

Commissioner Jenny Mayberry

RE: Walla Walla Workplace Investigation

Date: August 28, 2024

Commissioner Mayberry:

This letter serves as a summary of the County's workplace investigation.

SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION FINDINGS

As you were previously notified, the County received complaints regarding your communication and/or interaction with members of the Public Works Department. The independent investigator found that over the last three and a half years, you have directly communicated with Public Works staff, and inserted yourself in operational details of the Public Works Department in a manner that has been upsetting, off-putting, stress-inducing, and described by staff as "harassing." She also found that you have been unreasonably loud, rude and disrespectful to Public Works employees.

We met with you on August 12, 2024 in executive session to provide you with an opportunity to respond to the Investigator's findings. You generally denied the findings.

We met with you again on August 19 and August 26, 2024 in executive session. We understand that you vehemently disagree with the allegations. We understand that everyone remembers conversations differently. That being said, we have a responsibility to protect County employees.

We scheduled a special meeting for today, August 28, 2024.

It is important to note that the complaints by Public Works employees are not unique to that department but rather are consistent with the complaints received by other County staff, including the recent independent investigation into the Fair Grounds staff's concerns.

NEXT STEPS AND REMEDIAL ACTION

Considering the above, we are very concerned by your behavior and the impact felt by staff. We recognize your commitment to the County, but the behavior described above is unacceptable. Given your role as an elected official, we recognize that we do not have the authority to discipline you or assign you to mandatory training. However, we do have the authority—and the responsibility—to protect County employees. Every person has the right to feel respected at work. Therefore, it is critically important that you do the following:

- All communications and interactions with staff must be professional and respectful. Refrain from yelling, interrupting, and swearing.
- All questions, concerns, directions and sharing of information must occur with the appropriate department head or elected official. Refrain from contacting department or elected official's staff directly as this interferes with their work, causes confusion, and provides a stressful work environment. You may continue to contact the civil deputy prosecuting attorneys to the extent you are needing a legal question answered.
- Comply with the Public Works citizen complaint protocol.

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As a further remedial measure, you will no longer serve as the alternate Board liaison to Public Works. If you are willing to consider an executive coach who can help you with your communication skills and behavior, we are happy to consider this option, at the County's expense.

And finally, we understand that the position of County Commissioner can be difficult and stressful, with competing responsibilities. We welcome any other constructive feedback from you on how best to ensure County employees have a productive and respectful work environment.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Todd L. Kimball". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "T" and "L" at the beginning.

Todd L. Kimball, Chair
Walla Walla County Board of Commissioners