



## Wahkiakum Board of County Commissioners

District No. 1 Commissioner: Lee Tischer

District No. 2 Commissioner: Daniel L. Cothren

District No. 3 Commissioner: Vacant

### MINUTES Board of Wahkiakum County Commissioners Regular Meeting January 6, 2026

Acting Chair Dan Cothren called the regular meeting of the Board of Wahkiakum County Commissioners to order on January 6, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. in the third-floor public meeting room of the Wahkiakum County Courthouse located at 64 Main Street in Cathlamet, Washington.

Present: Acting Chair Dan Cothren, Commissioner Lee Tischer, Clerk of the Board Beth Johnson. Undersheriff Gary Howell, DEM Coordinator Austin Smith, Emergency Technology Coordinator Beau Renfro, Treasurer Tammy Peterson, Deputy Treasurer Marissa Longtain, Assessor Drew Jenkins, Public Works Director Chuck Beyer, Auditor Nicci Bergsens, HHS Community Services Manager Julie Johnston, HHS Director Chris Bischoff, Healthy Communities Specialist Diana Zimmerman, Healthy Communities Specialist Minette Smith.

#### Flag Salute

Commissioner Cothren led the flag salute.

#### Regular Meeting Agenda

It was **M/S/A** by Commissioners Tischer and Cothren approving the regular meeting agenda for January 6, 2026. Vote: Aye – Tischer and Cothren. Unanimously approved.

#### Consent Agenda

It was **M/S/A** by Commissioners Tischer and Cothren approving the consent agenda for January 6, 2026. Vote: Aye – Tischer and Cothren. Unanimously approved. The consent agenda contained the following items:

- A. Regular Meeting Minutes of December 23, 2025
- B. Resolution No. 01-26 an amended resolution authorizing the expenditure of \$2,320.09 from the Contingent Liabilities Cumulative Reserve Fund for payment of accumulated annual leave to Justin Moriarty and for payment of county share of FICA/Medicare
- C. Resolution No. 02-26 a resolution authorizing the expenditure of funds from the Emergency Medical Services Cumulative Reserve Fund for the payment of vouchers properly chargeable to said fund in the amount of \$20,000.00
- D. Resolution No. 03-26 a resolution authorizing the expenditure of funds from the County Properties Cumulative Reserve Fund for the payment of vouchers properly chargeable to said fund in the amount of \$1,722.43

- E. Resolution No. 04-26 a resolution authorizing the expenditure of funds from the Electronic Communications Cumulative Reserve Fund for the payment of vouchers properly chargeable to said fund in the amount of \$56,642.40
- F. Voucher Approval - \$ 1,090,466.30
- G. Holiday Closure: Martin Luther King Jr. Day – Monday, January 19, 2026

### **Public Comment**

Brian McClain, Fair Board member, commented on the upcoming Fair Fundraiser, the Crab & Oyster Feed.

Dan Turner, Cathlamet Library, commented on the library's membership and patronage statistics; the library membership has increased by over 800 members and physical patronage has seen a large increase. He further commented on the future goals and visions of the library.

Austin Smith, DEM Coordinator, commented that Sheriff Mason was not able to be in attendance, but that he was contacted by Senator Wilson about a last-minute grant opportunity to replace the battery backup system.

A west end resident spoke in appreciation of EMS and other first responders regarding a recent EMS event.

### **Auditor**

#### Service Contract with Evergreen Septic Pumping, LLC for Services at Johnson Park

It was **M/S/A** by Commissioners Tischer and Cothren to approve of the Board signature on the new service contract with Evergreen Septic Pumping, on behalf of Johnson Park. Vote: Aye – Tischer and Cothren. Unanimously approved.

### **IT Committee**

#### Bid Acceptance for the Microsoft 365 Migration Project

It was **M/S/A** by Commissioners Tischer and Cothren to approve accepting the bid as presented by MorePower Technology Group in the amount of \$35,967.47, including tax, to be paid out of the Electronic Communications Cumulative Reserve Fund and to authorize Beau Renfro to begin the contract negotiation process. Vote: Aye – Tischer and Cothren. Unanimously approved.

