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WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
**Special County Council Work Session**

PROPOSED 2007 and 2008 WHATCOM COUNTY BUDGET

October 31, 2006

Council Chair Laurie Caskey-Schreiber called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. in the Council Chambers, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, Washington.

Present:

Barbara Brenner  
Sam Crawford  
Seth Fleetwood  
L. Ward Nelson

Absent:

Carl Weimer  
Dan McShane

**DISCUSSION OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S 2007/2008 RECOMMENDED BUDGET (AB2006-263B)**

Caskey-Schreiber stated ASR 2007-0480 is a request for five additional positions.

Bill Elfo, Sheriff, stated his original request was for six additional deputies in 2007 and six additional deputies in 2008. They are broken into two different ASR's because seven were planned directly for patrol, and the other five were to go to traffic, neighborhood deputies, and an investigator. The Executive's recommendation is for two neighborhood deputies and one patrol deputy in 2007, and three patrol deputies in 2008.

Caskey-Schreiber asked if the two traffic deputies for 2007 are for a different task performed than the six requested. Elfo stated they are.

***Brenner moved*** to approve four deputies in 2007 and four deputies in 2008.

Crawford asked what the extra deputy each year would be for. Elfo stated they would be used to beef up 24/7 coverage, and move to expand the number of patrol areas. They would be additional patrol deputies.

Caskey-Schreiber asked if they could add five deputies in 2007, would that help the coverage issues. Elfo stated that is the Executive's current proposal, which is the two neighborhood deputies in 2007, one patrol deputy in 2007, and three patrol deputies in 2008. The neighborhood deputies aren't residential deputies who live in the area. The Kendall resident deputy will remain.

Brenner stated her motion is for one neighborhood deputy for Sudden Valley and one neighborhood deputy for Birch Bay, and one patrol deputy. The fourth position can go to whatever Sheriff Elfo needs.

Crawford stated he's torn on this issue. Sheriff Elfo said that it would help to phase in those three approved deputies throughout the year. Allow Sheriff Elfo to move forward on all three positions at the beginning of the year. That would enable them to put these people on line as quickly as possible. It's more cost effective than going with four deputies, but not as cost effective as phasing the new position.

1 Caskey-Schreiber stated the deputies that the Council added last went to courthouse  
2 security and one patrol deputy. It's important for the Council to be part of the plan to get  
3 to the biggest concern, which is the population ratio to staffing of commissioned officers.  
4 Elfo stated the detectives are commissioned officers. They were to address the upswing in  
5 child abuse cases. The goal is to put them in uniform and on the street, whether they are  
6 neighborhood or patrol deputies.  
7

8 Caskey-Schreiber asked about a ratio, and how it was done. Elfo stated it was used  
9 to compare counties to counties. The formula was tailored to look at Whatcom County's law  
10 and justice system. It was done before 9/11, the booking restrictions, and the  
11 methamphetamine epidemic.  
12

13 Caskey-Schreiber asked how many deputies are in the department. Elfo stated there  
14 are 80 authorized commissioned personnel. For firearms training, they also train the  
15 corrections deputies and reserve deputies.  
16

17 Caskey-Schreiber asked what the four deputies would be used for in 2008 if they add  
18 the four positions for 2007. Elfo stated don't fund the traffic deputy in 2008. Make it a  
19 patrol position. By 2008, they would have about enough to staff an additional patrol area.  
20

21 Fleetwood asked if they monitor statistics that indicate a correlation between staffing  
22 level of deputies and filings of the Prosecutor. Elfo stated filings go up as law enforcement  
23 are added. Not just the Sheriff deputy law enforcement. The Prosecutor is also influenced  
24 by additional municipal police, such as the State Patrol and City of Bellingham police. Many  
25 factors other than the Sheriff's Office influence the Prosecutor's Office workload. He wants  
26 to be more proactive and prevent crime in communities. Putting law enforcement on the  
27 street is where they can make the biggest impact. They are always behind, and what  
28 they've asked for won't solve the problem, but they are going to start to see a dent in the  
29 problem.  
30

