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

May 23, 2006

Committee Chair Sam Crawford called the meeting to order at 11:07 a.m. in the Council Chambers, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, Washington.

Present:

Carl Weimer

Absent:

L. Ward Nelson

Also Present:

Barbara Brenner

Dan McShane

Laurie Caskey-Schreiber

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

**1. BELLINGHAM-WHATCOM COUNTY COMMISSION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ANNUAL REPORT PRESENTED BY SUE PARROTT, COMMISSION DIRECTOR, AND REGINA DELAHUNT, WHATCOM COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR (AB2006-227)**

Regina Delahunt, Health Department Director and Commission Against Domestic Violence Chair, stated she has been impressed with how collaborative all the partners are, including treatment providers and law enforcement. Folks work hard together to improve the system.

Each year, the Commission presents an annual report to the City and County. She submitted the annual report (*on file*). Domestic violence occurs in every segment of society. It really impacts some of the clients the Health Department services. Domestic violence is a public health issue for the County.

One accomplishment of the Commission is the benchmarking report. It is included in the Council's packet. The Commission has worked with all partners to collect data on the prevalence of domestic violence. They analyzed the data to make some predictions.

Also, the Commission and City of Bellingham received a grant called the Grants to Encourage Arrest. A lot of good work is going on with that. She thanked the Council for its support over the years. It is money well-spent.

Sue Parrott, Commission Against Domestic Violence Director, stated the Grants to Encourage Arrest program was awarded to the Commission and City of Bellingham. There are some recommendations of the safety audit that the community couldn't implement because of funding. Also, the Commission wanted to conduct the next phase of the audit, which focuses on probation and prosecution. They submitted an application to conduct a safety audit and implement recommendations from the first audit. They have received those funds. There is information in the Council packet on what they are doing and have done. They just completed training for law enforcement agencies, and will standardize a new risk assessment protocol.

1 They also just completed training for all corrections staff in the jail, which was a  
2 recommendation of the first audit. The training was to increase the staff's understanding of  
3 the dynamics of domestic violence. Offenders are still a risk while in jail and can reach  
4 victims.

5  
6 Some funding went to a nonprofit service agency to expand on-scene advocacy to  
7 the entire county. After a domestic violence call, law enforcement connects the victim with  
8 an on-call advocate.

9  
10 There is funding for the Sheriff's Office to purchase specialized equipment. They  
11 have selected ten deputies to specialize in domestic violence response and investigation.

12  
13 The grant includes funding for the Commission, which has hired an additional staff  
14 person. The Commission is currently conducting a safety audit on the County Prosecutor,  
15 City Prosecutor, and District Court Probation. The audits will result in recommendations for  
16 change. Many recommendations are not resource-dependent. The City and County fund  
17 the Commission for basic operating expenses, which enabled them to do this additional  
18 work.

19  
20 As Commission director, she must be aware of what they are doing in Whatcom  
21 County and also what's happening nationally. The Commission could bring those ideas  
22 here. The Commission is a small organization. It is fortunate to work in a community with  
23 many other practitioners, stakeholder groups, and others who are willing to take on this  
24 issue. She finds other partners for other issues. The annual report includes examples of  
25 when partnerships have happened. For example, the Commission is working on a  
26 consistent recommendation for the criminal justice system on domestic violence offenders  
27 and firearms. They would like to improve access to firearms. The greatest percentage of  
28 fatality from domestic violence is from firearms.

29  
30 The benchmark report is in the Council packet. It is the Commission's third report.  
31 She has spent time on the data before. This year, they are seeing an increase in almost  
32 every data set in the report, which is adjusted for population changes and statistical  
33 significance. The year 2004 was one of the highest years in almost every index. The data  
34 doesn't say why it is changing. An increase doesn't necessarily mean the problem is worse  
35 or domestic violence rates have increased. It could simply mean there is more community  
36 education, law enforcement is doing a better job, or other variables.

