

October 10, 2023

The Board of Garfield County Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday October 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.

Road Supervisor, Steve Gormsen, gave the road report. Linda Lundquist has been training Brian Smith on the grader. There was discussion regarding upcoming vacations and Steve stated that he plans to have Linda run things while he's away. He informed the Board that in the shop the mechanic has been working on finishing rebuilding the plow on E259; everything is welded and hooked back up so they just have to paint it. The crew also serviced Truck E251, and serviced pickups E216, E220, and E219. The graders ran on the following roads; Breakdown, Mcgrann Hill, East Lynn, Valentine Ridge, Columbia Center, New York, and Kuhl Ridge. There was a complaint on the Valentine so the operator went out and pulled rock back into the road and fixed the issue. The crew was able to roll Kuhl Ridge after they graded it which should help with road conditions. There were a couple of loads of gravel that were sold so they were picked up by the purchasers. The crew did vegetation control on the following; Peola, Mountain Road, Linville Ridge, Knotgrass, and Casey Creek Road. The crew also trimmed trees throughout the county. Steve stated that the crew was able to get the yellow paint down for stripping and the white paint will be put down by the end of next week weather permitting. The crew is working on cleaning culverts this week and hauling rock to dust holes.

County Engineer James Wege joined the Board. He informed them that he has been working on property subdivisions. The first advertisement for consultants will be in the paper this week and will run for three weeks. He is trying to get it posted in the business journals, either in Spokane or Tri Cities but is having some issues due to those publications not typically posting these types of items. He stated that another option is to post it to the Seattle journal. The requirement from the state is these ads have to be posted in a trades journal in addition to the local paper of circulation. He continued that there has to be separate ads for each project. Kirby Mayview is the first project he's advertising for. They will hold interviews in November with the respondents. He will put ads in towards the end of December for the other projects.

Chairman Dixon informed the Board that he will be on vacation from November 2nd through November 13th. He will miss the meeting on the 6th of November and possibly the 13th. Commissioner Ledgerwood stated that he will most likely be absent on November 13th, but will be remote if it's possible. There was discussion about potentially canceling the meeting on the 13th depending on Board members' availability. There will be further discussion as this meeting gets closer.

McKenzie informed the Board that Katie Magill, Administrator/Courtroom Coordinator, received the quote back from Herres Enterprise for the Judge's bench. The quote is for \$4,194.72. Katie plans to use AOC Security funds to pay for 85% of this project and 15% will be paid with LATC. Commissioner Ledgerwood made a motion to accept the quote for the kevlar bench and Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board reviewed two requests for county credit cards for the sheriff's office and signed them.

Chairman Dixon explained that there was an amendment to the VSP contract. The amendment includes a \$47,000 increase for water monitoring. Commissioner Ledgerwood made a motion to have the Chairman sign the amendment and Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, the chairman signed it.

The Board recessed from 9:25 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

The LST county tour is tomorrow.

Adam Hodges, Garfield County Risk Manager, joined the Board to discuss the insurance facility review. Adam provided the Board with copies of the review and stated that he wanted to give a reason as to why this was just now coming to the Board's attention and not a month ago. He stated that there was an issue with the facility's review attachments being too large to email so the email was never received by him or the county. He spoke with the individual that did the review and they discovered the error. Adam said that a lot of the recommendations are housekeeping items that should be pretty simple to fix; space heaters were a concern in Garfield County, as well as, Columbia County. Another noted issue was what the insurance calls 'pig tailing', which is when there is a surge protector plugged into a surge protector. There were also recommendations for implementing regular maintenance on checking electrical panels and smoke detectors.