31 Fleetwood asked if there are any other jurisdictions where additional law  
32 enforcement resulted in a decrease. Elfo stated New York City had a dramatic decrease in  
33 crime when it added thousands of police officers and starting holding people accountable for  
34 minor crimes. That result has been seen elsewhere. When they control the little things, the  
35 big crimes don't happen. A Harvard professor and criminologist says that when they ignore  
36 the minor things because they don't have staff and facilities, the crimes get worse. When  
37 they deal with the minor crimes, the environment is not conducive to crime.  
38

39 Brenner stated she would like information about Whatcom County's odd shape and  
40 large unpopulated areas. Consider the extra deputies instead of juggling deputies around.  
41 The deputy in Kendall caused the crime rate to drop. Elfo stated he is not just concerned  
42 about the crime rate. It should be about the Sheriff's response. The only solution to that is  
43 to put more people on the street.  
44

45 Caskey-Schreiber asked about ratio of deputies per 1,000 population. She asked if  
46 that ratio includes the incorporated areas. Sheriff stated there are two comparisons. When  
47 compared with the cities, they removed some of the city duties that the County doesn't do,  
48 and came up with .88 deputies per 1,000 people. When he looked at the counties, he used  
49 the actual number, which is between .96 and .97 deputies per 1,000 people. Compared  
50 with other counties, they are fourth of the five comparable counties.  
51

52 Caskey-Schreiber asked if the four additional deputies each year would bring up the  
53 comparable equal to Benton County. Elfo stated he'd have to do the math.

1  
2 Nelson asked how many of the 80 commissioned officers are administrative and how  
3 many are traffic. Elfo stated there are four administrative positions and five traffic  
4 positions.

5  
6 Nelson stated they are functionally down to about 71 deputies 24/7. Elfo stated that  
7 there is a civil deputy, three drug task force staff, and a chief civil deputy.

8  
9 Nelson asked how many deputies are available for patrol.

10  
11 Jeff Parks, Sheriff's Office, stated they have about 50 deputies available for patrol.

12  
13 Nelson asked if 12 deputies are for 24/7 coverage of each area. Elfo stated they  
14 need 5.2 deputies for each area for 24/7 coverage.

15  
16 Crawford stated that in Skagit County, the 1.13 is dividing the total number of  
17 deputies by the unincorporated population. The total number of deputies used did not  
18 discount the five assigned to the City of LaConner and the four assigned to the City of  
19 Concrete. Elfo stated that in LaConner, there are four or five deputies assigned, but they  
20 also patrol a ten mile radius around the city. In Concrete, they contract for 80 hours of  
21 coverage per week. The other time is covered by the area car.

22  
23 Crawford stated there is revenue for those contracts. The Skagit County number is  
24 high. Other revenue sources support the service.

25  
26 Brenner stated the statistics should include all counties, not counties of a particular  
27 size. It is a per capita figure. Elfo stated other counties don't deal with international  
28 borders, pipeline security issues, refineries, or an international airport. They don't have 400  
29 border patrol agents and 400 other agencies that make arrests and turn them over to the  
30 Sheriff's Office.

31  
32 Caskey-Schreiber asked the administration's opinion of the motion.

33  
34 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated this is an arrangement between the  
35 Sheriff and Executive in a way to save some money to phase in deputies for 2007 and 2008.  
36 The full impact of a fulltime deputy will be felt in the years 2009 and 2010. All elements of  
37 the justice system, including all judges and department heads, say that additional deputies  
38 increase workload and demands throughout the justice system. The goal is a wonderful  
39 thing. They need adequate responses. There are other objectives for the Sheriff's Office in  
40 mind, including acquiring systems to make the operation fully effective and efficient. Some  
41 of the systems will be expensive. The new departmental headquarters will be expensive.  
42 The County will have to borrow money to do that. They can put the money into staff or  
43 buildings.

