

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Whitman County Board of Commissioners Date: January 10, 2021

Observer Reporting: Mary Collins Length of Meeting: 9 am to 1:30pm
(with recess from 11:30am-1pm)

Members Present: Commissioners Swannack, Largent, and Handy

Members Absent: None

Others Present (e.g., media, public): 23 others including reporters, department heads and other unknown individuals.

Business pertaining to League Positions or topics of interest:

The meeting was mostly a workshop where nothing was decided or voted on. The only formal, meeting decision, was **approval of \$400,000 toward the construction of the airport terminal.** This was the full amount requested of the County.

The Board was informed by the head of Public Works that a **new plan for a south by-pass for Pullman** is being considered. The route would start on Hwy 195 (Pullman to Lewiston) at Kirkindal Road then connect with Sand Road and go all the way to Moscow, *or join the current Pullman/Moscow Highway I wasn't clear.* This would make it possible for most truck traffic to not go through Pullman's downtown but would entail significant road construction paralleling the Pullman-Moscow highway. The cost is estimated to be in the area of \$10 million rather than closer to \$100 million for the currently visioned south by pass.

The Health Department reported that they expect **Covid numbers** to rise quickly for the next 4-5 weeks and then a sharp drop off is expected.

During the workshop there was mostly discussion related to the **IT system and upgrades.** Interestingly the IT Director said that Covid (and the special funds associated with it) has led to people having and now expecting to use greater on-line activity. Therefore, where he had hoped to upgrade a system that in 2019 was 10 years out of date over a few years the need for improvements is now immediate. The main expense would be in subscribing to computer systems that do all kinds of things *(sorry this is the best I can do with my limited interest in anything computer).*

Process & Protocol:

The meeting was on Zoom and live but most people participated by Zoom. Everyone was very cordial.