37  
38 New data in this report is the reactivity over a three-year period. They have  
39 reviewed recidivism rates. Twenty percent of individuals were charged for domestic  
40 violence more than one time. Some people think that statistic is low. This data also shows  
41 that 30 percent of individuals re-offended in another jurisdiction in the county. That's why  
42 all the criminal justice partners must be connected and have access to the same  
43 information.

44  
45 Crawford stated this is a great way to look at the information. Other indicators show  
46 there are more cases. That could be because they have better tools to identify those  
47 people. The 20 percent statistic seems low. If they can get that number down, even if the  
48 number of cases double, they know they are having a post-arrest impact. Parrott stated  
49 they weren't able to look at felony level cases. This compilation is limited.

50  
51 McShane stated 52 percent of the first additional incidents is assaults. The more the  
52 number of additional incidents has to do more with violating the orders. It is disconcerting  
53 that the first violation of the order is violent. Parrott stated it is concerning. Over time,

1 people are violating orders. That raises the question of why people aren't taking their  
2 orders seriously.

3  
4 McShane stated dealing with the problem quickly is critical. Parrott stated the data  
5 raises lots of questions. It gets people thinking.

6  
7 Crawford asked if the data is collected countywide. Parrott stated it mostly is. They  
8 tried to include the Tribes as well, when they could. They couldn't get that information for  
9 all data sets. The goal was for countywide information, not information by jurisdiction.

10  
11 Weimer asked if there is jurisdictional information also, and if certain areas stand  
12 out. Parrott stated they didn't pull that information out this year. She did that one year in  
13 the past. There were some differences. The city with the highest rate was Ferndale and the  
14 city with the lowest rate was Lynden. That was strictly the offense rate as reported by law  
15 enforcement.

16  
17 The most significant increases in 2004 were jail bookings, protection orders,  
18 probation referrals, and some of the service provider numbers.

19  
20 Weimer asked if there are examples around the country where certain programs  
21 created a decrease in numbers. Parrott stated benchmarking is challenging. When she first  
22 started, she tried to find out what other jurisdictions use as measures. She found little  
23 information. She found that different offices set different goals. There isn't much out there  
24 about what the goals should be. The goal depends on the measure.

25  
26 Crawford stated the measurement of re-offenses is significant. They have an  
27 almost-impossible task to educate everyone in the community so no one offends initially,  
28 however they need to react to the first offense. He asked if this is tied to alcohol and  
29 substance abuse. Parrott stated there is a link, but it is not cause and effect. It is co-  
30 occurring. Providers try to screen for alcohol and substance abuse.

31  
32 Bruce Van Glubt, District Court Probation, stated the domestic violence perpetrator  
33 treatment program evaluators are required to include a substance abuse evaluation  
34 element. The court order will include a requirement that the offender follow the assessment  
35 recommendations. If substance abuse is an issue, the offenders are required to have a  
36 substance abuse evaluation. Research shows that alcohol and substance abuse does not  
37 cause domestic violence. It could escalate the violence, but not cause it.

38  
39 Brenner stated domestic violence may escalate the substance abuse. Domestic  
40 violence is another problem the offenders have.

41  
42 Parrott stated they can't ignore the issue. They must understand how the two  
43 problems connect.

44  
45  
46 **COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

47  
48 **1. ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2006 WHATCOM COUNTY BUDGET, EIGHTH**  
49 **REQUEST, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,028,208 (AB2006-217)**

50  
51 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated about half of the total general fund  
52 portion is for the Planning and Development Services Department. There is \$200,000 in  
53 grant revenue. They haven't calculated all the fee revenue. There will be some revenue

1 from short-plats. Generally, the revenues tend to be about where they were last year,  
2 except for the short-plats.  
3

4 Crawford stated some of those applications will take years to go through the process.  
5 That \$300,000 will get thin after several years.  
6

7 Crawford stated he wants to discuss the commute trip reduction program. He's  
8 concerned about the County starting a new program when the Council of Governments  
9 (COG) has managed to find resources elsewhere. The funding issue doesn't make the  
10 program go away. It just expands or contracts any opportunity for the program to do  
11 something. He will support it at this point, but reluctantly. He would like COG to provide  
12 more information for the upcoming budget cycle. Generally, they all understand the benefit  
13 of commute trip reduction. He asked why the County should be involved.  
14

