

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Whitman County Board of Commissioners Date: May 16 and 23, 2022
Observer Reporting: Mary Collins Length of Meeting: 9am until 11:30 and 10:30am
Members Present: Commissioners Largent, Swannack, and Handy
Members Absent: _____
Others Present (e.g., media, public): 15-20 others including reporters, department heads and other unknown individuals.

Business pertaining to League Positions or topics of interest:

This is a report of a BOCC workshops on May 16 and 22. No Board Meeting was held on the 16th and the observer was only able to participate in the workshop on the 22nd.

Topics discussed in the **May 16 workshop** included the **comprehensive plan update** which it was felt needed more on **water issues**. Also discussed was that the plan is advisory, it is not a law or code and makes certain land uses possible not mandatory. Considerable time was spent on fine tuning the language related to **rail banking**. Their intent was to promote the maintenance of railroads and rail corridors intact and viable into the future. There was concern about protecting **Chipman Trail** as a trail even though it is a railbanked corridor. It was agreed that Chipman Trail should remain a trail but they didn't want to present contradictions within the rail corridor statement. They settled on language in the general introduction about preserving existing trails and parks but did not discuss any specific trails in the railbanking statement. There will be one more public hearing before they adopt the revised plan.

It was reported the work on **remodeling the County Court House** is progressing nicely despite on-going supply and labor issues.

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The **May 23 workshop** topics included a report of a **critical staff shortage in the emergency communications system**. Specifically, 911 dispatchers. Pullman and WSU are the largest users. The salary scale may need to be adjusted to attract workers.

The Director of Public Health reported that there are slight **increases in the Covid numbers** mostly in nursing, senior living, and childcare settings.

The current system for providing funds to assist low-income households allocates funds for each community. Pullman has a large surplus while several of the small towns are out of funds. The Community Action Center administers all of the funds. It was suggested that all of the remaining funds be congregated and need allocated by household rather than town.

### **Process & Protocol:**

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