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WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
**Finance and Administrative Services Committee**

November 27, 2001

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. by Committee Chair Robert Imhof in the Council Chambers, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, Washington.

Also Present:

Sam Crawford

Marlene Dawson

Absent:

None

**COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

**1. ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2001 BUDGET, REQUEST # 11 (AB2001-374)**

Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated the County began a self-insurance fund a few years ago. They are finding that, over those years, the fund balance has declined to the extent that they need to restore the fund balance to its original balance of \$1,050,000. This is a transfer from the general fund to the health insurance fund balance.

The second issue has to do with the fact that the cost of the health insurance in the self-insurance program far exceeded what the County projected. The cost is about \$900 per person. That is the amount of revenue they have to find to support that cost.

Dawson questioned whether they could transfer funds from the Road fund. Desler stated it goes into the Administrative Services fund, which is what they use to pay for health insurance costs. It is only for the people in that department.

Crawford asked about the other items.

Desler stated the Sheriff received funding from the Port of Bellingham to pay for security at the airport. They have a modest grant from the State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to provide substance abuse and chemical dependency services for pregnant and parenting women. The grant is self-supporting. Also, the Auditor says she is able to do all the work regarding the most recent election within the existing budget, so she has withdrawn that request.

The \$520,000 for the Administrative Services - Human Resources, is where they need the expenditure authority to pay for the additional costs of health care for 2001. The revenue comes from the \$301,000 in the general fund and from miscellaneous amounts that come from the Emergency Management fund, the investment pool fund, and the various districts. The combination of all that revenue would total \$520,000 for 2001.

1  
2 Crawford asked what happens next year. Desler stated the administration  
3 increased the amount projected to take from each of the departments' budgets.  
4 The new calculated amount is \$503,000 for the year 2002.

5  
6 Crawford asked at what point the Council starts talking about employee  
7 participation in health care costs. Desler stated at the negotiation with the union.  
8

9 Crawford asked about the road improvement district (RID) guaranty fund and  
10 Solid Waste fund. Desler stated there have been late payments and nonpayment  
11 related to the expenses associated with a special program to finance enhancements  
12 to the facilities at Cordata. The Facilities Management Division proposes to transfer  
13 money from another fund to make the loan payment, so they don't affect the bond  
14 rating. At the end of the normal period of time when properties are subject to  
15 nonpayment, they get into a foreclosure issue, which is three years. If there  
16 continues to be nonpayment on the parties who are obligated to pay this amount,  
17 then the County would seek foreclosure.

18  
19 Imhof asked the number of years left on the loan.

20  
21 Eric Schlehuber, Office Administrator, stated there are four or five years left  
22 on the loan.

23  
24 Imhof stated they are improvement districts that put the sewer and road in  
25 the Cordata area. The property owners were paying it back. This is about some  
26 property owners that didn't make their payments. The County will get the  
27 payments back, or foreclose on those properties.

28  
29 Desler stated the last item is a Public Works Department proposal to  
30 appropriate funds to pay for consulting contracts for the Y Road landfill. They  
31 would like to build a fence around some property. They are experiencing costs  
32 associated with disposal of toxic material. They also have a litter control grant.  
33 These were approved by the Solid Waste Executive Committee.

34  
35 Dawson moved to recommend approval.

36  
37 Imhof moved to amend the ordinance to remove \$24,000 from Auditor's line  
38 item.

39  
40 Motion to amend carried unanimously.

41  
42 Hoag questioned whether the Sheriff's request for overtime is entirely for  
43 port security at the airport. Desler stated it is.

44  
45 Motion to approve as amended carried unanimously.

46  
47 **2. ORDINANCE AMENDING WHATCOM COUNTY CODE 2.02, COUNTY**  
48 **COUNCIL (AB2001-352)**

1  
2 Imhof stated this is the clean up resulting from last year's code scrub.

3  
4 Dawson moved to recommend approval.