### **Public Works**

#### Review of the Capital Improvement Plan Project List

Chuck Beyer, Public Works Director, presented a draft capital improvement project list to the board for their review. Treasurer Tammy Peterson requested language that would allow the fund to be used for ongoing maintenance and improvements. No action taken at this time.

## Health & Human Services

### Contract with the Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities of Southwest Washington

This is a new grant to expand services, including the expansion of the Living Well event. Workshops and presentations focused on the needs of this population, expand fitness programs. It was **M/S/A** by Commissioners Tischer and Cothren to authorize Chris Bischoff, Director of Health and Human Services, to sign contract 2025-052-00 between the Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities of Southwest Washington and Wahkiakum County Health and Human Services for a budgeted amount of \$80,000. Vote: Aye – Tischer and Cothren. Unanimously approved.

## Board of Health

Julie Johnston, Community Services Manager, introduced Diana Zimmerman and Minette Smith who discussed the Youth Mentoring Program. The program is for youth, ages 6 to 18. January is national mentoring month. There are currently 12 youth and 9 mentors, and they are actively recruiting for more.

## Commissioner Reports

The Board reviewed their work over the past week. The Noxious Weed Control Board has at least one applicant for the manager position. The Board thanked Andy Lea for his service to the program over the years. Other topics included the Conservation District Meeting, the status of the timber markets and the interest in the vacancy county commissioner position.

## Public Hearing

### *Rate Adjustments for the KM Solid Waste Transfer Site*

Commissioner Cothren recessed the regular meeting at 10:02 a.m. to proceed into a public hearing and he then called for public comment.

Brian McClain, Skamokawa, questioned if the cost increase was because of increases from Peninsula Sanitation. Chuck Beyer, Public Works Director, commented that the program is operating in the red and that funds must be pulled from other budgets to keep applying to the solid waste expenses and that these rate increases will not solve the problem. Beyer further commented that state funding can only be used for recycling, not for solid waste expenses.

Megan Blackburn Friend, Cathlamet, questioned when the last rate increase occurred. Beyer commented that it was approximately in the timeframe of 2005 to 2007.

Kay Walters, Skamokawa, commented on illegal dumping.

Cindy Langston questioned if the site will be open for an additional day. Beyer advised the schedule will be the same, at just two days.

Blair Brady commented that trail cameras might help prevent dumping in some locations.

With no further public comments, the regular meeting was reconvened at 10:09 a.m.

**Executive Session**  
**RCW 42.30.110(1)(h)**  
**To evaluate Qualifications of Candidates for Appointment to Elective Office**  
**For vacancy in County Commissioner, District No. 3**

Commissioner Cothren announced that the Board will recess from the regular meeting at 10:10 a.m. for an executive session to evaluate the qualifications of candidates for appointment to elective office, per RCW 42.30.110(1)(h), to reconvene at 10:20 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Dan Cothren, Commissioner Lee Tischer.

**Reconvene**

Commissioner Dan Cothren reconvened the regular meeting at 10:21 a.m.

**Commissioners**

Resolution Appointing a Successor to Wahkiakum County Commissioner Gene Strong

The Board discussed the difficulty of the decision and encouraged all candidates to file to run for the position in May.

It was **M/S/A** by Commissioners Tischer and Cothren to adopt Resolution No. 05-26 a resolution appointing Mark Letham as successor to Wahkiakum County Commissioner Gene Strong. Vote: Aye – Tischer and Cothren. Unanimously approved.

Assign Chair and Vice Chair for 2026

Via consensus, Commissioner Cothren will serve as Chair and Commissioner Tischer will serve as Vice Chair for 2026

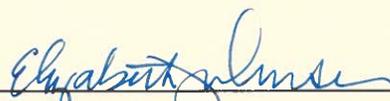
Review Board/Committee/Liaison Assignments for 2026

The Board will review their assignments at the next meeting.

**Adjournment**

With no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Attest:

  
Elizabeth Johnson  
Clerk of the Board

Approved:

  
Daniel L. Cothren  
Chair of the Board