44  
45 Cliff Langley, Sheriff's Office, stated the Council is elected to be visionaries for the  
46 safety of the community. The 2000 Cohen report says they are grossly understaffed. Now,  
47 there are 15,000 more people in the community. They still haven't reached the staffing  
48 level recommended for 2000. The request is reasonable. By the year 2020, the population  
49 is expected to be 226,220. Approve more deputies than just three per year.

50  
51 Steve Cooley, Deputy Sheriff's Guild President, stated consider the Guild as citizens  
52 as well as law enforcement officers. The Sheriff's Office now can only be reactive. Some  
53 positions are proactive, but they're not able to deter crime in Whatcom County. On a

1 normal shift, calls are always holding and waiting for deputies to respond. One of the best  
2 ways to deter crime is to get at the little things. He is in the position of having to let the  
3 little things fall away. The burglaries and vandalisms are cases that get dealt with many  
4 hours after the event or not at all. The Sheriff is in the best position to say how many  
5 deputies they need. In the Guild's position, they need an increase in deputies to be  
6 proactive.

7  
8 Nelson stated burglaries is an area that gets ignored in terms of response time. He  
9 asked if there is a significant rise in burglaries because of the population increase in the  
10 counties. Cooley stated there are a lot of burglaries. They take a lot of his time, but a cold  
11 burglary is a low priority. The deputy takes the initial report and files the report. In bigger  
12 agencies, the deputy would take further action, such as following up investigations.  
13 Whatcom County doesn't have the detectives to do that follow up.

14  
15 Nelson stated that to help the deputies, they need a system of reporting. Sheriff Elfo  
16 has talked about the ability to make reports via the internet, for insurance purposes.  
17 Cooley stated people can do that now, with the station deputy. Having a self-reporting  
18 system would take some of the load off. Don't overlook the things the deputies can do by  
19 going to the location and looking at the physical evidence.

20  
21 Caskey-Schreiber restated the motion.

22  
23 **Motion to amend failed 2-3 with Caskey-Schreiber and Brenner in favor.**

24  
25 **Brenner moved** to approve four deputies in 2007 and three patrol deputies in 2008.

26  
27 **Motion failed 2-3 with Brenner and Caskey-Schreiber in favor.**

28  
29 Caskey-Schreiber stated that at the very least, in the unincorporated areas, they  
30 have around 80,000 to 90,000 people.

31  
32 *(Clerk's Note: End of tape one, side A.)*

33  
34 Caskey-Schreiber continued to state that if they want to get to a ratio of one deputy  
35 per 1,000 people, they need to add deputies to get to that number. That would meet  
36 minimum staffing levels recommended by all safety guidelines.

37  
38 Nelson stated that if they added that many deputies, they only increase the ratio by  
39 .01 deputy per 1,000 people. The smaller counties still have to have a minimum number of  
40 deputies to do basic functions. That's why they have larger ratios. All the small counties  
41 are over one deputy per 1,000 people. Few larger counties with this kind of population are  
42 over one deputy per 1,000 people. They are not going to increase the ratio much without a  
43 huge investment. They won't get that much of a return on the investment.

44  
45 **Crawford moved** to amend the budget to allocate all three additional positions at  
46 the first of the year in 2007 and the first of the year in 2008, as opposed to a phased  
47 approach. Desler stated it costs about \$8,400 per month per deputy in ongoing cost. If  
48 they add a certain number of months, they have to calculate that cost.

49  
50 Brenner stated she would support the motion. Whatcom County has the best  
51 Sheriff's Office anywhere. The staff are incredibly dedicated. The Sheriff's Office doesn't  
52 ask a lot of the Council. She's disappointed that the Council can't give more.

