

# SPOKANE COUNTY CITIZENS' COMMISSION ON SALARIES

February 2, 2021

5:30pm – 7:30pm

## ZOOM information:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83858064479?pwd=cXVTYm53Mllld3hWVWk1hMy9yUDNXQT09>

Meeting ID: 814 0276 8481

Passcode: 722216

One tap mobile

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## AGENDA

**Present Committee Members:** Janae Ball, Tammy Bell, Dana Nash, Debra Stewart, April Croft, Keith Hamlin, Nancy Williams, Jeff Martin and Stephanie Curran

**Present Spokane County Employees:** Ashley Cameron, Toni Atwood

Meeting called to order 7:35PM by Chairperson Janae Ball.

1. Approve previous week's minutes All
  - a. Motion made by Jeff Martin
  - b. Motion Approved by Debbie Stewart
  - c. Motion passed and carried.

2. Elected Official/Commissioner Discussion Schedule All

5:40pm - 5:50pm	Tim Fitzgerald – County Clerk
5:55pm - 6:05pm	Mary Kunej – County Commissioner, District 2
6:10pm - 6:20pm	Al French – County Commissioner, District 3
6:25pm - 6:35pm	Tom Konis – County Assessor
6:40pm - 6:50pm	Michael Baumgartner – County Treasurer
6:55pm - 7:05pm	Vicky Dalton – County Auditor
7:10pm - 7:20pm	Josh Kerns – County Commissioner, District 1

5:40PM Tim Fitzgerald was brought into the Zoom Meeting - Sent a read ahead with statutory duties; runs the day to day legal system with five departments. Staff works with a vast amount of people in the office.

Biggest challenge since last meeting with the commission has been the pandemic. Courts are still open so had to get creative in order to provide access to the public for justice. Had to create new practices and procedures to ensure processes were still occurring, but had to do it in a way that was less in person with continued support.

The most valuable resource in the office is the staff and the goal is to retain staff. For 2021, they have designed a budget in a manner to protect staff as best as possible and utilize the CARES Act funds to help support eFiling.

Over the past two years, the biggest change is how people access the courts, especially in regard to mental health. We used to attend 15 sites on commitment sites. We now do those remotely and have created two rooms to do the hearings (4 employees). Remote hearings are the way of the future.

Also, they were able to get electronic processes completed. With the amount of work in Spokane County, we need to create efficiencies to move documents between courts, jail, prosecutor and public defender to ensure things are moving quickly.

Business Growth & Spokane County Population Growth – the more people we have living and working in the county, the more legal problems we see, which creates additional work for his team.

5:54, Mr. Fitzgerald was exited from Zoom Meeting room.

Mary Kuney entered the Zoom meeting room at 5:55 – County Commissioner. Has been in her role since October 2017 when she was appointed. Ran in 2018 and again in 2020. Prior – Chief Deputy auditor for auditor.

Biggest challenge since last meeting with the commission has been the pandemic. It has had a substantial impact on the community and what we do for them. Vice Chair last year and Chair this year for Health board which takes a significant amount of time. Has spent a significant amount of time working with the Cares Act – how to spend in the community to make the biggest effect we could for everyone in our community.

If you take COVID out of it and look to the future of the next two years, as we'll have 5 commissioners after that. Until that happens, over the next two years, the Commissioners are asked to lead in county commissions and boards. There are over 40 boards and commissions Spokane County Commissioners sit on. It's a full time 24/7 job, and COVID has added a lot to that.

2020 Finances – Sales tax revenue seems to come in stronger than anticipated, which is good. With Cares dollars, we used them across the county, and are hopeful we'll end up with a surplus for next year.

Commissioners split work – Monday and Tuesday, they are all together; at the end of each year look at boards and commissions for the next year and divvy them up amongst each other. During the week they also field citizens' concerns as well as positive suggestions that come in.

Commissioner Kuney exited the Zoom meeting at 6:09pm.

Al French entered the Zoom meeting at 6:10pm –Started his community involvement in 1994 at the neighborhood level. He then moved into city council; was appointed in 2001 and served eight years. His term limited off and he ran for county commissioner in 2010; he's now in his third term as commissioner. He serves on various boards and commissions – 6 state boards and total of 41 boards and commissions.

COVID has brought new challenges not experienced in the past. He was the chair last year when dealing with COVID and helped facilitate a balance between the people and the updates that were

The Commissioners were very measured and targeted in how Cares Funds were distributed. Additionally, they were very thoughtful during 2020 in regard to expenses and 2021 budgets. The number one propriety CARES money was allocated toward was the health district, but they also helped schools, small businesses and people who lost jobs, not of their own fault. The full \$91M in CARES money was distributed as directed under the federal guidelines.

