

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**  
Monday, March 15, 2021 - 10:00 AM

*Clerk's note – This meeting was held virtually.*

Stephanie DeZalia, Chairperson  
Joseph Giordano, Vice-Chairperson

Chairwoman DeZalia called this Personnel Meeting to order at 10:05 am with the following Supervisors virtually in attendance: Clayton Barber, Robin DeLoria, Archie Depo, Stephanie DeZalia, Shaun Gilliland (in person), Joseph Giordano, Charlie Harrington, Roy Holzer, Kenneth Hughes, Steve McNally, Jim Monty, Noel Merrihew, Jay Rand, Tom Scozzafava, Jeffrey Subra, Ike Tyler and Davina Winemiller. Joe Pete Wilson was excused.

Department Heads present: Dan Palmer (in person), Judy Garrison, Dan Manning and Jennifer Mascarenas.

Also virtually present: Sun News, Tim Rowland.

DEZALIA: I will call this Personnel Committee to order and I will say that I was happy to hear that the Government employees got added to the list last week, and I'm excited to be able to make my appointment on Wednesday. So we will start off with Jen, Personnel.

MASCARENAS: Good morning. I don't have anything in addition to my monthly report unless anyone has any questions for me.

DEZALIA: Did anyone have anything for Jen? No. Okay, thank you Jen.

MASCARENAS: Thank you.

DEZALIA: Have a good day. Judy, Clerk of the Board.

GARRISON: Good morning. I submitted monthly report and I do not have anything extra other than that, unless anyone has anything for me.

DEZALIA: Does anyone have anything for Judy? Doesn't look it.

GARRISON: Okay, thank you.

DEZALIA: Dan Manning, County Attorney.

MANNING: Just one thing, you have before you a resolution authorizing us to enter into a revocable license agreement with the Boquet Valley Central School District for the purposes of them being able to investigate the Thrall Dam Property. This is primarily so that we have insurance coverage in case anyone should get hurt while their engineers or any other of their subcontractors or contractors. So I just need a motion, a second and discussion.

DEZALIA: Anybody want to move that motion?

MERRIHEW: I'll move that.

BARBER: Second.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY CHAIRMAN OR COUNTY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A REVOKABLE LICENSE AGREEMENT WITH BOQUET VALLEY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR THE PURPOSES OF INVESTIGATING A LOCATION FOR A NEW CENTRAL SCHOOL ON PROPERTY OWNED BY THE COUNTY COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS THE "THRALL DAM" PROPERTY WHICH CONSISTS OF APPROXIMATELY 450 ACRES IN THE TOWN OF LEWIS. Merrihew, Barber. Hughes, Scozzafava – opposed.**

DEZALIA: Discussion anyone?

HUGHES: I have a question. So is it understood that the school district's board of education is interested in the Thrall Dam property and that's where they want to go?

PALMER: Yeah, that's our understanding at this point, is that's the piece of property that they have selected. As we discussed before though, there's some issue with the reforestation that we have to answer before we can even bring it to you guys for consideration. This resolution is simply just to allow them to go onto the property and get liability coverage from us in the event they get hurt looking at the property but it's not a commitment for anything yet because we simply don't know yet whether even it can be transferred under the reforestation issue.

HUGHES: So they're just exploring and this license basically says if they get hurt or something that we are indemnified?

PALMER: Yeah, we typically do that with anybody that's going to enter our property for any extended period of time to be looking at it for any reason, anywhere within the county, we ask for liability coverage and that's all this resolution does.

HUGHES: And one more quick, question. Do we know if they've passed by resolution any public language saying that they are interested in the Thrall Dam Property?

PALMER: I don't know that specifically. Jim may? Jim Monty may.

DEZALIA: Go ahead Jim.

MONTY: Yeah Ken, what has happened; they had a facilities committee that they formed with the school district, they researched several pieces of property. They found a couple they liked very much. One family said they were all in favor of the new school but they didn't want it in their backyard so they didn't want to sell. They found another piece of property, fairly, centrally located and they took it upon, they went and had the property appraised and it was appraised for I believe, it was \$180,000, don't quote me on that but the family wanted substantially more money for the property to make the property not feasible. They had notices and letters that went out to several people, large property owners to see if they were interested, they came back initially they had come to the county about Thrall about a year ago but they were at that time they weren't interested so they kicked it back to Thrall, the facilities committee recommended it to the school board. The school board voted to move forward on that property pending, reaching agreement with the county and getting through all the legalities and everything that was needed and also a vote by our board

to do it, the Board of Supervisors. Then go to public referendum to decide if that's what they wanted to do. So they've been following the process developed by State Ed to this point.

HUGHES: Okay.

DEZALIA: Okay. Anyone else, anymore discussion? No further questions on that? Alright, all in favor of that – opposed?

