

Whitman County Commissioners Meeting Minutes

089799 – Monday, February 2, 2026, at 9:00 a.m., the Board of Whitman County Commissioners met at the Whitman County Courthouse, 400 N. Main St., Suite 125, Colfax, Washington, in Commissioner Chambers.

Commissioner Arthur D. Swannack, Chairman; Commissioner Chad Whetzel; Commissioner Tom Handy; and Corey Mitzimberg, Clerk of the Board, were present.

Monday, February 2, 2026 – 9:00 a.m. Convened - Workshop

Attendance: Adam Turnidge, Alan Thomson, Brandy Dean, Brian Wilson, Chris Nelson, Craig Wines, Dean Cornelison, Denis Tracy, Elya McClintock, Heather Clark, Jacy Leach, Jessica Jensema, Jill Whelchel, Joshua Vincent, Katie Claussen, Kenneth Millar, Kristina Cooper, Mark Storey, Matt Floyd, Sandy Jamison, Suni Richards, Wraylee Flodin, Arun Pallathadka, Boyd Jeffries, Brian Davies, Carol Black, Carryn Vande Griend (PSE), Dave Gibney, Evan Ellis (KQQQ), Rob Anders, Shane S., and Tony S.

1. 089762 – The following items were discussed with no action taken:

- New Hire Fin. Spec. II – Starting Step 3
- Tekoa Easement
- BUILD Grant Update
- Courthouse Security Camera
- Camera Bandwidth
- Ditch Work on Dirt & Gravel Roads
- Shoulder work in Process
- Spot Rocking in Process
- Lower Snake River Dam Open House
- Future Fiber Optic Projects
- GIS System
- VPN Issues
- CRABoard Meeting Overview
- EWCOG Meeting Overview
- Indigent Defense Case Weighting Presentation
- WUI Code - Fire flow-SB 6074
- Bill is requesting \$0.20 per phone to fund NPR
- Snake River Salmon Recovery Board Membership changing to Board of Directors Non-Profit

9:45 a.m. – Returned to Open Session and Recessed

10:15 a.m. – Reconvened Board Business

Attendance: Dean Cornelison, Denis Tracy, Elya McClintock, Ginny Rumiser, Heather Clark, Jacy Leach, Jessica Jensema, Katie Claussen, Kelli Campbell, Kristina Cooper, Mark Storey, Sheriff Brett Myers, Suni Richards, Carol Black, Dave Gibney, Tresa Bannister, and Tony S.

2. D089799 – The Flag Salute was recited.

3. 089800 – Public Comment

- Planning Commission Member Julian Mathews shared that he received a letter regarding the Wind Code and noted that the land referenced is within the 1855 Treaty area. He stated that he had previously inquired whether the Tribes, particularly the Nez Perce Tribe, had been notified. As both a Planning Commission Member and a Nez Perce Tribal Member, he expressed his desire to review any responses received. He emphasized the importance of tribal land, its history, and the need for cultural surveys to protect tribal artifacts.
- Planning Commission Member Bill Meyers asked whether the Board's decision is tied to completion of the SEPA process or if a decision could be made prior to SEPA completion. County Prosecutor Denis Tracy responded that the Board cannot approve or adopt the changes at this time. He stated that the Board could review the proposal and make suggested changes; however, a public hearing would be required. Mr. Meyers also recommended that the Board accept the Planning Commission's recommendations, which passed by an 8–1 vote.

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- County Prosecutor Denis Tracy apologized to the Board, the public, and the Planning Commission, and provided an explanation along with a document outlining errors identified in the recent SEPA review. He stated that a new notice is being issued, reopening the public comment period for two weeks. He clarified that comments already received do not need to be resubmitted and explained how comments may be resent if desired.
4. 089800a – Consent Agenda for February 2-16, 2026, was approved.
 - 089801 – Approved Claims
 - Electronic Funds Transfer Expenditure & Treasurer Check Approval – \$331,977.34
 - Voucher Approval Nos. 384582-384616 – \$387,449.12
 - Payroll Approval Nos. 384183-384190 – \$733,455.73
 - Payroll Approval Nos. 384492-384500 – \$675,346.84
 - 089802-089811 – Approved Personnel Change Orders
 - 089812 – The January 20, 2026, Approved Meeting Minutes