15 Susan Horst, Council of Governments Commute Trip Reduction Program Manager,  
16 submitted a spreadsheet (*on file*). The first reason the County should be involved is that  
17 this is not something new. They are taking something they know works and expanding to a  
18 larger audience. The second benefit is to County citizens. People in this community  
19 understand that automobile trips affect the quality of life here, and they would like to make  
20 changes. What's stopping them is physical barriers and mental barriers, such as lack of  
21 information and lack of motivation. She can help people with those things. That's what this  
22 program is about. The program can give people incentives and information to motivate  
23 them to change. People are interested in making a change, but they have to start where  
24 they are. They can't force them into a program. If people are interested in making a  
25 change, she can get proper information to them. That is the benefit to the citizens. They  
26 want to make a change. She knows what it's like to drive on the roads at rush hour. If  
27 people need to drive a lot for the job, the traffic problems are disconcerting. However,  
28 people want to make changes.  
29

30 Brenner stated she's concerned that they're not raising the percentage very much.  
31 One problem is that there should be a guaranteed ride home in more instances than just  
32 emergencies. She has a real problem with the claim about smart trip school programs. The  
33 district gets paid per student that rides the bus. There is a disincentive to get the kids to  
34 walk. They need better commuter bus service from the small cities to Bellingham, very  
35 frequently during rush hours.  
36

37 Crawford asked the number of years they've been doing commute trip reduction.  
38 Horst stated they have been doing the program since 1997. The handout is about how the  
39 County benefits. The County leverages quite a bit of money with its \$20,000 contribution.  
40 The \$250,000 listed on the scope of work has gone up a bit. There is \$825,000 every three  
41 years. She read the list of funding sources. This is a very large program.  
42

43 Brenner asked their influence on the Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) for  
44 changing habits. Horst stated she is an educator and marketer. There are some low-  
45 hanging fruit. People want to make changes, but have physical barriers to making that  
46 change. That is a long-term problem that requires a lot of people and enough people who  
47 ask for the service. Start out serving the people who want to and can make changes now,  
48 but don't have the information they need to make the changes. That's where they start.  
49 Then, build momentum to justify making other changes.  
50

51 Weimer stated there has been a 4.5 percent reduction in nine years. He asked the  
52 number of trips that is.  
53

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

3 Horst stated there are about 200 trips. They don't get to count people who already  
4 carpool or ride the bus. They just claim the change.  
5

6 Weimer asked the funding before this. Horst stated the total funding was \$80,000.  
7 That is just money from the State to do the work trip program. In Whatcom County,  
8 citizens think this is a good idea and want the program expanded.  
9

10 Brenner asked if they are working with the school systems. A problem is that the  
11 schools get money for each kid that rides the buses. Horst stated she agrees with the  
12 conundrum. Start with people who have enthusiasm for the project, then build something  
13 that works to create a reason to talk to people about the school buses.  
14

15 Weimer asked what the Latimor project is. Desler stated the County contracted with  
16 a person named Latimore to assist with designing a more effective system for processing  
17 permits. Recommendations resulted from the work. The administration is asking for Mr.  
18 Latimore's assistance with some follow-up work. The project is about improving the permit  
19 process.  
20

21 Crawford asked whether the specific recommendations will be implemented.  
22

23 Hal Hart, Planning and Development Services Department Director, stated they will.  
24 Now, they are working on five of the 14 recommendations. He described the five  
25 recommendations. The volumes are much larger than they were five or six years ago.  
26

27 Crawford asked about the new Planner I for short-plats. He asked if the counter can  
28 take people throughout the day, rather than just in the mornings. Hart stated they are  
29 trying to look at that. Last year they were at 23. Today, they are at 171. Working with the  
30 Public Works Department is key. They are looking at how to get through the technical  
31 review committees. They are talking about twice as many technical review committees just  
32 to get through. That is a bigger problem. Another problem is just getting back to people  
33 who call for information. Communication needs to be improved.  
34