HUGHES: I'm going to oppose it.

DEZALIA: Alright, one opposed.

SCOZZAFAVA: I'm going to oppose it also.

DEZALIA: Okay. Anything further? Any further discussion to come before the Personnel Committee?

DELORIA: I'm not on the committee but I'm questioning the opposition to this? I mean, this is just a fact finding motion. I mean, what's going on?

SCOZZAFAVA: Well I can, unless I missed it in an e-mail or something I have not seen anything official from the school board in regards to their interest in that site other than what I've been told at the meetings. Seriously, I'll put it right out there point blank, I think that Elizabethtown and Lewis is strong arming Westport because they have the population and that's about the extent of it.

HUGHES: I'm happy to defend my no that as well. I love the Town of Lewis I just don't think it's the right place for a centrally located K-12 school. I think the distance is too far from Westport. The Lewis-Wadhams road is a hypotenuse that it's not a wonderful road for travel between Lewis and Westport and I feel like if I'm already not supportive of this I wouldn't want to give any false intentions by supporting even the ability to explore it from the very outset so that's why I opposed it.

MANNING: I just want to say something in response to Tom's inquiry, the school superintendent and their architect requested that we enter into this type of agreement so they could at least go onto the property to explore it. So you asked if the school had any inquiries or made any inquiries, they did.

SCOZZAFAVA: I did not hear a word of that.

MANNING: Sorry about that Tom. We had a Zoom meeting with the school superintendent and their architect maybe three weeks ago Shaun, Dan, myself I think Mike Mascarenas was there. They requested this access agreement so that they could safely go onto the property without worry that they couldn't be there and so that we would be assured we'd have insurance. So it's basically just to go on there and investigate and I'm not going to comment on the rest of the stuff that's on my province and up to your personal opinion.

SCOZZAFAVA: So was the property that's located, we had a discussion on this a month or so ago, next to the existing Westport School, was that apparently that's not even being considered by the school board?

GILLILLAND: That's really not in our province. I mean, that's the school districts province you know, to come to us if they want to explore that and then we told them. We're not forcing any property down their throat. We're responding to be co-operative with them.

HUGHES: Have we shared with their school board that and I don't know if this is true but if our Board of Supervisors is interested in doing something with that property in relationship, the fairgrounds property or parts of that property next to the school, have we indicated that A, we are interested in that and B, let them know that?

GILLILLAND: First of all, it's a separate piece of property than the fairgrounds property.

HUGHES: I misspoke. I apologize.

GILLILLAND: Also, I believe Mr. Tyler was very active in promoting that particular one.

TYLER: Yeah, I can add to that, the last meeting I went to with the architects, superintendent, Mr. Monty, Mr. Merrihew and a couple of board members I suggested that property and it was stated to me that that's the worse piece of property that they ever looked at.

PALMER: Again, I provided the board a copy of the letter that I sent the school superintendent indicating that we were willing to discuss with them either the Thrall Dam property or the fairgrounds property next to it. that letter went out more than a month and a half ago. It was not, you know, again, it's not I don't think it's our place as a county to suggest to the school where they should or should not build their property. The way I look at it doesn't really matter at all to the county in terms of that if and in fact they choose to build a school regardless of where they built that school there will be an empty school building across the road from the county and at that point the county would probably be interested in that building simply because of our own space needs and things that go with it but the public perception is that we somehow have a preference where they put the school, we do not. We have offered the property and we have offered both piece of property. What the school board chooses to do is the school board's and the school district's decision not I don't believe, the county's decision.

DELORIA: Thank you and that's why I raised the question because my understanding of this is we've been approached and we're going to do the fact finding on this and move it forward. I think if there's opposition to the county you know working with the school district, I think people should be going to the school districts meeting and not raising some sort of a filibuster order here to alleviate this possible choice for the school district. And it's really up to them and as long as Mr. Tyler is working with them and understands the ramifications of the distances and all that, it's really a school board decision so I think you for the discussion.

DEZALIA: Thank you. Anyone else?

MERRIHEW: Stephanie, just a point of information. A point of information, a communication went out last week to all the district owners and in that communication they gave representation of interest in the Thrall Dam property so that has been through their administration that has went out to all district owners for their consideration. It's still not a done deal but that was the site that they were proposing. Thank you.

DEZALIA: Thank you Noel. Anyone else, anything else to come before this committee?

PALMER: Just so, that did pass through the committee based upon the two no's and what appears to be one absent and if nobody else raised any no I think the resolution passes through the committee and therefore, would proceed to ways and means.

DEZALIA: Okay thank you Dan. Alright, I think that's it for today for Personnel. I move to adjourn.

As there was no further discussion to come before this Personnel committee it was adjourned at 10:18 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Garrison, Clerk  
Board of Supervisors