

December 11, 2023

The Board of Garfield County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday December 11, 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 reviewed and approved the minutes from the previous meeting.

Chairman Dixon called for public comment. There was none.

Chairman Dixon stated that Commissioner Nelson would be remote today.

Road Supervisor, Steve Gormsen, gave the road report. They put the wings on the grader for District 1 so it is ready for snow. Due to the muddy conditions the grader operators couldn't grade any roads except for Sky Hawk so they raked several roads to pull gravel that is piled up on the side of the roads back into the middle. The crew helped move the power line on Pataha Creek and will finish that project this week. They hauled rock to Dutch Flat and Malone Hill bridge. They have also been burning weeds in culvert heads. They finished mowing Casey Creek and trimmed trees. The mower needs work so it is in the shop and will be worked on this week. Steve stated that three trucks are plowed up and the chains are hung on all equipment, so they are ready for winter weather. Last week the ignition switch went out on Pickup E411, and due to the key needing programmed with the new ignition switch, it is headed to the Dodge dealership. Ollie completed sign inventory and gave Steve a list of signs that they will order this year. The crew is working on the Malone Hill bridge guardrail when weather permits. Commissioner Ledgerwood stated that Hutchins Hill is lacking gravel. Steve stated that as soon as the ground dries out they will get some gravel hauled but they can't even get into the pit right now. Steve said they still have money in the budget for rocking so he left two dump trucks unplowed so they can haul gravel. He's working on getting a culvert inventory and a rock inventory this week.

Monica Bartlow, Extension Office Secretary, joined the Board to request changes to the fair budget. She stated that there was a mistake on the proposed revenue for gate receipts and she requested to increase it to \$13,000 for gate receipts. She also requested to increase the revenue and expenditures related to the Shepherd Foundation Grant from \$1,200 to \$20,300 due to the recent granting of funds. Fair President Sara Riley and Commissioner Ledgerwood spoke about grants that they could apply for to help fund additional projects around the fair. One of the grants they are interested in applying for is the Novia grant which opens in January. Commissioner Ledgerwood stated that the Ag West grant indicated that if an entity did no fundraising on their own then they would not be granted funds. Because of this, Sara presented the Board with the profits that the Fair Fund made from their earlier fundraising efforts of the pancake breakfast (\$821.80) and cowboy church (\$1,392.25). There was discussion regarding grants available and the amount that could go towards different projects. Chairman Dixon stated that as long as the revenues and expenditures match that a change to the budget was not an issue. There was

discussion regarding tracking donations. The Board gave verbal approval to update the budget reflecting the potential grant revenues and expenditures. Commissioner Ledgerwood stated that when he was talking with Sara last week they discussed requesting LATC funds for projects that they don't currently have funding for. There was further discussion regarding the Ag West grant and applying to it for funding for the display case. Sara stated that the arena fence is a safety concern due to the chain link being in rough shape, the posts being rotted, and the gates not being in good shape. Sara provided the Board with a quote from Lucky Acres to fix the arena fencing in the amount of \$11,835.11. She stated that this is if Lucky Acres did everything including the tear down of the old fencing. Additionally, Sara provided a quote from C & C Painting to the Board for painting the hose stalls. This quote was in the amount of \$11,400. Commissioner Ledgerwood stated that they were hoping to get these two requests added to the list for the LATC, but were planning to apply to the Novia grant in January when it becomes available.

Chairman Dixon stated that Commissioner Nelson is remote today.

Engineer Wege and Stan Warren joined the Board to continue discussion regarding ag exemptions for building permits. Engineer Wege stated that he had emailed slight changes to the proposed ag exemption policy. He proposed that the county gathers the recording fee for exemption and once the county has approved the permit, then the county will file the permit with the Auditor's office. Commissioner Ledgerwood stated that this will be an ever changing document due to the recording fees continually changing. Engineer Wege stated that he left the fee amount out of the policy and worded it in a way to reflect the appropriate recording fee for that time. He provided the Board and Stan with a draft permit and stated that the permit application is based off the accessory building permit with some changes. In his draft, there is a size requirement of the building being 10,000 sq. ft. or smaller to be able to qualify for the exemption, among other requirements. There was discussion regarding the size requirement, and it was determined that it is at the jurisdiction's discretion to include a size requirement to the exemption. Chairman Dixon asked if a seed or chemical storage building would qualify and Engineer Wege said no according to current resolution. They then discussed a farmer with a storage shed, and Engineer Wege said it would qualify but there were concerns about how the wording was in the proposed policy stating 'place of employment'. Chairman Dixon recommended discussing these items with the Prosecutor. There was discussion about flood zones and slopes. Engineer Wege stated that new flood maps will be coming out in July, 2024. The FEMA maps have the flood plain and flood way designations. There was discussion regarding the difference between the two designations. Stan revisited the exemption policy and stated that some of the documents spoke about a building inspector. He wanted to verify that the county would do this in house and not outsource to another county. Engineer Wege said that depending on the situation in terms of the review that the intent would be to not have a structural review, but instead to just review the floor plan. He continued that the county does currently contract with Columbia County for building permit services. Stan stated that he didn't want this to be outsourced to Columbia County and there be more fees if there isn't going to be a physical inspection. Engineer Wege explained that they still need to send the plans to Columbia County so the plans are on file. Chairman Dixon said that he is okay with the language Engineer Wege drafted and requested that he submit it to the Prosecuting Attorney. Stan expressed concern about the process continuing to drag on and Chairman Dixon stated that it appears that they were on the right path to getting this policy in place.

