

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

MONDAY

6:00 P.M.

SEPTEMBER 24, 2007

Board members present: Chairman Alan Crankovich; Vice-Chairman David Bowen and Commissioner Mark McClain.

Others: Julie Kjorsvik, Clerk of the Board; Jerry Pettit, Auditor; Sue Higginbotham, Deputy Auditor/Elections Supervisor; and 5 members of the public.

PUBLIC HEARING

VOTE BY MAIL

AUDITOR

At approximately 6:00 p.m. **CHAIRMAN CRANKOVICH** opened a public hearing to consider the option to vote-by-mail for all elections in Kittitas County.

JERRY PETTIT, AUDITOR gave a power point presentation. He indicated most counties in Washington State have either moved or are moving to vote-by-mail (36/39 counties) for all elections. He said approximately 70% of Kittitas County voters already vote by mail. He reviewed voting trends from 2000 to the primary election in 2007, the cost of elections and various pros and cons of going vote-by-mail. He described the reasons for the costs of elections going down recently including the County reducing the number of poll sites to two, and ballot printing. **COMMISSIONER McCLAIN** asked what the actual dollar savings would be to the County if they went to all vote-by-mail? **MR. PETTIT** said when estimated the amount approximately a year and a half ago, it would be a cost savings of \$2,000 per year, but there has been an increase in postage since then and they would have to mail out ballots to everyone. **SUE HIGGINBOTHAM, DEPUTY AUDITOR/ELECTIONS SUPERVISOR** clarified the amount they currently pay for bulk mailing is between .9 and .11 per ballot. **MR. PETTIT** noted the request to change County elections to vote-by-mail would not take effect until 2008.

THOSE PRESENT & TESTIFYING: **SCOTT TURNBULL** spoke in favor of vote-by-mail but would like the county to adopt standards to ensure ballots have been received, signatures are validated and to be able to have voters verify that information by having a voter ID number via a web based system. He felt those standards would instill confidence from the public. He submitted a cd movie "Behind the Curtain" into the record for the Boards review. **LYNN WHITAKER** submitted a letter into the record and encouraged the Board to continue allowing the public the option of voting at poll sites.

WILMA DLOUHY said she has worked at the voting polls for many years and felt the vote-by-mail was the better option and thought there would be a better return if the County went that way. **DARIN CLARK** said he has voted in every election in the past 29 years. He felt voting-by-mail should be illegal and all citizens should have to go to poll sites to vote. He was concerned with fraud having been committed throughout the States including some who have registered their dog to vote, using deceased relative's ballots, etc. He felt going to the poll sites is fun in fact, he takes his grandchildren with him for the experience. He understood the costs of doing business changes and with the numbers reflected he favored the County going vote-by-mail.

COMMISSIONER BOWEN said he has always been an avid supporter of poll sites, and although the cost savings has not been enough yet, it is access to the ballot. He said he would be willing to delegate the decision to the Auditor.

COMMISSIONER McCLAIN agreed that there is a sense of community by going out to the polls. He said the cost analysis is what it comes down to and if there is only a savings to our County of \$2,000 he wonders why other counties went to vote-by-mail.

CHAIRMAN CRANKOVICH has always been a supporter of keeping the polls open. He thought what use to be tradition is now going by the way of convenience and still feels strong about poll sites, but understands it would be an adjustment and eventually be accepted.

CHAIRMAN CRANKOVICH moved to continue the public hearing to Tuesday September 25, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. at the Upper Kittitas County District Court, noting the record is open. **COMMISSIONER McCLAIN** seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

CLERK OF THE BOARD

**KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

Julie A. Kjorsvik

Alan Crankovich, Chairman