

FRANKLIN COUNTY WA ASSESSOR
CURRENT USE (OPEN SPACE) COMMITTEE
2025 ANNUAL MEETING

Called to order on February 4th, 2025 @ 9:00 AM.

Members Present: Zach Miller, Dana Herron, Burl Booker, Jared Balcom, & Grant Morris.

Staff Present: John Rosenau, Nikki Morgan, Sheree Rabideau, & Angel Samano.

Public Present: Cinthia Muse, of SOS Group, and Marla Marvin, their legal representative.

Election of Chair: Burl Booker nominated by Dana Herron.

Approve Previous Meeting Minutes: Motion by Dana Herron to approve, second by Grant Morris, motion passed.

Old Business:

- The dryland area is the Assessor's inspection area this year. The agricultural appraisers would like to host a presentation to review valuation models and answer questions. Dana and Burl will arrange and location, date, and time for a dryland meeting sometime this summer/fall.

New Business:

- Market values continue to increase even as Current Use values decrease. The 2024 agricultural assessment ratio was 79.2%, meaning assessments were 79.2% of market value.

Review of Irrigated Calculation:

- Burl suggested hay prices being utilized were much higher than actual. Grant agreed. They confirmed 2024 prices as follows: January \$185, June \$165, and December \$135. *Calculations have been updated to reflect this.*
- Nikki asked if the committee knew why our local market was so different than what Agrifacts. Burl said it is possibly impacted by the west side, which would include transport costs. John pointed out they may include small batches at higher prices.
- Grant reiterated fresh potatoes are most likely what is being reported in the publications used; will be more appropriate to use processed potato numbers in the future. Jared suggested a subscription to North American Potato Market News. Grant will let Assessor's office know if he can provide better resources. ~~For now, we should use 85% of \$9.00 and 15% of 6.50 = XXXX.~~ *The USDA information will be utilized after gaining clarity on what those values represent. See attached email*
- Burl noted the correlation between corn and hay prices both being down and said it looked accurate.
- Grant said 2024 potato yields were back up to between 590 and 600 CWT. *Calculations have been updated to reflect this.*
- The group agreed that all other prices, rents and yields seemed reasonable.
- 2024 irrigated value was \$4,253 per acre. Proposed 2025 irrigated value was \$4,071 per acre at the time of meeting but *has been updated to \$3,998 per acre.*
- The committee unanimously voiced concern that even with this tax exemption, it will not be long before it is impossible for small farms to continue farming. John and Nikki encouraged committee members and public to reach out to their legislators to impact change.

Review of Pasture Calculation

- Burl indicated the numbers are still accurate at \$1,104 per acre. Down from \$1,183 per acre last year due to cap rate and prices.

Review of Dryland Wheat Calculation:

- 2024 dryland market multiplier was 20. Proposed 2025 multiplier is 22 due to 2023 & 2024 sales.
- One 2023 sale and one 2024 sale were removed from sales considered because they were atypically high with market multipliers indicating almost 50.

Review of Sales and Market Valuation:

- Average 2024 sale price for typical irrigated open pivot land is \$16,965 per acre.
- Value for irrigated land will increase from \$15,500 to \$16,500 per acre.
- Assessor removed 2 valid sales of ~ \$28,000 per acre because they sold for higher than what was typical in the market. These sales did not impact the new assessment.

Review of Homesite Valuation:

- Integral one-acre homesite value for 2025 valuation will increase from \$1,620 to \$1,793.

Assessor relies heavily on feedback from committee members and will be reaching out periodically with specific questions throughout the year. Look forward to more frequent, short phone conversations.

Board agreed with the process to arrive at the calculations.

Meeting adjourned at 10:23 AM.

Minutes taken by: Nikki Morgan.

Post meeting- Sheree emailed the USDA to ask for clarification on the data from the potato summary. The data for Washington state includes fresh, processed, seed, and livestock feed. It is for 2023 crop year, 2024 marketing year. This is the most complete data we have for potato prices per CWT. The email exchanged is attached for reference.