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WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
Finance and Administrative Services Committee

May 4, 2004

Committee Chair Sam Crawford called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, Washington.

Present:

Dan McShane

Sharon Roy

Absent:

None

Also Present:

None

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

1. ANNUAL UPDATE FROM THE BELLINGHAM-WHATCOM COUNTY COMMISSION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (AB2004-188)

Bruce Van Glubt, District Court Probation Administrator, stated the Domestic Violence Commission deals with education, collaboration, and strengthening community response. The commission brings together groups that District Court and District Court Probation have had problems bringing together in the past. The commission has been actively involved in quarterly meetings with domestic violence batterer treatment providers to brainstorm regularly to bring people together. The commission also was active in setting up treatment and evaluation standards for people who have been ordered to attend batterer's treatment. This is one of the few communities in the State that has any standards. They've written up policies and gotten judges to set down consistent expectations. They've gotten batterer treatment providers to follow those expectations. Evaluations are very consistent. He is confident that people are getting quality evaluations.

The University of Washington and the Office of Administrator of Courts area doing research locally on evaluations completed in Whatcom County. District Court has a complete and comprehensive database. This is the only community in the state that has both a consistent evaluation process and a database to track progress of the clients. He has been working with them to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs. It is a long term project. The commission has brought together all those groups for this project to happen.

Sue Parrott, Domestic Violence Commission Director, stated she would discuss the safety audit. The commission went through a strategic planning process this year. The information on that process is included in the Council packet. The commission's original comprehensive plan from four years ago is also included in the packet. The commission is putting that plan to rest. Things from it

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1 have been melded into the strategic plan. This past year, the commission
2 published a new edition of a resource pamphlet and distributed it to the
3 community. The commission did quite a bit of community education and training,
4 targeting the small cities' councils. She did training as a result of the safety audit.
5 They've trained the What-Comm dispatchers on domestic violence. The Bellingham
6 Police also did extensive training, including one on risk assessment. The
7 commission is involved in domestic violence awareness month. It planned for and
8 funded most of the events. Community collaboration is a key element for success.
9

10 Projects worked on last year and completed this year include a project to try
11 and institutionalize routine domestic violence screening for all health care
12 providers. Right now, they have a pilot site that is willing to develop a model
13 protocol, which they will take to other health care provider offices. They are trying
14 to develop something that is easy to use in physicians' practices.
15

16 Crawford asked if they would do something similar for clergy and counselors.
17 He asked how they're networked into the domestic violence system. Parrott stated
18 it varies. It's a population the commission has not focused on, but easily could.
19 They sent a mailing last year to all churches in the Interfaith Coalition that included
20 a handout about responding to a victim and abuser. Beyond that, there's plenty
21 more they can do.
22

23 The safety audit was a project of the commission. They audited What-
24 Comm, the Sheriff, the Jail, and the Bellingham police. To date, 36 of the
25 recommendations are complete, 21 are in progress, and seven aren't done because
26 they are resource-dependent. Two recommendations have not been addressed.
27 That is a phenomenal response from those agencies, which weren't required to
28 follow the recommendations. What-Comm has a draft domestic violence policy that
29 is being reviewed right now. The Bellingham Police implemented 23 of 24
30 recommendations. The Sheriff is in the process of reviewing policies and training to
31 implement this summer and fall. Some of the issues around technology have been
32 harder to address because of a lack of resources.
33

34 One outcome of the audit was that the Sheriff's Office and Police Department
35 will do an additional risk assessment on a routine basis. Nationwide, there are
36 gaps in terms of understand the history and context of a domestic violence
37 incident. Domestic violence usually involves many incidents that haven't been
38 brought to the attention of law enforcement. The responding officers don't know
39 the danger of an offender unless officers take the time to understand what is really
40 happening in the relationship. As a result of the audit, law enforcement is now
41 asking three questions of a victim. By asking those questions, the victim can let
42 law enforcement know if the person is very dangerous. That information can be
43 used by the Prosecutor. It's a shift away from the specific incident and focuses on
44 the bigger picture.
45

46 The Jail has implemented a number of recommendations from the safety
47 audit. They decided a few recommendations weren't appropriate, and they can't

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1 implement one recommendation because of resource issues. It is not appropriate
2 to do an automatic phone block as recommended because it prevents the inmate
3 from making any phone calls, but the jail staff will do it only at the request of the
4 victim. It is also not appropriate to put a special wristband around domestic
5 violence offenders as recommended to listen for any threats offenders may make
6 for their victim. Jail staff said they already use wristbands for problematic
7 prisoners, and they don't want to cause confusion by having more wristbands.

