

BOCC Wrap-Up / County Manager Update

November 17, 2025

9:02 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Swope, Commissioner Pollock (virtual), County Manager Ryan Barrett, Becky Butler, Jonathan Meyer, Scott Gripp, David Bailey, Mindy Brooks, Sherri Dokken, Meja Handlen, Angie Hodge, Erika Katt, Matt Patana, Ross Nielson, Lynn Richard, Matt Hyatt, Caroline Garibay, Tom Stanton, Angie Hodge, Anders Pollman

Guest(s): Elizabeth Rohr

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Public comment: None.

At 9:03 a.m., Commissioner Swope announced that the Board would be going into executive session under RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) until 9:20 a.m. to discuss the following seven topics:

- Amicus brief re Initiative 2066 Supreme Court case
- Paul Bromm
- Northwest Hardwoods
- Blankenship tort claim
- Public defense contracts
- Chehalis annexation
- Centralia / Port mediation

At 9:20 a.m., Commissioner Swope extended executive session until 9:30 a.m.

Executive session ended at 9:30 a.m. Commissioner Swope noted that no decisions had been made.

Commissioner Pollock made a motion to approve the settlement value for the Northwest Hardwoods property as discussed in executive session. Commissioner Swope seconded. Motion passed 2-0.

DEM fees for non-ILA cities: Erika Katt discussed a proposed rate fee for DEM's work in response to emergency work the county does on the city of Centralia's behalf. The commissioners directed staff to move forward with the proposed ILA.

Planning Commission vacancies: Mindy Brooks said the Planning Commission has two vacancies. The commissioners directed staff to advertise the positions, noting that Planning Commission members will review the applications and forward their recommendations to the BOCC in January.

GIS updates: Geoff Soderquist, Matt Hyatt and Assessor Ross Nielson discussed the county's migration to a new cloud-based software. Geoff said the transition was planned for 2027. Ross said he is pushing to have the transition complete in 2026. The commissioners said they will revisit the topic Nov. 24.

2026 budget review: The commissioners provided the following preliminary decisions:

- **BOCC attorney fees:** The commissioners directed staff to add to current budget.
- **Assessor professional services:** Ross said the county cannot leave the legacy contract before 2027. **Commissioner Pollock made a motion to approve a one-time increase of \$104,413 for the Assessor's 2026 budget. Commissioner Swope seconded. Motion passed 2-0. Commissioner Swope requested the Assessor's Office provide monthly updates during the ESC meetings.**
- **Tax levies:** Geoff Soderquist discussed the implications related to approving or not approving increases.
- **Public defense contracts, including Juvenile Court:** Commissioner Pollock made a motion to approve the contracts as presented.

Commissioner Pollock made a motion to direct staff to move forward with public defender contract negotiations as discussed in executive session. Commissioner Swope seconded. Motion passed 2-0.

2026 boards and committees: The commissioners said they would like the boards and committee assignments to remain unchanged, aside from chair / vice chair for the BOCC, with Commissioner Pollock serving as chair and Commissioner Brummer serving as vice chair.

Meeting adjourned at 9:49 a.m.