



**CITY OF ELLENSBURG**

**Minutes of City Council, Special Meeting**

**Date of Meeting**

**June 13, 2024**

**Time of Meeting**

**5:30 PM**

**Place of Meeting**

**Central Washington University  
Student Union & Recreation Center Theatre  
400 E University Way  
Ellensburg, WA 98926  
And remotely via Zoom**

**1. Call to Order and Welcome**

Roll Call Present: Sarah Beauchamp, Rich Elliott, Nancy Goodloe, Nancy Lillquist, Joshua Thompson

Kittitas County Commissioners Brett Wachsmith, Laura Osiadacz, and Cory Wright

Others present in person: City Manager Behrends Cerniwey, City Attorney Weiner, Deputy City Clerk Davison, Community Development Director Carlson, Housing and Grants Administrator Frey, and approximately 110 members of the public

**2. Meeting Expectations and Decision-Making Process**

Commissioner Wachsmith and Mayor Elliott opened the meeting. Council and the Commissioners decided to keep public comment to 3 minutes.

**3. Overview of Sleep Center and Site Analysis Presentation**

**3.A Sleep Center Overview and Site Analysis**

City Manager Behrends Cerniwey presented information in the staff report. Captain Clasen spoke on the appearance of homelessness in Ellensburg, the cold weather shelter, the strain on emergency services and what information other communities had shared with Ellensburg. Kittitas County Sheriff Inspector Whitsett shared statistics from the jail and thanked church volunteers for their service.

City Manager Behrends Cerniwey reported on the Kittitas Valley Ministerial Association's decision not to operate the cold weather shelter in 2024. Brittany Bouchouari from HopeSource presented information on increasing numbers of unsheltered, the causes of homelessness, current resources, myths about homelessness, and an update on the Moses Lake sleep center.

City Manager Behrends Cerniwey discussed the sleep center model and detailed the site possibilities.

**APPROVED**

**12-3-24**

### 3.B Public Comment

- Cheryl Chance, county resident, spoke regarding Seattle sending homeless to other cities and the Johnson v. Grant's Pass case
- Gavin O'Connor, Ellensburg resident, spoke for the need of permanent housing
- Jeff Demetrescu, Ellensburg resident, spoke against the use of the Foursquare Church site
- Ed Slabodan, Ellensburg resident, spoke against the use of the Foursquare Church site
- Jessica Karraker, County resident, spoke regarding the need to participate in local government and the need for a better long-term option
- Louise Demetrescu, Ellensburg resident, spoke against the use of the Foursquare Church site
- Erin Sinclair, Ellensburg resident, spoke regarding the site choices
- Dean Katro, County resident, spoke regarding costs, crime statistics, and alternative options
- Angela Lang, Ellensburg resident, spoke regarding safety concerns and site locations
- Julie Ann Cleman, County resident, spoke about safety concerns and EcoNorthwest
- Jeanine Rodine, County resident, stressed the importance of access to services and being able to transition to something better
- Sarah Norton, County resident, spoke about being a volunteer at the cold weather shelter, the proposed costs, and the time it takes to get into housing
- Logan Denlinger, Ellensburg resident, spoke about the Ellensburg way and the need to look at other options
- Charles Johnson, Ellensburg resident, spoke for the need of a better solution
- Andy Cleman, County resident, spoke against offering services
- Peter Stone, County resident, thanked Council for their due diligence and reminded community members about the need for services
- Michael Karraker, County resident, spoke about being formerly homeless and the need for help and open hearts
- Connie Angly, Ellensburg resident, spoke about the need for infrastructure and potential fear
- Mark Larson, Ellensburg resident, thanked Council and the Commissioners for looking at the problem. He stressed the need to move forward and be engaged
- Barbara Pickett, Ellensburg resident, questioned if the setup of sheds would help
- Pat Kelleher, County resident, spoke regarding a potential site
- Don Pickett, Ellensburg resident, thanked the people present for their participation, expressed concern over drugs, the need for other options
- Brittany Bouchouari, County resident, spoke about the need for housing and providing a temporary solution is humane

- Cassie Waterston, County resident, spoke against the sleep center proposal
- Jessica Cranefield, County resident, asked about what services would be offered and the need for a group effort
- Cody Swallow, Ellensburg resident, spoke about the need to get in front of the problem
- Max Anderson, County resident, spoke via Zoom about the need for a solution and expressed a desire for concrete numbers

3.C City and County Action: Affirm Sleep Center Project  
 Commissioner Wright moved to affirm the Sleep Center Project.  
 Councilmember Goodloe moved to affirm the Sleep Center Project.

Commissioner Wright spoke in support of the sleep center, the need for tools for law enforcement and for a starting point.

Commissioner Osiadacz expressed the need for local support.

Councilmember Thompson spoke about whether the cost is realistic and requested more information.

Councilmember Palmer thanked those present, spoke about capital costs, the importance of location, and affirmed the need for a sleep center.

Councilmember Beauchamp spoke about the costs of cleanup, what is best for our community, and relayed a story about a homeless encounter at her business.

Councilmember Lillquist spoke about providing something to make things safer and the housing first model.

Councilmember Goodloe spoke about learning about the homeless in the County and having community members staff the sleep center.

Mayor Elliott spoke about the costs of emergency services, recidivism, and the opportunity to take the next step.

Commissioner Wachsmith thanked everyone for their decorum, spoke about the importance of services, and support for the concept of the sleep center with a focus on costs and location.

Commissioner Wachsmith moved the Board of County Commissioners to Approve the Sleep Center Concept. **Motion Approved 3-0**

Mayor Elliott moved the Ellensburg City Council to Approve the Sleep Center Concept. **Motion Approved 5-0**

3.D Refine Site List Under Consideration and Selection of Site

The following actions were taken by the Board of County Commissioners and Ellensburg City Council by consensus:

- Councilmember Lillquist was against leasing site #2, the Foursquare Church. Site #2 was removed from consideration
- Site #3, 701 S Main Street, was removed from consideration due to leasing and protecting limited business locations
- Site #4, Berry Road and Canyon Road, was left on the list for consideration
- Site #5, Highway 97, was left on the list for consideration, but there were concerns about costs and the distance from downtown
- The County and CWU are working on a land use arrangement. Site #6, Helena Avenue & Sycamore Street, was left on the list for consideration
- Site #7, Green Avenue, was removed from consideration due to the capital costs and floodplain concerns
- Site #8, 303 W Tacoma Avenue, was left on the list for consideration despite concerns about the property size

#### **4. Cold Weather Shelter**

##### **4.A Update**

City Attorney Weiner spoke about the search for temporary solutions for the 2024/2025 winter emergency shelter season.

Commissioner Wright asked law enforcement present what was done before the cold weather shelter was in existence. Mayor Elliott detailed the costs of emergency room visits.

##### **4.B Action Team for 2024 Cold Weather Emergency Shelter Season was formulated**

#### **5. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:02pm.

  
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Mayor

Attest:   
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Deputy Clerk

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
KITITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**



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Brett Wachsmith, Chairman



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Laura Osiadacz, Vice-Chairman



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Cory Wright, Commissioner