

MINUTES

BOARD OF BENTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Special Board Meeting
Thursday, January 29, 2009, 8:30 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; Finance Manager Linda Ivey; Central Services Manager Randy Reid; Keith Mercer, Sheriff's Office; Jacki Lahtinen, District Court; Personnel Manager Melina Wenner; Facilities Manager Roy Rogers; Planning Manager Mike Shuttleworth; Auditor Bobbie Gagner; Deputy Auditor Brenda Chilton; Steve Becken, Public Works; Clerk Josie Delvin; Treasurer Duane Davidson; Eric Hsu, Office of Public Defense; AND DPA Ryan Brown.

Economic Development

The Board discussed its philosophy regarding economic development to assist and not compete with the other entities.

Commissioner Beaver expressed his desire to have a goal for economic development and to get Benton County's name out there with a brochure and create its own identity through differentiation, name recognition, and advertising.

Adam Fyall reviewed the current Economic Development Plan and suggested it be re-done and asked the Commissioners if they wanted to lead or continue to be a partner.

Ryan Brown said if the Board had an idea of how it wanted to market, it could use those entities they currently contract with as a vehicle to get the things done instead of leaving it to them to decide what should be done.

The Board agreed that Commissioner Beaver could meet with David Sparks to discuss putting together a brochure for Benton County.

Office of Public Defense

Eric Hsu discussed the following priorities and recommendations for the Office of Public Defense:

- Propose and implement an ordinance by June to reflect the State Bar standards regarding case load maximums and attorney qualifications
- More involvement in the appointment process (hard to monitor cases without accurate numbers; issue of qualifications)
- Office space to deal more effectively with the public
- More involvement with investigator contracts (issue an RFP for investigators)
- Looking at future in-house attorneys, mentorship program
- Indigent screening (application fee for screening, promissory note - a system with a “pay as you go” sliding scale system)

Commissioner Benitz said he agreed with the ordinance and appointment process and requested Mr. Hsu get “buy-in” from the judges and PA’s office. He also indicated he was in agreement with going to in-house counsel and requested Mr. Hsu to start moving the process forward.

Mr. Hsu said he had talked to the judges and it was his understanding they would rather have the OPD take care of the appointment process.

The Board asked Mr. Hsu to send a memo and priority list to judges and see if they wanted to meet with the Commissioners.

The Board agreed to have the next workshop meeting on Tuesday, February 10, 2009 at 9:30 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:00 a.m.

Clerk of the Board

Chairman