

DISCLAIMER: This document contains the Whatcom County Council or Committee minutes, as approved. However, unless an attested signature page is attached, they are not the final approved minutes.

1 WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
2 **Finance and Administrative Services Committee**
3

4 September 28, 2004
5

6 Committee Chair Sam Crawford called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. in
7 the Council Chambers, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, Washington.
8

9 Present:

10 Dan McShane

11 Sharon Roy
12

Absent:

None

13 Also Present:

14 Laurie Caskey-Schreiber
15
16

17 **SPECIAL PRESENTATION**
18

19 **1. UPDATE FROM THE BELLINGHAM WHATCOM COUNTY CONVENTION**
20 **AND VISITORS BUREAU (AB2004-327)**
21

22 John Cooper, Bellingham Whatcom County Convention and Visitors Bureau
23 (CVB) President, submitted and presented a Power Point presentation. He read
24 from his presentation (*on file*). The branding program identifies everything the
25 organization does. When developing the brand, they found seven core identities
26 and words that encapsulate those identities. The seven key words encapsulate
27 what makes this area a unique destination and place to live. Since January, they
28 have been outreach to educate agencies and businesses in the community on what
29 branding is about and how those agencies can be involved.
30

31 He continued to read his presentation regarding program areas. He thanked
32 the committee for the opportunity to present this update.
33

34 Roy asked if the number of visitors to the visitor's center is an increase from
35 last year. Cooper stated the number of visitor's is slightly less. This year, a
36 challenge is the construction on Interstate 5. There isn't signage directing people
37 to the downtown area. There is a trend of people who gather information from
38 visitor's centers through ways other than walking in the center, such as on the
39 internet.
40

41 Roy stated the destination product enhancement idea is a very good idea.
42 There are many beautiful areas around the county. Many may need public
43 restrooms or other kinds of facilities to make tourism more user friendly. Cooper
44 stated the CVB wants to move away from political issues and become more
45 objective in evaluating those kinds of needs.
46

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1 McShane stated a recommendation for Chuckanut Drive is to coordinate with
2 Skagit County, which is where the south end of Chuckanut Drive is located. Cooper
3 stated the coordination on Chuckanut Drive has been through the Councils of
4 Government (COG) in both counties. A transportation grant paid for a brochure on
5 Chuckanut Drive. COG received the grant to develop a scenic byway management
6 plan.

7
8 McShane stated that area will become a bigger and bigger draw. Cooper
9 stated he recognizes that visitors don't see county boundaries. The CVB does have
10 to do that kind of coordination.

11
12 McShane stated he encourages the CVB to coordinate and communicate with
13 all the agencies and folks who work in that area.

14
15 Crawford asked what's included in the \$339 million. There is a farmgate
16 value of \$300 million in the community. Cooper stated a State of Washington
17 researcher will look at standard industry codes (SIC's) for each county. The \$339
18 million is the spending within those SIC's, including restaurants, hotels, recreation,
19 attractions, and transportation. The number represents direct visitor spending, not
20 indirect or secondary revenue.

21
22 Crawford stated they should look at the rest areas that will get people to stop
23 in cities in Whatcom County. Cooper stated there used to be a State welcome
24 center at Custer southbound to do just that. The State discontinued funding for
25 those facilities, and now have to rely on static kiosks. Those are key points of
26 intercept.

27
28 Crawford stated there are also a lot of Bellingham brochures on the ferries,
29 as well. Cooper stated that is due to the private sector. For instance, the museum
30 pays to have its brochures on the ferries.

31
32 Crawford stated he brings a first-time visitor to Whatcom County to Whatcom
33 Falls Park. He asked if that is a popular destination for people who stop in at the
34 visitor's center, since it's right down the road. Cooper stated visitor's countywide
35 are interested in trails, outdoor recreation, and sightseeing. Whatcom Falls Park
36 fits in that criteria, and is often recommended, especially if someone has a short
37 amount of time.

38
39 Crawford asked about the criticism from some folks who say the CVB only
40 promotes growth. Cooper stated the CVB is to attract visitors. They don't spend
41 money specifically to advertise for relocation. The visitor's guide does have a
42 relocation panel. Members of the CVB support that guide. No tax dollars go toward
43 that guide. The CVB is in the business of attracting visitors and sustaining the
44 destination as a quality place to visit.