1 Nelson asked if the Sheriff is able to get three deputies right away. Elfo stated  
2 experienced deputies are already waiting to be hired. There are three they can hire  
3 tomorrow. He can hire a fourth tomorrow if allowed.  
4

5 Nelson asked if the crisis is immediate. Sheriff stated it is immediate and  
6 continuous. One concern is that when the Council approves growth in outlying areas, they  
7 need to consider the law enforcement needs at the same time. Don't approve that growth  
8 unless they are able to provide the law enforcement resources also.  
9

10 Parks stated the phased in approach came up when they proposed eight positions.  
11 They have a cadre of 8 to 10 training officers who are ready to go. They are ready to have  
12 new deputies with them immediately. A lateral deputy only takes two months of training.  
13 They can get people on the road and trained now.  
14

15 **Nelson** stated the additional numbers will only change the population ratio by .01.  
16 They may need to look at the policy of growth impacts on law enforcement. He asked if  
17 they can approve four deputies this year and two next year for Birch Bay and other rapidly  
18 growing areas. He **proposed a friendly amendment** to approve four deputies who would  
19 be hired in January 2007 and two in 2008.  
20

21 Desler stated the cost of four and two, starting January 1, would cost \$142,000. To  
22 move a deputy from the 2008 budget to the 2007 budget would be another \$102,000.  
23 Moving the capital costs from 2008 to 2007 would be another \$44,000. The total is about  
24 \$288,000, of which \$146,000 is being moved from 2008 to 2007. There is an impact on the  
25 bottom line.  
26

27 Fleetwood asked if that additional cost is better than just spending the additional  
28 money and going with more deputies over two years. Desler stated it is better if the  
29 Council and administration want to go forward with hiring more positions. Realize that it's a  
30 matter of setting priorities. Of the more than 100 positions that County departments asked  
31 for, the administration approved 32. Eighty-one percent of all the new funding from the  
32 general fund is going to the new jail and Sheriff.  
33

34 Crawford asked about either spending resources today on deputies or depleting  
35 future resources for a new criminal justice facility. He asked for more details. Desler stated  
36 they are spending down the budget fund balance by \$9 million for many good things. The  
37 additional cost for this motion is about \$150,000.  
38

39 Nelson stated the basic difference is benefits and wages. They have to make an  
40 evaluation. If they can hire qualified, good people, it's more effective than phasing  
41 someone in, sending someone to school, and then find out that the person doesn't want the  
42 job. They can waste more money. It's more cost-effective to hire someone who is qualified  
43 and ready to go than someone who is unschooled.  
44

45 **Crawford accepted the friendly amendment.** He is reluctant. Be aware of the  
46 cost. His motion is to hire four deputies in 2007, allocated at the first of the year, and two  
47 deputies in 2008, at the first of the year.  
48

49 **Motion carried unanimously.**  
50

51 **Nelson moved** to approve ASR 2007-584 to increase from \$55,000 to up to  
52 \$200,000. All the other consultant proposals are over \$150,000 for just Lake Whatcom.  
53 This is for a countywide mechanism to get implementation.

1  
2 Caskey-Schreiber stated they can hire a staff for \$55,000.

3  
4 Nelson stated one person wouldn't be capable of doing what an entire team, with  
5 expertise, can do.

6  
7 Fleetwood asked if this \$200,000 would present funding options.

8  
9 Nelson stated funding options would come in phase two. The administration  
10 indicated that \$100,000 unallocated is available.

11  
12 Desler stated they've determined, but must confirm, that about \$106,000 remains  
13 unspent in the current water resources fund. That could be used to support this  
14 appropriation. Now, they have to find about \$40,000 if they use that balance.

15  
16 Crawford asked what the \$55,000 was to be used for. Desler stated it is an estimate  
17 and balancing figure. They want to install \$500,000 for water projects in 2007 and another  
18 \$500,000 in 2008. The \$55,000 is a placeholder. The Council wanted to spend more time  
19 deciding what work would be done by Council and what work would be done by consultants.

20  
21 Crawford asked how they know the \$55,000 will later be supplemented by the  
22 \$106,000. Desler stated upon new information, only \$26,000 is available from the water  
23 resources fund.

24  
25 Nelson stated this is more important than other issues for which consultant money is  
26 allocated. The public has demanded projects in the range of \$1 million. There is no process  
27 in place to go through what they want to do to protect water quality and manage fish  
28 habitat and make land use decisions. They have to get ahead of the process. There must  
29 be a mechanism that includes implementation.

