

1 WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
2 **Finance and Administrative Services Committee**  
3  
4 PROPOSED 2005 and 2006 WHATCOM COUNTY BUDGET

5  
6 October 19, 2004  
7

8 Committee Chair Sam Crawford called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. in  
9 the Council Chambers, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, Washington.

10  
11 Present:

12 Dan McShane  
13 Sharon Roy

Absent:

None

14  
15 Also Present:

16 Laurie Caskey-Schreiber  
17 Barbara Brenner  
18 Seth Fleetwood  
19  
20

21 **DISCUSSION OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S 2004 RECOMMENDED**  
22 **BUDGET (INTRODUCTION, AUDITOR, ASSESSOR, TREASURER,**  
23 **COOPERATIVE EXTENSION, SUPERIOR COURT, HEALTH DEPARTMENT,**  
24 **SHERIFF AND JAIL, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, PROSECUTING**  
25 **ATTORNEY AND LAW LIBRARY)(AB2004-027A)**  
26  
27

28 Introduction  
29

30 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated he would discuss expenditures  
31 and revenues. There have been a few more revenues than anticipated. Revenue  
32 from property taxes is rising due to new construction at the refineries. There are  
33 no new taxes in this proposed budget. Property tax revenue for 2005 is anticipated  
34 at \$973,000 and for 2006 is \$600,000. Normal new construction generates about  
35 \$400,000. Sales tax is strong, an additional \$300,000 over last year. Interest  
36 income is growing again as interest rates rise. Revenue is stable for 2005 for the  
37 road fund. The grant revenue is more predictive for that year. They did not fully  
38 budget all the road funds for 2006. The administration will do a supplemental for  
39 Public Works Department in 2006. The solid waste fund is stable, as are other  
40 funds.  
41

42 Regarding projected revenue and expenditures for 2006 to 2008, expenses  
43 continue to rise. The administration proposes to spend down the fund balance on  
44 capital related items. The fund balance goes from \$19.4 million to \$17.5 million in  
45 2006, and to \$12.9 million in 2008. Other revenues will come into play that they  
46 haven't identified at this point.  
47

1 Revenues and expenses tend to be close. They anticipate a bit more net  
2 expenses than revenue. The County will invest in buildings, software, and  
3 equipment to make the organization much more effective. Many budget items this  
4 year are related to capital items.  
5

6 Caskey-Schreiber asked if one-time capital expenses includes the minimum  
7 security jail. Desler stated they do not. The administration will submit a  
8 supplemental budget request in January or February once they know whether the  
9 levy will pass. However, the administration knows what the proposal will be and  
10 have informed the public of the proposal.  
11

12 Caskey-Schreiber stated make sure the budget for the minimum security jail  
13 or permanent jail is not factored into this budget. Desler stated that in the general  
14 fund, the revenues remain flat. Expenses exceed revenue by a fair amount.  
15 Adding another \$2.5 million for building and operation of a jail would drive down  
16 the general fund quickly. This budget is status quo, except for a few additional  
17 proposed efforts.  
18

19 Roy stated this is a change from the numbers they got three years ago about  
20 the fund balance. This is a lot healthier. She asked if the projection three years  
21 ago was to spend down the fund balance.  
22

23 Crawford stated that's correct. The administration projected the general  
24 fund reserve amount would drop each year. What makes it climb is that they don't  
25 spend all the money they budget. That amount is the lapse. The County ends up  
26 accumulating more money. This year, for the first time, they are budgeting the  
27 lapse into this figure.  
28

29 Desler stated that's correct. They are going to predict the lapse this year  
30 because they are more experienced at identifying that amount.  
31

32 Crawford stated they have used the lapse as a cushion in the past. If they  
33 remove the lapse amount, the budget would look worse. In this budget, they have  
34 taken out the lapse cushion. In two years if the reserve fund is still growing, they  
35 will be successful.  
36

37 Desler stated the strength of the economy recently resulted in additional  
38 revenues than predicted in 2003 and 2004. Sales tax and additional property tax  
39 drove up this fund. There were additional recording fees. There are more deputies  
40 on the road who are writing more tickets.  
41

42 McShane stated the budget lapse is easy to understand in terms of public  
43 works. He asked if the budget lapse items are more from capital projects. Desler  
44 stated they are not. There is an eight per cent employee turnover in the  
45 organization. Some of the lapse comes from a delay in hiring, hiring at lower levels  
46 on the salary matrix, and also some one-time expenditures in non-departmental  
47 contracts. The law and justice departments spend about 98 or 99 percent of

1 budgeted revenue. Other departments like the Health Department and Planning  
2 Department will have some money left for a number of reasons.

3  
4 Roy stated she would be concerned if there was pressure on departments  
5 and a County policy to have a lapse. Desler stated the departments cut two  
6 percent from their budgets one year and one percent the following year. The  
7 administration asked departments for a hiring freeze in the past, but they're not  
8 doing that now. However, the organization should consider actions that may delay  
9 hiring or not hire at all if revenues don't match expenses.

10  
11 Crawford referenced Planning and Development Services Department  
12 revenue fund 4345 on pages 30 and 60 of Volume 1, which is called Economic  
13 Environment. He asked what that revenue amount is from.

14  
15 Brad Bennett, Finance Manager, stated it's a State budget of County and  
16 recording description. It's set up within the required chart of accounts that the  
17 State mandates.

18  
19 Crawford asked if the County has used that terminology in the past. Bennett  
20 stated it has.

21  
22 Crawford stated a significant portion of the revenue is not generated through  
23 property taxes.

24  
25 Caskey-Schreiber asked if the administration factored in an increase in the  
26 employer contribution for the public employees retirement system (PERS). Desler  
27 stated it is included. It is a big increase. He listed some of the more significant  
28 increases in revenue and expenditures.

29  
30 Auditor

31  
32 Shirley Forslof, Auditor, listed the Auditor Office responsibilities. This year,  
33 she included concrete objectives in her proposal. One objective is to complete the  
34 election management system and have it in the budget this year. She will do a  
35 special presentation when she comes to the Council in 2005. She will select a  
36 vendor by June 2005. She has done presentations to service clubs about a new  
37 election management systems. She scheduled two meetings this month with the  
38 public on this issue. She is forming a citizens election voting task force to review  
39 equipment options.

40  
41 In the Internal Audit Division, they scheduled staff training to become more  
42 familiar with the JD Edwards system to makes sure the County meets State and  
43 federal standards.

44  
45 In the Recording Division, the objective is to record documents presented  
46 within 24 hours of submission, and have them scanned, indexed, done a verification  
47 of documents, and originals returned within seven days. They will develop  
48 standards for indexing.

1  
2 Brenner asked if they know the difference in cost between absentee voting  
3 and voting at polling places. Forslof stated she is preparing a presentation for the  
4 Council in November. She is collecting public input on voting methods.  
5

6 One additional services request (ASR) includes the recording system. They  
7 upgraded the recording system last year. The money she requested is for ongoing  
8 maintenance. She submitted an ASR for the internal auditor to do training on risk  
9 management. The ASR for quality control review in 2006 is to evaluate their  
10 internal audit work program to make sure they are meeting standards. An ASR for  
11 staffing in the Elections Division is to add two full-time equivalent (FTE) employees  
12 to complete daily work in elections to replace the designated temporaries they used  
13 in the past. Years ago, they could get by with four elections employees. Things  
14 have changed in 15 years. The County has grown. The Help America Vote Act  
15 (HAVA) is in place. Other federal laws require more time and effort to comply.  
16 These designated temporary workers are working almost full time. When they are  
17 not working, they draw unemployment. The County pays medical benefits for  
18 them. Turn these part time designated employees into full time employees. As a  
19 result, staff will be available all the time with a level of skills they demand today for  
20 conducting elections and entering data. The federal government is watching closely  
21 that they comply. They will be converting to a new type of voting because they can  
22 no longer use punch cards. They may convert to an optical scan system. The  
23 County must have one direct recording electronic (DRE) in every polling place to  
24 accommodate people with disabilities. If the County has absentee voting only, the  
25 County will have a few DRE's in the County for people with disabilities. They will  
26 still have part time work, kept under 70 hours per month so the County doesn't  
27 have to pay benefits. In 2005, she requests an election work station to reconfigure  
28 the Elections Division staff area. The last item is a scanner for the Auditor's Office,  
29 paid for from the Auditor's operations and maintenance (O&M) fund. Technology  
30 has changed. They need a new duplex scanner to keep up with extra recording  
31 volume.  
32

