

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

CONSENT AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: James Kennedy, Prosecuting Attorney
Melissa Pleimann, Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

DATE: December 2, 2024

SUBJECT: Approval of a Public Hearing Notice: An Ordinance Establishing the Office of the Coroner and Appointment of Coroner in Jefferson County

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

The Board of County Commissioners held a second workshop on October 7, 2024 to discuss updates from the Attorney General's Opinion dated August 22, 2024 interpreting the statutory changes to RCW 36.16.030 effective January 1, 2025 as prohibiting the Prosecuting Attorney from continuing to serve as the ex officio coroner. In light of the change in the law, the Board directed staff to prepare a proposed ordinance that reflects the most cost-effective option of establishing a separate Office of the Coroner and appointing a qualified individual to serve as the coroner for Jefferson County. Attached is a proposed hearing notice for a public hearing to adopt the Coroner Code. If the Board approves the publication of the hearing notice the hearing will take place on Monday, December 16, 2024 at 3:30 p.m. in the Board Chambers in the County Courthouse.

ANALYSIS:

The proposed ordinance, if adopted, would establish the separate Office of the Coroner for Jefferson County and establish the procedures an appointed coroner must follow. This ordinance would ensure compliance with the current laws in the State of Washington.

FISCAL IMPACT:

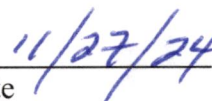
There was a request to increase the budget for the coroner function for the year of 2025. Our analysis is that the minimum budget increase going forward for this separate Coroner's Office will be estimated to increase by \$18,000.00 from prior budgets.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the attached hearing notice for publication.

REVIEWED BY:


Mark McCauley, County Administrator


Date

Please publish 2 times: December 4 and December 11, 2024

Contact Person: Adiel McKnight
Bill to: Jefferson County Commissioners
P.O. Box 1220
Port Townsend, WA 98368

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Establishing a separate Office of the Coroner
and appointing a non-lawyer Coroner in Jefferson County

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing is scheduled by the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners for **MONDAY, December 16, 2024 at 3:30 p.m.** in the Commissioners' Chambers, County Courthouse, 1820 Jefferson Street, Port Townsend, WA 98368. Notice of said public hearing is to be published in the official newspaper of Jefferson County.

This hearing is to discuss the proposed ordinance that reflects the most cost-effective option of establishing a separate Office of the Coroner and appointing a qualified individual to serve as the coroner for Jefferson County. This ordinance would ensure compliance with the current laws in the State of Washington.

The draft ordinance is available for viewing on the County website by clicking on: www.co.jefferson.wa.us and follow this pathway – Services – Laserfiche Web Portal (username and password is: public) - Board of Commissioners – BOCC Agenda Packets – 2024 Weekly Agenda Items – 12 December – 121624 - HEARING re Coroner Ordinance

You are welcome to participate in this hearing. You will need to join the meeting by 3:30 p.m. using the following methods: **VIRTUALLY:** Via the following Zoom, link: <https://zoom.us/j/93777841705>, **PHONE:** Dial 1-253-215-8782 and enter access code: 937-7784-1705# and press *9 to “raise your hand” to be called upon. Access for the hearing impaired can be accommodated using Washington Relay Service at 1-800-833-6384, or **IN-PERSON:** In the BOCC Chambers.

If you experience difficulties joining the meeting or viewing documents please call 360-385-9100 to report any issues.

In addition, additional written testimony is also invited beginning on December 2, 2024 and ending on December 16, 2024 at the end of the Public Hearing, unless extended by the Board of County Commissioners. Written public testimony may be submitted by **Email to:** jeffbocc@co.jefferson.wa.us You may view testimony received by clicking here: www.co.jefferson.wa.us and follow this pathway – Services – Laserfiche Web Portal (username and password is: public) - Board of Commissioners – BOCC Agenda Packets – 2024 Weekly Agenda Items – 12 December – 121624 - HEARING re Coroner Ordinance

You can also **Mail** your testimony to: Jefferson County Commissioners' Office; P.O. Box 1220, Port Townsend, WA 98368. Written testimony must be received by the Board of County Commissioners by the end of the hearing testimony period.

Signed this 2nd day of December, 2024.

JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
/S/Kate Dean, Chair