35 Crawford stated it's hard to understand why they would be open in the morning. The  
36 number of staff doesn't affect how many people apply for short-plats. Spreading it out over  
37 the day would avoid the buildup in the morning. They don't have to man the counter.  
38

39 Caskey-Schreiber asked if the County is mandated to process the short-plats within a  
40 certain timeframe. Hart stated they are. In fact, they've sent out a note saying that the  
41 County will get to them in the order they arrive. Within that, the staff is trying to work  
42 through it in a reasonable way.  
43

44 Caskey-Schreiber asked if the land rush that happened as a result of the proposed  
45 moratorium will go away when the moratorium is resolved. Hart stated they are trying to  
46 cross-train people in different areas and focus the staff on larger team projects. To move a  
47 project forward, it will take a team leader. The Guide Meridian project alone is a huge  
48 consumptive process. All the property owners are responding to the widening of the Guide  
49 by moving back septic systems, which requires review and approval.  
50

51 Caskey-Schreiber asked how much the staff has increased in the last four years.  
52 Hart stated they went from 52 or 54 to about 70 right now. Eighty five percent of the

1 program is focused on permits. The increases are a result of getting permits out in a timely  
2 manner. They are catching up this year.  
3

4 Crawford stated the County is not following State regulations in terms of timeliness.  
5 The short-plat issue will go a lot longer than two years. The stuff getting short-platted  
6 today is more marginal than what used to get short-platted. These things will drag out for  
7 years. There will be no shortage of work for these people.  
8

9 Brenner stated part of the problem is the huge turnover. The County has not  
10 replaced some of the specialists. Also, Planning staff, not the Planning Director, should be  
11 answering general calls with simple questions from the public.  
12

13 Crawford stated that his experience as a user is that staff is consistent about call-  
14 backs within a day or two. The loss of Jay Irwin is significant.  
15

16 Weimer stated he supports funding for the water resource inventory area (WRIA)  
17 plan implementation. Funding for that project used to be under the Public Works  
18 Department. When the project was transferred to the Planning Department, the associated  
19 employees were not transferred. He asked if the number of employees in the Public Works  
20 Department has decreased accordingly. Desler stated the remaining Public Works staff are  
21 working on other issues, and are no longer funded with the water resource fund. There are  
22 many good reasons to move forward with implementation by Planning and Development  
23 Services staff. There are many vacancies in the Public Works Department.  
24

25 Weimer asked if there has been growth-creep in the Public Works Department as a  
26 result of those same positions that were budgeted for this work. Desler stated the  
27 administration doesn't believe that is true. There is a need for additional capacity in the  
28 Public Works Department to carry on with the things for which the Council is calling.  
29

30 Weimer asked why the funds for chipper equipment is coming from the Planning and  
31 Development Services Department, not the Public Works Department, since this equipment  
32 has been in the County Solid Waste Plan. Desler stated its being organized through a grant  
33 through the Northwest Clean Air Agency and the Fire Marshal's Office, which is in the  
34 Planning Department. It's not part of the Solid Waste Division.  
35

36 Hart stated he has been working with the State Department of Natural Resources on  
37 wildfire prevention. The rules on wildfire prevention and burn permits will be changing.  
38

39 Weimer stated that all communities should have access to this equipment.  
40

41 Caskey-Schreiber stated the chipper is mobile, so it can go anywhere it is needed.  
42 The money is settlement money from Conoco Phillips to the Northwest Clean Air Agency.  
43 Warner Webb put forth a request for this project, intended to serve the entire county. Burn  
44 permits are handled through the Planning and Development Services Department.  
45

46 Weimer stated he recommends that this issue go through the Solid Waste Advisory  
47 Committee. Hart stated he will find out more about that.  
48

49 **Crawford moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.  
50

51 Caskey-Schreiber asked about the Lummi Island groundwater study.  
52

1 Roland Middleton, Planning and Development Services Department, stated he will  
2 present an update to the Committee of the Whole tonight.