33 The budget for 2006 is almost the same, except without the scanner. Most  
34 of the other requests are for equipment maintenance. Once they purchase new  
35 equipment, they must maintain and upgrade as State law changes.  
36

### 37 Assessor

38  
39 Keith Willnauer, Assessor, stated the Assessor's Office provides a core group  
40 of fundamental services annually and continuously. He listed the office's services.  
41 They have completed all their tasks for 2004. They are finishing the third year in  
42 the four-year reevaluation cycle. They are picking up new construction. There is a  
43 continually escalating number of new construction. New construction this year  
44 included projects at both refineries, adding \$200 million of new construction to  
45 assessment roles.  
46

47 Caskey-Schreiber asked if that is why the 2005 projected revenue is about  
48 \$200,000 higher than in 2006. Willnauer stated it is. Both refineries upgraded

1 their facilities. The Phillips refinery was endanger of closing not long ago. It was a  
2 very old refinery using old technology. The refinery was passed among many  
3 owners. He knew that Tosco's intention was to run it into the ground and close it.  
4 That would have been a serious loss for the county. For many reasons, the refinery  
5 was essentially completely rebuilt. Now, it is one of the most state-of-the-art  
6 refineries. Now, the refinery intends to stay in the community. The BP site is also  
7 state-of-the-art. It is one of the newer refineries in the country. Two of the  
8 premier refineries on the west coast are in Whatcom County. The tax base reflects  
9 that.

10  
11 Two projects are ongoing in assessor's office. One project is an AS/400 joint  
12 Assessor/Treasurer system upgrade. A goal is to revitalize the program and add  
13 another ten years of operating life to the existing software. Another major project  
14 is the segregation combination cancellation supplemental (SCCS) administrative  
15 automation process. They are nearing completion with phase one, and intend to  
16 continue until the project is complete.

17  
18 *(Clerk's Note: End of tape one, side A.)*

19  
20 Willnauer continued to state that projects are about extending the life of their  
21 software for ten years.

22  
23 The second project is one they've been working on for 15 years, and recently  
24 been in the spotlight, which is the County coordinated geographic information  
25 system (GIS) implementation. They are cooperating with other County  
26 departments to implement this GIS project. Now, two ASR's are the beginning of  
27 the Assessor's Office commitment to that GIS project. They have a new  
28 coordinator for County's project. He's been working closely with this coordinator,  
29 Perry Rice. He is very happy with the progress. Detailed projects are on board.  
30 There has been progress on those projects.

31  
32 His two ASR's are for the GIS expenditures. They were reviewed by the  
33 administration, the GIS coordinator, and the Information Services Division.

34  
35 Crawford asked if parcel maps will look different. Willnauer stated they will.  
36 They are transitioning the Assessor's component of the GIS system. It will become  
37 part of the organization's GIS structure.

38  
39 Crawford asked if it will be a public-friendly system. Willnauer stated the  
40 parcel maps will be public-friendly. They will enhance the format with more  
41 applications without adding complexity.

42  
43 Two additional ASR's are personnel items. The County has seen dramatic  
44 increases in the recording of documents in the Auditor's Office. They also have  
45 seen building and platting activity increase. Both of those activities end up in the  
46 Assessor's Office. He has been struggling with that additional burden. They need  
47 support for ongoing data maintenance. They also need out-of-class pay for some

1 expected movements and retirements of key Assessor's Office staff. He wants to  
2 prepare others for advancement. He has had no money for this item in the past.

3  
4 Brenner asked for clarification on the two GIS ASR's. Willnauer stated the  
5 first item is in the Treasurer's Office budget. That's where the funding and  
6 expenditures for that project is located. It's a coordinated effort with the  
7 administration, the County strategic plan, the Information Systems Division, and  
8 the software provider.

9  
10 Roy asked if the out-of-class pay is to consolidate positions and will result in  
11 staffing changes. Willnauer stated the end result is cross training. He expects  
12 expanded uses of leave in some critical positions. Now, no one else can do those  
13 jobs. He wants to also prepares individuals for career track advancement.

14  
15 McShane stated there are benefits to the County for GIS consolidation. The  
16 Assessor's Office webpage is a very useful tool for citizens. Willnauer stated it's  
17 also very beneficial to the County organization. The intent is to continue to provide  
18 efficient and effective information for the public.

#### 19 20 Treasurer

21  
22 Barbara Cory, Treasurer, stated her office continues to operate efficiently. In  
23 1981, there were over 21 employees in the office. Today, she has only 16  
24 employees. She asked for Council support in the past for a position to audit sales  
25 tax revenues for the County. That position brings in revenue to the County. The  
26 Council approved that position in 1997. Initially, she assigned that position to  
27 review sales tax transactions. She has added other taxes for review by that  
28 position. Since inception, they have recovered over \$500,000 in tax revenues due  
29 the County. In last six months, they recovered \$120,000 in tax revenues. The  
30 benefit continues to accrue when they find needed corrections.

31  
32 With increased construction, they have focused on construction-related  
33 activities, which contributes the greatest portion of County sales tax. It is the  
34 activity that also is most likely to be recorded incorrectly. She appreciates the  
35 Council support of this activity.

36  
37 Another increase in the Treasurer's Office work is related to the real estate  
38 excise tax (REET), a substantial revenue source for County. She submitted  
39 historical information on REET collection (*on file*). REET revenue can possibly  
40 support the proposed jail.

41  
42 She issued a request for proposals (RFP) for a contract to allow credit card  
43 payments of taxes. They have discontinued the Easy-Gov service because it was  
44 too costly given the number of accounts using that service. A recent study on how  
45 people pay their bills showed that only 47 percent of people are now using cash or  
46 check, and the rest are using debit and credit cards. She will review the proposals  
47 in the next couple of weeks. Currently the County has a credit card service for  
48 property tax payers over the phone, which charges two to three percent of taxing

1 amount. More taxpayers will use the service if the County can reduce that cost  
2 substantially.

3  
4 The only ASR the administration denied was for a phone module. For awhile,  
5 she's had problems with the phone system. The Information Services Division staff  
6 began to monitor the phone traffic for 15 weeks. In 74 working days, her office  
7 received over 10,000 phone calls. Based on this sample, she expects to receive  
8 over 30,000 calls per year. Everyone in the office can be on the phone at any one  
9 time, especially during the busy periods. A typical call lasts several minutes and  
10 frequently requires research and review of data while the taxpayer waits on the  
11 line. Sometimes the staff needs to do further research and call the taxpayer back.  
12 The ASR is based on an upgrade to the existing phone system, recommended by  
13 the Information Services Division. This module will provide an option for customers  
14 to wait on hold. Currently, callers are directed to voicemail if the phone is not  
15 answered after four rings, or two rings if there is already a voice mail message.  
16 This upgrade could benefit the entire courthouse. The benefits include the potential  
17 for advanced call handling features, advanced call routing, and customer interaction  
18 while waiting. It's a very important efficiency that her office needs. She submitted  
19 a report showing the phone survey (*on file*).

20  
21 They are continuing on work with Compu-Tech. There is no funding in this  
22 budget because the project is already budgeted.

23  
24 Brenner asked if the phone service would be available for the entire  
25 courthouse. Cory stated it would be available to every department.

