

# BOARD OF COWLITZ COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

## RULES OF PRACTICE



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***DECEMBER 20, 2022***

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## Section I: County Board

1. Cowlitz County shall be governed by the Board of County Commissioners. The Board of County Commissioners shall comply with the Washington State Open Public Meetings Act Chapter 42.30 RCW.

## Section II: Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Board Assignments

1. The Board of County Commissioners shall elect a Chairman according to RCW 36.32.100 each year from one of its number to preside at its meeting and conduct County business. The Board of County Commissioners also shall elect a Vice Chairman.
2. The Chairman shall preside over Board open public meetings. In case of the absence of the Board Chairman, the Board Vice-Chairman shall preside.
3. At a Commissioner Business Meeting in January of each year the Board will determine Committee assignments. The Board may review committee assignments at any other time during a regular public meeting.

## Section III: Board Meetings

### A. General Information

1. Dates and times of the Board Meetings are described in these Rules of Practice. All open public meetings are subject to cancellation or rescheduling
2. Special Meetings<sup>2</sup> may be held with proper legal notice.
3. Executive Sessions<sup>1</sup> may also be scheduled or held anytime during Board meetings.
4. Final action may be taken in any regular or special meetings in accordance with the law.
5. Two members constitute a quorum. A quorum shall be necessary for final action unless otherwise provided for by law.
6. Any member of the Board may attend any Board meeting or public hearing by telephone or video conferencing, provided, however, that adequate audio-visual equipment is available at the location of the Board meeting so as to allow all present at the meeting, including the Clerk of the Board and the attending public, to hear the conferencing member's voice and for the conferencing member to hear the other speakers at the meeting.
7. Minutes shall be kept for all regular and special meetings of the Board. Minutes will not be kept for Executive Sessions. Minutes shall be open and available for public inspection. Minutes will reflect the following:
  - a. Date, time, and location the meeting convened
  - b. Attendees from Governing body and Staff
  - c. General Nature of the business discussion
  - d. Action taken – not what was said.
8. Special Meetings of the Board may be requested by any County Commissioner as provided by the provisions of RCW 42.30.080. Adjournments and continuances shall be governed by the provisions of RCW 42.30.090 and 42.30.100. Any request shall be made to the Clerk of the Board and shall specify the time, place, and reason for such meeting. Upon receipt of the request, the Clerk will notify the other Commissioners.
9. Executive Sessions may be called during any regular or special meeting. No final action will be made during Executive Sessions.
10. Public citizens are always welcomed and encouraged to attend Commissioners' Board meetings. Citizens are welcome to make comment during the Commissioners' regular public meetings. In accordance with RCW 42.30.040, citizens are not required to identify themselves unless otherwise required by law. During a meeting, citizen comments will be received, either or both, orally (raise hand in ZOOM or use \*9 on phone) and by writing. Note: Witten comment may be sent by the Board at any time. For oral presentations, the Board may set a time for comment and speakers.
11. The Chairman shall conduct meetings generally following Robert's Rules of Order<sup>3</sup>. The rules of the Board may be suspended upon approval of a motion. Interruptions or disturbances may be handled by the Chairman in accordance with RCW 42.30.050.
12. The Clerk of the Board and shall be responsible for reviewing all Board meeting agendas prior to posting.
  - a. Prior to or during any Board Meeting, removal of an agenda item or addition of an agenda item, after submission deadline, will be made by a quorum vote of the Board.

## B. Board Meeting Information and Schedules

1. Board meetings shall be held in person, with a virtual component, whenever practicable, thus allowing for remote participation. Pursuant to RCW 42.30.070, meeting location of the Board is the Commissioners' Hearing Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of the Administration Building, 207 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, Kelso, Washington.
  - a. Commissioners' Regular Public Meeting<sup>4</sup>. The regular, adopted public meeting of the Board shall convene every Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. Board members begin to assemble at 8:45 a.m. The assembly shall establish a quorum and provide an opportunity to answer any last-minute questions related to the meeting agenda.
    - I. Agendas are available in advance of these open public meetings; however, they are subject to last minute changes that may arise from accommodation of Board or public requests, even during the Board meetings.
    - II. Agendas for regular public meetings should provide for the following:
      1. Acknowledge Board Members
      2. Pledge of Allegiance
      3. Special recognition (if applicable)
      4. Minutes
      5. Consent Agenda
      6. Public Comment on items not on the agenda
      7. Regular Agenda
      8. Public hearing matters (if applicable) or timed items
      9. Bid awards (if applicable)
      10. Appointments
      11. Board of Health quarterly
      12. Other items at the discretion of the Board
      13. Adjourn
    - III. Submission deadline for the Regular Public Meeting agenda items is 6pm the prior Tuesday. Departments will submit the agenda items through Agenda Quick<sup>6</sup> For each agenda item submitted, a copy of the Agenda Quick cover page and all attachments should be delivered to the Commissioner's Office by 4:30 pm the prior Wednesday and received no later than the time of Agenda publication. The department will need to submit additional copies to receive signed copies for their own records.
    - IV. Prior to or during any Board meeting, removal of an agenda item or addition of an agenda item, after submission deadline, will be made by a quorum vote of the Board
    - V. The meeting agenda for regular and special board meetings shall be noticed in accordance with RCW 42.30.080.
    - VI. During the Regular Public Meeting, any Commissioner may request that an item be removed from the Consent Agenda for discussion. An item removed from the Consent Agenda will be considered as a separate item of business by the Board. Approval of the Consent Agenda will be by a simple majority voice vote of the Board.
  - b. Commissioners' Business Meetings<sup>5</sup>.
    1. Monday Business meetings.
      - a. 10:00 a.m. Risk, Human Resources, and Office of Financial Management weekly.
      - b. 11:00 a.m. Public Services weekly
    2. Tuesday Additional Business Meetings.
      - a. 1:30 p.m. Commissioners' Conference every 1<sup>st</sup>, 2, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday.
      - b. 1:30 p.m. Commissioner Liaison Reports every 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday.
    3. Wednesday Business Meetings.
      - a. 9:00 a.m. Staff Meeting every 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday
      - b. 1:30 p.m. Work Session weekly.

