

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LEWIS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
May 17, 2010**

The Board of County Commissioners for Lewis County, Washington met in regular session on Monday, May 17, 2010, at 10:00 a.m. **COMMISSIONERS P.W. SCHULTE, RON AVERILL and F. LEE GROSE** were in attendance. **Chairman Schulte** determined a quorum, called the meeting to order and proceeded with the flag salute. **Commissioner Grose** moved to approve the minutes from the 10:00 a.m. meeting held on Monday, May 10, 2010. **Commissioner Averill** seconded the motion.

Motion carried 3-0

Notice

Commissioner Averill moved to pull Resolution 10-123 from the Monday, May 17, 2010 BOCC Agenda. **Commissioner Grose** seconded the motion.

1. Notice of Hearing: Regarding a new non-exclusive franchise to Public Utility District No.1 of Thurston County. Hearing will be held on or after 10:00 a.m. on Monday, June 14, 2010. Resolution No. 10-123

Rod Lakey stated there were some corrections that needed to be made to the Notice before we could proceed with the hearing.

Commissioner Averill noted that notice was for a countywide franchise and the Board asked for it to be limited to the areas Thurston PUD already had lines.

Motion carried 3-0

Consent

Commissioner Grose made a motion to approve Consent Items two through five. **Commissioner Averill** seconded the motion. Karri Muir, Clerk of the Board read the items into the record.

2. Resolution No. 10-124 Appointment of Rod Lakey PE, as Assistant County Engineer and Acting County Engineer.

Rod Lakey, Public Works stated RCW 36.80 requires Lewis County to employ a County Engineer. Tim Elsea, a professional engineer from Montana, has been hired as the Public Works Director/County Engineer. However, there is a need to temporarily fill the position of the County Engineer until Mr. Elsea has obtained his WA State Professional Engineer credentials.

Rod Lakey has been serving as the County Engineer during the recent vacancy period. He will continue to serve as the Acting County Engineer while Mr. Elsea is in the

process of obtaining his WA credentials. This process should not take longer than three months.

Commissioner Averill noted that a County Engineer has certain requirements to meet. One of those is signing off on documents, and when doing so they are putting their professional reputation on the line as a public engineer. WA State considers this a very important aspect and requires us to have an engineer on our staff who is authorized to sign using their license for certain contracts with the State. Mr. Lakey has been doing this since John Huestis left his employment with Lewis County. This will extend Mr. Lakey's appointment until Mr. Elsea has his WA credentials.

3. Resolution No. 10-125 Appointment of Tim Elsea as the Public Works Director/County Engineer.

Archie Smith, Human Resources stated during the Director of Public Works/County Engineer interviews, candidate, Timothy R. Elsea, was selected among the finalist as the first candidate of choice.

Commissioner Averill noted that there were 27 applicants that applied for this position. There were four that were interviewed and Mr. Elsea was our selection.

Commissioner Grose noted that Mr. Elsea was the top candidate for this position two years ago. We offered him a position and after he accepted the position let us know that he was not able to take the position. Commissioner Grose had reservations about hiring Mr. Elsea for this position. He appeared to be the best candidate for this position. He discussed his reservations with Mr. Elsea and the other members of the Board. He does not want this hiring to look like it was rubber stamped, because it was not and it took a great deal of thought during the hiring process.

4. Resolution No. 10-126 Agreement with the WA State Military Department for the 2010 FEMA Emergency Management Performance Grant.

Ross McDowell, Department of Emergency Management (DEM), stated this grant helps the DEM enhance their emergency operating center, communications and training and first responders. The grant is for \$50,984.00. He appreciates the Boards support in passing this resolution. This is an annual grant the funding amount stays about the same every year.

Commissioner Averill asked what the funding is for.

Mr. McDowell stated we did a complete remake of the Emergency Operating Center when they moved from the old Public Works building. Communications is what they have mostly been using the funding for; a lot of updated equipment from the IT Department, and the First Responder Training for mass causality incidents. It helps with providing training with other entities for disaster response. We have tried to build a better partnership by doing the trainings together. The training costs are now covered through this grant.

Commissioner Averill noted that the responsibility for Emergency Management belongs to the Board of County Commissioners. Awhile back the BOCC asked the Sheriff's Office to take over the operations. He thanked the Sheriff's Office for doing a

good job for the County and Mr. McDowell for his role in the department and outstanding job he does.

5. Resolution No. 10-127 Agreement with Thurston PUD concerning water services to local residents.

Robert Johnson, Community Development stated this resolution will renew the agreement with Thurston PUD. The existing agreement has expired and because Thurston PUD owns and operates several small water systems in Lewis County we need to renew the agreement. This agreement defines certain conditions and terms for operation within Lewis County.

