

MINUTES

BOARD OF BENTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Special Board Meeting
Wednesday, January 14, 2009, 8:00 am.
Commissioners' Conference Room
Benton County Justice Center
Kennewick, WA

Present: Chairman Max E. Benitz, Jr. Chairman
Commissioner Leo Bowman
Commissioner James Beaver
County Administrator David Sparks
Clerk of the Board Cami McKenzie

Benton County Employees Present During All or a Portion of the Meeting: Deputy Administrator Loretta Smith Kelty; Adam Fyall, Community Development Coordinator; Finance Manager Linda Ivey; Public Works Director Ross Dunfee; DPA Ryan Brown; Auditor Bobbie Gagner; Deputy Auditor Brenda Chilton; Central Services Manager Randy Reid; Keith Mercer, Sheriff's Office; Judge Holly Hollenbeck; District Court Administrator Jacki Lahtinen; Clerk Josie Delvin.

Workshop – 2009 Commissioner Priorities

District Court Judge Nomination Process

Bobbie Gagner said she had contacted the Secretary of State and this position would be appointed and would run for election during the next even-year election. She said she forwarded the information to the PA for review.

Chairman Benitz said he had looked at other County processes and recommended the Board put together a policy for non-partisan position appointments. He suggested the Board send out a questionnaire sent to the Bar Association, which would be sent back to the County Administrator. The County Administrator would then make a recommendation for the top three and the Board would look at filling the position.

Commissioner Bowman agreed the Board needed to have a standardized process.

Commissioner Beaver also agreed there should be a standardized form and an application to fill out. He requested Mr. Sparks to get at least four or five models for the Board to review.

Judge Hollenbeck said that Benton County was unique in that it did not have a municipal court nor judges and the Courts worked well because of the cooperation from the cities. He said in the past a committee was formed represented by cities and judicial positions, an application sent out,

and a recommendation made to the Board. Mr. Sparks said there was an application process already in place and the Board could use Personnel for recruitment of the position.

Commissioner Beaver said he liked the idea from Judge Hollenbeck and recommended the Board put together an interview team that made a recommendation for the top three and sent the recommendation to the Board.

The Board agreed.

Bylaws and Rules of Procedure for Benton County Commissioners

The Board reviewed the Bylaws and Rules of Procedure for the Board and the following changes were agreed to:

1. Reference to “audiotapes” should be changed to reflect the current recording system.
2. Deadline to schedule and submit documentation for the agenda would be 5:00 p.m. on the Wednesday preceding the meeting.
3. Failure to comply with this deadline would result in removal of the agenda item without the prior consent of the County Administrator.
4. Only a member of the Commission could bring “Other Business” items before the Board.

Emergency Management - 800 MHz

David Sparks said the City of Richland was currently drafting an interlocal agreement regarding the participation in the 800 MHz system.

Chairman Benitz asked the Board if it wanted to participate financially in the upgrade of the 800 MHz system. He said he would support it, but first wanted to see the proposed participation plan. He indicated the proportionate share of each party was determined on use of the radios between Richland, Kennewick and Benton County and with the \$7 million grant, there was approximately a \$4 million shortfall.

Ryan Brown and David Sparks discussed the sheriff’s usage on behalf of the jail and the cities and allocating a percentage back to the cities. Chairman Benitz said the project was moving forward and two new tower sites were being constructed. He did indicate that funds were available in the 800 MHz reserves (based on a per month maintenance charge per phone) to begin paying for construction.

Commissioner Beaver said if part of this system was for the jail, then it should be worked out in the bed day rate. There was a discussion on whether the cost of the Public Works phones should be used in the formula since they were only used in the case of an emergency.

Mr. Sparks said he would be meeting with the City of Richland later in the day to discuss the interlocal agreement.

Chairman Benitz asked the Board if it was still willing to participate in an amount up to \$2 million and the Board said it was.

Budget Policies/Procedures

The Board discussed going to a biennial budget instead of a yearly budget, for the sake of saving staff and department time. The Board agreed to have Mr. Sparks research the idea. The Board briefly discussed a zero-base budget and said it was not ready to go there, but would look at it if the need arose.

The Board agreed to have another workshop at 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 21, 2009.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Clerk of the Board

Chairman