26  
27 Desler stated he believes that module is only for the Treasurer's office.  
28 Other modules would have to be added. This phone volume problem is something  
29 the administration wants to solve. The cost to do that for the Treasurer only, in the  
30 amount of \$20,000, is high. The administration decided to start a plan to look at  
31 replacing the phone system with new technology. It is not in the budget yet. The  
32 administration will take a strategic review of entire phone system. There has been  
33 recent training in the Treasurer's Office in how to maximize the use of the current  
34 phone system. Problems are similar in other offices. Solve the problem for  
35 everyone.

36  
37 Brenner stated there is a discrepancy in whether or not this can work in  
38 other departments.

39  
40 Crawford asked for this discrepancy in information to be resolved by next  
41 Tuesday. Desler stated the fix isn't as simple as it seems.

42  
43 Cory stated she would appreciate that this phone problem be cleared up as  
44 soon as possible. It is very frustrating for the citizens.

45  
46 Cooperative Extension

1 Craig MacConnell, Cooperative Extension, submitted information (*on file*).  
2 Now, regarding agriculture, they are looking to transition agriculture from a low  
3 value commodity production to value-added products. Whatcom County has \$270  
4 million in agricultural value. It is an export industry. They have found funding  
5 sources from State and federal government for business incubators for an  
6 agricultural innovation center to provide a suite of services such as market and  
7 product development region-wide. In the long run, it will sustain agriculture.  
8

9 They have one of five digital diagnostic systems in the state to capture exotic  
10 pest samples, and send them to experts around the country. This system is related  
11 to homeland bio-security.  
12

13 They have had money from different sources to look at raspberry fruit worm.  
14 There is a rapid increase in the number of farms and acres that are using the newly  
15 developed integrated pest management (IPM).  
16

17 Crawford stated there is an ASR for \$50,000. MacConnell stated in the past,  
18 he has received \$75,000 from the water resources/flood fund. That has gone  
19 away. They are reducing the cost because they have gotten some outside funds.  
20 They are transitioning the funding to the general fund. He asked for the cost to be  
21 ongoing, but was approved for two years.  
22

23 The digester should operate by end of this month. It is the first commercial  
24 anaerobic digester dairy in the state. To work, they have to find high-value income  
25 streams. They just got another \$684,000 grant from the U.S. Department of  
26 Agriculture (USDA) to extend the work on the research on the value of those  
27 products. The County Council's original funding for nutrient management research  
28 helped get the money from Paul Allen and the USDA. That's good leveraging.  
29

30 In the Paul Allen grant is money to take that technology and move it up  
31 another level to be more efficient. A Washington State University (WSU)  
32 researcher, in collaboration with others, will move new technology to market.  
33

34 The family living topic includes the Strengthening Families project to rebuild  
35 family relationships that have fractured. It is to deal with adolescents with  
36 substance abuse problems.  
37

38 A new project is the Food Sense projects, funded with federal money and  
39 designed to address dietary quality, food security, and food management skills for  
40 people who don't have those skills.  
41

42 They are the lead partner with Windward High School. WSU Extension in  
43 Whatcom County is the lead to connect those children with the community every  
44 day.  
45

46 The 4H challenge has worked well. The Gates grant brings the 4H programs  
47 into schools to address segments of families that typically don't have access to  
48 those kinds of things. It will keep the kids after school for practical education.

1  
2 The University of Washington (UW) contract on a sea grant to co-fund a  
3 faculty position will deal with water resource issues. Some of the major projects  
4 include:

- 5 • Real time telemetry modeling of surface water in the Four Mile Creek for  
6 the landowners,
- 7 • Technical support to Birch Bay and Drayton Harbor citizens to deal with  
8 environmental issues,
- 9 • Partnerships with realtors on regulatory issues they need to know about  
10 in terms of water resources, and
- 11 • The beach watcher program from Island County, that will expand to other  
12 counties, including Whatcom County.

13  
14 The waste management composting operation and education is very cool.

15  
16 One way to deliver information is through the internet. They track pages the  
17 pages viewed. There are up to 70,000 page views per month. They are the most  
18 tracked extension website in the state. Use is driven by good content.

19  
20 Crawford stated the administration denied an ASR. MacConnell stated he's  
21 not worried about that ASR.

22  
23 Caskey-Schreiber congratulated Mr. MacConnell on the anaerobic digester  
24 project.

25  
26 Roy stated Mr. MacConnell has brought a lot of resources to the county. He's  
27 always does a fantastic job.

28  
29 MacConnell stated Cooperative Extension has been a partnership since 1916.  
30 He tracks contributions of each partner. The traditional contribution is one-third  
31 each from the federal government, State government, and County. Since he has  
32 been going for grants, Whatcom County is putting in about 20 percent now. That's  
33 pretty good, and due to the County's foresight to fund work that lets him get  
34 grants.

35  
36 Caskey-Schreiber stated agriculture is successful if the people of the  
37 community are supportive of the industry. Have people take ownership of the  
38 agricultural industry.

#### 39 40 Superior Court

41  
42 N.F. Jackson, Superior Court Clerk, stated that from 2001 and 2006, budget  
43 has increased two percent per year. He is holding the line on services. The  
44 greatest increase is to assigned council. Over 70 percent of his budget is salaries  
45 and benefits. Another increase is for guardians ad litem, which exclusively driven  
46 by statutory requirements. Another largely uncontrollable expenditure is the  
47 conflict contract. Eighteen attorneys are under contract to provide conflict services.  
48 At one point, they talked about creating a second public defender office.

1  
2           *(Clerk's Note: End of tape one, side B.)*  
3

4           Jackson continued to state that the number of commissioners and judges,  
5 based on caseloads and findings, are short one-half of a judicial officer. If the  
6 County added new judges, they still couldn't get the work done. There is an  
7 insufficient number of attorneys to process the cases. In terms of judges, the  
8 County is doing okay.  
9

10           They are having unparalleled success in the drug courts. Whatcom County  
11 has three drug courts. One is a family treatment drug court that acknowledges the  
12 fact that about 85 percent of dependent parents also have mental health issues.  
13 They can't treat chemical dependency without also treating mental health. A new  
14 program will integrate assessment and treatment of both mental health and  
15 chemical dependency issues for the entire family. He is ready to force providers to  
16 provide an integrated treatment modality. Treatment providers want to do  
17 integrated treatment. That will open up a new pot of money from the State  
18 Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), which has a revenue stream  
19 available to the County for integrated treatment.  
20

21           This success bodes well for adult drug court also. The administration  
22 recommends continuing the adult drug court through 2005. They continue to look  
23 for other funding streams and models. For the first time, enrollment is over 60  
24 clients.  
25

26           They are moving to full document imaging on January 1, 2005. They are  
27 taking in seven tons of paper per year. He spends \$6,000 per year alone on file  
28 folders and \$15,000 on photocopying. There is staff time to pull file folders off the  
29 shelf 77,000 times per year. Imaging may cost more in labor in capturing the  
30 image, but will save in file retrieval. He would like to make those files available on  
31 the internet. Because they are a court of record, all hardware for that effort is  
32 totally funded from Auditor's O&M fund. He has been visiting courts to see how  
33 they're being done differently all over the state. King County has imaged 60 million  
34 pages since it started. There will be a reluctance from some, and there will be a  
35 learning curve, but they can weather it.  
36

37           Commercial collections was not as good as hoped. They have done an in-  
38 depth analysis, and plan to begin processing in-house collections in 2005. new  
39 cases, as they are sentenced, with an eye toward improving the track record, will  
40 generate more than enough to cover the cost. As they take cases out of collections  
41 and manage them in-house, they will get greater returns.  
42

43           Through the Clerk's Trust Fund, they are required to give funds to the State  
44 for cases where there has been no action in two years. Money to the State is  
45 forfeiture of eligible bail. They are making an effort to get a check from the State  
46 for \$100,000.  
47

1 Caskey-Schreiber asked if the transition to imaging will lead to better access  
2 to the data and information by Sheriff deputies on the front line. Jackson stated it  
3 will. For cases filed after 2005, they can look at the case file 24 hours per day,  
4 seven days per week. The administration hasn't decided if that information will be  
5 publicly accessible. He hoped it will be. The Supreme Court stated that any open  
6 document available at the counter should be available online. There is a concern  
7 about confidential information. The responsibility is on the party to protect private  
8 information.