To do this job right, we need to be involved at the table on the westside. Commissioner French is involved in many state boards and committees because that's where the money flows from and Spokane needs adequate representation.

Commissioner French exited the Zoom meeting room at 6:24pm.

Tom Konis entered the Zoom meeting room at 6:25pm – His team consists of 46 employees with budget of \$3.9M. They are responsible for fairly assesses properties for tax purposes. They also manage the exemption.

COVID has had a different impact on this department as compared to others. All appraisers are out working remotely using an ipad which has enabled us to do a better job and be more effecient.

Pop & Business Growth directly impacts this department – every new parcel adds new work. Every sub division creates more work and we are seeing more and more of this. We still see a

Mr. Konis exited the Zoom meeting room at 6:39pm.

Michael Baumgartner entered the Zoom meeting room at 6:40pm – Elected Treasurer – He stated he is running on of the largest public banks in Eastern Washington, as his team processes about \$15B in payments, 1.3B public investment fund for schools, and .5 budget annually7

Pandemic has been a challenge but through it all, it hit during height of tax collection season. Spokane County granted largest tax extension in state when Governor created state of emergency. His team increased liquidity of funds to help that process.

The Treasurer's office is unlike other office in county, work for school districts, airport, public facilities district so we do more work for them than for the actual county.

This year has been about pandemic, did a landlord extension and were only ones in state who did that.

Mr. Baumgartner exited the Zoom meeting room at 6:54pm.

Vicky Dalton entered the Zoom meeting room at 6:55pm– Auditors office is responsible for elections, recording, motor vehicle and licensing. 1999 had 53 position and today 42 at last headcount. Continue to improve our operations and with financial services, we touch every department in the county.

Over the past two years, no single biggest challenge. Elections office – every legislative session is a significant process.

In 2020 we had one person in licensing go out because of age and concern (tied to COVID) and that department operated one person down for almost entire year. Operated two people short in recording due to natural attrition; this was completed with an increase in recorded documents 20k more this year. 2020 was a rough year, either operated short handed or under extreme conditions. We've faced a lot of challenges and have made it work, we have great staff.

The county has not always been very progressive and are moving from paper based to electronic. We fortunately had just moved from paper moving and vouchers right before COVID. Progressive thinking to get things done has been very helpful.

The pandemic has become new normal; onboarding and training, managing remotely are still some challenges, but we're in our new norm. The legislature passes are what impact us and how do we implement it, that's the challenging part.

As we see an increase in population and Business Growth: more people, more vehicles, licensing, properties being sold, more documents, ore registered voters and activity there, financial services, more vendors, payments. We are doing this with the same amount of full time employees, as we haven't increased head count substantially in about 15 years.

Ms. Dalton exited the Zoom meeting at 7:09pm.

Josh Kearns entered the Zoom meeting room at 7:10pm – County commissioner from District 1 in role part of legislative and executive branch. Commissioners are responsible for adopting budget that funds over 50 departments, oversee all land use decisions, oversee variety of departments like roads department, parks and rec, criminal justice, catch all for government. What is a county commissioner – most people understand what city council and mayor are, if you combine those job duties, there are three Commissioners that do that for every county not within a city boundary.

The COVID pandemic impacted everything Commissioners do at the county the way we do things at the county. Have shifted for 700 people to teleworking, forced to find new ways to deliver service virtually as we still need to service the community in this new arena.

Commissioners had dynamic thrown at them during COVID. The Cares dollars from federal govt were in the amount of \$91k. Those dollars allowed Commissioners to accommodate the shifts in the way services were delivered, make tech upgrade purchases, software and hardware to allow telecommuting, assist local school districts to ramp up for virtual learning and supplies, helped public facilities district for things they needed to be safe. About \$9M in CARES dollars were allocated to the health district, over \$20M small business grants. Distributed over seven million pieces of PPE to help keep people safe during the pandemic. That money was a huge help to our community. Commissioners had to work with community members to define needs, what to address and then how do we address those needs. Allowed them to work with more community partners they don't normally work with like education and fire districts.

Commissioner work split – all three are elected by 520k people w/in the county. Try to disperse workload as it comes in for constituents to districts. Have 40 or so boards or commissions they sit on. Since COVID, they have found having more meetings in a day because don't have to account for drive time – you are able to do more in a day and be more efficient.

We still need to meet minimum service level, but with pandemic and cares dollars were able to shift 700 people to telecommute from home and purchased other hardware and software that will show a return on investment in efficiency.

Commissioner Kearns left the Zoom meeting room at 7:25pm.

3. Miscellaneous Chairperson
  - a. We had one additional meeting beyond this, last year. We are on track for completion. Our next meeting will be Tuesday the 9th from 5:30-6:30.
4. Close Chairperson
  - a. Meeting adjourned at 7:33PM