Jay Franks joined the Board to discuss insurance and an event at the fairgrounds. Adam Hodges joined the meeting virtually, as he's the county's insurance representative. The Agriculture Museum is wanting to put on a gas engine show and shine and a swap meet event. Jay asked the Board about a rental fee. He stated that the Ag Museum doesn't pay rent for Spring Farming Days but wasn't sure about this event as it wouldn't be affiliated with the county. Jay stated that the Ag Museum Board is planning the event for June 29<sup>th</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup>. Chairman Dixon asked if they have verified that the fairgrounds is available for rent that weekend and Jay stated that they have already secured the fairgrounds for that weekend. There was discussion regarding vendors and camp sites. The Board requested that the Ag Museum handle RVs that are dry camping on their own but that all RV spots are ran through the extension office so there is no confusion on which spots are sold. There was discussion regarding the amount it costs to dry camp and Chairman Dixon stated that the fair charges \$10 per night. Chairman Dixon continued that he thinks this is an excellent idea that will bring people to the community. Jay is trying to get some food vendors lined up for the event as well. There was discussion regarding the vendor fees. Jay asked if exhibitors would owe a fee. Monica stated that food vendors are charged 15% on their earnings for the fair. She also stated that the county sells a none food vendor permit for a fee of \$35. Chairman Dixon suggested that the Board look at none food vendor fees and consider waiving at least some of it to ease the fees on the participants as they get this event up and running. Commissioner Ledgerwood brought up that when someone rents the fairgrounds to have an event, then whatever money is collected for vendor fees goes back to the renter. Jay asked if the Ag Museum rents the facility, how that impacts insurance coverage. Commissioner Ledgerwood stated that for the fair, every food vendor has to submit proof of insurance. Monica stated that the none food vendors aren't required to show proof of insurance, but do have to complete a hold harmless agreement. Adam stated that spectators would probably be covered under the county's insurance, however, the participants would not be covered because they are participating. Vendors would need to sign the hold harmless agreement because they are participating. He continued that it's a good risk mitigation tool to require vendors via a policy to provide liability insurance. Chairman Dixon stated that he would like to continue the conversation regarding the vendor fees. Commissioner Ledgerwood said if the Board does it like they were planning for the renaissance fair than the renter gets to keep the fees collected. Chairman Dixon stated that he is tentative to agree to that because the Board could potentially be limiting revenue for the county if a big event comes in and rents the fairgrounds. As the Ag Museum continues to plan the event they will work with the Board to get the details finalized.

There was a budget hearing at 10:00 a.m. for the Board to adopt the Final Budget for the County. Due to the budget not being ready, the Board agreed to continue this hearing until the next meeting December 18<sup>th</sup>.

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

The Board reviewed Resolution 2023-24 which pertains to Levy Certification for all Taxing Districts. The following levies were certified;

Garfield County General Fund:	\$ 821,934.04
Garfield County Road Fund:	\$ 916,358.85

Mental Health Fund:	\$ 13,482.17
City of Pomeroy:	\$ 193,967.44
Garfield County Port District:	\$ 210,426.60
Garfield County Fire District:	\$ 472,900.22
Garfield County Public Hospital District:	\$ 221,506.94
Pomeroy School District #110:	\$ 1,100,000.00
Pomeroy School District #110 Bond:	\$ 500,000.00

Commissioner Ledgerwood made a motion to sign the resolution and Commissioner Nelson seconded it. The motion passed unanimously, and the resolution was signed.