9  
10 Caskey-Schreiber asked if there would be coordination of criminal  
11 information across jurisdictions. Jackson stated that coordination already exists.  
12 This will enable other counties to better see what is going on.

13  
14 *(Clerk's Note: The committee took a lunch break from 12:15 p.m. to 1:00*  
15 *p.m.)*

### 16 17 Health Department

18  
19 Regina Delahunt, Health Department Director, stated the most significant  
20 aspect of their budget is their move. They've consolidated services from three  
21 locations into two locations. They gained additional space at State Street office. All  
22 clinical services and community health services are at that location. Human  
23 services is moving from Forest Street to Girard Street, which has additional  
24 capacity available. That move allowed them to reorganize the department and  
25 provided clerical and administrative support efficiencies.

26  
27 Assistant Health Department Director Terry Hinz has taken over the duties of  
28 the Human Services Division. The previous Human Services Division manager  
29 position will oversee disease control and emergency response. Upon her  
30 retirement, Sue Hyndman's position will be restructured to the business services  
31 supervisor, with more clerical supervision and accounting. The reorganization  
32 reduced the amount of FTE's from 79.6 to 79 FTE's. No extra funds were required.

33  
34 In the Facilities Management Division budget, there is a Girard Street  
35 remodel ASR. They need that minimal remodel to make the reorganization  
36 efficient.

37  
38 In the past, they have talked about having an assessment coordinator  
39 position to look at the big picture. That position is now included in the budget.

40  
41 One ASR is for West Nile Virus activity. Seasonal extra help will do  
42 surveillance for mosquitoes and in mammals. She would like to have that service  
43 ongoing instead of one-time. West Nile virus will not go away. Now, the virus is in  
44 every state except Washington.

45  
46 One ASR is for a health promotion coordinator. The position is fully funded  
47 and will work on physical activity and tobacco control.

1 Roy asked if the ASR for the remodel is approved. Delahunt stated it is. The  
2 administration has been very supportive of her remodeling and reorganization  
3 ideas.  
4

5 Fleetwood asked how they determined the level of protection expected for  
6 the public if the ASR for extra help on West Nile virus is approved. Delahunt stated  
7 the public expects the Health Department would do a minimal level of surveillance.  
8 They will know if West Nile Virus is in the community. That's the level of protection  
9 the community expects. The community doesn't expect the County to have a West  
10 Nile Virus unit at the Health Department, but only to be aware of it.  
11

12 Crawford asked about federal funding cuts to mental health. Delahunt stated  
13 the budget does not include cuts in those areas. They have projected stable  
14 funding. At this point, however, she is uncertain about the result. They won't  
15 know until June 2005 whether the State legislature approves funding. She could  
16 come to the Council at some point with any funding cuts.  
17

18 Crawford asked if the I-695 replacement funding is assured. Delahunt stated  
19 it is not assured. The legislature must reauthorize funding this coming session,  
20 which is likely, but not assured.  
21

22 Crawford asked about the cost effectiveness of treatment versus  
23 incarceration for substance abuse clients. There was a letter from the Division of  
24 Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA) requesting funding from the legislature. The  
25 County will be expanding its jail facilities. They need to continue to talk about  
26 treatment issues with the State legislators. There is evidence that investing in  
27 treatment will save money in the long run. Delahunt stated the ASR for the health  
28 promotion staff person also includes statistics on health care prevention versus  
29 incarceration.  
30

31 Crawford asked if the health promotion staff position is State funded.  
32 Delahunt stated it depends. There may be other funding sources for the position.  
33 The tobacco dollars are State dollars. The substance abuse dollars are from  
34 increased fees from the victim impact panel.  
35

36 McShane stated there is concern they aren't doing enough prevention. Keep  
37 that in mind also. When increasing jail capacity, they need an incremental increase  
38 in treatment space as part of the jail expansion. Create more interface between  
39 the Health Department and inmates for treatment. Delahunt stated prevention is  
40 the key to public health in general.  
41

42 Desler stated they expect to see low-income housing developed. He would  
43 like to talk about that.  
44

45 Delahunt stated that the reorganization includes shifting Gary Williams as a  
46 full time employee of the county, and will work on housing.  
47

1 Gary Williams, Behavioral Health Supervisor, stated the County Executive  
2 named an advisory committee this spring. The committee worked to clarify the  
3 County's role in housing. It drafted an RFP for operations of the 2060 dollars,  
4 which are held by the County. They should have successful bidders in November.  
5 They are also drafting RFP's for capital and retention of 2060 dollars. Those RFP's  
6 will be moved forward in January or March. They've agreed to a three-year phasing  
7 of accumulated funds to get to the annual level. The amount accumulated is  
8 around \$800,000 dollars. The operations RFP is for \$211,000.

9  
10 Crawford asked if overhead is included. Desler stated the auditor collects a  
11 small percentage of that money for the general fund for administrative costs.

12  
13 Crawford stated there was a concern that somehow Whatcom County would  
14 make money off the funds designated for homeless people. Other than the  
15 auditor's allowed fee for collecting the money, all the money will go toward  
16 homeless. He asked if Mr. Williams' salary is included. Desler stated the money  
17 collected in the Auditor's Office is applied to a portion of Mr. Williams' salary. The  
18 committee requires some support. There is a lot of work to get contracts off the  
19 ground. In the reorganization, the administrative fee goes in the general fund and  
20 is assigned to Mr. Williams' salary. The County can easily show people that the  
21 money will go toward housing. In addition, there are a lot of general fund money  
22 to support programs through the Health Department. The Council must now review  
23 and approve the contracts.

24  
25 Crawford asked about the lack of Medicare reimbursement for mental health.  
26 Williams stated there is a long-term transition at the State level. It impacts  
27 Whatcom County. The crucial time is the next six months because the lack of State  
28 dollars leaves the County the last safety line for many citizens. The County made  
29 budget adjustments to get through that period. They will know more when the  
30 legislature is adjourned if they will receive more money.

31  
32 Sheriff and Jail

33  
34 Bill Elfo, Sheriff, stated the Council approved a volunteer services coordinator  
35 position for creating a reserve deputy force last year. The goal is to have 40  
36 reservists. Since approved, the department obtained a grant and opened a deputy  
37 reserve academy. Four certified reserve deputy sheriffs, including a medical  
38 detection and a former Secret Service agent, are coming on board. They are  
39 adding another academy in 2005, to be paid for by the community college through  
40 the grant. The goal is to have two deputies per vehicle as often as possible. They  
41 want to get up to about 40 reserves. The reserve coordinator is making progress  
42 on other volunteers and interns, which are providing a variety of services. He  
43 would like to continue the program on a permanent basis. Reserves are all unpaid  
44 volunteers.

45  
46 *(Clerk's Note: End of tape two, side A.)*  
47

1 Elfo continued to state that the County and reservist shares the cost of  
2 uniforms and equipment.

3  
4 He would like a one-time position to continue from last year for the drug task  
5 force secretary. The Council added two uniformed deputies to handle  
6 methamphetamine. The secretary is an important part of this program. She  
7 receives all the information on the tip line, prioritizes and triages the information,  
8 then distributes the information to strike force. Previously, 20 percent of people  
9 calling on the tip line received return calls. Now, all calls are getting a return call.

10  
11 The evidence technician is one part-time employee working between the  
12 evidence room and records. The department is behind on both services. The  
13 records system is archaic. The new data integration project will help in the future.  
14 They are not meeting accreditation standards. He doesn't want to spiral completely  
15 out of control.

16  
17 The laser fiche system to will be a more efficient use of available space and  
18 provide more convenient information.