5  
6 Motion carried unanimously.  
7  
8

9 **COUNCIL "CONSENT AGENDA" ITEM**

- 10  
11 **1. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO AWARD BID #01-102 TO THE APPROPRIATE VENDOR FROM THE IDENTIFIED BIDDERS, BASED ON EQUIPMENT AVAILABILITY AND SUITABILITY, WITH PREFERENCE TO LOW BIDDERS, WITH THE POSSIBILITY THAT MORE THAN \$35,000 COULD BE SPENT WITH A SINGLE VENDOR (AB2001-378)**

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18 Dawson moved to recommend approval.

19  
20 Motion carried unanimously.  
21

- 22 **2. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO AWARD BID #01-130 TO THE LOWEST RESPONSIVE BIDDER, KENWORTH NORTHWEST INC., FOR A BLADE TRUCK IN THE AMOUNT OF \$119,862.87 (AB2001-379)**

23  
24  
25  
26  
27 Imhof asked if this is a replacement vehicle.

28  
29 Mary Green, ER&R Manager, stated it is the replacement of an old blade  
30 truck.

31  
32 Imhof asked if it is a front blade. Green stated it is a belly blade.

33  
34 Dawson moved to recommend approval.

35  
36 Motion carried unanimously.  
37

38 Crawford stated he would like to standardize the County's fleet to get  
39 interchangeable parts. It seems like the County is still buying equipment from a  
40 variety of suppliers. Green agreed that it is a nightmare, but it's about how they  
41 write a bid and who meets the bid. If they don't write a bid where various vendors  
42 can bid, then they create bad relationships with the vendors. Lately they have  
43 mostly been getting Kenworth trucks.  
44

- 45 **3. RESOLUTION SETTING HEARING DATE AND NOTICE OF HEARING ON SALE OF COUNTY TAX TITLE PROPERTY, REQUEST NO. 05-01 (AB2001-380)**  
46  
47  
48

1 Dawson moved to recommend approval.

2  
3 Hoag stated this item is different than the others. The Whatcom County  
4 Parks and Recreation Department owns this. She questioned why they want to get  
5 rid of the property.

6  
7 Barbara Cory, Treasurer, stated this is about a request from Mr. Graham to  
8 put in a sewer or drain field that goes across Parks Department property, as  
9 required by the Health and Human Services Department. Mr. Graham began  
10 negotiating with the Parks Department because the Health Department required it.  
11 That is why there is a request to sell this property to Mr. Graham. It is to  
12 accommodate his store.

13  
14 Hoag questioned whether the County could just provide an easement.

15  
16 Imhof stated this is a Parks Department issue. Councilmember Hoag should  
17 get those answers from Mr. DeSpain between now and the date of the hearing.

18  
19 Motion carried unanimously.

20  
21 **4. RESOLUTION SETTING HEARING DATE AND NOTICE OF HEARING ON**  
22 **SALE OF COUNTY TAX TITLE PROPERTY, REQUEST NO. 06-01**  
23 **(AB2001-381)**

24  
25 Dawson moved to recommend approval.

26  
27 Motion carried unanimously.

28  
29 **5. RESOLUTION ORDERING THE CANCELLATION OF WARRANTS MORE**  
30 **THAN A YEAR OLD (AB2001-382)**

31  
32 Dawson moved to recommend approval.

33  
34 Motion carried unanimously.

35  
36 **6. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**  
37 **JUVENILE ACCOUNTABILITY INCENTIVE BLOCK GRANT (JAIBG)**  
38 **CONTRACT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF**  
39 **SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES (DSHS) TO PROVIDE FOR**  
40 **ADDITIONAL COURT COMMISSIONER AND DEPUTY COURT CLERK**  
41 **STAFFING TO EXPEDITE JUVENILE OFFENDER CASE PROCESSING, IN**  
42 **THE AMOUNT OF \$58,923 (AB2001-383)**

43  
44 Dawson moved to recommend approval.

