Board that there is a lot of money involved, but there is also concern regarding the source of the materials which Representative Dye stated will largely come from China. Representative Dye questioned how many acres will not have some sort of industrial energy source on it? She gave the Board a handout from Columbia County which included revenues and costs associated with Columbia County's clean energy projects. She stated that the company's that put these wind energy sites up receive sales tax refunds. These projects have affected Columbia County's roads, their E911 system, etc. She questioned how the refunds these

companies receive impact Garfield County and other counties that host renewable energy? Representative Dye stated that they recognize that these projects do provide jobs within the community, as well as, donations/grants to the community. Representative Dye's caucus wants to see litigation against these companies so the host counties are getting the funds they deserve. She continued that HB 1756 removed personal property tax for any state purpose on certain taxpayers that met the requirements, but places an excise tax on using qualified renewable energy generating systems. Representative Dye stated that it may be a wash or it may be slightly less than the County was receiving before. Garfield County Assessor, Brian Bartels, stated that the personal property levy only applies to the state school tax. Garfield County Treasurer, Tereasa Summers, asked who pays for the exemption and Representative Dye stated that it's all the other land owners spread across the state. Representative Dye requested that the Board ask the Treasurer to prepare the same data that Columbia County prepared so they can have all the data to review before continuing to make decisions regarding clean energy. Treasurer Summers stated that Puget Sound Energy pays almost \$3 million a year to Garfield County, and the County collects \$6-7 million total. Chairman Dixon agreed that getting valid numbers for Garfield County is important for this discussion because Columbia County's numbers aren't valid for our situation. Representative Dye stated that she wants all of the hosting counties to do the same study that Columbia did because the host counties aren't the counties that use the energy. Commissioner Nelson agreed that the minority counties don't have a voice, but asked how to smaller counties get heard. He continued that if she could get some draft language to them, then the Board would be in support of it, and would also be able to discuss it with other host counties and hopefully get their support as well. Representative Dye stated that we have the right to demand that the energy is reliable, sustainable, and US made, instead of allowing China to be in control of our clean energy supply chain. Clay Barr stated that Puget Sound Energy's project uses 1.2% of the land that is under lease. He asked how much of the land will be occupied by the clean energy? Representative Dye stated that they have not been able to get a clear answer on that yet. Clay stated that he has four leases of clean energy; he stated that the solar panels that are included in one of his leases are being produced in Moses Lake. Representative Dye stated that she thinks it's important that the Treasurer give the same data that Columbia County did. Clay agreed with Representative Dye. He stated that he agreed with some of what was said, but disagreed with a lot of it based on his experience with his four leases. Treasurer Summers stated that Garfield County collects \$6 million in tax revenue regardless if there was clean energy in Garfield County or not, but because Puget Sound is in Garfield County they are paying \$3 million of the \$6 million. Representative Dye stated that there will be a legislative meeting on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, in Pasco, WA. Stan Warren asked what affect solar/wind has on the hydro power and Representative Dye stated that it has not been stated, however, last year Governor Inslee stated that there is not enough replacement energy yet to replace the dams. Commissioner Nelson stated that the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) is going to host tours this fall (late September/ early October) and one of the counties they will be touring is Garfield County. He continued that he would like to tour Lower Granite dam as well as some wind energy farms to help showcase Garfield County's resources. Commissioner Nelson stated that he would keep Representative Dye involved because he would like her to give the same presentation she gave today to the other County Commissioners that will be present at the tour. The Board thanked Representative Dye, as well as, the other spectators, for coming to the meeting.

The Board reviewed a supplemental budget that was presented by Auditor McKenzie Lueck. The supplemental budget increased the original budgeted amount for the following departments; Commissioners, Clerk, Treasurer, Courthouse, Civil Service, Dispatch, and Miscellaneous. The supplemental budget increased the County's budget by \$94,719.32. Commissioner Nelson made a motion to pass Resolution 2023-12 in the matter of 2023 Supplemental Budgets and Commissioner Ledgerwood seconded the motion. The resolution passed unanimously.

The Board reviewed a Third Amended: 2023 Salary and Wage Schedule presented by Auditor Lueck. The salary and wage schedule needed amended due to the Board creating a new position, Information Technology Coordinator, and the wage/benefits needed added to the schedule. Commissioner Ledgerwood made a motion to pass Resolution 2023-13 in the matter of Third Amended: 2023 Salary and Wage Schedule. Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion and the resolution passed unanimously.

The Board reviewed proposals provided to them in response to the advertised request for proposals to install and maintain an electronic access control system for the courthouse. There were three proposals provided by the following companies; Camtek, Fisher Systems, and Pacific Office Solutions. The Board agreed to give all proposals to the Prosecuting Attorney for review before moving forward.

Chairman Dixon restated that the next scheduled meeting will be July 24<sup>th</sup>. He then stated that there will be executive session regarding potential litigation but no decision will be made and following that the Board will review vouchers. There were three applications for the WSU extension office position that Chairman Dixon will review with Mark Heitstuman.

Engineer Wege stated that the ice machine that was previously approved was actually \$100 higher than previously quoted because it was before tax.

Monica Bartlow, the Extension Agent, asked the Board if they came up with a monthly amount for the long-term residents staying at the fairgrounds RV park. Chairman Dixon stated that he has been in communication with them and will get back to her with an amount when an agreement is made.

The Board went into executive session at 11:58 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

The following vouchers/warrants/electronic payments were approved for payment:

### **Claims Clearing Fund**

Numbers: <u>69198</u>	Through: <u>69232</u>	Totaling: <u>\$6,572.41</u>
Numbers: <u>69233</u>	Through: <u>69282</u>	Totaling: <u>\$63,151.38</u>
Numbers: <u>69283</u>	Through: <u>69306</u>	Totaling: <u>\$21,321.72</u>

### **Payroll Clearing Fund**

Numbers: <u>22612</u>	Through: <u>22623</u>	Totaling: <u>\$15,264.93</u>
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**Electronic Payments**

Dated: 7/10/2023      Number of Payments: 57      Totaling: \$146,500.12

The Commissioners regular meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m. with the next regular meeting set for Monday, July 24th, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioner's Chambers at the Garfield County Courthouse.

/s/ McKenzie Lueck

Attest: Clerk of the Board

/s/ Justin Dixon

Chairman, Board of Garfield County Commissioners

Adopted