19  
20 He asked for more money for the reservists' uniforms and costs.

21  
22 He asked for more computer laptops for mobile digital terminals for the cars.  
23 Deputies can get information directly from the station in the car. Laptops will  
24 access the County AS/400 as well as the Prosecutor's and Public Defender's  
25 databases.

26  
27 Roy asked if this will further decentralize deputy activities so more people will  
28 be in the field for longer lengths of time. Elfo stated it would.

29  
30 He submitted an ASR for mobile radios. The current radio system is  
31 overloaded. The City of Bellingham dispatch is understaffed. They need to improve  
32 efficiency. Traffic officers write the bulk of the citations. Providing them with this  
33 equipment will allow the officers to enter data themselves in the field without taking  
34 up airtime on the dispatch channel. This will be a pilot project to see how it works.

35  
36 He submitted an ASR to upgrade three vehicles to Ford Expeditions or other  
37 4x4 vehicles. The 4x4 vehicles are not good patrol vehicles, but are needed for  
38 areas of the county that get more snow and ice. He also plans to replace all  
39 vehicles for the duty staff officers who take after-hours calls and the Emergency  
40 Management Division administration with 4x4 vehicles because they can carry  
41 additional equipment and accommodate a command system. During inclement  
42 weather, the deputies will be able to use those 4x4 vehicles on patrol, but he will  
43 not use 4x4 vehicles for every day patrol. The 4x4 vehicles will all have lights and  
44 sirens.

45  
46 He submitted an ASR to increase motorcycle rental. They need to replace  
47 one motorcycle, and he is requesting one additional motorcycle for the traffic unit.  
48 The BMW motorcycle is the safest for detectives. The biggest complaint to the

1 Sheriff's Office is about traffic. Motorcycles are the best way to address the  
2 complaints because of maneuverability. He has five people trained to drive  
3 motorcycles. Two are assigned, and the other three share a motorcycle.  
4

5 He submitted an ASR to hire a child abuse detective. Now, the department is  
6 not investigating property crimes because of work loads. Reports of child abuse,  
7 child neglect, and sexual abuse of children are skyrocketing because more people  
8 are trained and mandated to report suspicious situations. The department is  
9 mandated to conduct an investigation, which are complex. Staff require specific  
10 training. The cases are backlogged. Some cases are triaged, and are sent to the  
11 patrol deputies. There is a high potential for a mistake. They have to protect the  
12 children and not occur any liability. They are now facing a lawsuit from an incident  
13 in the 1980's when Sheriff's Office investigated a child abuse case. The accusation  
14 is that the investigation was inadequate.  
15

16 He submitted an ASR for overtime. In the 2003 budget, the former sheriff  
17 took a significant cut in overtime. The result is not keeping pace with wages owed.  
18 The new scheduling scheme reduced the need for some overtime. It creates an  
19 overlap during peak work hours during which deputies can get their reports done.  
20 However, they still have workloads they can't always get to. If they don't have the  
21 paperwork in for certain cases, the system stops working. In addition, there have  
22 been several recent incidents where they have had to hold over two shifts due to  
23 armed and barricaded suspects in homes, murder investigation, and a home  
24 invasion and rape of two children.  
25

26 McShane asked the current overtime budget. Elfo stated the current  
27 overtime budget is \$165,000. The Executive recommended an additional \$45,000.  
28 He tries to avoid overtime whenever possible.  
29

30 He submitted an ASR for a new special response team, which is a SWAT  
31 team. In the past, he relied on the City of Bellingham for the service. Recently,  
32 the City of Bellingham decided to charge the County for every minute it used the  
33 service. On a recent case, a three-hour call out was billed for approximately  
34 \$6,000. That has a big impact on his budget, and also on the small cities' budgets.  
35 More important is the decision to be ultimately responsible. He is ultimately  
36 responsible, but when he uses the City of Bellingham SWAT team, he has to  
37 relinquish all decision-making to the City of Bellingham SWAT Team. The County  
38 needs to be able to make those decisions. It would take several years to develop  
39 the team. The initial amount requested is to get equipment and training in place.  
40 They will cross-train existing deputies for this service. The City of Bellingham was  
41 not interested in merging programs.  
42

43 Roy asked if people will be dedicated to this team only or if deputies will have  
44 multiple responsibilities. Elfo stated deputies will have multiple responsibilities.  
45

46 Crawford asked how often the County uses the City of Bellingham SWAT  
47 Team. Elfo stated he uses the team four to five times per year.  
48

1 Desler stated the equipment is available for the department, beyond SWAT  
2 Team callouts.

3  
4 Elfo stated that when additional homeland security monies come down, he  
5 will make a point of getting funds from that.

6  
7 He submitted an ASR for Point Roberts overtime. An assortment of crimes  
8 happen in Point Roberts. It is increasingly difficult to respond to Point Roberts from  
9 the mainland. When deputies aren't available in Point Roberts, he must send  
10 someone up there. He is negotiating now with Customs Canada, which stopped  
11 deputies from using the Nexus lane. The deputy responding has to wait in the  
12 border crossing line with everyone else, secure the firearms in a locked box in the  
13 trunk, and then take it out again when across the border. When British Columbia  
14 made the decisions about border crossings, it was easier. Now the decision is being  
15 made in Ottawa.

16  
17 Crawford asked the problem that caused the change in Customs conditions  
18 for the American deputies. Elfo stated there have been no problems. The only  
19 thing he can think of to cause the change is Canada's dislike of guns. In the past,  
20 he had permits that allowed the deputies to travel through British Columbia. The  
21 problem occurred recently, when the U.S. Government tried to set standards that  
22 would apply from Maine to Blaine.

23  
24 When a deputy is on vacation, no one is working in Point Roberts unless he  
25 pays overtime. Even with overtime, the deputies are putting in more hours than  
26 what they are getting paid for.

27  
28 He submitted an ASR for search and rescue. The Sheriff is responsible for  
29 search and rescue countywide, mostly due to lost hikers, skiers, and climbers in the  
30 Mt. Baker Wilderness. They also search for people wandering away from nursing  
31 homes. Everything is done by volunteers. There are two hundred to four hundred  
32 people in these organizations. He does very little to support them. He would like  
33 to reimburse them somehow as a sign of support.

34  
35 He submitted an ASR for ongoing training programs. Some specialized  
36 training programs are supported by the State or federal government.

37  
38 He submitted an ASR for a live scan fingerprint system to query the national  
39 database instantly. The jail has one now. He needs one in Sheriff's Office.  
40 Pending legislation will require this live scan fingerprinting for people who want gun  
41 licenses. There is an existing backlog right now.

42  
43 He submitted an ASR for a motorcycle trailer. The current trailer is a 25-year  
44 old homemade trailer. He's asking for a covered trailer that would be available to  
45 other County departments when Sheriff's Office is not using it.

46  
47 He submitted an ASR for a portable radio for the arson investigators, who  
48 work for the Planning and Development Services Department. There is now no way

1 for them to call for help at this time. With a radio, an investigator can  
2 communicate with sheriff deputies.

3  
4 Caskey-Schreiber asked if the fire marshal was a Planning Department staff  
5 person. Elfo stated Planning Department supplies a staff person. The Sheriff's  
6 Office supplies vehicle and overtime costs.

7  
8 Caskey-Schreiber stated she might be able to help get funding for overtime  
9 from the Northwest Air Pollution Authority (NWAPA). Elfo stated NWAPA is probably  
10 not available for arson investigation.

11  
12 Wendy Jones, Chief of Corrections, stated most ASR's are for continuation of  
13 current services. There are some increases in medical services or computer  
14 upgrades. One FTE request is for a transportation officer to handle additional  
15 inmates. The other FTE request is for a work group coordinator for the jail  
16 alternatives center. Revenue will contribute to some of the cost, but not all. The  
17 net cost a little over \$11,000.

