

October 2, 2023

The Board of Garfield County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday October 2, 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.

Road Supervisor, Steve Gormsen, gave the road report for the two-week period of September 18th through September 28th. Steve stated that there were four graders that ran last week on the following roads; Wawawai Grade, Lambi Grade, Pomeroy Hill, Willow Gulch, Hastings, Debow, Bounds, Connell Hill, Tramway Road, Alpowa Creek, Howell Grade, Clayton Road, Niebel Grade, Bartels, Tatman Mountain, Skyhawk, Dutch Flat, Blind Grade, Browns Gulch, Rickman, and Bell Plain Road. The County received some moisture over the last couple of weeks so the crew was able to grade and roll Blind Grade. Steve stated that Linda Lundquist is training Brian Smith as a grader operator and he is learning very quick and doing very well. The crew hauled all of the sanding chips the County should need for winter. A culvert was cleaned on Willow Gulch and another was installed on Kirby Mayview. The culvert that was installed on Kirby Mayview was more work than anticipated due to the fiber line being located where the culvert was. Steve stated that the crew finished crack sealing September 18th. In the shop, there was fabrication work on E259 which is a snow plow. The frame of the plow was about to break so the Shop Mechanic is working on building a new one. There was also service work in the shop on E259 and E207. Steve presented the Board with a bill for the creation of the turnaround at the fairgrounds that Public Works completed. He stated that the dry well wasn't included in the billing because it was not finished by the time this bill was created so there will be another bill for that project. There was vegetation work done on Peola Road and Mountain Road. Steve stated the rain has really helped with the road conditions and they have been using the roller behind the grader to help better the results. He stated that after striping is completed that will be the majority of the projects being completed for the year and the rest of the year will be general maintenance. Commissioner Ledgerwood asked if they would go back and hit the major traffic areas again that they graded prior to receiving moisture; Steve stated that they are doing their best to catch up and hit them now that there is moisture.

Chairman Dixon asked what the status of the Washington Counties Risk Group renewal worksheet was. McKenzie stated that the worksheet would be submitted back to the Risk Manager today.

Monica Bartlow, Extension Office Secretary, joined the Board to discuss the application for the Washington State Agriculture Grant. Monica stated that she is applying for the grant to purchase new bleachers at the fairgrounds due to the current bleachers being a safety hazard. She stated that the estimated cost to dispose of the current bleachers is \$10,000 and the quote for new bleachers was \$66,589.60 to get 10 rows of new aluminum bleachers. Monica stated that if the

County provides a match there are better odds of getting awarded this grant. Monica stated that the current bleachers are a safety concern and Commissioner Nelson agreed, stating that this was an important project for the County and community. Commissioner Ledgerwood discussed matching with LATC funds. Chairman Dixon stated that his fear is that the quotes were too low. Engineer Wege stated that he spoke with Steve briefly last week and he had originally quoted \$15,000 to tear down the current bleachers. The Board agreed that they will be paying this out of LATC funds. The Board agreed to provide \$35,000 of in-kind services to remove the old bleachers and assemble and place the new bleachers. Monica will submit for the grant with the purchase price of the bleachers being stated at \$66,589.60 and the total project amount costing \$101,589.60 with \$35,000 of in-kind services being provided by the County.

Engineer Wege joined the Board to inform them of requirement changes brought on by the legislature. He stated that there were changes to Davis-Bacon prevailing wage. Wages continue to get adjusted every six months, but the rules are changing including what a 'public work' is and when the wages apply. Washington Department of Transportation just published their local agency guidance and there are continually changing guidelines for doing business. Chairman Dixon explained that these guidelines are project based, so in order to get reimbursed we have to meet these standards. Engineer Wege stated that the goals are set for upcoming projects and those goals are set at 0% for one project and 13% for the other two. Chairman Dixon asked what the process is if the County does not meet the goals. Engineer Wege stated that there is a process which includes documenting that they did what they could to meet goals. Chairman Dixon asked if these regulations are going to deter out-of-state companies from bidding on our jobs, and Engineer Wege stated he doesn't believe so. He informed the Board that there are also new requirements for where you have to publish advertisements. He stated that this is why he did not get an ad out last week for consultants because DOT told him he had to meet their requirements. Commissioner Ledgerwood asked for a deadline for the consultants ad to be published and Engineer Wege stated that he should be able to get it posted by next week. He stated that there were additional documentation requirements for hiring consultants as well.

Shanda Wolf, Chief Deputy Auditor, joined the Board to discuss refurbishing and archiving of plat maps. Shanda gave the Board the e-recording contracts to sign since the Prosecuting Attorney had approved them. Shanda stated that she and Asu went to the Licensing and Recording Conference two weeks ago in Leavenworth and the state did a presentation on refurbishing and archiving historical documents. She stated that the County has received a lot of requests for plat maps from title companies recently and that the plat maps are in the Assessor's office. These maps are very old and starting to fall apart. She discussed a few grants that would provide funding sources to restore and preserve these maps and then requested permission from the Board to look into this project and receive quotes to get the project moving forward. The Board approved Shanda to move forward with getting hard numbers on digitizing the plat maps.

Katie Magill, Employees' Group President, and Bandie Lockard, Employees' Group Representative, joined the Board to present the Employees' Group salary and benefit request for 2024. Katie introduced the Board to Bandie as the new Employees' Group Representative in place of Rachel Anderson. The Employees' Group request is as follows;

- 4% wage increase to all employees effective January 1, 2024.

