

**Klickitat County**  
**Policies for Appointments and Functions for**  
**Boards, Commissions and Committees**

**1. Purpose**

Boards, Commissions, and Committees exist for the primary purpose of gathering information and presenting options and recommendations for consideration to the Klickitat County Board of Commissioners. Boards, commissions, and committees are created under the authority of county ordinances or: by resolution of the Board of County Commissioners. Individual boards, commissions and committees typically retain no official independent responsibility or authority and serve only in an advisory capacity unless otherwise directed by ordinance or resolution of the Board of County Commissioners or by order of law.

**2. Types**

There are several types of boards, commissions and committees used in Klickitat County. These bodies originate from different sources; some are established by ordinance while others are established by motion of the Board of County Commissioners, or, in the case of task forces, sometimes by a county department. Some boards, commissions and committees are established under a state or federal statute or authority, or by county resolution or ordinance and operate semi- autonomously; some are established by county resolution or ordinance and make recommendations to county departments and/or elected officials; some are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners to carry out a specific task or function often subject to review by the Board of County Commissioners; and others have focused responsibilities to work on or study a specific issue.

**3. Authority**

This policy applies to all appointed boards, commissions and committees, Klickitat County offices/departments and to all elected officials, department heads, and their employees.

**4. Appointments by Board of County Commissioners**

Members to boards, commissions and committees functioning under the auspices of the Board of County Commissioners are appointed to the various boards, commissions and committees by resolution of a majority of the Klickitat County Board of County Commissioners. Appointments are made for a specific term of office.

**5. Appointment Procedure**

The following appointment processes apply for members of boards, commissions and committees that are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. Candidates for some boards, commissions and committees may be screened for criminal background.

**a. Vacancies to be announced**

Approximately ninety (90) days prior to the end of a term for an appointed position on a board, commission or committee, the Board of County Commissioners shall begin the appointment process. The first step is to issue a public notice of the impending vacancy and soliciting interest for appointment. A copy of the notice shall be provided to each incumbent whose term is ending.

At a minimum, notice shall be provided on the county's Internet site and via a media release announcement to area print and broadcast media sources. The notice should summarize the type of position, where additional information is available, where an application form may be obtained and must be submitted. Display advertising in the print media is optional, and legal advertising is not required.

Application forms will be available from the commissioners' office and as a PDF document on the County's Internet site. The application period should be a minimum of twenty-one (21) days. Applications will be kept on file for three (3) years.

County Commissioners, existing board, commission and committee members, and others are encouraged to solicit citizens, who they believe would serve the county well, to apply for vacancies. If no applications are received by the expiration of the application period, or if applicants fail to receive majority support of the Board, the Board may solicit individuals to serve and may appoint members without another open application period.

#### **b. Methods of Appointment**

The Board of County Commissioners has several options for appointing persons that have submitted applications requesting to become members of boards, commissions and committees or for replacing a member when a vacancy occurs. Any of these methods may be used at the sole discretion of the Board of County Commissioners:

- i. **Appointment by Interview:** The Board of County Commissioners may review the applications for a vacancy and request interviews with the applicants in order to confirm qualifications and suitability for a specific appointment.
- ii. **Appointment by Application Review:** The Board of County Commissioners may review the applications for a vacancy and make an appointment from the available applicants, without interview.
- iii. **Review and Recommendation by Others:** The Board of County Commissioners may request that a county official or another board or committee review applications and/or interview candidates and make a recommendation to the Board for appointment.

#### **c. Filling Mid-Term Vacancies**

Should a mid-term vacancy occur on a board, commission or committee for any reason, the Board of County Commissioners may appoint a replacement member to complete the remainder of the unexpired term. If applications for the original appointment are less than three (3) years old, the Board of County Commissioners may appoint a replacement from the original pool of applicants. Appointments to vacancies shall be for the remainder of the unexpired term that has been vacated.

#### **d. Incumbent Must Reapply**

Incumbent members of boards, commissions and committees desiring to serve another term must so indicate by submitting a written request, on the appropriate application form provided in 5.a. above, confirming their desire for reappointment. No reappointments will be made automatically.

## e. Criteria for Appointment

- i. Residency. Appointments to certain boards, commissions and committees must, by state law or county requirement, be limited to residents of the county. Persons residing outside the county may be considered and appointed to positions not legally restricted to county residents when determined appropriate by the Board of County Commissioners.
- ii. Conflicts. Elected Officials and persons that have a contract for services and/or goods with the county are not eligible for appointment to county boards commissions and committees unless the intent of the committee so requires or is otherwise provided by law or where a conflict of interest could occur.
- iii. Contributive Potential. The Board of County Commissioners shall evaluate the potential contribution that each applicant may make if appointed to a board, commission or committee. Guiding factors include:
  - a. Desire to perform public service.
  - b. Ability to express ideas, concepts and philosophies.
  - c. Experience in the community on other boards, commissions and committees.
  - d. Special knowledge important to a particular board, commission or committee, yet still possess the ability to represent the interests of the community as a whole and not a special interest.
  - e. Ability to work collaboratively with other members, staff and officials.
- iv. Time available. The Board of County Commissioners will need assurance that the applicant will be available to attend scheduled meetings.
- v. Geographic representation. Maintaining a geographical balance of community representation is a desirable goal in the appointment of members to county boards, commissions and committees. On boards, commissions, and committees that have positions based on a geographical nature aligned with the commissioner districts, the commissioner for that district shall submit his/her top two (2) ranked candidates to take to the whole board for consideration.
- vi. Reappointments. There is not a vested right to reappointment for any position. Incumbents that wish to be reappointed and that are eligible for reappointment shall submit an application during the application period. In addition to the criteria above, the Board of County Commissioners will also evaluate incumbents using the following:
  - a. Attendance. The expected minimum standard of attendance at all meetings is 75%, regardless of whether absences are excused or unexcused.
  - b. Understanding of the function of the board, commission or committee.
  - c. Contribution to the success of the board, commission or committee.
  - d. Effectiveness as a participating member of the body.
  - e. Number of terms served.