Commissioner Nelson brought up discussion regarding the recommendation from the risk pool pertaining to the jail. Adam stated that the risk pool would recommend to close the jail while there is an investigation going on. Adam stressed that these are recommendations and the Board can choose to do what they want with each of the recommendations. Commissioner Nelson stated that he is concerned about getting a recommendation from the risk pool and how it might look if the Board goes against the risk pool's recommendations. Adam said it might be important to see how it looks to other counties that are a part of our risk pool. Chairman Dixon asked how it would decrease the County's premiums if they closed the jail. There was discussion regarding the uncertainty of the costs for the coming year. Additional discussion was had about the costs of closing the jail and covering costs to transport inmates to another facility. Chairman Dixon stated that Garfield County was one of three counties within the risk pool that has had a death in the jail within the last few years. The next annual board meeting for insurance will be October 25th. Commissioner Nelson stated that there were no other recommendations for the jail from the risk pool other than shutting the jail down.

There was discussion regarding the jail and the looming law suit. Adam pointed out that another option might be stating that we will only house a certain group of people for a certain amount of

time and anything else will be transported. There is a 90-day follow-up on this report where the insurance will want to review the progress on the recommendations made to the County. The Board feels that the recommendation regarding the jail is more of a policy/procedure review, not a facility review. The County is working on recommendations regarding the jail, but it is not a fast process and requires more conversations with the Sheriff, Prosecutor, and Judge.

Commissioner Ledgerwood pointed out that the last few months show a daily average of .18 people being housed in the jail. Chairman Dixon said that he was approached by another county with a potential opportunity of housing inmates, but there's further discussion needed. Adam stated Columbia County contracted with Walla Walla County. Commissioner Nelson stated that Asotin County is building a jail that they plan on having completed by October of next year. There was further discussion regarding the premium and how it would be affected depending on how the recommendations for the jail are handled. Chairman Dixon stated that the risk pool looks like the premiums are going to be increasing quite a bit. Chairman Dixon was hoping to have numbers late last week or sometime this week. Adam said that he would be surprised if Chairman Dixon gets numbers because the risk pool is waiting on the County's responses to the recommendations before getting premiums worked up. The Board will review the recommendations and reach out to Adam with any questions.

There was a public budget hearing at 10:00 a.m. The Board met with department heads to review their budget requests. Katie Magill and Judge Cox joined the Board to discuss the District Court's 2024 budget. They updated the District Court dues and communications lines based upon new increases and historical data. The biggest increase was the court appointed conflict attorney; Katie stated that it was doubled from \$75 per hour \$150 per hour. The increase was based upon what the surrounding counties were doing. Katie and the Judge stated that there is a lack of attorneys and if they didn't raise the costs then they wouldn't be able to get anyone. The Board thanked them for their time.

Katie gave an update to the Board that she has reached out to another contractor for the three dutch doors needed for the courthouse security badge system, and she is going to continue working on finding a few other options. The Board informed Katie that they did approve the Kevlar bench quote.

The Board recessed for 5 minutes from 10:08 a.m. to 10:13 a.m.

Sheriff Hyer and E911 Coordinator joined the Board to discuss their budgets. Chairman Dixon gave Sheriff Hyer a copy of the facilities review and asked him to review the jail's section. Commissioner Nelson asked if Sheriff Hyer was asking for a 10% increase for salaries, and Commissioner Nelson asked if the Sheriff thought that was feasible. Sheriff Hyer stated he did. Commissioner Nelson asked Cyndi if she was requesting a 20% increase for salaries for dispatchers and Cyndi stated that she was. The Board asked for an explanation and Cyndi informed them that the dispatchers are not just dispatchers, they are doing a lot more than just that. She continued that most call centers just take calls and dispatch emergency services, where as ours have to do monthly validations, public records requests, CPL's, enter warrants, enter protection orders, etc. Cyndi stated that there are only two other agencies in the state that have dispatchers cross trained for the jail. She also informed the Board that her training budget isn't big enough to send anyone to training. She said the lack of pay is what she hears from