30  
31 Caskey-Schreiber stated she wants to ask questions about budget and money before  
32 voting on this. She referenced page 66 of volume II and asked where they factored in the  
33 traffic impact fees they are hoping to accrue from the proposed concurrency ordinance. She  
34 asked for an estimate. Desler stated traffic impact fees (TIF's) for capital items aren't  
35 included in the estimates. None of the capital costs are included, either.

36  
37 Caskey-Schreiber asked about the indirect costs from federal grants. She asked if  
38 the number is likely to change. Desler stated the County is moving into a project-based  
39 budget. Budgets, revenues, and expenditures will have a two- or three-year life. It affects  
40 general County buildings and other capital projects in the road department.

41  
42 Brad Bennett, Administrative Services Department, stated the project budgets that  
43 come forward from the road fund will use more road fund balance than normal. There are  
44 many projects that have a significant amount of local money assigned to them. When  
45 project budgets come forward, they will likely have more fund balance.

46  
47 Caskey-Schreiber referenced page 38 of volume I. There is \$3.5 million for the Law  
48 Enforcement Officer and Firefighter (LEOFF) retirement system. She asked why they must  
49 pay that now, and why amounts are drawn out for 2008. Desler stated he would submit  
50 more information on that question. The County must cover health and long-term care costs  
51 for about 28 or 29 retired LEOFF employees. The administration proposes setting aside  
52 \$3.5 million in a fund, and supplement it with \$223,000 per year for the next 30 years. If  
53 the amount of money they have to spend in any year is more than \$223,000, they will draw

1 from the \$3.5 million. The County is required to start to account for the liabilities it faces  
2 with these measures. All government financial reports have to document this liability. The  
3 fund balance levels that exist and are reported will show deficits. They will borrow money  
4 to take on major projects in the next few years. When the County borrows money, it must  
5 show bond holders that its responsibly addressed this major liability. The County will  
6 qualify for better bond ratings and lower borrowing cost.

7  
8 Caskey-Schreiber stated it also puts them negative in spending. Desler stated the  
9 \$3.5 million is a transfer from the general fund to a retiree health fund. That is a one-time  
10 expense. Over the next 20 to 25 years, it will resolve the County's liability.

11  
12 Nelson stated that any money that isn't spent over 20 years or so can be transferred  
13 back to the general fund.

14  
15 Caskey-Schreiber stated that if she approves a budget that has a deficit, make sure  
16 they have to do this. Desler stated the people who served this county have done so during  
17 the same time frame they built up the fund balance. Use tax resources to cover future  
18 expenses. The other choice is to pay for it out of the current tax revenue year after year.  
19 They are asking the taxpayers of 2010 and 2020 to cover the cost of services provided in  
20 the 1970's and 1980's.

21  
22 Bennett stated the Government Accounting Standards Board came out last year with  
23 this pronouncement, effective 2007. It has to be put on the radar screen of the bond  
24 underwriters. Now, when the County goes out for debt, a question the County must answer  
25 is how they are going to provide for this long-term debt. Budgeting annually in future years  
26 could happen. An issue with ongoing revenues and expenditures is that things may be tight  
27 in future years. That answer will not be as favorable as setting money aside.

28  
29 Caskey-Schreiber stated that a reserve to cover that debt would be a wash. Bennett  
30 stated that's correct. It may also raise the question of why the County isn't setting that  
31 money aside. Putting it in the fund balance gives the impression that the money is available  
32 for the County to spend.

33  
34 Nelson stated that if the County has a \$10 million or \$15 million fund balance now, it  
35 might not exist in eight or nine years. Therefore, lock it up if that's required.

36  
37 Caskey-Schreiber referenced page 41 of volume I. She asked why line item 501  
38 jumps to \$18 million in 2008. Bennett stated the philosophy is to fund depreciation and a  
39 two percent inflation factor. When a piece of equipment needs to be replaced, have the  
40 money available to replace the equipment. They take all replacements from this fund. New  
41 equipment costs are provided up front, and rental fees provide for replacement.