New and Old Business

5. 089813 – Commissioner Whetzel moved, Commissioner Handy seconded, to change the date for consideration of the Planning Commission’s proposed commercial wind ordinance to March 2, 2026, at a time determined by the Clerk of the Board. Motion carried.
6. 089814 – Commissioner Whetzel moved, Commissioner Handy seconded, to reappoint Ian Clark to a four-year term on the Salary Commission expiring December 31, 2030. Motion carried.
7. 089815-089816 – Commissioner Whetzel moved, Commissioner Handy seconded, to approve signing two letters of thanks to John Snyder and Earl Patterson for their service on the Salary Commission. Motion carried.
8. 089817 – Commissioner Whetzel moved, Commissioner Handy seconded, correct Corey Mitzimberg’s compensatory time carryover from 126.50 hours to 118.50 hours, to be used by May 31, 2026. Motion carried.
9. 089818 – Commissioner Whetzel moved, Commissioner Handy seconded, to correct Bill Tensfeld’s vacation time carryover from 134 hours to 133.32 hours, to be used by May 31, 2026. Motion carried.
10. 089819 – Commissioner Whetzel moved, Commissioner Handy seconded, to correct Lorena Lynch’s vacation time carryover from 97.50 hours to 67.50 hours, to be used by May 31, 2026. Motion carried.
11. 089820 – Commissioner Whetzel moved, Commissioner Handy seconded, to authorize the amount of \$100,000 from the .09 fund for the 2026 Public Facilities Annual Grant Awards. Motion carried.
12. 089821 – Commissioner Whetzel moved, Commissioner Handy seconded, to authorize the Chairman to sign a right-of-way easement with Avista Utilities for 10 feet of county-owned property adjacent to State Route 27 in Tekoa. Motion carried.
13. 089822 – The regular meeting was recessed and the hearing convened by the Chairman to hear arguments for or against the Whitman County Code, Chapter 1.08-Commissioner Districts and Voting Precincts.

Jeff Marshall, Whitman County Information Systems Project Engineer, shared an overview of the updates being made. These include updates to Commissioner precincts as required due to population changes identified in the most recent census, revisions to the precinct numbering format previously

based on outdated tax codes, Pullman ward updates based on recent census population data, and minor corrections to code wording and outdated references.

There being no further comments, the hearing was adjourned and the regular meeting reconvened.

14. 089823 – Commissioner Whetzel moved, Commissioner Handy seconded, to adopt the updates to Whitman County Code, Chapter 1.08-Commissioner Districts and Voting Precincts. Motion carried.
15. 089824 – Commissioner Whetzel moved, and Commissioner Handy seconded, to authorize Commissioner Swannack, Chairman of the Board of Whitman County Commissioners, to negotiate with the Whitman County Gazette and to execute a legal advertising contract for the period of July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027. Motion carried.
16. 089825 – Commissioner Whetzel moved, Commissioner Handy seconded, to approve publishing a Notice to call for bids for the 2026 Fuel contract to be opened in the Commissioners Chambers on February 17th at 11:00 a.m. Motion Carried.
17. 089826 – Commissioner Whetzel moved, Commissioner Handy seconded, to approve the Resolution of intent to vacate and abandon a portion of Long Hollow Road as presented. Motion carried.
18. 089827 – Commissioner Whetzel moved, Commissioner Handy seconded, to approve publishing the notice of public hearing on vacating and abandoning a portion of Long Hollow Road to be held in the Commissioners Chambers on March 2, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. Motion carried.
19. 089828 – Commissioner Whetzel moved, Commissioner Handy seconded, to approve the Chairman signing the Whitman County Letter of intent to comply with WSDOT Title VI Plan assuring that no person on the grounds of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participating in, be denied benefits of or be otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity. Motion carried.
20. 089829 – Commissioner Whetzel moved, Commissioner Handy seconded, to approve the Chairman signing the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Standard Title VI/Non-Discrimination assurance as presented. Motion carried.
21. 089830 – Commissioner Whetzel moved, Commissioner Handy seconded, to approve and sign the contract between Kimberly Horn and Whitman County for the Critical Areas Ordinance assistance as presented. Motion carried.
22. 089831 – The following Public Works update was provided.
 - Dean Cornelison, County Engineer presented a document and spoke to the commencing of Summer Hours for the Public Works Department starting March 2, 2026.
 - The document listed employees moving to a 4-day 10-hour work week. Hours are 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. This includes Public Works Director, Mark Storey, County Engineer, Dean Cornelison, Brian Wilson, Maintenance Operator, the Mechanics /Service Shops, Project and Programs, the Engineering Staff and Road Maintenance Crews.
 - Other Public Works employees will also be working under approved summer schedules, as applicable.
23. The following executed contracts and correspondence were received and reviewed.
 - 089832 – A letter from Rod Hubner regarding Whitman County Commercial Wind Energy Code 19.61 and its failure to adequately address the siting of wind turbines and associated infrastructure on highly productive agricultural lands with annual cropping systems.

