

**KITTITAS COUNTY
SHERIFF'S STUDY SESSION MINUTES
COMMISSIONERS' AUDITORIUM, 205 WEST 5TH ROOM 109 - ELLENSBURG
Regular Meeting**

WEDNESDAY	8:00 AM	August 5, 2026
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Board members present: Chairman Brett Wachsmith and Commissioner Laura Osiadacz.

Others: Sheriff Clay Myers, Chief Deputy Ben Kokjer, Auditor Byran Elliott, Budget & Finance Director Zach Dehaven, Inspector Chris Whitsett, Public Works Director Josh Fredrickson, Chief Deputy Darren Higashiyama, and Chief Admin Deputy Nancy Shaff.

Citizen Comments: None.

Discussion on Capital Facilities:

1-EOC-SAR Building

- Dedicating General Fund, funds to complete the EOC
- Completing the facility will allow for more opportunities to apply for Grants
- We could run the risk of losing future federal funds if we don't finish the facility
- The funds needed were \$4M
- By keeping the grant rolling, if we can finish, it will cost less
- There is a Radio Control room, which Kittcom will have a contribution to the building. This room will house radio equipment that the EOC will need to function.
- Fiber cost was estimated at \$600K
- Laura mentioned that the Kittitas Fire District #1 Fire Levy passed.
- Laura suggested we help make the public aware of the building and its purpose. Sheriff agreed we could accomplish that. He talked a bit about how that could be accomplished but also it was out of sight out of mind and that it would be used as a secure storage for equipment. Maybe we could have a SAR open house and a ribbon cutting.
- It was asked if there are more inside/outside partners that could help contribute to the cost of building, that would benefit from its use.
- Need to present to the Capital Facility group.

2-Potential purchase of the storage units behind the Sheriff's Office.

- We currently have 4 units
- There are others within the County that need storage
- Cost savings as well as revenue generating
 - We met with Jack and talked about a price of \$1.4M
 - Chris provided a draft of the cost savings and additional revenue.
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We discussed the \$22M General Fund balance and the policy that establishes what the Restricted Fund Reserve must be. Zack sent the policy to Chris. The Restricted Fund Reserve needs to be \$11M/\$12M following the policy. Zack stated the trend for General Fund is negative, but it is getting better.

APPROVED

a/1/2026

The Facility Group does have a timeline for projects – Morris Sorenson is priority, with the Prosecutors Office being second due to the upcoming lease. For that lease they are looking to see how they can utilize the space in that building more efficiently.

County Road Diversion-Action Item:

- The Diversion was “stayed” in exchange for the land the facility was being built on. It “stayed” for 2022, 2023, 2024 and was to end in 2024, but it has continued due to a Road Levy that did not pass and low General Funds.
- Sheriff would like “the stay” to end and have Public Works begin transferring those funds to the Sheriff’s Office to pay for traffic issues on county roads. It also pays for Upper County issues which include education and enforcement.
- When we do have traffic emphasis, we see a direct impact, but we can’t do it if we aren’t fully staffed.
- Laura asked about doing another Roads Levy and tying it to traffic safety.
- Zack asked how each unit can create a relationship with constituents. When we create a relationship it’s easier to ask for money when needed and people are more willing to give.
- It was asked if “the stay” of the Diversion funds paid for the cost of the land for the EOC facility to be built on? Was it adequate for the value paid for through 2024? The answer was yes.

The actions that were needed for the Position are:

1-Unfreeze the Deputy position

2-Estimate CRAB \$’s for 2027

- Do the funds come from GF or do we continue to have the funds diverted through Public Works?
- The Sheriff’s Office will continue to track the statistics to justify the amount of work going into traffic safety on county roads.
- Laura wanted Zack to look at what was the best method. She needed more information.
- Zack said the budget isn’t getting better; you may get to a spot where all you can do is fire people.
- The plan was made to schedule a special meeting for week of August 10th to discuss:
 - Road Diversion
 - Unfreeze the Deputy position

Other Business: None.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 a.m.


Kim Dawson

KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Brett Wachsmith, Chairman