18  
19 Crawford asked about ASR 2005-1377 for nursing and ASR 2005-2475 for  
20 overtime are comparable to amounts allocated in the past, or if they are additional  
21 amounts. Jones stated they are additional funds. Jail overtime has been  
22 consistently under-funded for years. They spend about \$247,000. Sixty-seven  
23 percent of overtime is for training, sick leave, and vacation relief. The Visiting  
24 Nurse amount is an increase. As the population goes up, there are more and more  
25 offenders and staff can't get everything done it needs with the current staffing  
26 level. This ASR will bring on a new full time nurse. The contractor underestimated  
27 the time needed on the weekends.

28  
29 Crawford asked if ASR 2005-1743, medication, accommodates the increase  
30 the Council talked about recently. Jones stated she is working with a pharmacist  
31 through the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police to reduce  
32 medication costs. The cost will still be about \$200,000.

33  
34 Crawford asked about ASR 2005-550 for ammunition. Jones stated they  
35 increasingly have officers who are qualified for transport. This is a one-time only  
36 ASR each year.

37  
38 Caskey-Schreiber asked if the transport officer position would remain if there  
39 were a minimum-security jail. Jones stated they won't need an additional transport  
40 officer. Instead, they will need other staffing that would be paid for from a sales  
41 tax increase, if approved.

42  
43 Roy stated the Sheriff and County Executive have worked closely together.  
44 She asked if there are any ASR's not approved that they would like to have  
45 approved. Elfo stated he is happy with the budget he and the administration  
46 agreed on.

47  
48 Public Works Department

1  
2 Jeff Monsen, Public Works Director, stated the Council will address the annual  
3 road construction program. He submitted a memo on bridge conditions (*on file*).  
4 Load rating guidelines have changed. The department found some problems.  
5 Fourteen bridges are structurally deficient for heavy loads, including the bridges on  
6 Mosquito Lake Road, Smith Road, Hannegan Road, and West Badger Road. They  
7 can do one of two things. The Council can have a public hearing on a substitute  
8 program that takes an item from the six-year program and moves it onto the  
9 annual program. Another option is to have an additional item with the changes in  
10 the packet for the end of the public hearing.

11  
12 Fleetwood asked who enforces the load rating. Monsen stated the County  
13 enforces the load rating. A bridge isn't considered to be structurally deficient when  
14 the next vehicle crossing it will cause it to collapse. It's a case of repeated loads  
15 that weaken it gradually, so it moves toward catastrophic failure. Being deficient  
16 doesn't mean a bridge will fall down tomorrow. However, they now have a  
17 technical document that says a bridge is deficient, and the County may be required  
18 to post weight restrictions. He is beginning to find out if there is an alternative to  
19 restricting heavy loads, through an aggressive monitoring program and temporary  
20 repair program.

21  
22 Crawford asked if bridges fail. Monsen stated catastrophic failure has  
23 occurred. Locally, the most significant issue is erosion of the foundation. After use  
24 over a certain number of years, a bridge begins to get weaker and fatigued, to the  
25 point of falling below the original rating.

26  
27 Crawford asked the administrative for a recommendation. Desler stated the  
28 administration agrees with moving the project up on the road program. The  
29 administration is very supportive of dealing with any supplemental issue in advance  
30 of the 2005 budget, as necessary. As they make adjustments in 2005 or 2006, the  
31 administration can work with the Public Works Department, based on new revenue  
32 projections, to create a more precise road program for 2006.

33  
34 Monsen stated he is not talking about an increase in expenditures on the six-  
35 year road program. He is looking for a way to accelerate some of the work on the  
36 six-year program. At this point, it's premature to suggest they need a budget  
37 increase for 2005. His challenge is to move the bridge activity forward, without  
38 delaying other projects. He's only asking to insert this project into the annual road  
39 program.

40  
41 Caskey-Schreiber asked how they will not delay any projects and have an  
42 increase while including this project.

43  
44 (*Clerk's Note: End of tape two, side B.*)

45  
46 Monsen continued to state that this bridge situation may be contained  
47 enough that it is primed for consulting support rather than consuming staff time.

1 Brenner asked about posting and enforcing weight restrictions on bridges to  
2 prevent possible damage or failure. She asked how they would enforce weight  
3 restrictions. Monsen stated a deputy is paid for from the Public Works Department  
4 and will allocate his energy from time to time to weight enforcement. He explained  
5 enforcement of weight restrictions. The goal is to not have a weight restriction and  
6 the associated issues.

7  
8 Roy stated the question is whether this is folded into the discussion on  
9 Tuesday, or is a separate item at the end of the public hearing that is related to  
10 this. She prefers to fold it into the presentation on Tuesday, without having a  
11 separate discussion.

12  
13 Monsen submitted a 2005/2006 Budget Preparation Report (*on file*). The  
14 summary on page 16 of 20 discusses a transition period. The budget proposal for  
15 next year doesn't show that transition. The summary highlights where the  
16 department is headed. This budget deals with the issues discussed in the  
17 summary. Most of the changes are not reflected in the ASR's.

18  
19 Referring to page 17 of 20, the federal and State governments are looking at  
20 a longer term view of transportation priorities and funding. He is waiting to see  
21 how the State and federal decisions will play out. He hopes funding will come to  
22 local governments. Integration of natural resource management is happening.  
23 They are redefining how they make decisions on accomplishing tasks. They have to  
24 have clear policy guidance, keeping in mind the differences between public and  
25 private rights and expectations.

26  
27 The one stop shop is a big issue. They must finish physical construction of  
28 the facility. They must also make everything work behind the counter. A lot of  
29 energy has gone into that step.

30  
31 Enhance data management to deal with complex issues and to understand  
32 challenges, alternatives, and cost implications. Create information that can be used  
33 as a tool for making better decisions.

34  
35 Crawford asked if there is going to be more information online. The City of  
36 Bellingham seems to have more data accessible to the public.

37  
38 Joe Rutan, County Road Engineer, stated all forms are available on line.  
39 There is a new frequently asked questions (FAQ) section. Next year, they will put  
40 the road standards on line. Every year, staff makes the website more robust. It is  
41 a goal of the office to be more accessible to the public.

42  
43 Crawford stated more information should be available to the public. Rutan  
44 stated he agreed.

45  
46 Monsen stated a series of ASR's deal with the geographic information system  
47 (GIS). There is a coordinated effort to address some of those accessibility issues.

1 Caskey-Schreiber stated there are no capital expenses listed for 2006 on  
2 page 206, Volume 2. Monsen stated that even though they have moved into a  
3 biennial budget process, they still must adopt an annual construction program. He  
4 is working toward a different method to budget road construction entirely, through  
5 project-based budgeting rather than calendar-based budgeting. They will see a  
6 different procedure to do project-based budgeting, which will be more reliable.  
7

8 Caskey-Schreiber asked about the expenses for 2006. Monsen stated they  
9 will see projects in the 2005 annual construction program. Incomplete programs  
10 will be carried into 2006. Projects on the six-year plan, in their second year, will  
11 also go into the annual road program for 2006. The Council will see that  
12 amendment when it adopts the next six-year road program.  
13

14 McShane asked if State law requires the six-year program. Monsen stated it  
15 does.  
16

17 McShane asked if it is a sustainable road program. Monsen stated it is meant  
18 to coordinate among federal, state, and local financing. It is a long-term vision to  
19 make sure coordination of financing can occur.  
20

21 McShane stated that across the state, work on bridges keeps getting  
22 deferred. He asked how the Council is assured that it is not creating a time bomb.  
23 Monsen stated there will always be small time bombs that will show up, such as  
24 Mosquito Lake Road falling into the river. Rehabilitation of a bridge is a major  
25 project that prevents bridge failure. They can repair and maintain bridges, but if  
26 the bridge is very old, they may be required to replace the bridge.  
27

28 McShane asked if there is a policy assuring that the Council doesn't pass on  
29 the problem to future generations. Monsen stated the State Transportation  
30 Commission is discussing that exact thing. Preservation and maintenance is a  
31 priority. There is a cost difference between maintenance and replacement levels of  
32 service. He will discuss that topic further with the Council.  
33

34 Rutan stated the County has to certify bridges to the State every two years.  
35 The Public Works Engineering Division bridge repair program is very impressive.  
36 Staff is expert and knowledgeable. They are able to put together 100 percent grant  
37 funding. Staff was aware of these changes that came along, and identified these  
38 problems already.  
39

40 Roy asked if anyone in the Public Works Department is dedicated to  
41 developing the website for the department. Monsen stated there isn't one person  
42 specifically assigned to it full time. However, one-third of the people in the  
43 department are working on it in one form or another.  
44

45 Roy asked if they need to dedicate more resources to it.  
46

47 Crawford stated the GIS integration involves every department. Desler  
48 stated GIS and many other areas are trying to involve new technology. In GIS,

1 they are using a consistent set of applications. It is a unified approach for all  
2 departments. Last year, the County made an investment to have a unified GIS  
3 system. There is an interdepartmental agreement to implement the system over  
4 time. Everyone is working together. The County recently reorganized staff to  
5 double staff time devoted to web development activities.

