

COMMISSIONERS' PROCEEDINGS

Regular Meeting
Adams County Courthouse
Ritzville, Washington

May 10, 2023 – 9:00 a.m.
(Wednesday)

Call to Order

Vice-Chairman Blankenship called the meeting to order.

Present:

Vice-Chairman Dan C. Blankenship
Commissioner Miguel A. Garza

Absent:

Chairman Jay R. Weise

Pledge of Allegiance

Vice-Chairman Blankenship led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval/Addition of Agenda

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

Board of Commissioner Meeting – Recess @ 9:01 a.m.

Board of Health Meeting – Call to Order @ 9:01 a.m.

Present: Commissioners Garza and Blankenship; Adams County Health Officer Dr. Brzezny (virtually); IHCS Director Guse; April May.

Due to a lack of quorum, no action was taken on any matter during the Board of Health meeting.

Health Officer Update

Adams County Health Officer Dr. Brzezny reported the following:

- Covid-19 can no longer be considered unusual and unexpected.
- Cross-border transmission cannot (and will not) be stopped.

- Population immunity from disease and vaccinations has increased, putting Covid-19 on a downward trend.
- Pressure on health systems from Covid-19 has eased.

The end of the global emergency means:

- The end of mobilizing international coordination.
- The end of streamlining international funding.
- The relative end of accelerating the advancement of the development of vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics under emergency U.S. authorization.

The end of the global emergency does not mean:

- The virus has stopped spreading.
- That SARS-CoV-21 is no longer a health threat.
- That the pandemic is over.
- That there will be any significant change in the behavior of the vast majority of society.

Additionally, updates were provided concerning the following:

- Reported COVID-19 deaths vs. “excess mortality”.
- Reported vs. observed deaths.
- Worldwide, over 80% of people who have died from COVID-19 are over 60 – reaching 100% vaccination of older adults globally will help save lives.
- Leading causes of death in 2022: (1) heart disease; (2) cancer; (3) unintentional injury; and, (4) COVID-19.
- Wastewater trends across U.S.
- United States epidemiologic update.
- National and Washington state COVID case rates.
- Statewide percent positivity and testing rate.
- Adams County 14-day positive test rate January, 2022 through May, 2023.
- While COVID hospitalizations continue to slowly drop for the state, emergency department boarding continues to be a problem for hospitals.
- Pediatric facilities are extremely busy; limited space is available.
- Behavioral and mental health numbers remain concerning with a trend of some very young patients as well as seeing fentanyl overdoses in children.
- Influenza activity by state – minimal in Washington state.

- May 11, 2023: Ending the U.S. Public Health Declaration
 - CDC will no longer have the authority to require reporting from the states on COVID-19 metrics.
 - Data sharing between states will not be required.
 - Insurers will not need to provide coverage for tests, vaccines, some treatments.
 - Provision to keep people enrolled in Medicaid during the emergency dropped, disenrolling has started.
- Public Health staff updates (previously emailed)
 1. A need to continue working on COVID surveillance with sentinel sites (CBHA, hospitals).
 2. On-going healthcare focus: outbreaks, long term care facilities.
 3. Continued support for testing, surveillance, and support of schools.
- Wastewater sampling in Othello.
- Tuberculosis, STD's number of cases is rising.
- Proposed landfill.
- Development of artificial intelligence (AI).

Board Updates – None

Board Discussion/Decision Items – None

Other Business – None

Executive Session – None

Board of Health Meeting – Adjourn @ 10:24 a.m.

Board of Commissioner Meeting – Reconvene @ 10:27 a.m.

Board Workshop

Integrated Health Care Services

IHCS Director Guse provided departmental staff updates for April, 2023.

Additionally, the following contracts were reviewed and will be placed on the May 16, 2023 consent agenda for approval:

1. Consolidated Contract 2022-2024 No. CLH31001, Amendment #12 for the purpose of amending the funding total to \$2,326,862. No other changes to the original agreement.

2. DSHS and Local Health Jurisdiction Agreement for the purpose of continuing the agreement through June 30, 2026.

Recess @ 10:43 a.m.

Reconvene @ 11:00 a.m.