## Section IV: Filling Citizen Advisory and Regulatory Board Vacancies

1. Appointments to fill vacancies will be presented to the Commissioners by the Clerk of the Board. The Commissioners' appointments shall be approved by a majority at any regular meeting.
2. Any recommendation for an appointment must be made with an application to serve. Applications are required for re-appointments.
3. Ad hoc, special committees, and/or task forces may be established as determined and recommended by the Board or in accordance with state law. They will cease to function when they have completed their duties and have made their final reports. Appointments to these groups shall be communicated to the department involved.

## Section V: County Operations

1. Resolution No. 17-040 explains the policy and procedure for office hours. Office hours are on file with the Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners and published on the County's web site<sup>7</sup>, which sets forth the specific business office days and hours for specific County offices and departments:
2. Pertinent policies and procedures relating to salaries; employee benefits; general, sick, and various other types of leave; holidays; hours of work; physical examinations; retirement; and all such matters of personnel and employee relations are cited in the Cowlitz County Human Resources Policy Manual, located on both the intranet<sup>8</sup> and internet<sup>9</sup>. All reference pertaining to such matters should be made thereto and inquiries made to the Director of Human Resources.
3. A Commissioners' use of staff time beyond the Clerk of the Board should be approved by the Board.
4. A Commissioners' concerns regarding county employees within Board Departments shall be referred to the Director of Human Resources for investigation and follow up.

## Section VI: Appointment, Evaluation, and Removal of Department Heads

1. The Board of Commissioners will appoint all Board department heads<sup>10</sup>.
2. The Board of Commissioners shall supervise and evaluate all appointed Board department heads.
3. Removal of any Board department head shall be made by the Board of Commissioners.
4. When such a department head position is vacant, the Board of Commissioners or its designee shall be authorized to perform those duties and execute documents for the department.
5. In accordance with Board policy, its appointed department heads shall report to the Board of Commissioners.
6. The Board of Commissioners may designate a person to fulfill the duties during an absence of a department head.

## Section VII: County Board Member Expenses

1. For the Cowlitz County Commissioners, through the submittal of Commissioner Travel form, Travel to be charged to the County shall be pre-approved during a public meeting of the Board in which the merits and expenses of the travel are discussed. The expenses must conform to the County travel policy. [Commissioner Travel form](#)
  - a. The Commissioner Travel form, outlining the activities or accomplishments at the meeting, will be filed with the Clerk of the Board.

Glossary:

1. Executive Sessions: Meeting to discuss matters set forth in RCW 42.30.110 and RCW 42.30.140 including, but not limited to pending litigation, site acquisition of real estate and the price thereof, and certain personnel matters.
2. Special Meetings: A special meeting for a specific day, time and location is set by the Board for a specific reason and specific County business, pursuant to RCWs 42.30.080 and 36.32.090.
3. Robert's Rules of Order: Another term for parliamentary procedure. It's a meeting protocol that is almost universally accepted for conducting meetings and making group decisions in an orderly fashion.
4. Regular Public Meeting: A regular public meeting day, time and location is set by the Board for County business, public comment, budgeting, and adoption of resolutions or ordinances pursuant to RCW 42.30.077 and 36.32.080.
5. Business Meeting: Meetings scheduled to give the Commissioners opportunity to interact with staff to discuss pending matters of county business in a less formal setting. The purpose of the meeting is to provide the Commissioners with information on topics of interest, pending issues, provide pertinent policy making information, and/or provide for a final review of matters to come before the Board at its regular meeting or at a public hearing.
6. Agenda Quick. <https://destinyhosted.com/frs/cowlitz.htm>.
7. Cowlitz County Website: <http://www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/>
8. Cowlitz County Commissioner Intranet: <http://intranet/commissioner/>
9. Cowlitz County Commissioner Website: <http://www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/Index.aspx?NID=166>
10. County Department Heads: Department heads are employees of the Board delegated to manage specific employees and perform specific duties and obligations of the Board under its direction.

Adopted this 20 day of December, 2022.

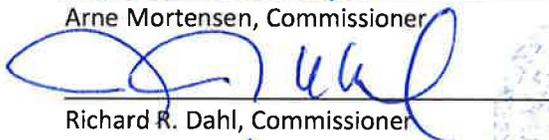
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
of COWLITZ COUNTY, WASHINGTON



Dennis P. Weber, Chairman



Arne Mortensen, Commissioner



Richard R. Dahl, Commissioner

Attest: 

Kelly Dombrowsky, Clerk of the Board

