

**COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES
KITITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
COMMISSIONERS CONFERENCE ROOM
SPECIAL MEETING**

WEDNESDAY

10:00 A.M.

MARCH 30, 2011

Board members present: Chairman Paul Jewell; and Commissioner Obie O'Brien. Vice-Chairman Alan Crankovich was absent.

Others: Catherine Dunn, Deputy Clerk of the Board; Suzanne Becker, Deputy Prosecutor; Jerry Pettit, Auditor; Deanna Panattoni, Treasurer; Judy Pless, Finance and Budget Manager; Jim Mapes and Ben Kern, TV District; Jeff Slothower, representing the TV District; Ken Messer, KYVE; Bob Berry, KNDO; Cliff Grady, KNDO.

SPECIAL MEETING

TV DISTRICT DISCUSSION

COMMISSIONERS

At 10:00 a.m. **Chairman Jewell** opened a Special Meeting to discuss the future of the TV District. He said the TV District was in talks with the TV Stations to take over the lease and transmitters. The TV District is paid through Excise Tax funds collected by the Treasurer's Office. He said he had received letters from TV Stations agreeing to take on the lease, license, utilities and maintenance responsibilities of the TV District. He noted that the digital equipment was bought through a Federal grant and needs to be maintained. He also said the County cannot transfer assets without going through the open bid process.

Jeff Slothower, representing the TV District, said he had a call from Brian Ledowski, KAPP, indicating the LLC formed by the TV Stations, was not interested in acquiring the licenses as a group but the stations needed to have the licenses individually. **Ken Musser**, speaking for the LLC, agreed that the LLC cannot take on the licenses but the TV Stations were willing to take each license.

Jeff Slothower said there was no authority for the TV District to dispose of the property. He said if the TV District is dissolved, the County would take over the assets of the District including the lease, licenses and equipment. They would have to follow State Statute to dispose of the equipment.

Ken Messer, KYVE, said the LLC was going to take over the lease and electrical payments but each station has to have their own license. He said the grant requirements were a challenge but the TV Stations are willing to maintain the equipment for as long as they are in business.

Bob Berry, KNDO, said the taxpayer's interest has not always been served by public auction of TV equipment if they have no knowledge

of their use. He said there are at least two entities which might be interested in the equipment, which wouldn't benefit Kittitas County.

Ben Kern, TV District, said the District members have talked and their greatest fear is the equipment will be bought and removed and there would be no free TV in Kittitas County.

Ken Messer said as part of the public auction the County could put in the documents that the equipment must continue to serve Kittitas County. **Jeff Slothower** agreed saying the County has put strings on other things they have surplus. **Bob Berry** asked if the documents could stipulate that the auction winner would have to be a non-profit organization.

Jeff Slothower said the successful bidder will have to abide by the grant terms.

Jerry Pettit, Auditor, suggested the TV District stay in existence and contract with the LLC to operate the transmitters. **Mr. Slothower** said there was some peculiar language in the lease with the Eaton's and he would have to research it to see if the sub-lease would be appropriate. **Commissioner O'Brien** said the TV District contract with the LLC wouldn't be a sub-lease but a contract for services.

A discussion followed on the methods of ascertaining how many households used the TV translators. **Bob Berry** said the Neilson Rating service could provide documents with percentages of users for each method, on air TV, Satellite TV and Cable TV.

Chairman Jewell asked why the TV Stations wished to take this on. **Ken Messer** said they were asked to continue with the transmitters and it made sense to the TV Stations. He said no TV Station wants to lose an area of coverage.

Mr. Slothower said the TV District can contract with the LLC to provide payment for the lease etc. They will be only tied in as long as they are in business. **Mr. Messer** said "Over the Air" TV is not going away but they are not willing to contract in perpetuity.

Chairman Jewell directed Suzanne Becker, Deputy Prosecutor to research the RCW's and to meet with Jeff Slothower, who will have researched the Eaton lease, and to discuss the possibility of a sub-lease or contract with the TV District. He also directed Judy Pless, Budget and Finance Manager, to research any budgetary issues.

Meeting adjourned at 10:50 p.m.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD


Catherine Dunn

KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON


Paul Jewell, Chairman