45
46
47 **COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

1
2 **1. ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2004 WHATCOM COUNTY BUDGET, 12TH**
3 **REQUEST (AB2004-325)**

4
5 Crawford asked about the jail allocation request.
6

7 Wendy Jones, Chief of Corrections, stated they have run through all the
8 money allocated for medication at the end of June. At that point, the budget
9 supplemental went through, but it was delayed. There are a lot of sick inmates.
10 There is an increasing cost of medications. They must provide basic medication to
11 the offender population. They have a formulary. The physician and hospital work
12 to stick with that formulary. Unfortunately, there have been a few offenders who
13 have been very ill that require a fair amount of medication. One person in custody
14 was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS). His medication costs about \$2,500 per
15 month. That inmate is not leaving the jail any time soon. Several inmates have
16 come into the jail with HIV. There have been other incidents of drug-resistance
17 staphylococcus. Even though she wishes this was a one-time request, it isn't. For
18 the next two years, she's increased the budget for medication. She's looking for a
19 discount medical plan. Because they need to get medications 24 hours a day and
20 seven days per week, they are limited in who can provide the service.
21

22 Caskey-Schreiber asked if the County's responsibility to provide medication
23 supercedes the use of any private insurance an inmate might have. Jones stated it
24 does.
25

26 Caskey-Schreiber asked what larger jails around the state are doing. Jones
27 stated they are having the same problem. That's one of the reason there is a new
28 program she's looking into. The inmate population in Whatcom County are at-risk
29 because of lifestyle choices in the community. Inmates will come into custody,
30 they are the County's legal responsibility.
31

32 Caskey-Schreiber asked if these people are segregated in the jail population.
33 Jones stated it depends on whether the inmate is directly contagious.
34

35 Caskey-Schreiber asked if the County issues condoms. If someone gets
36 infected with HIV while in jail, the County will be responsible. Jones stated they
37 haven't. Any sexual behavior is explicitly prohibited in the facility. If they find out
38 about it happening, there is disciplinary action. One issue in the jail recently was
39 about a tattoo kit that the inmates had made from Bic pen ink and a paperclip.
40 They found the kit, but before that happen, three inmates tattooed each other.
41 Now, they have to test those inmates for hepatitis. It's something the officers are
42 on watch for.
43

44 Roy asked if the County has the same obligation in alternative sentencing
45 programs. Jones stated it doesn't.
46

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1 Roy asked if larger jails in different counties can buy medications as a group.
2 Jones stated that's what this program is that she's looking into.
3

4 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated this year the health budget for
5 the jail will be over \$1 million for the 6,000 offenders who come through the jail.
6 Medication costs are rising 25 to 30 percent each year. The nurses are assigning
7 medication now, which is an improvement. Unfortunately, the federal government
8 decided that jail inmates are not eligible for Medicaid. That is a flawed policy. It
9 transfers a federal mandate from the federal courts to the local governments. If
10 Medicaid were applied, the state and federal governments would each pay about
11 half the cost. Some private health insurance carriers do continue to pay for
12 inmates.
13

14 Jones stated the County recouped about \$124,000 last year. Extraordinary
15 medical costs of pre-trial inmates are billed to the arresting jurisdiction. However,
16 medication is not considered an extraordinary medical cost.
17

18 Caskey-Schreiber stated she's concerned that jails and prisons are a
19 breeding ground for contagious diseases that are spread into the community when
20 the inmate is let out. She hopes that is different in jails than in prisons. Jones
21 stated the average length of stay for someone in prison is years. In jails, the
22 length of stay averages 24 days. They are very proactive with the health
23 department to catch sexually transmitted diseases and tuberculosis on offenders
24 because they are a high-risk population.
25

26 Crawford asked about the request for the radios and the dog. He asked why
27 they would buy used radios.
28

29 Carey James, Undersheriff, stated he found used radios in good condition.
30 The radios come with a good guarantee and a charger. The radios will be used in
31 the reserve program.
32

33 The dog was injured while taking a suspect into custody. The suspect hit the
34 dog on its back and in the head with a two by four. They have gone through the
35 Prosecutor's Office to get restitution. However, the suspect is not in a position to
36 pay for the dog.
37

38 Crawford asked about the microfilm services.
39

40 Shirley Forslof, County Auditor, stated there is a backlog of documents that
41 need to be microfilmed. They are enhancing the recording system. Because of
42 that, they have the backlog. They need additional money to cover the large
43 number of documents that were left over from 2003, and to continue the rest of
44 2004. The Secretary of State service is invaluable. She sends the disks there,
45 where a microfilm is created and stored. Therefore, there is off-site storage of
46 documents in the case of a disaster.
47

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1 Crawford asked why they are still using microfilm, when everything is digital.
2 Forslof stated it is the only long-term, guaranteed solution. There is a question of
3 whether a CD can be read in ten or 50 years. The State is looking into digital
4 archiving. A microfilm can be read with a magnifying glass.
5