8
9 The overarching recommendations include conducting focus groups with
10 victims and survivors to provide input on how the system can work better. It will
11 find a way to institutionalize that perspective.

12
13 The commission is currently planning the second phase of the audit, which
14 will happen this fall and which will include District Court Probation and the
15 prosecutor offices of Bellingham and Whatcom County.

16
17 Crawford asked if funding is the same this year. Parrott stated the County
18 provided funding equal to the City this year, which was an increase. The
19 commission looks for additional funding throughout the year. This year it will have
20 to hire consultants for the audit, so it will have to raise about \$30,000.

21
22 Roy stated it sounds like the Sheriff's Office and Police Department are on
23 two paths to get to the same goal. She asked about the Sheriff having difficulty
24 implementing recommendations because of resource issues. She asked if it has to
25 do with accessing records. Parrott stated that's part of it. Part of the problem is
26 technology and part of the problem is the staffing level. Reports aren't entered
27 electronically. Once entered electronically, they won't have the extra data entry
28 steps.

29
30 McShane asked if the training for corrections officers in the jail is not a
31 recommendation being implemented because of a lack of resources. He also asked
32 if they are planning for training for the deputies, but haven't done it yet. Parrott
33 stated that's correct. It's not the top priority. It will happen this year, but is taking
34 a little longer than anticipated. Regarding the jail, she was told there is no money
35 for overtime, and it will require overtime to receive domestic violence training.
36 They can do a training session in an hour.

37
38 McShane asked who would do the training. Parrott stated that's negotiable.
39 There are domestic violence service providers that could provide the service, or she
40 could provide the service.

41
42 Crawford asked about money allocated from the federal government for the
43 management information system (MIS). It's been discouraging to have
44 inconsistent responses, reports missing information, technology and resource
45 limitations, and information not being shared across the systems. At some point,
46 he wants to see a result. He wants to see problems with information sharing
47 addressed.

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2 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated the County received a grant for
3 \$1 million. They are in the process of implementing the grant. The result should
4 be that it would take far less staff to handle data. There should be much better
5 data for purposes like this and for all people in the justice system. They are
6 working on a complicated scope of work for a team from Compu-Tech. When the
7 contract is prepared, it will be presented to the Council in about a month.
8

9 They should all be apologetic for the nature of the entire justice information
10 systems. Implementation of information sharing systems is on its way. It's one of
11 the most important things they can do to increase efficiency in the justice system.
12 They hope to see more effective and efficient operations.
13

14 Roy asked if this team would include consumers of the product, such as law
15 enforcement personnel. Desler stated most of the planning involves mid-managers
16 in the justice system.
17

18 Parrott stated this year she's working with the Northwest Regional Council to
19 get an elder abuse council formed to address the issue of elder abuse. That will be
20 a first for the community. It's an exciting piece of collaboration.
21

22 Crawford thanked Ms. Parrott for her hard work and contribution to the
23 issue. This is a valuable program for the community.
24
25

COUNCIL "CONSENT AGENDA" ITEM

26
27
28 **1. RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING CRP NO. 904008 AND AWARDING THE**
29 **BID FOR THE SUBDIVISION OVERLAY, CRYSTAL AND MAPLE**
30 **BEACHES, PT. ROBERTS, TO THE LOW BIDDER, WHATCOM BUILDERS**
31 **INC., IN THE AMOUNT OF \$319,405 (AB2004-190)**
32

33 McShane asked if this is an overlay of an existing road.
34

35 Chris Brueske, Engineer Manager, stated it is only an overlay. There is a
36 limited amount of digging on Marina Drive where there are base failures.
37

