

**COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES
KITITITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
AUDITORIUM
SPECIAL MEETING**

MONDAY

10:00 A.M.

JULY 10, 2023

Board members present: Chairman Cory Wright; Vice-Chairman Brett Wachsmith and Commissioner Laura Osiadacz.

Others: Julie Kjorsvik, Clerk of the Board; Todd Davis, Noxious Weed Coordinator; Patti Stacey, Solid Waste/Interim Maintenance Director/Project Manager; David Ohl, Airport Director; Jeanne Killgore, Human Resource Director; Doug Fessler, IT Director; Eileen Murphy, Office of Public Defense Director; Bryan Elliott, Auditor; Mark Cook, Public Works/CDS Director; Brian Carlson, Auditor; and 2 members of the public.

SPECIAL MEETING

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Wright opened a Special Meeting to discuss a County Administrator position. He provided some history on the subject including the committee who worked over the past 7-8 months which had been facilitated by Eric Johnson, WSAC Executive Director. At the conclusion of their study, it resulted in an overwhelming 8-1 vote in favor of creating the position. The Management Team also had a presentation by Mr. Johnson and then discussed it at a later meeting. They also voted in favor of the recommendation and to forward it to the Board of Commissioners. At this time the Board would like to hear from their Department Heads. Chairman Wright said they received a cost estimate from the Auditor's office in the amount of \$312,000.00, including an Administrative Assistant. Chairman Wright said Chelsey Loeffers, Public Health Administrator, was unable to attend the meeting, but had provided an email in support of the position.

Patti Stacey, Solid Waste Director/Interim Maintenance Director/Project Manager, said she had a few questions and would like to know how the Board sees their interactions with an Administrator. She questioned how communications would be between the Department Heads and the Commissioners. Commissioner Wachsmith said he didn't see a lot of Board involvement in the day-to-day decisions. Commissioner Osiadacz questioned what the interactions were like in other Counties with Solid Waste Directors for example, as she'd heard there were challenges, and they liked having the ability to have a relationship with their County Commissioners.

Chairman Wright said the model presented was made for an opportunity for our County to build upon and best practices. He said it was important to have a sense of trust within the process. Mark Cook,

Public Works/CDS Director didn't see an issue of having a disconnect with Department Heads not having access to the County Commissioners.

Eileen Murphy, Office of Public Defense Director, explained how she's heard several comments (not from the County Commissioners) about her new department and it's taking away funds. She felt it could be difficult to justify the position with the community.

Brian Carlson, Budget & Finance Director, felt the question was whether a restructure could create better efficiencies with a large budget. He said the benefits of restructuring may take a couple of years to see.

Commissioner Osiadacz felt it could be a challenge with a lot of people in the community.

Mark Cook, Public Works/CDS Director was in support of getting a transition plan in place, noting it could possibly take up to a year.

Doug Fessler, IT Director, said he was fairly neutral on the subject, but was concerned what it would look like if the wrong person was put into place who could ultimately have a lot of power.

Kady Porterfield, Event Center Director, said she was in support of a transition team moving forward. She would like to see the big picture of how it would be structured, including what people would be reporting to the Administrator and a communication strategy.

Patti Stacey, Solid Waste Director/Interim Maintenance Director/Project Manager, said she would be in support of creating a transition team to see how it would work. She said she saw what happened with the Communications Director and the frustration they had of having to report to 3 individuals. Ms. Stacey said she'd also like to see the organizational chart and more specifics on the communications piece, as well as an outline of the tasks a County Administrator would have.

Jeanne Killgore, Human Resources Director, said she would be in support of a transition team and creating a draft plan. She said she has limited experience, and it would appeal to her having another person to learn from and support.

Eileen said she was in support of a transition team and to answer questions including where budget & finance would fit in.

Todd Davis, Noxious Weed Coordinator, said he supported a transition team with potential benefits.

David Ohl, Airport Director, said coming from the military and

having it resemble their structure, he felt it was easy and adaptable, but would support the Board's decision.

Julie Kjorsvik, Clerk of the Board, said she had questions relating to the organizational structure and who their Staff would report to.

Roberta Soltz, Representative of District #1 on the Executive Management Advisory Committee, explained how their group was committed and had deep discussions while exploring all the benefits and drawbacks of a position. They proposed a best practices model and encouraged the Board to support their recommendations.

Vice-Chairman Wachsmith felt there was still a lot of unknowns and would take time to eventually get something like an Administrator position set up right. Commissioner Osiadacz felt a transition team should be created of Department Heads. It was recommended to have the Washington State Association of Counties assist with the next phase as well.

The Board said they could take formal action later by forming a committee, along with direction and a timeline, with expected product. If there's a Department Head interested in serving on the group to let the Board know.

The meeting was concluded at 10:47 a.m.

CLERK OF THE BOARD

KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON


Julie Kjorsvik


Cory Wright, Chairman

APPROVED