

**COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES
KITTTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
COMMISSIONER'S AUDITORIUM
SPECIAL MEETING**

MONDAY

11:00 A.M.

DECEMBER 30, 2019

Board members present: Chairman Cory Wright; Vice-Chairman Brett Wachsmith and Commissioner Laura Osiadacz.

Others: Julie Kjorsvik, Clerk of the Board; Gary Berndt, Department of Natural Resources; John Sinclair, Kittitas Valley Fire & Rescue Chief; Darcy Batura, The Nature Conservancy; Reese Lolley, The Nature Conservancy; and a Representative from the U.S. Forest Service.

SPECIAL MEETING DEDICATED FOREST HEALTH FUNDING BILL COMMISSIONERS

At 11:00 a.m. Chairman Wright opened a Special Meeting to receive an update on the Dedicated Forest Health Funding Bill.

Commissioner Osiadacz explained how the language in the proposed Bill had been changed since last year and it is to be considered during this upcoming Legislative Session.

Darcy Batura, The Nature Conservancy, said fire suppression is no longer included in the proposed Bill and explained how the language is now more flexible in order to meet the needs of communities and agencies; has science/fire background support; and the 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan. Chief Sinclair explained how he is very concerned of a potential wildfire which could completely devastate the Upper County. He expressed concerns relating to not having enough volunteer firefighters in the area if a significant fire were to break out; lack of egress/ingress in various areas; mounting fuel and increased growth; and a high potential for fast moving/wind driven fires. Gary Berndt, Department of Natural Resources provided information to the Board on the proposed Bill and said although they cannot fully prevent all fires, they can make it less impactful. There was information provided on the benefits of the Good Neighbor Authority.

The current draft of the Bill is available online, but it will not be official until it gets closer to the beginning of the Legislative Session. If the Bill passed, the funding would be from a surcharge on insurance. Chairman Wright said he would like to support the Bill but needs to see the plan and where the investments are being placed before he'd take official action. The Board agreed to wait and review the Bill and all the details before considering an official action of support. Once the Bill has been submitted, a follow up meeting would be scheduled

APPROVED

1/7/2020

in mid-January for the Board to consider acting on whether to support it or not.


The meeting was adjourned at 11:56 a.m.

CLERK OF THE BOARD



Julie Kjorsvik

**KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**



Cory Wright, Chairman