

**League of Women Voters of Tacoma – Pierce County Observer Corps  
Pierce County Council**

**August 28, 2018**

Lydia Zepeda reporting

Started at 3:03pm ended at 5:27pm

Members present: Connie Ladenburg (left at 5pm), Douglas Richardson, Dan Roach, Pam Roach (left at 5:10pm), Rick Talbert, Derek Young

Members absent: Jim McCune

Others present: county directors and staff, sheriffs, Fire/safety, members of the public.

Content:

1. Two hours of the meeting were devoted to Proposal 2018-63, 2018 Budget Supplemental/Capital Facilities Plan Amendment to fund a 16 bed Behavioral Health Crisis Stabilization Facility (BHCSF) in Parkland. The proposal is for the county to fund about \$500,000 and provide the land for the \$6.1 million facility to be used for emergency stabilization of people with mental health/drug issues. Currently, there is one facility in Fife that runs at capacity. The Parkland location would reduce time spent by first responders transporting patients by serving south Pierce County. It would also free up space and expenses in ERs and jails for people who are better served by emergency mental health care.

Support for the proposal was unanimous among all who testified. All the council members present spoke in favor of the facility. County staff, sheriffs, emergency responders, and mental health providers gave expert testimony in support of the proposed facility. In the second hour of the testimony, public comments were invited and over a dozen members of the public, including the LWVTPC's own Cynthia Stewart, testified in support of the facility. Other public supporters included medical and mental health specialists, housing advocates, NAMI, Veteran's Administration, educators, and individuals with family members suffering from mental illness.

Many of those who spoke emphasized that there is a tremendous need for mental health services and that the BHCSF is only a small part of what is needed in Pierce County. Derek Young noted that in 1955 there were 337 beds for mental health patients for every 100,000 of the US population; currently it is 24 beds per 100,000. Washington state and Pierce County lag even further behind, with 13 and 3 beds per 100,000, respectively.

A note regarding the 2018 county budget of \$328,644,996 presented in the proposal: the budget allocates only \$34,080, or one hundredth of one percent to mental health.

The council voted 6-0 in favor of the behavioral health crisis stabilization facility.

2. The Council also considered proposal R2018-103 Agricultural Support Staff to increase the agricultural staff in Pierce county by adding two positions: a permitting specialist and a drainage

engineer in 2019 at an estimated total cost of \$150,000 for the two positions. Currently, Pierce county has only one agricultural specialist who works on marketing and this proposal addresses farmers' needs for assistance with permitting and drainage issues. For comparison, King County has 10 full-time agricultural staff.

The council voted 5-0 in favor.

3. Proposal 2018-106 requested the confirmation of Karl Imlig as Director of the Facilities Management Department. Mr. Imlig indicated in his statement that his priority for the first 12 months in the position would be to examine the large backlog of deferred maintenance to identify what are the priorities from a safety perspective. The council chair reminded him that it was up to the council to determine priorities in terms of what would be funded.

Mr. Imlig was confirmed by a vote of 4-0.