

BOARD OF MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' BRIEFING MINUTES
Mason County Commission Chambers, 411 North 5th Street, Shelton, WA
Week of September 29, 2014

According to staff notes, the following items were discussed.

Monday, September 29, 2014

- 9:00 A.M. Closed Session – RCW 42.30.140 (4) Labor Discussion
Commissioners Jeffreys and Sheldon met with Bill Kenny and Frank Pinter in Closed Session from 9:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. Cmmr. Neatherlin joined the briefing at 9:15 a.m.
- 9:30 A.M. WSU Extension Office - Interim Director Zena Edwards
Commissioners Jeffreys, Neatherlin and Sheldon were in attendance.
- Zena Edwards introduced herself and provided her background with WA State University Extension Office as the new interim director. Jim Kropf was also in attendance. Cmmr. Jeffreys provided an update of the selection process for the Mason County Extension Chair position.
- 9:45 A.M. Department of Community Development – Barbara Adkins
Commissioners Jeffreys, Neatherlin and Sheldon were in attendance.
- Barbara provided a staffing update. A Building Inspector and Code Enforcement position are being filled. She is advertising for Permit Specialist and Clerical positions.
 - Proposed amendments to Title 17 regulating Recreational Marijuana from the Planning Advisory Commission (PAC). A public hearing will be scheduled on October 21. The recommended amendments were to increase the buffers to 150 feet from any portion of a production or processing operation to the nearest property line in all rural residential districts and changes to the tier level limitations. The PAC also made several recommendations for the Commissioners to consider: adjacent densities, nuisance abatement, bonding, resource lands, non-conforming status. Discussion of how to permit hoop houses.
- 10:15 A.M. BREAK
- 10:20 A.M. Executive Session – RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i) Potential Litigation
Commissioners Jeffreys, Neatherlin and Sheldon met in Executive Session with Tim Whitehead, Barbara Adkins and Grace Miller for potential litigation from 10:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.
- 10:35 A.M. Executive Session – RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i) Potential Litigation
Commissioners Jeffreys, Neatherlin and Sheldon met in Executive Session with Tim Whitehead, Michael Dorcy, Bill Kenny and Frank Pinter for potential litigation from 10:45 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.
- 11:00 A.M. Lodging Tax Discussion of Tourism Development Proposals – Chair Jeffreys
Commissioners Jeffreys, Neatherlin and Sheldon were in attendance.
- Discussion of the proposed contract for tourism development. The Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) has recommended the contract be awarded to Blue Collar Advertising Agency in Hood River, Oregon.

Shaun Tucker, LTAC member, provided information on the LTAC process. LTAC selected the top three proposals from the seven submitted and those top three made presentations. His opinion is that Blue Collar had the right expertise and team to best utilize the lodging tax. He acknowledged the concern of being out of state and he believes in buying locally as much as possible. His decision was based on choosing the best candidate, not choosing local.

Darin Berry, LTAC member, provided a handout of LTAC money spent, \$2.2M spent in the past on a fundamental issues. He supports new age marketing, gather emails and social media contacts to minimize money spent on ad prints. Needs to look at in a different way and his approach to marketing is to first get the website perfect, then spend money on bringing people to the website. Use Google analytics to see if the campaign is working and make necessary changes to get the

best return on investment. The county is working on old methodology with no measurable results. He supports funding photographers and writers for permanent posts on website that have longer lasting power than TV ads. One difficulty he has had is the impression that tourism has grown in Mason County 14%. In looking at the numbers, he sees \$500,000 growth at Alderbrook, \$100,000 at Robin Hood and if you take those numbers out of the stats and he doesn't see other tourism growth. He chose Blue Collar from the three choices although his first choice was to hire nobody, hire an administrator for the website, and readvertise. Blue Collar understood the objective was heads in beds.

Shaun pointed out that Blue Collar's proposal does budget for brochures and Blue Collar has indicated they would seek guidance on adjustments.

Stephanie Rowland, LTAC member & submitted proposal, stated she has no problems with the process. Her Chamber Board has concerns with taking lodging tax out of county. They have been making changes to the tourism website and have seen results from TV and print ads. In the proposal, they cut their proposed TV budget to address internet marketing. They believe personal connections are important. She is very concerned with moving the local contact. They have had an analysis of the explorehoodcanal website, and it does need tweaks but is not broken.

Duane Wilson, LTAC member, supported Rachel's proposal, he likes her enthusiasm and that she is a local contact. He has personally moved on, the LTAC generators have a direct stake in this and they aren't happy with status quo and he was impressed that generators were unanimous in the selection. He feels the process was very fair and they weren't tasked with staying local.

John Mitchell, Blue Collar, stated they are very focused on return on investment. Their process is to have a discovery process when they will interview stakeholders. If the group makes a collective decision to go to TV, they will do that. They partner with clients and spend a lot of time designing the program. They are confident they can do the job and are open to suggestions. There is value from bringing in someone from the outside - they bring fresh ideas and create new relationships. They have accounts with other clients they did not know but have learned about them. He is excited about the prospect.