42  
43 Desler stated that when adding deputies, the cost includes the cost of the car plus a  
44 certain amount to replace the car in the future. That applies to all major capital equipment.  
45 They've applied the same philosophy to the computer equipment.

46  
47 Caskey-Schreiber asked about using money from the Park Improvement Fund versus  
48 real estate excise tax (REET) II. Desler stated the Park Improvement Fund is targeted  
49 money from the pipeline settlement, and is designed to be used for the development cost of  
50 that park. It is targeted money. They want to maximize the use of REET II fund for the  
51 Parks Department.

1 Brenner stated she will support the motion. From what staff said, it sounds like they  
2 will have to go through this one more step for implementation.

3  
4 Nelson stated they need to prioritize. The part-time Council has a difficult time  
5 allocating funds for the many requests it gets. They need processes in place. That's what  
6 he's trying to provide.

7  
8 Caskey-Schreiber restated the motion to allocate \$200,000 for phase one of ASR  
9 2007-584.

10 Fleetwood asked how that estimate was created.

11  
12 Brenner stated staff came up with that amount.

13  
14 Nelson stated staff consulted with three large groups that are capable of helping the  
15 County do this. The actual cost may be less.

16  
17 Fleetwood asked about the proposed financing to implement phase two.

18  
19 Nelson stated there is none until they review phase one. If phase one is approved,  
20 they can consider funding phase two.

21  
22  
23 Jeff Monsen, Public Works Director, stated that as they moved into the watershed  
24 planning process, they deliberately tried to create a goal and budget. They decided to  
25 accomplish that goal before making a decision to proceed with the project. They never  
26 moved into the project asking for approval of \$6 million. They asked for it incrementally so  
27 they are always comfortable that they continue to move in the right direction.

28  
29 *(Clerk's Note: End of tape one, side B.)*

30  
31 Monsen continued to state that as they get new revenue sources, it will begin to  
32 automate implementation of this strategy. Don't wait until the end to implement  
33 everything. It may not be a \$200,000 exercise. However, this is the level of expenditure  
34 necessary to capture the big policy issues that prevent them from looking at this  
35 comprehensively. He is nervous about his ability to move ahead if the Council is divided.

36  
37 Caskey-Schreiber stated there are action items in the water resource inventory area  
38 (WRIA) plan already. She understands that they need to prioritize the items. She  
39 questions whether the best plan is to hire an outsider. Monsen stated this effort is to  
40 prioritize between and among all the plans. It's not focused on implementing the watershed  
41 plan.

42  
43 Brenner stated staff was clear that they don't have the time, and this is the only way  
44 this effort will happen.

45  
46 Desler stated there is \$55,000 in the budget now and \$26,000 in the fund that will  
47 rollover. That leaves an amount of \$119,000, for a total of \$200,000.

48  
49 Nelson stated the administration will bring forward the funding mechanism when  
50 they approve the financing.

51  
52 Caskey-Schreiber stated the amounts matter, in terms of how much of a budget  
53 deficit they have.

1  
2 Fleetwood stated that what is required is \$119,000. Councilmember Nelson wants  
3 \$200,000 for a phase one consultant.  
4

5 Nelson stated he doesn't know what the consultant will cost. Approve an amount up  
6 to \$200,000. It's a placeholder.  
7

8 Brenner stated this is a one-time cost and part of the excess fund balance. There  
9 won't be a negative budget balance.  
10

11 Desler stated page 26 of volume I shows the fund balances in 2007 and 2008.  
12

13 Crawford stated this motion is about the expenditure, not where the money comes  
14 from. The motion is to change the \$55,000 to \$200,000, and don't worry about where  
15 money is added or subtracted.  
16

17 ***Motion to amend carried unanimously.***  
18

19 ***Caskey-Schreiber*** referenced ASR 20074-221 and ASR 2007-342. The amount  
20 requested for the video system in the Council Chambers was not approved. She ***moved***  
21 to add it back in. To make up the difference, remove the lighting system upgrade of \$59,500  
22 in ASR 2007-342. Many people who speak to the Council want to use the one podium so  
23 they can be on camera. This is a reasonable request. It would save an annual cost of  
24 \$11,000.  
25