Chairman Schulte asked how many of these wells are in Lewis County.

Commissioner Averill stated there were about 126 of them here.

Chairman Schulte noted that when we became aware that Thurston PUD owned and operated public water supplies in Lewis County we signed an agreement with them and now we need to renew it.

Commissioner Averill asked what the two primary elements we were asking for in this agreement, because of our concerns over the long run.

Mr. Johnson stated there are two elements to this agreement:

1. Not transferring the water rights out of Lewis County.
2. The County has the first rights of refusal if they want to sell any of the water systems and the water rights that go along with them.

Commissioner Averill noted that this resolution is in conjunction with Notice Item No. 1, the item we pulled.

Motion carried 3-0

Hearing

Hearing

Open Space Land Classifications

Chairman Schulte announced the hearing and asked staff for a report.

Dianne Dorey, Lewis County Assessor and Susan Johnson were in attendance. **Ms. Dorey** stated these are applications that have come from the Planning Commission for properties that went through the Public Benefits Rating Selection Committee (PBRs). They looked at and scored and independently look at the applications to make sure that they qualify. Based upon that score they get a certain amount of points and reduction off their assessed value. We have ten applicants that have gone through that scoring process and the recommendation has come through to the BOCC from the Planning Commission to adopt and accept those applicants.

Commissioner Averill asked who the members are of the PBRs Committee.

Ms. Dorey stated Susan Johnson, Commissioner Ron Averill, Phil Rupp, Vic Kvorhoff, Greg Lund, and Mike Mahoney make up the committee.

Commissioner Averill stated that a number of the applicants had their property in other Open Space Programs. Having their properties in these programs saves them a considerable amount in taxes. Unfortunately for some residents, the Department of Revenue has been putting pressure on Assessors for about three years to go back and

make sure the people that are in those programs are actually qualified for them. This means they have to show that they receive a certain amount of income, or that they have a F1, depending upon the size of their property. What has happened is that number of people actually were in farming for one reason or another they are no longer able to farm and do not qualify for the Open Space Program, and some of them if they can qualify have moved into this program because in Open Space, Open Space they also can get a tax break. What may surprise people is that the tax break may not be as good as it was under the original program.

Susan Johnson, Assessor's Office, stated that some of the applicants will pay more in taxes by being in this program. The people in this program get special recognition on their taxes, due to the fact that they are conserving farmland for someone to commercially farm it in the future. That was the goal of the Legislature when they created this sub topic under the Open Space, Open Space. This Open Space classification is all about conservation and preservation.

Commissioner Averill stated that in order to come into this program the property owner has to agree that the property is open to the public.

Ms. Johnson stated this is true with all except the Open Space Farm and Agricultural Conservation Lands.

Chairman Schulte asked if there were any other questions from the Board or audience. There were none. He closed the question and answer portion of the hearing and opened the formal hearing.

Ms. Dorey asked that her previous comments be adopted into the record.

Commissioner Averill stated there were ten applicants currently for this program. Each was individually interviewed with the matrix the committee uses. Recommendations from the PBRS Committee went to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission had a hearing last week on these applications and has forwarded their recommendations to the BOCC.

Commissioner Grose asked if the property owners that are involved in this have been notified of these changes and what their reductions are going to be.

Ms. Dorey stated they would be notified after this hearing. They have been notified that they have been accepted but not what their point total is at this point.

Commissioner Grose stated another part of this is when we reduce taxes on a piece of property, that tax burden is spread evenly throughout the rest of the County.

Ms. Dorey stated this is correct. When one person pays less, everyone else pays more to offset those taxes. When Ms. Johnson accepts these applications, she is very good at advising the people that there will be a change in their tax base.

Chairman Schulte asked if there was anyone else who would like to speak for or against Resolution No. 10-128. There was no one. He closed the hearing and asked for a motion to approve Resolution No. 10-128.

Commissioner Averill moved to approve Resolution No. 10-128. **Commissioner Grose** seconded the motion.

Motion carried 3-0

There being no further business, the Commissioners' public meeting adjourned at 10:24 a.m. on May 17, 2010. The next public meeting will be held Monday, May 24, 2010, at 10:00 a.m.

Please note that minutes from the Board of County Commissioners' meetings are not verbatim. A recording of the meeting may be purchased at the Commissioners' office.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LEWIS COUNTY, WASHINGTON

ATTEST:

P.W. Schulte, Chairman

Clerk of the Board
Lewis County Commissioners

Ron Averill, Commissioner

F. Lee Grose, Commissioner