

COMMISSIONERS' PROCEEDINGS

**Regular Meeting
County Public Services Building – Conference Room
Othello, Washington**

March 29, 2023 – 9:00 a.m.
(Wednesday)

Call to Order

Chairman Weise called the meeting to order.

Present:

Chairman Jay R. Weise
Vice-Chairman Dan C. Blankenship
Commissioner Miguel A. Garza

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Weise led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment – None

Approval/Addition of Agenda

Commissioner Garza moved, Blankenship seconded, to *approve the agenda as presented*. **Motion carried.**

Board Workshop

Voluntary Stewardship Program

Kristina Ribellia, Columbia Basin Conservation District, reviewed the actions taken on behalf of the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program (OGWRP) in a letter to Congress supporting Adams County's request for bridge replacement, noting the District fully supports the efforts of Adams County.

Harold Crose, Columbia Basin Conservation District, reviewed the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) in Adams County. Topics included:

- Critical areas:
 - Wetlands
 - Frequently flooded areas
 - Critical aquifer recharge areas
 - Geologically hazardous areas
 - Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas (emphasis on anadromous fish).
- Managing growth in Washington.
- VSP (created in 2011) gives counties the option to protect critical areas and farmland by implementing plans that rely on incentives, rather than regulations, to encourage farm-friendly conservation practices.
- Elements of the Adams County VSP work plan:
 - Evaluate existing information and resource conditions.
 - Establish protection and enhancement goals and measurable benchmarks for critical areas while maintaining agricultural viability.
 - Establish participation goals by agricultural producers to meet measurable benchmarks.
 - Provide a framework for monitoring and reporting.
 - Facilitate landowner participation and outreach.
- Funding for the VSP program.
- Agricultural activities under the VSP program.
- Critical areas within Adams County agricultural lands.

Periodic flooding of Sprague Lake was reviewed with Crose noting the Conservation District works closely with Lincoln County and is available as a technical resource.

Additionally, Crose reported the Conservation District coordinated with the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District; Department of Ecology; counties; and several state agencies in developing a Watershed plan for the Odessa

aquifer. The conservation district acted as the lead agency and was successful in getting the Odessa aquifer designated as a PL-566 project.

Juvenile Department

Administrator Garza reviewed the proposed Memorandum of Understanding to house juvenile offenders in a facility other than Martin Hall due to a potentially necessary separation of individuals. Benton and Franklin Counties will not be able to use the Martin Hall facility to house individuals as they are not part of the Consortium. The Memorandum of Understanding will be modified to reflect that change. Spokane County is also available and open to a Memorandum of Understanding with Adams County to house juvenile offenders. The Board provided **consensus authorization for Administrator Garza to move forward with the preparation of Memorandum of Understanding documents for juvenile detention services for Board review.**

Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative

Administrator Garza, along with Administrative Assistant Olascon, reviewed the requirements and responsibilities of the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative program. There are currently ten (10) Washington counties participating in the JDAI program with Adams County being the sole participant in Eastern Washington. Garza expressed a desire to continue with the strategies of the program, however, the requirements and responsibilities have become burdensome to his department. Garza noted a willingness to continue to search for grants to provide funding for the Juvenile Department. The current JDAI grant provides the county \$35,000, with \$20,500 allocated for salaries. Garza is requesting the Juvenile Department be allowed to discontinue the JDAI grant program; and the current part-time JDAI funded position become a full-time, county-funded position. No action was taken pending additional consideration by the Board.

Juvenile Internet

Administrator Garza reported the Juvenile Department is no longer able to access an internet connection through SkillSource, noting the department uses that facility for programming and internet access is necessary. Garza noted he has consulted with Central Services Manager Igbinoba. The cost of the service will be approximately \$100 per month and falls within the Juvenile Department budget. The Board provided **consensus authorization for the Juvenile Department to move forward with**

obtaining an internet service to juvenile offices in the SkillSource building.

Spanish Language Proficiency Testing

Administrator Garza has received inquiries from employees in his department regarding the Spanish language proficiency testing. Garza was informed that the matter is in progress and employees, pursuant to the collective bargaining agreement, should contact their Association representative with contract issues.

Adjournment @ 11:11 a.m.

Submitted:
s/Patricia J. Phillips, CMC
Clerk of the Board

Edited and Approved:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ADAMS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
s/Jay R. Weise, Chairman
s/Dan C. Blankenship, Vice-Chairman
s/Miguel A. Garza, Commissioner