The Board reviewed a request to surplus the Prosecutor's copy machine due to it being obsolete and no longer of use after the email migration. Commissioner Ledgerwood made a motion to surplus the copy machine and Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

There was discussion regarding annual support from the County to the Public Health District. Commissioner Ledgerwood stated that this is a requirement that counties support their local health district per RCW. He continued that the Auditor stated during a previous audit that the State Auditor's Office recommended having an agreement of some sort in place between the County and the Health District in support of providing these funds. The Prosecutor was in the process of reviewing a resolution that would support the annual invoices submitted by the Health District for the annual payment. The Board approved the invoice for payment to Public Health in the amount of \$16,500 and made a motion to approve resolution 2023-26 in the matter of Providing Support to the Health District pending the approval of the Prosecutor. Commissioner Ledgerwood made a motion to sign the document and Commissioner Nelson seconded it. The Board approved it unanimously.

Chairman Dixon stated that he attended an Executive Infrastructure & Facilities Workshop last Thursday with Clerk of the Board McKenzie Lueck in Walla Walla and one of the main subjects discussed was HB 1257 regarding the Clean Buildings Act. Commissioner Nelson state that he received an email last week from Paul Jewell, the Policy Director for the Washington State Association of Counties, regarding the Clean Buildings Act Compliance which he forwarded to the Board. Chairman Dixon stated that this bill states any facilities that fall within a square footage requirement must meet an unfunded mandate to meet the requirements set forth within the Clean Buildings Act. There has been \$1.5 billion of additional revenue collected over the last few months in the Climate Commitment Act. The Legislative Steering Committee is going to focus their efforts on appropriations of this additional funding to help counties who have facilities that will fall within the requirements. The Clean Buildings Act was passed in 2019 and expanded in 2022. The current size requirements state existing Tier 1 (50,000 sq. ft. +) and Tier 2 (20,000 to 49,999 sq. ft.) are required to meet the requirements of the Clean Buildings Act. These requirements could force the county to make significant upgrades to any facilities that fall within either of these tiers. Chairman Dixon stated that the firm that put on the workshop has worked with Walla Walla County and Walla Walla County spoke very highly of them. He continued that there are other firms that do the same thing. Commissioner Nelson stated that he hasn't responded to Paul's email yet, but will inform him that Garfield County is just getting into

an assessment phase and we aren't sure what facilities will be affected by these requirements yet. This discussion will continue as the Board assesses what buildings will, if any, be affected.

Chairman Dixon stated that he has a Snake River Salmon Recovery Board meeting this week.

Commissioner Nelson stated that he had ALTC and BQH meetings last week. He also informed the Board that John Hirsch will be the liaison for the City of Pomeroy. Mr. Hirsch requested the Commissioner Nelson inform the Board and public that there will be a gathering at 2 p.m. Tuesday, December 12, at City Hall to recognize the outgoing council members and Mayor.

Commissioner Ledgerwood stated that there will be a search and rescue meeting tomorrow at 6 p.m. in the court room open to anyone that wants to become a member or existing members. This meeting is to reorganize the search and rescue efforts.

The Board reviewed resolution 2023-25 regarding a transfer from the Criminal Justice Fund to the Current Expense Fund in the amount of \$400,000. Chairman Dixon stated that this is an annual transfer that is done to help cover costs associated with criminal justice that are not covered by the E911 fund transfer. Commissioner Ledgerwood moved to approve the resolution and Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the resolution was signed.

Commissioner Nelson asked if the Board has received a breakdown of the jail expenses. Chairman Dixon stated that he spoke with Clear Risk, the County's liability insurance provider, about the County's jail and asked if there would be any reduction in premiums if the County chose to close the jail. Chairman Dixon stated that the response he got back from Clear Risk was that there would not be any reduction in premiums due to the closure of the jail and that Clear Risk makes their risk assessments based on other factors such as number of employees and the size of the County. Chairman Dixon continued that there were several counties that sent letters of intent to withdraw from the pool and if a county decides to leave the pool it has to draft a letter by 12/31/23. Chairman Dixon informed the Board that he would like to draft a letter and have it ready in case the county decides to withdraw from the pool because if multiple counties leave, then the pool would lose their buying power. He stated that there are multiple county's discussing self-insurance. The Board agreed that it is a good idea to have a letter drafted and ready in case they choose to withdraw. Chairman Dixon will draft a letter. The Board can withdraw their intent to leave if they change their minds.