Shaun stated he supports local events. Tourism is to direct people from outside the county to the county. The outside perspective is powerful. His perspective is way different from when he first moved here. We need the outside perspective to know what is going on out there. Blue Collar is a professional marketing agency.

Cmmr. Sheldon referred to the fact that we are close to a huge population base, people can get here easily. He asked if there is a possibility of a joint proposal that would satisfy the local component and utilize local expertise.

Cmmr. Jeffreys stated she has talked to John about a local piece. If tourism is the objective and if they need to work with a local contact, that will come out in discovery phase. John is a bit skeptical of not receiving a fair shake to the resources. He is not confident a joint venture would help Blue Collar to succeed. They need to be very smart on how to spend the money. There was discussion of a two-year contract. Cmmr. Jeffreys pointed out that the first two years is to build a brand and if it is going well, the Commissioners can contract for another two years.

John Mitchell stated in the discovery phase they will take a deep dive into the analytics, work to understand the county, and talk to stakeholders. It is an investigation process.

Cmmr. Neatherlin stated he had concerns with the money going out-of-state and no TV marketing. He has now read the proposals and is happy with Blue Collar. He still disagrees with no TV but agrees with has been said by Shaun and Darin. He has had a problem with the current contract for tourism and information provided. He acknowledged one of our markets is Portland. He would like cable media incorporated in some way and use some local vendors.

Mr. Mitchell stated they will use local vendors, when possible. They strategize in Oregon and the plan is to integrate locally. Once it is determined what the right thing to do is, they will work to find local resources. He noted it is a small budget and he assured the Commissioners that everything is on the table.

Discussion of using TV for tourism. Darin stated the website has to be correct. Blue Collar staff pointed out if you have a good idea, you can get that out using other methods, such as YouTube.

Cmmr. Jeffreys pointed out the contract will have to be on agenda.

Cmmr. Sheldon stated that lodging tax has always been controversial and the law is often changed. The money was collected to spend. He is willing to place a contract on the agenda but have to have something acceptable that melds marketing, is measurable and has local interests.

Cmmr. Neatherlin would like more time, sees Blue Collar expertise but wants a local contact. Darin stated that LTAC considered hybrid ideas. He believes it is smart for local control of website and analytics.

Cmmr. Jeffreys pointed out the county went out for request for proposals and if the scope of work is changed, could potentially have to go out for new RFP's and do the whole process again.

Blue Collar staff pointed out that the translation of analytical data is what is critical and they are happy to share the data.

There was discussion of a subcontract with a local contact.

Shaun pointed out that if Mason County is happy with where we are at, then stay local, if you want to improve our status then we have to be willing to take a risk to change and improve. He is a volunteer on the LTAC and finds it frustrating to stop the process. He is looking to grow tourism.

Cmmr. Neatherlin stated the Commissioners have to go through a process and they do respect the LTAC's recommendation.

Stephanie Rowland believes there is a flaw in the system. Need on-going communication with service providers.

Commissioner Discussion – there was no discussion.

BREAK – NOON

- 1:30 P.M. Support Services - Bill Kenny
Commissioners Jeffreys and Neatherlin were in attendance. Commissioner Sheldon joined the briefing at 1:50 p.m.
- Budget hearings for 2014 budget adjustments were discussed. The Board agreed to hold the first hearing in October.
 - Guidelines and County Wide Planning for the 2015 budget was discussed. Diane will work on scheduling budget workshops.
 - Request for Letter of Support for MTA grant. Because the deadline before the next Commission meeting of October 7, the Commissioners agreed to hold a special meeting to consider signing the letter.
 - Proposal from MasonWebTV.com to provide live video streaming of Commission meetings was discussed. There are several questions such as ownership of the videos and how to be able to fulfil public record requests. If this is pursued, a contract would be needed.
 - County cell phone policy was discussed. The policy should outline proper usage and what positions would have a county cell phone.

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- Ross reported on a mobile support vehicle he was able to purchase for Emergency Management.

2:30 P.M.

Facilities, Parks & Trails – John Keates

Commissioners Jeffreys, Neatherlin and Sheldon were in attendance.

- Washer/dryer unit broke in the Juvenile Detention Center and replacement cost is \$10,000+.
- John and contractor provided status of the jail HVAC/control panel improvement project. The project should be completed by November.
- Courthouse signs have two options at a cost of \$20K or \$15K. Need to check with Historical Preservation Commission.

3:00 P.M.

Public Works - Brian Matthews & Melissa McFadden

Utilities & Waste Management - Brian Matthews & Tom Moore

Commissioners Jeffreys and Neatherlin were in attendance. Commissioner Sheldon was absent.

- Skokomish Flood Control Zone Board meeting has been scheduled for October 7. Cmmr. Jeffreys had changes to resolution.
- Discussion of Sand Hill Road speed limit.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Zoren, Administrative Services Manager

BOARD OF MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS


Terri Jeffreys
Chair


Tim Sheldon
Commissioner


Randy Neatherlin
Commissioner