26 Nelson asked about the concern with the lighting. Desler stated that when there is a  
27 failure, which they expect, the concern is with their ability to replace or fix it in a timely  
28 manner. The proposal to redo lighting will also save energy costs.  
29

30 ***Caskey-Schreiber amended her motion*** to fund in 2007 the video system  
31 requested in ASR 2007-221 without removing the lighting system upgrade of \$59,500 in  
32 ASR 2007-342.  
33

34 Crawford asked about the breakdown of those costs. Desler stated the  
35 administration didn't want to destroy the project, but first do the digital audio recording  
36 system and making sure it works. Later, they would reconsider the video recording.  
37

38 Crawford asked why the administration eliminates the \$11,000 per year services to  
39 the City. It seems that there will still be someone to do monitoring.  
40

41 Caskey-Schreiber stated the Council Office will do the recording rather than hiring  
42 out someone to do the recording, at a cost of \$470 per meeting.  
43

44 Crawford stated there will be added staff time to manage the new system.  
45

46 ***Motion carried 4-1 with Crawford opposed.***  
47

48 ***Brenner moved*** to include \$12,000 in support of the Sean Humphrey House in non-  
49 departmental requests. It provides a service no one else in the State provides. It provides  
50 hospice care for AIDS patients and also helps people transition to life with AIDS.  
51

52 Nelson stated the County provided this support in the past.  
53

1 Desler stated the County has provided some general fund, non-departmental support  
2 and some Executive contingency fund support over the years. The last couple of years, the  
3 County provided the low-income housing money to support them, based on a grant  
4 application. This would add a line item of \$12,000, beyond those other items. He doesn't  
5 know what the grant allocation will be.  
6

7 Crawford asked why \$12,000 and not the requested \$18,000. Desler stated it is the  
8 recommendation of the Executive.  
9

10 Crawford stated they are already providing three funding streams to this  
11 organization. He asked if this is new funding the County has not provided before. Desler  
12 stated it is new. The Executive has been supporting the agency through his contingency  
13 fund, based on the needs the applicants identified.  
14

15 Crawford stated the Sean Humphrey House has new funding from the 2060 funding.  
16 They didn't get that before. Desler stated that is correct. He doesn't know what is planned  
17 for 2007 and 2008 from that fund source.  
18

19 Crawford stated he appreciates what this organization does, but there are other  
20 mechanisms to get money from the County. Don't allocate a new funding stream at this  
21 time.  
22

23 ***Motion carried 4-1 with Crawford opposed.***  
24

25 Fleetwood submitted an ASR request for \$75,000 to develop affordable housing in  
26 Whatcom County by joining with the City of Bellingham to pay for costs of a consultant to  
27 help with public process, resulting in deliverables such as guidelines and ordinances to take  
28 significant steps toward implementing the housing chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. This  
29 comes forward with the assistance of the Executive. He met with Mr. Desler and Ms.  
30 Harduar to put together this request. It is a joint recommendation with the administration.  
31

32 Caskey-Schreiber asked if this could come out of the low income housing fund.  
33 Desler stated it can't.  
34

35 Nelson stated consultants are better for one-time funding to get projects underway.  
36 One can't even buy affordably in the county. The smallest parcel is \$170,000. If they are  
37 going to go after affordable housing, the land is getting costly. He asked if the objective is  
38 to drive down costs. The average income is \$25,000 to \$30,000.  
39

40 Fleetwood stated the median household income in Whatcom County is \$50,000.  
41 That will buy a mortgage of \$150,000. One percent of homes available is in that price  
42 range. He doesn't know how to get at affordability. That's the reason for the need for the  
43 funding. There are national experts who can provide solutions. This is an effort to try and  
44 achieve the provisions in the Comprehensive plan.  
45

46 Nelson asked if these consultants have been able to implement successful programs  
47 in other areas.  
48

49 Fleetwood stated the consultants they've considered have worked with municipalities  
50 and local governments and have achieved success. He can't quantify that success at the  
51 moment.  
52

1 Caskey-Schreiber asked for a description of the low income housing fund. Desler  
2 explained the program. It's directed at homeless people.