38 McShane asked about the issue of buried Native American remains. Brueske
39 stated they have already completed an archeology survey of the area. There is an
40 archeological consultant should anything be found.
41

42 ***McShane moved*** to recommend approval to the full Council.
43

44 ***Motion carried unanimously.***
45

46 **2. RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING CRP NO. 902004 AND AWARDING THE**
47 **BID FOR THE LAKEWAY DRIVE/TERRACE AVENUE OVERLAY FROM**

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1 **BELLINGHAM CITY LIMITS TO LAKEVIEW STREET TO THE LOW**
2 **BIDDER, WHATCOM BUILDERS INC., IN THE AMOUNT OF \$281,413**
3 **(AB2004-191)**

4
5 *Roy moved* to recommend approval to the full Council.

6
7 *Motion carried unanimously.*

8
9 **3. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**
10 **PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY**
11 **AND WHATCOM COUNSELING & PSYCHIATRIC CLINIC FOR MENTAL**
12 **HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$36,068 (AB2004-**
13 **192)**

14
15 Andy Byrne, Human Services Division Manager, stated this contract seems
16 straightforward. There is money from the North Sound Mental Health
17 Administration, resulting from a fee. However, this money from the North Sound
18 Mental Health Administration came specifically for the County to find and develop a
19 consumer-oriented project, which is a project designed and done by workers with
20 mental health issues. This project delivers not only additional mental health
21 services to people on the street, but also through means of peer counseling. The
22 other objective is that it works to train and employ people at the rainbow center in
23 recovery.

24
25 Sharon Matthews, peer support program nurse educator, stated this is the
26 most exciting and rewarding project she's seen in the 35 years she's worked in the
27 mental health field. She's trained 25 consumers to be peer support counselors. Of
28 those, 11 have become employed and others have returned to school for their
29 master's degrees. This is an important program. The latest project is for housing
30 homeless people who are not in mental health services.

31
32 Julian Marsh, peer counselor and mental health consumer, stated the
33 Gladstone House project is a transitional housing for individuals who are interested
34 in getting mental health services, who are not currently enrolled in the services,
35 and who are also homeless. It provides a base for homeless individuals to begin
36 getting the services they need. Those people would likely be eligible for services
37 through the Regional Support Network or other agencies. There will be five beds in
38 the house. The project will be staffed by four Rainbow Center staff such as he.
39 The individuals will receive support before being enrolled in case management.

40
41 McShane stated it's a great program. He's excited about the changes at the
42 center. One federal idea he recently read about is to target the mentally ill through
43 the homeless program because it is more cost effective. More federal dollars would
44 be directed that way.

45
46 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated that article also talked about
47 transition housing and linking services for a specialized population. A regional

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1 representative of the federal government will be in town to meet with the homeless
2 commission this week. The County and City of Bellingham administrations have an
3 opportunity to meet with that representative later this month.
4

5 The County has an opportunity to address similar options around that model
6 with the 20/60 housing program that is being formed. Someone from the Rainbow
7 Center may choose to be a part of that program.
8

9 Roy stated mental health consumers at the regional retreat are very excited
10 about this project. She asked if the peer support is focused on the homeless. They
11 also need a lot of mental health services in the jail. She asked if there would be
12 any peer support in that environment. Marsh stated they already do have a
13 program in place where peer counselors at the Rainbow Center have clearance to
14 do visitations at the jail. They coordinate with other providers. The jail refers
15 inmates with mental health needs to the Rainbow Center staff. Peer counselors go
16 to the jail weekly and meet with inmates at the jail.
17

18 Byrne stated the peer program and the Whatcom Counseling Clinic employee
19 received the statewide Mental Health Advisory Council's Service Excellence Award.
20 It is recognized statewide as a model for other communities to follow.
21

22 ***McShane moved*** to recommend approval to the full Council.
23

24 ***Motion carried unanimously.***
25

26 **4. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO AWARD BID #04-**
27 **30 TO THE LOWEST BIDDER, WILDER CONSTRUCTION, FOR THE**
28 **ASPHALT CONCRETE OVERLAY AND PRELEVEL AT MISCELLANEOUS**
29 **COUNTY LOCATIONS, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$662,620 (AB2004-193)**
30

