

April 15, 2024

The Board of Garfield County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday April 15, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Chambers at the Garfield County Courthouse.

Present were Chairman Justin Dixon, Member Jim Nelson, Member Larry Ledgerwood (remote), 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 for the previous meeting.

Chairman Dixon called for public comment. There was none.

Road Supervisor Steve Gormsen gave the Board the weekly maintenance report. The crew finished dipping ditches on Gould City. They also graded the following roads: Bratcher, Tramway, Connell Hill, Debow, Legge, Fairview, Rickman, Upper Hutchins, Tatman, and Skyhawk. The trucks hauled ditch materials from Gould City to a few county residents that live nearby that needed fill dirt. They also trimmed trees on Pataha Creek. Steve stated that the mower broke down and they are waiting for a part to get that fixed. Once it's fixed, they will mow Pataha Creek. They sprayed on Mountain Road, Clayton Road, and Knott Grass Road. Steve stated that the pit was open for chipper day on Saturday, so they went up and pushed the pile back. In the shop, they worked on trailer E159, loader E108, and took the sander and plow off E252. Steve informed the Board that last Monday they had hearing tests per OSHA requirements. Steve also informed the Board that Whitman County will do the line striping for Garfield County. Garfield and Whitman Counties are discussing when striping will be completed in Garfield County, Steve is hoping for the end of August. He stated that there will be about 40 miles painted. The crew will have to have chip sealing done prior to that. Chairman Dixon asked who would order the paint and Steve stated that Whitman County will order the paint. Chairman Dixon asked where the priority would be for painting, and Steve stated that they were going to focus on striping Gould City and Kirby this year. There will be core samples taken on Kacey Creek this week. The crew will start hauling oil rock next week and it will probably take about a week and a half to finish that. Steve informed the Board that if the pup trailer isn't ready, Columbia County has one the county can use so the crew can run four trucks. The graders are running this week and rock is being hauled. Commissioner Nelson commented that the state fixed the guardrail on the bottom of Meadow Creek.

The Board reviewed a Notice of Award letter for the 2024 Seal Coat Aggregate supply bid to Atlas Sand and Rock. Steve and Ashlyn confirmed that all qualifications for the bid were met. Commissioner Nelson made a motion to award the bid to Atlas Sand and Rock and Commissioner Ledgerwood seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board reviewed a Notice of Award for the 2024 Chip Seal CRS-2P Supply Contract bid for Ergon Asphalt & Emulsions, Inc. Steve and Ashlyn confirmed that all qualifications for the bid were met. Commissioner Nelson made a motion to award the bid to Ergon Asphalt & Emulsions, Inc. and Commissioner Ledgerwood seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Dixon stated that the Board opened a bid for a parking lot project for EWAM last week as well. They received one bid for this project, and it was from 2 Cannon River Construction. Chairman Dixon stated that later last week the county received another bid that was delivered to the wrong PO Box and was not opened. Because of this, the Board is awarding the bid to 2 Cannon River Construction, which was the only applicable bid for the project. Commissioner Ledgerwood made a motion to approve the bid from 2 Cannon River Construction and Commissioner Nelson seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Dixon stated that there was a final bid that was opened last week for hot mix. There were two companies that submitted for the bid: Herco and Poe Asphalt. Chairman Dixon stated that the county reached out to Poe Asphalt as the apparently low bidder, however, there was confusion on when the county could pick up the hot mix and when it was needed. Because of this both bids were rejected. Chairman Dixon continued, that the bids were very comparable in price, but the pickup times were not comparable. Because the bid is under the \$50,000 procurement threshold for the formal competitive bid process, the Board unanimously agreed to defer this to Steve to work out and find an appropriate supplier that will meet the timeline the county needs to complete the work.

Commissioner Ledgerwood asked if the Board wanted to act on the quote from 2 Cannon River Construction for the sidewalk project at the fairgrounds. Chairman Dixon stated that he would call the contractor this afternoon and the Board could discuss it next week and potentially act on it.

Chairman Dixon stated that they are going to put an ad in the paper for a request for bids for bleachers at the fairground today. He added that the county will need to make sure the bleachers are put together prior to the fair.

Chairman Dixon stated that Spring Farming Day's took place last weekend at the fairgrounds. He wanted to give a shout out to the people that take part in these activities because they are good for the community.