McKenzie asked for clarification on a few budget requests. She stated that the Sheriff's office initially requested \$10,000 for Search and Rescue, and since they are reorganizing the Search and Rescue efforts now she wanted to confirm what the Board wanted to do with that request. Commissioner Nelson stated that he spoke with Deputy Taylor, who is the head of Search and Rescue, about what these funds would be used for and it was stated that they would mostly go towards training. Commissioner Ledgerwood stated that Deputy Taylor is working on getting an inventory list for Search and Rescue. There was discussion regarding the approval of expenditures for Search Rescue prior to them being expensed. The Board wanted to have further discussion with Deputy Taylor about this before making any decisions on approving and rejecting the request in the budget. McKenzie stated that there was a request to increase the CTO

(certified training officer) Dispatch line from \$3,000 annually to \$6,000 annually. Chairman Dixon stated that he received clarification from Cyndi as to why she made the request and she stated that she's hoping to promote more dispatchers to CTO status because they are training more dispatchers and have to have the CTO designation to provide training. She stated that they are hoping to hire two dispatchers in the next year. Commissioner Nelson stated that this would make sense with all of the hiring that this department has had to do recently. Commissioner Ledgerwood asked if this was a one year increase or an indefinite increase. There was discussion about the term of the increase and the Board unanimously decided to move forward with increasing the CTO line for dispatch. McKenzie stated that the final request she needed clarification on was a request to increase the Civil Service Examiner wages from the current wages of \$5,400 annually to \$8,000 annually. Commissioner Nelson stated that the Board increased these wages midyear to the \$5,400 amount. The Board agreed to leave the wage at \$5,400. Civil Service Examiner, Rachel Anderson, requested the Board budget a laptop for Civil Service in the ERR budget. She will work with Greg Sharp, IT Coordinator, and Ashlyn Deatherage, Business Manager, about getting that amount added to the ERR budget.

Sheriff Hyer joined the Board to discuss the jail budget. He provided the 2023 jail budget, the 2024 proposed jail budget, and an email from Walla Walla Deputy Jail Commander, Jon Liger regarding details about the current billing to Columbia County, City of Walla Walla, and the City of College Place. Sheriff Hyer stated that his jail budget for 2023 is \$250,860 and he has spent \$178,424.77 year-to-date. The projected 2024 jail budget is \$258,931. Walla Walla County is charging a daily rate of \$92.59 to Columbia County and Columbia County covers medical. Walla Walla County is charging an hourly rate of \$5.75 per hour or a daily rate of \$138 to the City of Walla Walla and the City of College Place and County pays medical. There was discussion about what the projected budget would be if the county outsourced jail services and how many inmates Garfield County could hold for the projected budgeted amount. There was continued discussion regarding the lack of premium decrease with the closure of the jail. The Board requested a meeting with the Prosecuting Attorney, Sheriff, and Judge to weigh the options. Commissioner Nelson requested that the Board make a decision as soon as possible. They will discuss this at their next meeting.

Chairman Dixon stated that Garfield County received a Certificate of Good Practice for 2022 from the County Road Administration Board (CRAB). This certificate was awarded due to submitting all reports required by law to the Department of Transportation or CRAB and has complied with laws relating to county road administration.

Sheriff Hyer stated that he interviewed a deputy this weekend and is moving forward with the background check on the potential hire. The Board thanked him for the update.

Engineer Wege joined the Board to discuss a claim from Century Link due to the damage of a telephone line that took place while the County Road crew was clearing the head of a culvert. He stated that he discussed this with members of the County Road Administration Board last week during his training and members of the CRAB stated that Century Link was not in a permitted area. Engineer Wege provided the Board with pictures of the damaged lines which were shown to be right at the head of the culvert not under the bottom of the ditch. Engineer Wege will send the images to Century Link and deny the claim. He continued with his weekly update that the

fairgrounds were granted funds for the bleacher upgrade, and due to it being a state grant there are requirements which includes lengthy studies on the ground and any historical value prior to taking action, so the soonest the process of replacing the bleachers will begin is April. Engineer Wege stated that after speaking with Steve about the project, Steve plans on having the crew work on it during harvest when they are trying to stay off of the roads for farmers but they do plan to have it completed in time for the fair. Engineer Wege continued that Eastern Washington Agriculture Museum (EWAM) received funds from the Shepherd Foundation for concrete sidewalks to meet ADA compliance, so they will be moving forward with that project as well. Commissioner Ledgerwood asked if the advertisement was placed for the 6 Year Plan and Engineer Wege confirmed it will be printed this week and next.

The Board met with the Public Health Board at 11:00 a.m. and adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

The following voucher payments were approved for payment:

**Claims Clearing Fund**

Numbers: 70515	Through: 70549	Totaling: <u>\$6,508.21</u>
Numbers: 70563	Through: 70613	Totaling: <u>\$161,133.96</u>
Numbers: 70614	Through: 70644	Totaling: <u>\$72,927.34</u>

**Payroll Clearing Fund**

Numbers: 23057	Through: 23064	Totaling: <u>\$9,975.02</u>
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**Electronic Payments**

Dated: 12/08/2023	Number of Payments: 57	Totaling: <u>\$153,929.10</u>
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The Commissioners regular meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m. with the next regular meeting set for Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, 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