



**Office of the Washington State Auditor
Pat McCarthy**

April 16, 2025

Sheriff Jim Raymond
1016 N. 4th Ave. D-201
Pasco, WA 99301

Dear Sheriff Raymond:

Thank you for contacting the State Auditor's Office Citizen Hotline with your concerns regarding Franklin County.

We recently examined your concerns as part of our audit of Franklin County and would like to share the results with you.

Concern: Unlawful deductions from your paycheck, specifically that a court order was required for any deductions from your paycheck and disabling purchases cards as a form of retaliation.

Result: State law (RCW 42.24.115) grants the County authority to make salary deductions and revoke purchase cards.

Concern: Commissioners removed capital expenditures from a previously approved budget and did not make this change in an open public meeting.

Results: The County Commissioners have the authority to set the budgets and make changes. We reviewed Resolution 2023-346 and attached budget and noted there is \$0 in the Sheriff capital expenditure line item. The Commissioners approved the final budget in an open public meeting on December 8, 2023.

Concern: The County violated open public meeting laws for specific meetings and sessions. Specifically, the April 3, 2024, open public meeting did not follow the agenda for the day and the agenda was not made available to the public.

Results: We obtained the meeting agenda from the County's website that was available to the public, compared it with the approved meeting minutes and watched the meeting video on the County's website. We confirmed the consent agenda and regular business items were pulled from the current agenda during the open public meeting. Further, we confirmed after the public comment section, at about the 21 minute 30 second mark in the recorded meeting, the Commission Chair moved from public comment to the Commissioner and Administrator updates section because there was no regular business. Further, during our audit of fiscal year 2023 we reviewed the

meeting minutes for compliance with certain aspects of the Open Public Meetings law, including the use of executive sessions for the fiscal year 2023 and did not identify any violations.

Concern: A Commissioner wanted a large amount of equipment that was declared surplus at the HAPO Center to be gifted to an organization of his personal choice based on his assessment of need.

Results: We obtained Resolution 2023-097 approving the surplus of equipment at the HAPO Center. We also obtained the statement from Booker Auction dated June 6, 2023, showing the income from the sale of each item. We determined the HAPO Center surplus items were sold at auction and not gifted.

Concern: The County violated executive session requirements. Specifically, An executive session under RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) occurred and the three commissioners met with no one else attending. At the end of the session, the Commissioners said they took no action, yet they decided the County Administrator would be receiving a performance evaluation.

Review: We reviewed the meeting minutes and watched the meeting video available on the County's website and noted an executive session was called under RCW 42.30.110(1)(g). Commissioners can go into executive session to discuss performance of an employee which could include an evaluation and issues surrounding an evaluation. Per RCW 42.30.110(1)(g), executive sessions can be held to evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment or to review the performance of a public employee. However, subject to RCW 42.30.140(4), discussion by a governing body of salaries, wages, and other conditions of employment to be generally applied within the agency shall occur in a meeting open to the public, and when a governing body elects to take final action hiring, setting the salary of an individual employee or class of employees, or discharging or disciplining an employee, that action shall be taken in a meeting open to the public. The Commissioners followed the executive session requirements. Additionally, during our audit of fiscal year 2023 we reviewed the meeting minutes for compliance with executive sessions for the fiscal year 2023 and did not identify any violations.

Thank you for taking the time to submit your concerns. If you have any questions, please contact me at (509) 734-7104.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ginny Waltman".

Ginny Waltman, Audit Manager
Team Tri-Cities