6  
7 Perry Rice, GIS Coordinator, stated the GIS policy committee includes  
8 different staff from the county. At one of their first meetings, they toured public  
9 GIS websites. One should be able to access cross-department information on one  
10 parcel. The GIS technical committee has broken up into small work groups. Now,  
11 they are focusing on framework layers. One layer is the parcels. The Assessor's  
12 Office is updating those parcels to provide more specific information and knowledge  
13 about the parcels.

14  
15 Desler stated the web would be the primary portal for communicating. The  
16 County has updated its web presence and bandwidth.

17  
18 Rice stated the laser fiche project is going on and will plug into the GIS  
19 software package.

20  
21 McShane stated it is a great resource for the community.

22  
23 Caskey-Schreiber referenced Volume 2, page 213. Road engineering costs  
24 and supplies for 2004 increased significantly, and decrease in following years. The  
25 County is one of the biggest users of gravel in the county. She was told recently  
26 that Whatcom County only uses the best gravel. If the County uses less quality in  
27 its backfill, it may save money. Monsen stated the primary change in road  
28 engineering costs is the change in consultant support. Another change for 2005 is  
29 they will not operate out of the Water Resource fund anymore.

30  
31 They are looking at an option to go with a lower grade gravel material. Staff  
32 has determined the specifications of the high quality of gravel because it performs  
33 well in most weather conditions. Therefore, he is not as concerned about  
34 organizing working days around the weather. If they use lower quality gravel, the  
35 gravel will perform just fine, but he has to be more careful about when it is used.  
36 The higher grade gravel makes it easier to finish the road.

37  
38 Caskey-Schreiber stated the County will face choices about how to manage  
39 gravel natural resources. Monsen stated the cost of the gravel is also market  
40 driven. If the highest quality gravel is no more expensive than the lower quality,  
41 they will buy it. Now, the high-grade gravel is not much more expensive than the  
42 lower quality gravel.

#### 43 44 Administrative Services

45  
46 Desler listed the divisions that operate within the Administrative Services  
47 Department. They are working on a series of projects countywide, including  
48 imaging, GIS, the integrated justice management project, maintenance

1 management, and certain software integration. Many of those things are organized  
2 through the Administrative Services Department.

3  
4 They are working on the Girard Street building to move walls and re-carpet.

5  
6 *(Clerk's Note: End of tape three, side A.)*

7  
8 Desler stated there are two different ASR's for that project.

9  
10 Certain heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are very  
11 old and need to be replaced. They are large energy users. The request is for a  
12 one-time expense.

13  
14 Crawford stated the Girard Street remodel is very costly. He asked if this is  
15 a fix until they get the long-term master facilities plan. Desler stated it is. The  
16 Health Department needs an effective location for the next five to six years. By  
17 then, he would like the County to make a decision on where it wants to go for the  
18 long term. He doesn't recommend doing a lot of roofing, siding, and HVAC work.

19  
20 ASR 2005-3528 is for courthouse safety. One approach is screening the  
21 entrance to the elevator for anyone entering the second through sixth floors. The  
22 details are not fully formed. Staff who want to access those floors would go  
23 through the screening or use the proximity locks to access the stairwell. Another  
24 option is a courthouse security officer, which would not be a full deputy sheriff.  
25 That staff could be a retired law enforcement, for example. The administration will  
26 organize a small County staff committee to form this security procedure. The  
27 administration will come back to the Council with an additional budget assignment  
28 when that is decided. They have some money set aside for this.

29  
30 Crawford asked the number of security incidents here. He asked what  
31 prompts this. Desler stated all law and justice departments met to share budgeting  
32 information and program ideas, which hasn't been done in the past. He wants to  
33 rectify that problem. They are all concerned about uniform security. Often, a  
34 prosecutor or public defender is accosted by angry victims or perpetrators. Staff  
35 thought about how to address that issue. Also, youth vandalized the building  
36 during hearings. People also get angry during domestic violence hearings. Judges  
37 are just a step away from leaving the bench to get away from hostile situations.  
38 The concern is for employees in the court systems.

39  
40 He proposed two one-time appropriations, which they will review annually for  
41 two years to see how it works. The Sheriff will go to training on courthouse  
42 security. This building is not designed to handle courthouse security. There are  
43 courtrooms on four different floors and multiple entrances into the building. Two  
44 people would screen people as they enter the elevator area on the main floor. In  
45 State law, the only way allowed to prohibit guns or weapons, which is what they  
46 are trying to screen out, is to have a reasonable way of addressing it for court  
47 entrances only. In consulting with the prosecutor, the County can't do something

1 at both entrances to the courthouse. The County can do something at the entrance  
2 to the elevator, which is effectively the entrance to the courts.

3  
4 Crawford asked if the courthouse has bailiffs. Desler stated it does  
5 occasionally for jury trials. Transportation officers come from the public safety  
6 building for criminal cases.

7  
8 Roy stated Whatcom County is the only courthouse that doesn't have a  
9 security system. Island, Skagit, San Juan, and other small counties have some  
10 kind of security. This is necessary. She asked about security during Council  
11 meetings. Desler stated unarmed hired security is present at Council meetings.  
12 The State law does not allow metal screenings of the chambers. The County is only  
13 able to remove guns and weapons from courtrooms and schools.

14  
15 Crawford asked how much of the \$260,000 is labor, planning, and  
16 equipment. Desler stated \$260,000 might be too much. The Sheriff likes the idea  
17 of hiring someone who is not a full deputy. They have set aside a certain amount  
18 that will probably be more than what they actually need.

19  
20 There is an ASR to integrate the civil service function with the Human  
21 Resources Division.

22  
23 There is an ASR to purchase a new AS/400 mainframe computer. The  
24 existing system is seven years old. They want a new telephone system, and will  
25 start analysis of a new system in-house.

26  
27 Caskey-Schreiber referenced the increase in salaries and wages for  
28 administration in 2004. That item goes up again in 2005, then goes down in 2006.  
29 She also wants to talk about an additional FTE in the Information Services Division.  
30 Desler stated the County received a \$1 million grant for data integration. The grant  
31 for GIS was initially tied to the Administrative Services Department. There are  
32 positions tied to that grant.

33  
34 The ASR for web resources is to convert the way the microfilm staff in the  
35 County are counted. They combined two part time positions into one full time  
36 position. They have been accounting for those one-time expenses each year.  
37 There is no net increase in costs or FTE's. He proposes the addition of a database  
38 administrator. The most significant call from all departments is for help in handling  
39 the large databases being set up. The Information Services Division is  
40 overwhelmed. The administration will install another person to assist with the  
41 management of the information systems.