45  
46 Crawford asked where the money comes from.

1 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated the money comes from a State  
2 Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) annual grant.

3  
4 Motion carried unanimously.

5  
6 **7. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**  
7 **CONTRACT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN**  
8 **SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND**  
9 **HEALTH SERVICES (DSHS) DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOL AND**  
10 **SUBSTANCE ABUSE (DASA) TO PROVIDE REVENUE FOR OUTPATIENT**  
11 **SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES, IN THE CONTRACT AMOUNT OF**  
12 **\$2,415,551 (AB2001-384)**  
13

14 Crawford moved to recommend approval. The Governor asked for a 15  
15 percent budget cut, and the State Department of Social and Health Services  
16 (DSHS) asked for a 30 percent cut in day programs. He asked if cuts are proposed  
17 for this.

18  
19 Andy Byrne, Human Services Manager, stated yes. The DSHS made  
20 recommendations to the Governor about how they would make their cuts. Within  
21 the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, several reductions are proposed. The  
22 only one that affects Whatcom County totals \$18,668. This is a contract  
23 amendment to a current contract. It adds \$192,000, with the likelihood that DSHS  
24 will want \$18,000 back.

25  
26 Motion carried unanimously.

27  
28 **8. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE, ON BEHALF OF**  
29 **WRIA 1, TO ENTER INTO A LEAD ENTITY GRANT BETWEEN WHATCOM**  
30 **COUNTY AND THE WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND**  
31 **WILDLIFE TO FUND CORE SALMON RECOVERY FUNCTIONS, IN THE**  
32 **AMOUNT OF \$65,000 (AB2001-385)**  
33

34 Dawson moved to recommend approval.

35  
36 Crawford stated this is fully funded by the State Department of Fish and  
37 Wildlife (WDFW).

38  
39 Hoag stated the copy of the agreement mentioned that the money was  
40 delayed in coming through. One item on packet page 149, is a modification of the  
41 habitat project list. She questioned whether the County, as the lead entity, cannot  
42 change the list or else it will lose its contract as the lead entity.

43  
44 John Thompson, Resources Planner/Endangered Species Act, stated WDFW is  
45 trying to assure that the citizens committee is going to have meaningful input into  
46 establishing the list. The statute says that a committee of representative interests  
47 will determine the list. The WDFW is concerned about a committee of the County  
48 Council unilaterally changing the list. The process the County built involves

1 technical review, and then the citizen committee review and ranking. The County,  
2 as the lead entity, reviews the list for the Joint Board to be sure that the process  
3 has been followed. They are building accountability into the process by having  
4 technical and citizen review.

5  
6 Hoag asked if this language allows the County Council to send something  
7 back to the committee asking for a change. Thompson stated that is the process.

8  
9 Motion carried unanimously.

10  
11 **9. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO AN**  
12 **AGREEMENT AMENDMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY PUBLIC**  
13 **WORKS AND NORTHWEST SURVEYING & GPS (NWS) FOR**  
14 **FORESEEABLE SURVEYING SERVICES FOR RIVER AND FLOOD**  
15 **DIVISION PROJECTS THROUGH THE END OF 2002, IN THE AMENDED**  
16 **AMOUNT OF \$75,000, FOR A TOTAL AMENDED AMOUNT OF \$150,000**  
17 **(AB2001-386)**

18  
19 Imhof moved to recommend approval. It is an extension of an existing  
20 agreement.

21  
22 Dawson asked how they pick the surveyor.

23  
24 Paula Cooper, Engineering Manager/River and Flood, stated this item and the  
25 next item are almost identical, except they are with two different surveying firms.  
26 The Public Works Department divvied up the workload between the two firms to be  
27 more efficient.

28  
29 Motion carried unanimously.