- 089833 – An email from Andrew Lavallo, Public Affairs Specialist, Washington Ecological Services, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, regarding petitions to list three species as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. These include the Olympic Marmot, Wilson’s Phalarope, and the Gray Cat’s-Eye plant.
- 089834 – A media release from the Port of Whitman announcing the purchase of the former seed depot in Colfax, Washington.
- 089835 – An email from Lorraine Ralston following up on Whitman County’s participation in the America’s 250th Anniversary celebration throughout 2026.
- 089836 – A letter from Jack Lein commenting on the SEPA review of proposed revisions to the Whitman County Wind Code (WCC 19.61) and the insufficient protection of scenic and visual resources of the Palouse and Whitman County landscapes.
- 089837 – An executed copy of Resolution No. 25-0637 from the Spokane County Board of County Commissioners authorizing execution of the “Second Addendum to the Private Road Use Agreement” among Spokane County, Whitman County, and Triple D Centennial Farms LLC (Resolution No. 11-0670, Tekoa Butte site).

24. 089838 – The Pending List was reviewed

25. D089838 – Approved documents were signed.

11:15 a.m. – Recessed to 1:00 p.m. for Board Business-Executive Session

1:00 p.m. – Reconvened Board Business

26. 089839 – Commissioner Whetzel moved, Commissioner Handy seconded, to go into executive session until 2:00 p.m. for matters related Performance of a Public Employee-RCW 42.30.110(1)(g). Attendance: Kelli Campbell and Mark Storey

2:00 p.m. – Returned to open session and recessed to Monday, February 9, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. for Workshop

Monday, January 26, 2026 – 9:00 a.m. Convened - Workshop

Attendance: Adam Turnidge, Brandy Dean, Brian Wilson, Craig Wines, Chris Nelson, Chris Skidmore, Crystn Guenthner, Elya McClintock, Heather Clark, Jacy Leach, Jessica Jensema, Joshua Vincent, Katie Claussen, Kelli Campbell, Mark Storey, Sandy Jamison, Sherri Aune, Wraylee Flodin, Dave Gibney and Tony S.

27. 089839a – Bi-Week Consent Agenda.

- Approved Claims
 - 089840 – Treasurer Wire Transfers & Check Report \$445,340.63
 - 089840 – Voucher Claims 384633-384741 \$345,353.82
- 089841 – Approved Personnel Change Orders

27a. 089841a – Commissioner Whetzel moved, Commissioner Handy seconded, the motion to amend the agenda adding item 29., an Executive Session for matters related to the Performance of a Public Employee, RCW 42.30.110(1)(g), today, February 9th from 11:00 a.m., to 12:00 p.m. Motion carried.

28. 089842 – Workshop - The following items were discussed with no action taken:

- WSAC Board & LSC Board Overview
 - Indigent Defense
 - Martin Hall
 - WSAC-For Profit Division Creation
 - Millionaire Income Tax
 - House Bill 5643
 - Transportation Local Funding

- House Bill 2566
- Jail Medical Reform Bill
- Tort Reform Liability Bill
- Gas Tax Distribution
- House Bill 5974
- House Bill 2559
- PBAC Meeting March 11
- State Building Code Meeting Review
 - 10-year Hiatus
 - Performance Base Code
 - KIT Home Requirements
- District Court Pullman City Hall Contract
- Sales Tax Relief Bill
- House Bill 1960
- House Bill 5972
- House Bill 2489
- House Bill 5990
- Freight Bypass Discussion
- Snake River Recovery Board Transition
 - WUI Code
 - House Bill 6279
 - Nomination Interview
- Security Camera System Options

10:45 a.m. – Recessed to 11:00 a.m.-Board Business – Executive Session

11:00 a.m. – Return to Open Session -Board Business

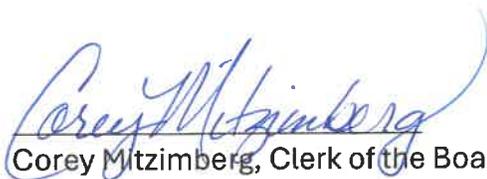
29. 089~~843~~⁸⁴⁷ – Commissioner Whetzel moved, Commissioner Handy seconded, the motion and carried to go into executive session until 11:00 a.m. for matters related to Collective Bargaining Unit Negotiations. Attendance: Kelli Campbell and Scotty Anderson
 Commissioner Swannack publicly announced the session would continue an additional 15 minutes, ending at 11:15 a.m.

12:00 p.m. – Return to Open Session and Adjourned

Commissioner Whetzel moved to adjourn the February 2, 2026 and 9, 2026 meetings. Motion was seconded, by Commissioner Handy and carried.

The foregoing action was made today, February 9, 2026

ss/ Chad Whetzel, Commissioner
 ss/ Tom Handy, Commissioner


 Corey Mitzimberg, Clerk of the Board


 Arthur D Swannack, Chairman

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