Rachel Anderson joined the Board to inform them that the food bank in Walla Walla has changed the way they allocate food. Garfield County previously received a certain weight of food for three months at a time, and now Garfield County will only receive a percentage of the food. This is worrisome because the food bank is hardly receiving enough food for a month instead of three. Rachel stated that they are looking for funding sources to help bridge the gap of food now, and she asked the Board for ARPA/LATC funds. She also informed the Board that there will be a meeting at the high school at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday evening to discuss the need for day care in the community. Commissioner Nelson asked if the distribution of food from Walla Walla was a long-term issue or not and Rachel stated that it was long-term. Chairman Dixon asked if there were any other options to receive food from such as Spokane. There was discussion regarding additional questions and Chairman Dixon stated that he would like to speak with Walla Walla to get further information regarding the change in allocation of food. Rachel stated that covid funding has been cut and that caused food stamps to go from \$400 to \$30 per month as well. Rachel stated that it is not just Garfield County that is short, but surrounding

areas as well. There was discussion regarding a food drive, but Rachel stated that the drawback to a food drive is that items that are donated are not items that people generally use. That is why they're asking for monetary donations for the foodbank instead. She also brought up the idea of someone donating a whole beef. Chairman Dixon stated that beef prices are high right now and it must go through a certification process in order to be donated. Chairman Dixon stated that he would like to reach out to Walla Walla and have further discussion about the change.

Katie Magill, District Court Administrator, joined the Board to give an update on the jury system. She received a written response from Prosecutor Newberg in favor of spending \$20,000 from the DUI fund to purchase the new software, Jury System, but he would like to reduce the amount spent annually from the DUI fund for maintenance of the system to \$3,000 and split the annual maintenance cost between the Court Improvement fund and the DUI fund equally. Katie provided the Board with an updated proposal with the following costs for the setup fees; DUI Fund \$20,000, CIF \$5,000, and LATC \$19,309 (total of \$44,309). She also provided them with an updated annual maintenance plan of the following: \$3,100 DUI, \$3,100 CIF (total of \$6,200/year). Commissioner Ledgerwood stated that the request was reasonable, and Commissioner Nelson agreed that he was also in favor of the system. Katie stated that the current system was last updated in 2018, and because of this the jury pool continues to shrink every year. Commissioner Nelson made a motion to approve the purchase of the new software with the cost allocation provided by Katie and Commissioner Ledgerwood seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Nelson stated that he spoke with Prosecutor Newberg about the proposed ag building exemption. Mr. Newberg has handed the exemption to the County's outside council, Ken Harper, for further review and to provide edits due to Mr. Newberg's current workload. Commissioner Nelson is hoping for an answer regarding the exemption from Mr. Harper this week.

Chairman Dixon stated that he is going to Ephrata on Wednesday for an insurance board meeting. Chairman Dixon also stated that he wishes to discuss hiring an emergency manager next week during the meeting. Chairman Dixon stated that he met with the state's emergency management team last week, and he stated it was very helpful. He informed the Board that during the meeting the emergency management team spoke about potential funding for cyber security through emergency management.

Commissioner Nelson stated that Paul Jewell, Policy Director for WSAC, reached out looking for six east side, rural commissioners to be involved in a clean energy focus group to study the impacts of clean energy on those communities. Commissioner Nelson stated that he might get involved in the focus group, but he wasn't sure yet.

McKenzie requested LATC funds to purchase a new envelope opener for the elections, stating that they are starting to have issues with the current one. She received a quote from Pacific Office Automation, and it was around \$2,500. Commissioner Nelson made a motion to approve the purchase and Commissioner Ledgerwood seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board recessed from 9:40 a.m. until 9:50 a.m.

The Board went into executive session from 9:50 a.m. until 10:00 a.m. with Prosecutor Newberg to discuss contract negotiations.

There was a Public Health District meeting from 10:00 a.m. until 10:50 a.m.

There was a County Transportation meeting from 11:00 a.m. until 11:07 a.m.

The Board recessed from 11:07 a.m. until 11:20 a.m.

The Board met in regular session at 11:20 a.m. Cyndi Holbert, E911 Coordinator, joined the Board to discuss dispatch vacancies and the hardship caused because of those. She stated that dispatch is losing a full timer at the end of the month. This will bring them down to three full-time dispatchers at the end of the month and two part-time dispatchers. There was discussion regarding the emergency resolution to allow overtime to be paid per shift instead of after 40 hours per work week. There was discussion regarding employee(s) that are about to max their vacation hours and the potential need for an emergency cashout of vacation. Cyndi informed the Board that there is a potential hire that is going through the hiring process and the process has been expedited but they are still not going to be able to be full time until the end of the summer. The Board will discuss this further next week.

Commissioner Nelson stated that it was National Telecommunicators week and stated that the Board fully supports this and stated that if there is a formalized support letter for them to sign, they're more than willing to sign it. Commissioner Nelson stated that the Sheriff or previous E911 Coordinator used to bring a formalized letter for the Board to sign in support.

The following voucher payments were approved for payment:

### **Payroll Clearing Fund**

Numbers: 23357      Through: 23364      Totaling: \$20,833.59

### **Electronic Payments**

Dated: 4/10/24      Number of Payments: 59      Totaling: \$153,640.98

The Board continued a non-formal workshop in their chambers in the afternoon with Public Works administrative staff which adjourned at 2:50 p.m. No decisions were made during this workshop.

The Commissioners regular meeting adjourned at 11:26 a.m. with the next regular meeting set for Monday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024, 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