## 6. Terms

When possible, terms will be set to expire at either year-end or mid-year. The same expiration date shall apply to all terms of a board, commission or committee. Terms may be adjusted as necessary to maintain staggered expiration dates of members.

Some boards, commissions and committees have maximum term limits established by adopted policy or code. Where maximum terms of service are specified, appointees serving in a three (3) year term may be reappointed twice for a maximum of three terms; appointees serving in a four (4), five (5) or six (6) year term may be reappointed once for a maximum of two terms. Some boards, commissions and committees may have different term lengths and term limits that are exceptions to these general rules.

Appointments of less than two (2) years chosen to fill an unexpired term shall not be considered as a term in these criteria. Appointments over two (2) years shall be considered a full term.

If an appointee is selected to fill the remainder of an unexpired term for six (6) months or less, then their appointment shall be for the unexpired term plus the next full term.

Members shall continue to serve after the expiration of their term until a new appointment or a reappointment is made, or the member resigns in writing.

## **7. Removal of Members**

The Board of County Commissioners may, by majority vote, remove any member of a board, commission or committee without cause. Members removed by the Board of County Commissioners shall be so notified.

## **8. Attendance policy**

All board, commission and committee members shall attend at least 75 percent (75%) of all meetings in the preceding twelve (12) month period. No differentiation is made between excused and unexcused absences of members. Failure to attend at least 75 percent (75%) will not result in an automatic removal of the member, though the chair or staff of said board will notify the clerk of the commissioners of the members failure to attend the 75 percent threshold.

## **9. Multiple appointments**

No person should be nominated or confirmed to a position on more than one board, commission or committee at a time. This does not apply to multiple appointments created by specifying certain representative memberships, expressly created by the Board of County Commissioners.

## **10. Conflict of interest**

All members of boards, commissions and committees must avoid any instance of a conflict of interest. No individual may use an official position to gain a personal advantage. If a member of a board, commission or committee concludes that they have a conflict of interest or an appearance of fairness issue with respect to a matter pending before the board, commission or committee, they shall disqualify themselves from participating in the deliberations and decision-making process for the matter. A member so disqualifying themselves shall have no personal presence before or direct communication with the other members regarding the matter.

## **11. Public process**

All members of boards, commissions and committees are subject to the Open Public Meetings Act. All members of boards, commissions and committees are responsible for understanding and complying with the law, which includes but is not limited to the prohibition on conducting meetings outside of the public forum except as provided for by statute. Failure to adhere to the Open Public Meetings Act may result in personal liability, including but not limited to fines and penalties as provided for by statute.

## **12. Lobbying**

No board, commission or committee, or any member of a board, commission or committee shall engage in lobbying on legislative or political matters on behalf of the board, commission, committee or Klickitat County unless specifically authorized by the Board of County Commissioners.

## **13. Records**

All members of boards, commissions and committees are subject to the Public Records Act. Any and all records created or received in the scope of the position are subject to retention and disclosure pursuant to statute. All members of boards, commissions and committees are responsible for understanding and complying with the law. Members of boards, commissions and committees shall preserve all records according to retention schedules and shall not destroy records subject to preservation. In the event of a records request, members shall work with staff to provide records subject to disclosure. Failure to preserve and provide records pursuant to statute may result in personal liability, including but not limited to fines and penalties.

## **14. Meeting location**

The Board of County Commissioners will designate meeting locations for its boards, commissions and committees. The Board of County Commissioners may delegate this authority to the department head or staff for the commissions and committees.

## **15. Compensation**

Members of boards, commissions and committees serve without compensation unless authorized by statute, ordinance or resolution adopted by the Board of County Commissioners. Members may be reimbursed for authorized travel expenses incidental to their service.

## **16. Rules of procedure**

Boards, commissions and committees operating directly under the auspices of the Board of County Commissioners may, depending on the nature of the group, adopt rules to address procedural considerations. Such rules of procedure shall not become effective until reviewed and confirmed by the Board of County Commissioners.

## **17. Legal counsel**

The Klickitat County Prosecuting Attorney is legal counsel for Klickitat County and all of its officials, boards, commissions and committees. Boards, commissions and committees, and their members shall not base action or procedure on any other legal counsel.

## **18. Staff liaisons**

As liaisons to boards, commissions and committees, county staff members provide a variety of professional assistance and administrative functions. These include preparing and distributing meeting notices, record keeping, providing professional guidance and analysis and serving as the communication link between boards, commissions or committees and other groups, departments and officials.

The liaisons are staff professionals with significant responsibilities in addition to their committee liaison activities. The liaison role is one of communication, and county staff are not "committee staff" and do not work "for" or "at" the direction of a board, commission or committee. They are professionals who work to develop information and recommendations for consideration by the Board of County Commissioners.