Quarterly Jail Update

Jail Commander Nick Williams provided an update on current activities within the jail.

Recess @ 11:52 a.m.

Reconvene @ 1:00 p.m.

Closed Session

At 1:00 p.m. Vice-Chairman Blankenship announced the Board would recess into Closed Session for fifteen (15) minutes under RCW 42.30.140(4)(b) – “that portion of a meeting during which the governing body is planning or adopting the strategy or position to be taken by the governing body during the course of any collective bargaining, professional negotiations, or grievance or mediation proceedings, or reviewing the proposals made in the negotiations or proceedings while in progress.” Additionally present were Civil Attorney Barden (telephonically), and Human Resource Manager Campbell.

At 1:13 p.m. the Board reconvened from Closed Session.

Juvenile Detention Contracts

Memorandum of Understandings for Juvenile Detention Services between Spokane County and Adams County; and, Benton-Franklin Counties and Adams County were reviewed. The agreements are necessary to house juvenile offenders in a facility other than Martin Hall due to a potentially necessary separation of individual offenders. The MOU's will be placed on the May 16, 2023 consent agenda for Board approval.

District Court

District Court Judges Benzel and Russell met to discuss the placement of the Lead Deputy Clerk position in Othello District Court. Commissioner Blankenship reviewed the facts of the matter, noting an individual moved to the Exempt position of court administrator, from a position within the Association, on a trial basis, and after some period decided to no longer continue in the Administrator position. Additionally noted was the court

administrator position was a newly created position and now this individual is moving to another position that did not exist prior to April 1, 2023. The Collective Bargaining Agreement allows for an individual beginning a new position to be placed at Step 1 or 2 of the appropriate, agreed upon salary range. The Court is requesting the individual, who is now in the position of Lead District Court Clerk, be placed at Step 4 of the salary schedule for that position.

Judge Benzel related the situation as a unique occurrence, noting Ms. Alfaro accepted the court administrator position at a salary of EE1, Step 2 when the position would only serve the Othello Court. Once the court administrator position was restructured and tasked with overseeing both courts, Ms. Alfaro notified Judge Benzel that she was not interested in the administrator position and requested a return to her previous position. Ms. Alfaro consulted the Association; Human Resources was consulted; and, the Board was advised by the Court that Ms. Alfaro did not wish to continue in the position of Court Administrator and requested reclassification of the Court Administrator position to include both Courts. Ms. Alfaro continued in the position with assurance from Judge Benzel that her previous position of clerk would not be filled for her to return to it once an Administrator was hired to oversee both Courts.

The position of court administrator was filled and Ms. Alfaro was able to vacate the administrator position and return to a clerk position. A payroll change for the placement of Ms. Alfaro at a Range F, Step 4, on the Courthouse Bargaining Unit Salary Schedule, was submitted to payroll based off Resolution 65-06 and the information they perceived at the March meeting that the position of the lead District Court clerk would be placed at that range and step. The lead clerk position was subsequently adopted with a Range F salary. A notice of payroll change was submitted to payroll for the change in positions with Ms. Alfaro's current compensation listed at EE1, Step 2, of the Adams County Exempt Employee salary schedule with a request for her to be placed at a Range F, Step 4, of the Adams County Courthouse Bargaining Unit salary schedule upon Ms. Alfaro accepting the position of Lead District Court Clerk. In hindsight, Judge Benzel noted that from the time the administrator position was reclassified, effective April 1, 2023, Ms. Alfaro should have been compensated at the range of EE5 on the Exempt Employee Salary Schedule. No change request was submitted to payroll at that time. Judge Benzel noted that it was always the intent of the Court for Ms. Alfaro to return to her previous position, however, her position is

now classified at a Range F and, based on Resolution No. 65-06, should be placed at a Range F, Step 4, on the Courthouse Bargaining Unit salary schedule.

Action was deferred until such time that Commissioner Weise returns.

Additionally present were Human Resource Manager Campbell and Payroll Deputy Bowman. Civil Attorney Barden was present virtually.

Adjournment @ 2:42 p.m.

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

Edited and Approved:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ADAMS COUNTY, WASHINGTON

-absent-

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