

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

TUESDAY

2:00 P.M

NOVEMBER 17, 2009

Board members present: Chairman Alan Crankovich; Vice-Chairman Paul Jewell and Commissioner Mark McClain.

Others: Julie Kjorsvik, Clerk of the Board; Brenda Larsen, Fire Marshal and 2 members of the public.

PUBLIC HEARING

FEE SCHEDULE - FIRE MARSHAL

FIRE MARSHAL

At approximately 2:07 p.m. **CHAIRMAN CRANKOVICH** opened a public hearing to consider the adoption of a Fee Schedule for Fire and Life Safety related to inspections conducted by the Fire Marshal's office. He said they Board delayed hearing for a few minutes due to the initial hearing notice location being scheduled for the Ellensburg City Council Chambers. He said the Board had provided adequate notice of the change in location to the Commissioners Auditorium.

BRENDA LARSEN, FIRE MARSHAL presented a proposed fee schedule including calculations for cost recovery. She said inspections were required by law and they need to be sure the minimum requirements are met and maintained in public areas. She said although the concept of a fee schedule may be new to Kittitas County and its citizens, inspections do decrease incidents. She said businesses are initially good about making sure everything is up to code, but over time their systems end up failing by not keeping them up. She indicated the total cost recovery is much greater than the fee she was proposing.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL asked how many inspections were done for buildings less than 1,000 square feet. **MS. LARSEN** said approximately 45% of the inspections are under 1,000 square feet. **COMMISSIONER JEWELL** suggested a separate rate for buildings between 0-500 square feet and between 501-1,000 square feet, since the smaller espresso stands do not take very long to inspect. He questioned the capped rate for buildings over 20,000 square feet. **MS. LARSEN** said initially, she did have a fee schedule based on square footage, but after discussions with the Board and the proposed fee schedule being brand new to the public, she figured the fees could be revisited later on. She indicated the program would be for annual

inspections. **COMMISSIONER JEWELL** said if they were spending a lot of time on an inspection, the rates should be higher and vice versa for the smaller places. **MS. LARSEN** said she could add any time spent over the amount of time listed in schedule, they would be billed at \$65.00 per hour (and to allocate 7 hours for the larger inspections). She said the original fee does include one re-inspection. She noted the mileage rates were recommended by the Public Health Department and is what they use, and the Auditor's office suggested using a 13% administrative cost.

THOSE PRESENT & TESTIFYING: **RAY RISDON, FIRE DISTRICT #7** said he had a lot of experience with Fire Marshals offices from around the nation and many jurisdictions struggle going from what was once a free service to a fee based schedule, but the Board really needed to look at the hazardous aspect of inspections as well. He indicated that when there are fees associated with inspections, there is not as much wasted time for inspectors having to back out if the initial inspection did not pass. He encouraged the Board to approve the fee schedule, so the costs do not rely upon the taxpayers. He indicated how the hazardous material portion of the inspections takes a significant amount of time. **JOE SEMILLER, KITTITAS VALLEY FIRE & RESCUE** said the City does not currently charge fees for inspections, but noted their tax and fee structures were different than the County. He said their revenue comes through property taxes and the City pays for his wages. **COMMISSIONER McCLAIN** commented on how some of the funding that comes from the sale of business licenses. **MR. SEMILLER** said when the burden is shifted to the user there are both benefits and drawbacks. He felt the major benefit would be on the re-inspection side, and the re-inspection fees will assist with having people comply. He indicated the City has considered it, and may develop a similar program in the future, especially if they have difficulty with their funding in the future. He did note the proposed program was not unique to Kittitas County. **THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL PUBLIC REQUESTING TO TESTIFY, THE PUBLIC PORTION OF THE HEARING WAS CLOSED.**

COMMISSIONER McCLAIN asked if the time of inspecting hazardous material was included in the proposed fee schedule. **MS. LARSEN** said it was considered and they were trying to make it as easy as possible for County and its citizens.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL AND CHAIRMAN CRANKOVICH supported a category for a lower fee schedule for smaller inspections, and to apply a \$65.00 per hour rate, for consideration of taking more time for the inspection of hazardous materials. **COMMISSIONER JEWELL** said he would like to review the fees on an annual basis to help minimize the shock and to make progress towards obtaining full cost recovery.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL moved to continue the Public Hearing to Tuesday December 15, 2009 at the 10:00 a.m. Agenda Session for Board Discussion Decision, and to incorporate the suggested changes to the proposed fee schedule, as noted by the Board. **COMMISSIONER McCLAIN** seconded. Motion carried 3-0. The Board noted the proposed fees would become effective January 1, 2010.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:47 p.m.

CLERK OF THE BOARD

**KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

Julie Kjorsvik

Alan Crankovich, Chairman