31 ***Roy moved*** to recommend approval to the full Council.
32

33 ***Motion carried unanimously.***
34

35 **5. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO AWARD BID #04-**
36 **40 TO THE LOWEST BIDDER, PACIFIC CONCRETE INDUSTRIES, INC.,**
37 **FOR THE SUPPLY OF PRECAST CONCRETE GIRDERS, IN THE AMOUNT**
38 **OF \$78,552.35 (AB2004-194)**
39

40 ***McShane moved*** to recommend approval to the full Council.
41

42 ***Motion carried unanimously.***
43

44 **6. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO AWARD BID #04-**
45 **44 TO THE ONLY BIDDER, WASHINGTON CULVERT, FOR THE ANNUAL**
46 **SUPPLY OF ALUMINIZED AND GALVANIZED CULVERT, IN THE**
47 **AMOUNT OF \$51,359.57 (AB2004-195)**

1
2 **Roy moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.
3

4 **Motion carried unanimously.**
5

6 **7. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO APPROVE THE**
7 **PURCHASE OF LIGNOSITE FROM SOLE SOURCE MEENDERINCK LLC**
8 **FOR DUST CONTROL ON COUNTY ROADS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$85,000**
9 **(AB2004-196)**

10
11 **McShane moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.
12

13 **Motion carried unanimously.**
14

15
16 **OTHER BUSINESS**
17

18 Crawford stated a local attorney, Mr. Chmelik, has been playing a role as
19 facilitator to come up with an interlocal agreement between the City of Bellingham
20 and the County for emergency medical services (EMS).
21

22 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated that last December the
23 Executive announced the formation of a group of people that could advise the
24 County and community about EMS funding options.
25

26 *(Clerk's Note: End of tape one, side A.)*
27

28 Desler continued to state that right after that announcement, a delegation
29 of fire commissioners requested to delay the creation of the committee until they
30 put forward their own proposal. There was a desire to use Frank Chmelik, who is
31 an attorney who represents fire districts and other public entities across the state,
32 in a role that would build a new EMS authority for Whatcom County.
33

34 The EMS authority would be created by interlocal agreement. There would
35 be a board similar to the Council of Governments. The duties would be to oversee
36 and operate EMS in the community through a contract. There has been a series of
37 meetings of the affected individuals. The administration has been working with the
38 people from the City of Bellingham and the fire districts to crafting an interlocal
39 agreement for all cities and the county to sign. A draft is being circulated. Portions
40 of it have been discussed in the newspaper. There was mention of a potential tax
41 increase to fund EMS.
42

43 Some of the announcements the mayor is making and attributing to the
44 County are things he is not aware of. For instance, they talked about forming a
45 new tax to go before the public in the next couple of years, but he hasn't been a
46 part of that discussion. It will be up to the EMS authority to work that out.
47

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1 The EMS authority would be a seven-member board that includes two
2 representatives each from the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County. There
3 would be one representative each of the small cities, fire districts, and medical
4 community. The board would hire a staff and executive director to implement
5 emergency medical services in the community, which could involve contracting with
6 the City of Bellingham for this service.
7

8 To begin with, the City of Bellingham has requested a six-year commitment
9 through the year 2010. The County would contribute \$1.35 million to the authority
10 the first year, with a 5.9 percent increase each of the six years. The agreement
11 would run at least through 2010, and potentially beyond that. They would
12 terminate the existing agreements with the City of Bellingham. There are a series
13 of issues they have to work out about the transfer of authority. The current assets
14 would be shifted to the EMS authority.
15

16 The administration has been working with Civil Prosecutor Dan Gibson on the
17 issue. They're continuing to work with others on the team as well. Ultimately, the
18 Council will be presented with a complex interlocal agreement.
19

20 Crawford asked the administration's position if this were to come forward as
21 described, with a financial commitment for six years as described. It might be
22 inevitable that they would go back to the public for another levy proposal. Desler
23 stated there has been discussion that the EMS authority would take that leadership
24 role. It's unusual for the County to be involved with such an extensive amount of
25 money from the general fund to pay for EMS. Also, this is a six-year commitment,
26 which is unusual. He's not aware of any other arrangement. Even union
27 agreements are for only three years.
28