42  
43 The most significant thing to address the needs of the organization is how to  
44 manage and support information. Mostly, the County collects, processes, and  
45 distributes information. They are converting systems to paperless digital systems  
46 for the future. This will prevent the County from having to add manual labor clerks  
47 to handle this collection and distribution process. Instead, they are extending the  
48 capabilities of existing staff with better tools.

1  
2 Caskey-Schreiber asked if that is why they will continue to be under the  
3 category of salaries and wages for administration. Desler stated the GIS work  
4 continues. Continuing the data integration program hinges on efforts to reel in the  
5 next million-dollar grant they are working on from the federal government. In the  
6 Senate budget, there is money for Whatcom County to handle law and justice  
7 issues, data integration issues, and border issues.

8  
9 Caskey-Schreiber stated money is budgeted regarding the real estate excise  
10 tax (REET) and REET two. Desler stated those funds will be used to replace the  
11 roof at the Silver Lake facility.

12  
13 Council Office

14  
15 Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council, submitted information (*on file*). The  
16 budget increase is due to administrative cost allocation for information microfilmed  
17 in 2003. They must reimburse the Information Services Division for microfilming  
18 work that has been done.

19  
20 Charter Review Commission review will occur in 2005. The cost estimate to  
21 staff 20 meetings is \$16,000. The administration approved \$6,000. She prefers to  
22 have the \$16,000.

23  
24 Councilmembers may want to increase their travel budget.

25  
26 Caskey-Schreiber stated she preferred to budget the \$16,000 for the Charter  
27 Review Commission. Hopefully they won't have to use it all. She also wants to  
28 increase the Council's travel budget. Traveling requires a lot of mileage expenses.  
29 All councilmembers go to many different events. She's always paid her own way.  
30 Knowing that someone else doesn't do that is irksome. The travel budget is grossly  
31 inappropriate. It's expended on one trip to Washington D.C. The current level  
32 creates a financial burden of doing this job well. Approve at least another \$1,000.  
33 Allow reimbursement of mileage for long distance meetings.

34  
35 McShane stated the Council should have a policy discussion on what  
36 expenses are and are not okay. Discuss the kinds of meetings they should and  
37 should not pay for, including travel time. Create guidelines. He supports an  
38 increase to create equity between councilmembers who live in the area and those  
39 who live in farther out. Have that discussion soon.

40  
41 Crawford stated he doesn't go to many of those functions because his budget  
42 doesn't allow it.

43  
44 McShane stated they have to draw the line between what is really part of  
45 their jobs and what is just making a presence in the community.

46  
47 Desler stated there was a Council policy about reimbursing mileage for  
48 councilmembers.

1  
2 Brown-Davis stated there might be a County policy, not a Council policy.

3  
4 Desler stated the County policy is to not reimburse for meals paid for inside  
5 the county, unless the staff is a speaker at an event. The County doesn't normally  
6 pay for non-profit events that are partial fundraisers.

7  
8 Caskey-Schreiber stated they need a policy discussion and decisions on  
9 reimbursement that any Council Chair would follow.

10  
11 McShane stated that once they have the policy discussion, they can decide  
12 an appropriate travel amount.

13  
14 Desler stated that if the Council feels the need to travel to places where they  
15 can bring back knowledge for the good of the organization, there should be budget  
16 authority. If the Council doesn't think the current amount is enough, the Council  
17 can adjust it.

18  
19 McShane stated he would like to schedule a discussion at the upcoming  
20 Committee of the Whole meeting. Some councilmembers face more travel  
21 expenses than others because they live farther out. He would be interested in  
22 discussing this aspect of it.

23  
24 *(Clerk's Note: End of tape three, side B.)*

25  
26 Crawford stated a per-councilmember budget of \$2,500 is more appropriate  
27 than \$1,000. One councilmember should be actively involved in the Washington  
28 State Association of Counties (WSAC) and the County Road Administration Board  
29 (CRAB). He asked if the councilmembers want to make the change on the Charter  
30 Review Commission funding.

31  
32 Desler stated he was very concerned about where the County was at with the  
33 budget when he initially met with Ms. Brown-Davis. The idea was to give the  
34 commission the ability to assess what they needed, and build a supplemental  
35 budget request later. He believed the Council should deliberate on what it needs  
36 after hearing from the commission.

37  
38 Crawford stated he doesn't see the Charter Review Commission being  
39 involved in a budget issue. The Council is going to assist the commission get  
40 together in January. When the commissioners walk into that meeting, they will find  
41 someone who has been hired to facilitate discussion and propose an operating  
42 procedure. The commission will decide if it wants to continue with that facilitator.  
43 He doesn't want the Charter Review Commission to focus on how much it can  
44 spend.

45  
46 Desler stated this is not a big deal for the administration. The Commission  
47 may make some of these decisions on its own.

1 Caskey-Schreiber stated fund the full \$16,000 for the Charter Review  
2 Commission. Don't give them the budget, just the staff and facilities with which to  
3 work. They will need direction from staff on how to meet and run the meetings.  
4

5 Crawford asked if this could go out for a request for proposals (RFP). Brown-  
6 Davis stated it does not. The Charter Review Commission can pick its own  
7 facilitator. She planned to have a facilitator for the first meeting, and then allow  
8 the commission to choose its own facilitator.  
9

10 Desler stated the County normally has a \$10,000 contract limit before it  
11 must go out for an RFP.  
12

13 Crawford stated the Council can issue an RFP, and the commission can  
14 choose its own facilitators from the proposals received during its first meeting.  
15

#### 16 Executive

17  
18 Desler stated Executive's budget increased \$12,000 from 2004 to 2005.  
19

20 Caskey-Schreiber asked the amount of the Executive's travel budget.  
21

22 McShane stated he knows from firsthand experience that Mr. Kremen is very  
23 frugal with his travel funds.  
24

#### 25 Non-Departmental

26  
27 Desler stated the committee will address non-departmental items at the  
28 meeting on Thursday, October 21, but he can answer some questions now.  
29

30 Caskey-Schreiber asked if there was any conflict with funding the  
31 Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce's request. It is becoming a political  
32 action group. She thought the Chamber said it would no longer ask for funding,  
33 including for the Ski to Sea Festival. There is no accountability for how the funds  
34 are spent if it is spent on the festival. Desler stated the Chamber said it was not  
35 going to ask the City and County for additional resources. However, the Chamber  
36 asked for money for promotional efforts on the festival. The Chamber submitted a  
37 request for convention center funds in the amount of \$29,000.  
38

39 Caskey-Schreiber stated the letter from the Chamber doesn't explain much.  
40 She doesn't hate the Chamber. It does an excellent job with the festival. However,  
41 citizens have questioned the councilmembers on why the Council gave the Chamber  
42 funding when it transitioned into a political action group. That is going to be an  
43 issue with the citizens. Desler stated the Chamber plans to devote the money  
44 strictly to the marketing and promotion of the Ski to Sea event.  
45

46 Caskey-Schreiber stated she would like to see an itemization of how that  
47 money will be spent.  
48

1 Roy asked if there is a way to fund this expense through another entity. This  
2 item will upset a lot of people in the community.

3  
4 Crawford stated no other entity will take on the Ski to Sea Festival.  
5 However, the County could fund the event upon presentation of receipts from the  
6 Chamber. Desler stated that's possible.

7  
8 Crawford stated he agreed that the County only reimburse the Chamber for  
9 expenses already paid. Mr. Oplinger wants to disconnect from government funding.  
10 That's what this Finance Committee would like to see happen.

11  
12 Caskey-Schreiber stated she agreed with Councilmember Crawford.

13  
14 Prosecuting Attorney and Law Library

15  
16 This presentation was rescheduled to Thursday, October 21, 2004 between  
17 noon and 1:00 p.m.

18  
19  
20 **ADJOURN**

21  
22 The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

23  
24  
25 \_\_\_\_\_  
26 Jill Nixon, Minutes Transcription

27  
28  
29 ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

30  
31  
32  
33  
34 \_\_\_\_\_  
35 Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_

Sam Crawford, Committee Chair