6 Crawford stated there is increased revenue from recording services, which
7 will offset this cost.
8

9 **McShane moved** to recommend approval of the ordinance to the full
10 Council.
11

12 ***Motion carried unanimously.***
13
14

15 **COUNCIL "CONSENT AGENDA" ITEM**

16
17 **1. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**
18 **CONTRACT AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND KERR**
19 **WOOD LEIDAL FOR THE NOOKSACK RIVER SEDIMENT MANAGEMENT**
20 **PLAN, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$39,865 (AB2004-328)**
21

22 Paula Cooper, River and Flood Division Manager, stated this work is one
23 component of the final Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan for the lower
24 Nooksack River. This contract is the first phase of the work. It involves a lot of
25 data collection needed to define the overall management plan.
26

27 Caskey-Schreiber asked if they would look at the feasibility of mining the
28 river. Cooper stated it is one component of the overall management plan. The
29 tribes, State Department of Ecology (DOE), Army Corps of Engineers, and
30 Department of Fisheries will be involved in the first phase. The advisory committee
31 is aware this may not lead to actual extraction. However, some of the initial
32 phases need to be done regardless. This phased approach will provide the science
33 from the beginning. One option would be to design gravel removal to build fish
34 habitat.
35

36 McShane stated phase two will be a bigger cost. He asked if that would be
37 done after meander limits are established. Cooper stated there is a channel
38 migration study. They can let those two processes go along at the same time and
39 feed off each other. They're doing hydraulic analysis and getting into the sediment.
40 In the end, they all have to work together. It's okay to do them concurrently with
41 feedback.
42

43 McShane stated he may support excavations in the river in that context and
44 for the cost benefit.
45

46 **Roy moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.
47

1 *Motion carried unanimously.*

2
3 **2. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**
4 **CONTRACT AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND TOAD**
5 **MOUNTAIN COFFEE COMPANY TO PROVIDE MANAGEMENT AND**
6 **OPERATIONS OF THE RESTAURANT/DELI ON THE 2ND FLOOR OF THE**
7 **COURTHOUSE (AB2004-329)**

8
9 Crawford asked the historical gross revenue.

10
11 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated they don't know that
12 information. They would look at daily receipts to have a record of what's going on
13 and to track the trends. The five percent of the gross revenue will pay for
14 maintenance, equipment, and utility costs. It's a service for the people using the
15 courthouse. The cost structure is designed to also keep the product costs low.

16
17 *McShane moved* to recommend approval to the full Council.

18
19 *(Clerk's Note: End of tape one, side A.)*

20
21 McShane continued to state that one idea is to staff the businesses with
22 developmentally disabled. It's an opportunity to provide employment and
23 interaction with the public. If used, part of the fee to the County could be
24 forgiven.

25
26 Desler said that he would raise the idea with the ownership of Toad
27 Mountain Coffee.

28
29 Roy stated she supports Councilmember McShane's idea. A Whatcom
30 County program is always looking for job sites for the disabled. The
31 Developmental Disabilities Council would be interested in this issue.

32
33 *Motion carried unanimously.*

34
35 **3. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO AN**
36 **ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM**
37 **COUNTY AND EBERLE VIVIAN FOR ADMINISTRATION AND CLAIMS**
38 **PROCESSING FOR THE SELF-INSURED WORKERS' COMPENSATION**
39 **PROGRAM, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$33,480 FOR 2005 AND 2006, AND**
40 **\$35,154 FOR 2007 (AB2004-330)**

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

43
44 *Motion carried unanimously.*

45
46 **4. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO AN**
47 **INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND THE**

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1 **CITY OF BELLINGHAM TO PRODUCE A GROWTH STRATEGY REPORT,**
2 **IN THE AMOUNT OF \$25,000 (AB2004-331)**

3
4 *Roy moved* to recommend approval to the full Council.

5
6 Crawford stated he is opposed to the request. He is not in favor of funding
7 this. The County has more than met its obligation. The County does want to
8 promote a spirit of cooperation with the City, however he can't approve putting
9 money into these forums at this point.

10
11 Roy stated she is in favor of the request. Coordination of these activities is
12 critical. It's critical to have someone with expertise. Councilmember Fleetwood is
13 very supportive of this request.