30  
31 **10. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO AN**  
32 **AGREEMENT AMENDMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY PUBLIC**  
33 **WORKS AND PACIFIC SURVEYING & ENGINEERING SERVICES, INC.**  
34 **(PSE) FOR FORESEEABLE SURVEYING SERVICES FOR RIVER AND**  
35 **FLOOD DIVISION PROJECTS THROUGH THE END OF 2002, IN THE**  
36 **AMENDED AMOUNT OF \$75,000, FOR A TOTAL AMENDED AMOUNT OF**  
37 **\$150,000 (AB2001-387)**

38  
39 Imhof moved to recommend approval.

40  
41 Motion carried unanimously.

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44 **OTHER BUSINESS**

45  
46 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated that the Port of Bellingham and  
47 BP Refining can obtain tax exempt financing for environmental facilities that they  
48 would like to install at the refinery if the County approves. It would significantly

1 lower their cost of borrowing, and would allow these projects to go forward. This  
2 project would take advantage of industrial development revenue bonds. It requires  
3 the County Council to ultimately approve these, as the planning jurisdiction. There  
4 is no obligation to the County. The administration will submit a resolution in  
5 support of this project at the December 11, 2001 County Council meeting. The  
6 deadline is the end of this year.

7  
8 Imhof asked the benefit to the County's tax status. Desler stated it doesn't  
9 affect County's tax funds. It affects federal tax funds.

10  
11 Imhof stated they want to make sure this doesn't cost the County.

12  
13 Desler stated there were technical corrections to the budget on November 6,  
14 2001 that included one-time capital projects, which they don't anticipate finishing  
15 before the end of the year. The projects mostly have to do with roof or window  
16 issues. In some cases, bids came in too high, or they are still negotiating the  
17 approach for professional services. A total amount of \$350,000 to \$400,000 in  
18 projects that will lapse at the end of the year. The administration will come back to  
19 the Council with those same projects in 2002. Another option is to force the  
20 projects through this year, but it didn't seem prudent to do that.

21  
22 A third issue is that the administration will need the Council's help to monitor  
23 changes in funding that occurs at the State level. There are significant issues  
24 occurring due to the slow-down in the economy. There are many proposals on the  
25 table being discussed by the legislature and Governor. The County has an  
26 administrative entity, and receives funding, authority, restrictions, and mandates  
27 from the State legislature. If there are significant cuts in the State Department of  
28 Social and Health Services (DSHS), for example, those people who received those  
29 services end up at the County's doorstep. If the legislature cuts major sources of  
30 revenue for things such as criminal justice or public health, then the County will  
31 have to be a strong advocate for how this will affect the people of Whatcom County.  
32 He is preparing a list of mandates that are onerous on Whatcom County  
33 government.

34  
35 Crawford stated the state should spend within its budget. The State cannot  
36 cut programs and require the County to still carry on those programs. That is his  
37 concern. If the State cuts a program, it needs to be clear to everyone that it was  
38 the State that cut the program. He requested that the administration be proactive  
39 in identifying areas in which the County will have no option and must provide the  
40 service. That becomes an unfunded mandate. Budget cuts will occur unless there  
41 is a dramatic change in the economy. Desler stated identifying those areas might  
42 be possible regarding the Growth Management Act. In other cases, it is not  
43 possible. The County is required to go to arbitration with the uniformed deputies.  
44 The courts also have liability requirements on the County. Sometimes there is not  
45 a direct connection between an act of the State legislature and Whatcom County  
46 government. It is not going to be simple to say that if funding is cut, a  
47 corresponding program will be cut.

1            Crawford stated the Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) decided a  
2 couple of weeks ago to increase the sales tax by three-tenths of one percent.

3  
4            Dawson stated it will go to the voters.

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6  
7            **ADJOURN**

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9            The meeting adjourned at 12:44 p.m.

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13 Jill Nixon, Minutes Transcription

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15  
16 ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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21 \_\_\_\_\_  
22 Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

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Robert Imhof, Committee Chair