3  
4 Brenner stated the ASR handout is about one option. She wants to look at all  
5 options.

6  
7 Fleetwood stated it considers all options.

8  
9 Brenner stated she's not in favor of mandatory inclusionary zoning. If they are going  
10 to do this with the City, make sure someone with expertise and who is open-minded will  
11 consider accessory dwelling units.

12  
13 Fleetwood stated this has expanded since he submitted his application for a zoning  
14 text amendment. He explained the evolution of this effort. The community wants this  
15 effort to be much broader. There is a lot of skepticism about mandatory inclusionary  
16 housing as the sole solution. His motion is broader than that.

17  
18 Nelson stated it's worth it if they find a mechanism for affordable housing. That is a  
19 big concern in the community. He asked how other communities have made this possible or  
20 found solutions.

21  
22 Paul Schissler, Kulshan Community Land Trust, stated that if they can learn from  
23 other communities, they can do more than what they've been able to do so far. Many in the  
24 private sector would like to help solve this problem. It will take funding and action. This  
25 strategy must look beyond inclusionary housing, including accessory dwelling units,  
26 incentives for developers, and other methods. Engage as many stakeholders as they can,  
27 especially builders and developers.

28  
29 Nelson asked what can offset the cost of land. Reducing that cost will have a  
30 significant impact. Expediting the permit process won't lower the cost.

31  
32 Hal Hart, Planning and Development Services Director, stated give the development  
33 community incentives. They are timing this to the urban growth area (UGA) adoption. That  
34 is significant. Consultants have said to do that. If they are going to open new lands to  
35 development, and have large developers, there are a number of ways to use this to great  
36 effect. Developers are looking for benefits to develop affordable housing.

37  
38 Brenner stated time is money and will reduce costs. Population per household is  
39 getting smaller. Accessory dwelling units can provide traditional and ongoing housing.  
40 They can get developers on board. The bigger concern is the landowners. Get the  
41 landowners involved.

42  
43 Crawford stated he does not support the amendment. It's a waste of taxpayer  
44 dollars.

45  
46 ***Motion carried 4-1 with Crawford opposed.***

47  
48 Brenner stated word it in a way to get money from the low income housing fund.

49  
50 Caskey-Schreiber referenced page 27 of volume I. The border prosecution grant  
51 shows a deficit in 2008. Desler stated they are spending down the grant funds they've  
52 received so far. They are asking for more money next year to pay for border impact issues.

1 Caskey-Schreiber asked about page 69 of volume I regarding drug fund projections.  
2 They are half of what they've been. Desler stated the Prosecutor anticipates a drop in  
3 revenue from fines, penalties, and money from captured cash and equipment. The federal  
4 government is taking more of that money for itself.  
5  
6

7 **ADJOURN**

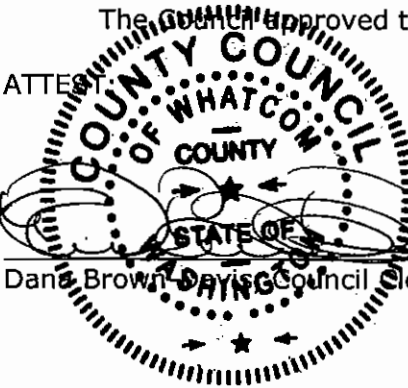
8  
9 The meeting adjourned at 11:54 a.m.

10   
11 \_\_\_\_\_  
12 Jill Nixon, Minutes Transcription  
13  
14

15 The Council approved these minutes on July 10, 2007.

16  
17 ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

18   
19  
20  
21  
22  
23 Dan Brown, Council Clerk

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Laurie Caskey-Schreiber, Council Chair