

MINUTES

BOARD OF BENTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Special Emergency Board Meeting
September 1, 2010, 11:30 a.m.
Commissioners' Conference Room
Benton County Courthouse, Prosser, WA

Present: Chairman James Beaver
Commissioner Leo Bowman (via/video conference -Justice Center)
Commissioner Max E. Benitz, Jr.
County Administrator David Sparks (via/video conference – Justice Center)
Clerk of the Board Cami McKenzie (via/video conference – Justice Center)

Benton County Employees Present During All or a Portion of the Meeting: Deputy Administrator Loretta Smith Kelty; Facilities Manager Roy Rogers; Safety Coordinator Bryan Perry; Personnel Manager Melina Wenner.

Chairman Beaver said he called the special emergency board meeting to address a water leak that had occurred at the Benton County Courthouse in Prosser, Washington. He read into the record the resolution addressing the situation, said he witnessed the damage first hand, and wanted to evacuate areas where the leak had occurred. He said with the Board's concurrence he would close the offices at the Courthouse.

Commissioner Bowman asked if the issue had been resolved. Roy Rogers said the leak was stopped and they were replacing a gasket and the area should be cleaned up within an hour. Commissioner Bowman asked why it constituted an emergency.

Commissioner Benitz stated that all restrooms were shut off, ceiling tiles were down, the area was slippery and wet, and the HVAC and chillers were shut off.

Commissioner Bowman said he was not convinced there was any imminent danger but maybe they could close affected offices.

Commissioner Benitz stated there was water in the hallway, near the elevator, communications area, and into the Auditor's office.

Commissioner Bowman again stated he did not see the need to shut down the Courthouse for the entire day. Mr. Rogers said they were in the process of fixing the problem and believed it would be complete in approximately an hour. Additionally, the water was turned on and the bathrooms were in working order.

Bryan Perry said there was a slip and trip hazard on the first floor until it was cleaned up, however, there was not a problem on the 2nd and 3rd floors.

Commissioner Benitz said he wanted to give the Chairman authority to authorize any future delays or closures.

Commissioner Bowman suggested the Courthouse continue to operate but give the Managers and Elected Officials authority to send people home.

Chairman Beaver read the section of the resolution stating that elected officials and department directors shall grant paid leave to non-essential public safety workers and discretion to determine what employees were essential.

MOTION: Commissioner Benitz moved to approve the resolution in the matter of declaring county offices closed due to an emergency resulting from a hazardous broken water pipe inside the County Courthouse. Chairman Beaver seconded.

Discussion

Commissioner Bowman said he believed it was wrong to close the Courthouse and it was his understanding the situation was under control.

Upon vote, the motion carried with Commissioner Bowman opposing.

Resolutions

10-509: Approving Closure of Benton County Courthouse

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at approximately 11:48 a.m.

Clerk of the Board

Chairman