14
15 *Motion carried 2-1 with Crawford opposed.*

16
17 **5. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO AN**
18 **AMENDMENT TO CONTRACT NO. 200311018 BETWEEN WHATCOM**
19 **COUNTY AND BURLINGTON ENVIRONMENTAL INC. FOR THE**
20 **MODERATE RISK WASTE FACILITY OPERATION, IN THE AMOUNT OF**
21 **\$125,770 FOR A TOTAL AMENDED CONTRACT IN THE AMOUNT OF**
22 **\$989,758 (AB2004-332)**

23
24 Jeff Monsen, Public Works Director, stated the original contract with this
25 company was to replace the service that used to be provided by the City of
26 Bellingham. He did not include those things the County provided directly to that
27 facility. He's found the County is spending time and energy performing services
28 that this company could provide more efficiently under this contract, rather than
29 sharing tasks with the County. The cost proposed is approximately the same cost
30 the County spends on these activities already. They decided not to move ahead
31 with the acquisition of a storage building.

32
33 McShane asked the size of the building.

34
35 Penni Lemperes, Solid Waste Specialist, stated the building currently houses
36 55-gallon drums of hazardous waste that is eventually hauled away. To house
37 those materials, the building has to meet certain specifications.

38
39 Crawford asked the amount of money the County would save. Monsen
40 stated the two costs are about the same. It will reduce the County's time
41 commitment in dealing with it.

42
43 Caskey-Schreiber asked if this is land the County owns on Airport Drive.
44 Monsen stated it is. The site remains a County asset. The company will use the
45 County's property for the service.

46
47 *Roy moved* to recommend approval to the full Council.

1
2 *Motion carried unanimously.*
3

4 **6. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**
5 **RESIDENTIAL LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND**
6 **PHIL O'CONNOR TO LEASE THE HOUSE LOCATED AT 311 E. LAKE**
7 **SAMISH DRIVE, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$795.00 PER MONTH (AB2004-**
8 **333)**
9

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

11
12 *Motion carried unanimously.*
13

14
15 **OTHER BUSINESS**
16

17 Crawford stated he has scheduled the Finance Committee budget hearings.
18

19 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated he wanted to discuss
20 emergency medical services (EMS). He introduced the new Medic One director,
21 Roger Christianson, who replaces Dave Hammers. There is a possibility of
22 changing the fee schedule to be up-to-date with Medicare requirements. The
23 current agreement requires that the City and County agree to a fee schedule. The
24 City Council adopted the fee schedule a couple of weeks ago. It is scheduled
25 before the Council tonight. He asked if the committee had any questions regarding
26 the **ordinance amending ordinance 2000-085, establishing service fees and**
27 **setting a fee schedule related to ambulance service charges (AB2004-**
28 **324)**, which is scheduled for a public hearing at this evening's meeting.
29

30 McShane stated the ordinance is appropriate, given the situation everyone is
31 in. The numbers make sense.
32

33 Crawford asked if there has been a fee for unsuccessful resuscitation before.
34

35 Roger Christianson, Medic One Director, stated that fee was charged as part
36 of an advanced life support (ALS) fee, even though it was a non-transport.
37 Medicare changed the law. Since they don't transport the patient, they can't do
38 that. However, Medicare has included the fee as part of the basic life support
39 (BLS) fee.
40

41 Caskey-Schreiber asked if the County will address the future of EMS during
42 the budget cycle or in the spring. Desler stated he's been working closely with the
43 Mayor and Medic One officials on future issues they face as they conclude the
44 existing agreement. There are some changes the City of Bellingham proposes that
45 would affect some of the fire districts. The fire districts will pick up more of the
46 BLS transport requirements. That will change the revenues for the fire districts.
47 Also, they have set up meetings that include fire chiefs and commissioners

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1 representing all the districts and the cities. That group is making progress on how
2 to deliver EMS in the future. The budget will propose the cost of Medic One for the
3 next year. They're developing staff and consulting assistance to help with the
4 transfer.

5
6 Caskey-Schreiber stated she's met with firefighters, medic one providers,
7 and citizens in the rural areas. She hopes to continue with the medic one service in
8 some fashion. If necessary, have another levy at a significantly reduced rate to
9 subsidize the cost by half. Keep them as the main provider for ALS. She's
10 skeptical about whether the fire district will be able to do that for less money than
11 they are currently spending. She doesn't want to take that risk. Desler stated
12 they're still working this out methodically with a group of representatives from the
13 districts and cities. They have worked all year on this. One direction is that the
14 County would become an EMS district authority, similar to the flood district. The
15 County Council would serve as the Board of Directors. There would be an
16 administrative board to oversee the operations. Contractual arrangements would
17 be with the fire districts and cities. That concept is still being worked out.

18
19 Caskey-Schreiber stated that cost will probably be pretty high.

20
21
22 **ADJOURN**

23
24 The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

25
26
27 _____
28 Jill Nixon, Minutes Transcription

29
30
31 ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

32
33
34
35
36 _____
37 Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Sam Crawford, Committee Chair