29 Crawford stated the levy was going to be for six years. It sounds like the
30 agreement is being crafted that the authority would take over at the end of the six
31 years, but that the County would be responsible the first six-years. Desler stated
32 the County Council has to approve the EMS levy, which has to be confirmed by the
33 City Council. The EMS authority would have to ask the County Council to do a levy.
34 It would also have to go to the City of Bellingham Council to confirm the County
35 Council action.
36

37 Crawford stated the County is being asked up front to make a six-year
38 commitment. He asked how the County administration would respond to that
39 request. Desler stated he hasn't talked to the Executive extensively about this.
40 The Executive would recommend that it would take a much higher priority, because
41 of the legal obligation the County has. It would become a mandate. It sets in
42 stone a set amount of money. It's something they'd have to start with as a
43 building block for the budget.
44

45 Roy stated they have a board that will look over all the options and
46 possibilities, including financial options. That board wouldn't have the authority to
47 recommend that the City of Bellingham and County contribute certain amounts.

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1 She asked how the board and the separate negotiations meet. Desler stated it's
2 tentative that the City and County would contribute this money. The ability to bill
3 insurance companies for the service would be run through the authority, which
4 would be set up in the next three or four months.
5

6 Roy asked if any levy would supplement or replace what the City and County
7 contribute. Desler stated it could do either. This board does not have a taxing
8 authority. It's a voluntary association of governments.
9

10 McShane stated the County reached a point where it cannot possibly raise
11 the amount of money needed to maintain the level of service. The only way to
12 raise the money was to get a levy, but it was not approved. The City of Bellingham
13 could just say it will take care of its own citizens. The City desires to provide
14 service in the county, but not at the level that it has been. The City will maintain
15 that level of service in the city. They will see a decline in the level of service
16 outside of incorporated Bellingham. That's okay, it makes sense. His concern with
17 the agreement is that the County should be clear about not having a system that
18 crashes in six years. This is a bridge for six years. The term six years was chosen
19 because the City of Bellingham wanted to make commitments to its employees.
20

21 The 5.9 percent increase each year is a lot of money. At the end, the County
22 would contribute about \$2 million per year. The County is being asked to make a
23 commitment that really increases the amount of money. His concern is that
24 doesn't send the message to this new board that the County is not going to keep
25 providing that much money. The board needs to get the message that it has to
26 come up with other funding. There's an equity issue. The residents of the City of
27 Bellingham are paying twice, once for the City general fund and once for the
28 County general fund. There are different ways for services to be created in the
29 county. The board would oversee that process. Desler stated the County had an
30 agreement with the City three years ago for one and a half year termination clause.
31 The City got nervous about that, so it negotiated to a three and a half year
32 termination clause. Now, the City is asking for a six or more year agreement. The
33 language has to be negotiated more. The commitments they make to the
34 professional firefighters is important to the City. The City doesn't want to reduce
35 the level of staff in the organization now.
36

37 Crawford stated previous agreements were regarding service. All the City
38 said about money was that they'd sit down and figure it out every year. The new
39 agreement is about money, and making the commitment to a specific financial
40 amount. It's a different scenario. He understands why the City would want that.
41 Desler agreed. The negotiation process worked to a certain extent. The County
42 was able to ask questions that would constrain the rampant growth.
43

44 McShane stated he is concerned about ramping the money up every year. It
45 will cause the level of service to be maintained. If the level of service starts to
46 decline because the money isn't there, the motivation isn't there. They need the
47 motivation or they will be cursed six years from now. They need to have a healthy

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1 discussion on how that committee will be appointed. Include people on the board
2 who are linked to taxing authority.

3
4 Crawford stated they would have a presentation in two weeks from the
5 Farmer's Market.

6
7 Desler stated there will be a budget retreat on June 8. The materials are
8 being prepared. In addition, the WA-CERT materials will arrive today.

9

10

11 **ADJOURN**

12

13 The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

14

15

16

17 _____
Jill Nixon, Minutes Transcription

18

19

20 ATTEST:

21

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

22

23

24

25

26 _____
Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Sam Crawford, Committee Chair