- The County to pay the medical insurance through Public Employees Benefit Board (PEBB), Uniform Medical Classic Plan for all eligible employees. They requested to keep employees able to add a spouse for \$200 per month, children for \$100 per month, and a family for \$300 per month. Garfield County will reimburse all other out-of-pocket costs for deductible and in-network/preferred provider co-insurance for the covered employee and family from the HRA account.
- The County pay dental, vision, life insurance and base long-term disability increases for 2024 for all covered employees through Washington Counties Insurance Fund (WCIF).
- The County to continue VEBA for all eligible employees with a contribution of \$150 per month, which is an increase of \$50.00 per month. Continue existing VEBA employees not enrolled under the County's medical insurance with a contribution of \$600 per month plus previous mentioned \$150 per month for a total of \$750.

The Board thanked Katie and Bandie for their presentation and stated they would get back to them.

Nikki Smith, Payroll/Benefits Coordinator, joined the Board to discuss the Master Application for the County's health insurance renewal. Nikki gave a brief overview of the minimal changes, stating that Justin received the same email and had previously announced the changes. Chairman Dixon stated that he recommended signing the application. Commissioner Nelson made a motion to sign the Master Application, and Commissioner Ledgerwood seconded the motion. Nikki stated that there would be a benefits fair on October 19th at 2:30 pm where employees can gain more information. Nikki requested permission to submit electronically, and the Board granted the request.

Commissioner Nelson stated that the coalition met yesterday and it is red ribbon week. He stated that the Board has always been in support of red ribbon week and that the coalition put a banner and lights in the courthouse lawn in support of it. Commissioner Nelson stated that it is also red ribbon week at the school this week.

The Board reviewed two requests to transfer expenses from the Current Expense Fund to the Historical Document Preservation Fund. McKenzie explained that these expenses were incurred for an accounting software upgrade but were intended to pay for software that would aid in preserving the Board's meeting minutes, resolutions, and ordinances. McKenzie worked with the software company to transfer the payments to the software that was originally intended for purchase, and since that has occurred she wanted to request for the expenses to be appropriately accounted for so they match. The Board approved the transfer and Chairman Dixon signed the transmittal.

Chairman Dixon stated that he spent time at the annual board meeting for the county's risk pool. They discussed rates for liability insurance. Chairman Dixon stated that he believes there will be a substantial rate increase. He stated that there will be rates that come out in the next couple of weeks. Engineer Wege asked if this was a general increase or if it's due to the county's risk.

Chairman Dixon stated that it is a general liability in part with Mother Nature (fires, floods, etc). Chairman Dixon stated that the large insurance companies are not happy with the legislature in Washington State because municipalities are getting sued due to having deeper pockets. He went on to state that the insurance company lives on premiums, and if they don't have a lot of claims they are able to put the premiums in the stock market but due to the amount of claims lately, there has been much opportunity for that. Chairman Dixon stated that our risk pool has a large fight on their hands because the insurance carrier has the ability to put their foot down at the end of the day and tell them what they will pay. The two large insurance carriers in discussion were Munich and Brown and Brown. Chairman Dixon stated that the County might see an increase for the next couple of years but it might go down after that. Chairman Dixon stated that with all of that happening in the background, he doesn't want to put the employees group on the back burner with a reply to their request for benefits and wages but the Board needs to review the rate changes for the County's insurance before they enter into negotiations.

Chairman Dixon stated that there will not be a meeting next Monday, it will be on Tuesday due to the holiday weekend.

The Board recessed from 9:52 a.m. to 10:02 a.m.

Sheriff Hyer and Cyndi Holbert, E911 Coordinator, joined the Board. Chairman Dixon stated that there is a use of force training on October 10th in Asotin and that there will be a morning session and an afternoon session. Chairman Dixon will pass the contact information on to Sheriff Hyer in case any of his staff is interested and available. The Board went into executive session at 10:05 to discuss the loss of another dispatcher. The executive session went until 10:28 a.m. There were no decisions made.

The Board went into regular session at 10:33 a.m.

The Board reviewed an email from Katie Magill regarding door hardware for the courthouse door badge security project. The Board discussed the aesthetics of the door knobs in question and unanimously approved moving forward. Commissioner Ledgerwood stated that he would inform Katie of the approval.

Commissioner Nelson stated he has the following meetings this week; Greater Columbia Behavioral Health and ALTC (Aging and Long Term Care) both on Thursday in Kennewick.

Chairman Dixon stated that they are doing Snake River Recovery Board interviews on October 24th and then a Board meeting. One of the individuals previously served in this position.

Commissioner Ledgerwood stated that Martha Lanman, Garfield County Public Health Nurse Director, had inquired about a shared position for environmental safety. This position would be paid for partially by Public Health and partially by Public Works. She stated that the state is trying to update contracts so she is trying to put something in place for hazardous materials. Chairman Dixon stated that he left that information in the department head's hands and if they come forward with a proposal the Board will look at it then.

Chairman Dixon stated that he has a VSP meeting on October 5th.

Commissioner Ledgerwood stated that he received a call from Greg Sharp, Garfield County IT Coordinator, on Friday night while he was trying to set up a laptop for Monica at the Extension Office. Greg informed Commissioner Ledgerwood that the Extension Office was getting abnormally slow internet speeds. There was discussion regarding different options from other internet companies and discussion regarding if fiber would be a viable option. Commissioner Ledgerwood recommended Greg look into other options other than fiber and also requested that Greg reach out to Mark Heitstuman, Extension Office Agent, before moving forward to have this discussion with him.

The following voucher payments were approved for payment:

Payroll Clearing Fund

Numbers: 22775 Through: 22783 Totaling: \$16,714.29

Electronic Payments

Dated: 09/08/2023 Number of Payments: 57 Totaling: \$148,938.32

The Commissioners regular meeting adjourned at 10:44 a.m. with the next regular meeting set for Tuesday, October 10th, 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