prospective hires that aren't willing to come to Garfield County. She said having to split their attention multiple different ways is exhausting as well. Commissioner Nelson stated that the dispatch is now part of the union. Chairman Dixon stated that there has not been a letter to the Board stating they are part of the union, only the verbal acknowledgement the last time the deputies met with the Board. Commissioner Nelson asked about the veterinarian line within the Sheriff's budget and Sheriff Hyer stated that this is if there's an injured dog that the Sheriff's office can't find the owners of, then the county has to pay the vet bill. There was discussion regarding the K9 fund and if it's needed or not. Sheriff Hyer stated that in the next year or two it's not likely to have a K9, but after there's more training there might be a deputy that wants to take that on. Chairman Dixon stated that one of the places they need to look at in the budget is the ERR side of things, stating they need to look at where they are and where they're going with the amount of vehicles that aren't getting drove. Chairman Dixon asked if the dispatchers' job duties have changed since they have been hired. Cyndi stated that she came in with a lot of experience but was still unprepared for how much work it was. Chairman Dixon said if the job duties have changed he would like to work with the department to see what they can do to help minimize these extra duties or help justify a change in pay. The Board asked to see a list of the duties that have changed. Sheriff Hyer asked if the Board has seen anything from the union regarding dispatch joining the union and the Board stated they haven't seen anything in writing, the only confirmation was the verbal. Sheriff Hyer informed them that he would pass along the message to the union to get a letter to the Board. The Board thanked Sheriff Hyer and Cyndi for coming.

McKenzie discussed the Auditor's budget and informed the Board of the increase to her training expense line and supplies budget line. She informed the Board that the increase in the training budget was due to having to have her staff certified in all of the things they work with which includes having to go to conferences for elections and licensing/recording. She stated that the change to the supplies line was simply due to the increasing costs of supplies. She went over the election budget with the Board and stated that the increases in this budget were due to the fact that there will be at least three elections next year with the possibility of up to five due to the presidential year. She stated that most of the election costs are reimbursed from other jurisdictions that have items on the ballot, including the state.

Commissioner Nelson spoke about a manpower shortage in the dispatch department and stated that the Board drafted a resolution to help relieve a dispatcher that had already scheduled a vacation in November, but the department revoked it due to being short staffed. He continued that because of this, that dispatcher would have to forfeit 40 hours of vacation because they were maxed and couldn't carry any more forward. This resolution would provide a one-time cash-out of 40 hours of vacation for the dispatcher in question. Chairman Dixon stated that his only concern was that they might be opening the door for others to want cash-outs. Commissioner Nelson stated that the Board needs to look at each situation as an individual and if it applies in the future they will review those situations as they come. Commissioner Ledgerwood stated that he is in favor of it because the employee did everything they could to mitigate losing their vacation, but at no fault of their own the department revoked the scheduled vacation to help cover shifts. Commissioner Nelson made a motion to sign Resolution 2023-19 in the matter of One-Time Emergency Vacation Cash-Out, and Commissioner Ledgerwood seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously and the resolution was signed. McKenzie stated that she would draft a letter on the Board's behalf to pay out vacation on the November 10th payroll.

The Board went into executive session at 10:41 a.m. to talk about potential litigation and employee negotiations.

The following voucher payments were approved for payment:

Claims Clearing Fund

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| Numbers: 69943 | Through: 69977 | Totaling: <u>\$6,408.21</u> |
| Numbers: 69978 | Through: 70051 | Totaling: <u>\$104,415.56</u> |
| Numbers: 70052 | Through: 70089 | Totaling: <u>\$54,637.96</u> |

Payroll Clearing Fund

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| Numbers: 22853 | Through: 22859 | Totaling: <u>\$13,197.51</u> |
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Electronic Payments

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| Dated: 10/10/2023 | Number of Payments: 57 | Totaling: <u>\$166,409.80</u> |
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The Commissioners regular meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m. with the next regular meeting set for Monday, October 16th, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioner's Chambers at the Garfield County Courthouse.

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| <u>/s/ McKenzie Lueck</u> | <u>/s/ Justin Dixon</u> |
| Attest: Clerk of the Board | Chairman, Board of Garfield County Commissioners |