3  
4 ***Motion carried unanimously.***

5  
6  
7 **COUNCIL "CONSENT AGENDA" ITEM**

- 8  
9 **1. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO AWARD BID #06-41 TO**  
10 **LOW BIDDER, DIEHL FORD, FOR SIX SMALL UTILITY VEHICLES, IN THE**  
11 **AMOUNT OF \$117,138.13 (AB2006-228)**

12  
13 ***Weimer moved*** to recommend approval to the full Council.

14  
15 ***Motion carried unanimously.***

- 16  
17 **3. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO AWARD BID #06-57 TO**  
18 **LOW BIDDER, CONCRETE TECHNOLOGY CORPORATION, FOR THE SUPPLY OF**  
19 **PRE-STRESSED CONCRETE VOIDED SLAB BRIDGE GIRDERS, IN THE AMOUNT**  
20 **OF \$83,735.09 (AB2006-230)**

21  
22 ***Crawford moved*** to recommend approval to the full Council.

23  
24 ***Motion carried unanimously.***

- 25  
26 **2. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO AWARD BID #06-47 TO**  
27 **LOW BIDDER, FRONTIER FORD, FOR FIVE HALF-TON EXTENDED CAB PICKUP**  
28 **TRUCKS, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$98,006.08 (AB2006-229)**

29  
30 ***Crawford moved*** to recommend approval to the full Council.

31  
32 ***Motion carried unanimously.***

- 33  
34 **4. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**  
35 **COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND THE UNITED**  
36 **STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, MT. BAKER-SNOQUALMIE**  
37 **NATIONAL FOREST, TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR A DEPUTY TO PATROL THE MT.**  
38 **BAKER-SNOQUALMIE NATIONAL FOREST, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$60,000**  
39 **(AB2006-231)**

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

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

- 44  
45 **5. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A SUB-**  
46 **RECIPIENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND NORTHWEST**  
47 **REGIONAL COUNCIL, FOR THE PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF UHF**  
48 **REPEATERS FOR MOUNTAINTOP FIXED SITES IN ORDER TO ENHANCE OUR**  
49 **COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS TO COMBAT TERRORISM, IN THE AMOUNT OF**  
50 **\$46,550 (AB2006-232)**

51  
52 Crawford asked who uses these repeaters.

1 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated it is a law enforcement system for the  
2 Sheriff's Office and all the smaller towns.

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

5  
6 **Motion carried unanimously.**

- 7  
8 **6. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A SUB-  
9 RECIPIENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND THE CITY OF  
10 FERNDALE, FOR THE PURCHASE OF A FIXED GENERATOR FOR THE CITY OF  
11 FERNDALE POLICE DEPARTMENT TO ENHANCE LAW ENFORCEMENT'S  
12 ABILITY TO RESPOND TO AND CONTINUE CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE  
13 OPERATIONS DURING NATURAL AND MAN-MADE EMERGENCIES, IN THE  
14 AMOUNT OF \$20,000 (AB2006-233)**

15  
16 **Weimer moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.

17  
18 **Motion carried unanimously.**

- 19  
20 **7. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A SUB-  
21 RECIPIENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND ST. JOSEPH  
22 HOSPITAL, FOR THE PURCHASE OF TWO PORTABLE VENTILATORS TO  
23 ENHANCE THE HOSPITAL'S ABILITY TO CONTINUE CRITICAL  
24 INFRASTRUCTURE OPERATIONS AND RESPOND TO THE HEALTH CARE  
25 NEEDS OF WHATCOM COUNTY DURING NATURE AND MAN-MADE  
26 EMERGENCIES, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$16,800 (AB2006-234)**

27  
28 **Crawford moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.

29  
30 **Motion carried unanimously.**

- 31  
32 **8. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO AN  
33 INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND THE  
34 WHATCOM COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS, TO ASSIST IN FUNDING THE  
35 WHATCOM SMART TRIPS PROGRAM TO REDUCE AUTOMOBILE TRIPS AS A  
36 PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL TRIPS THROUGH EDUCATION, ASSISTANCE AND  
37 INCENTIVES, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$20,000 PER YEAR FOR THREE YEARS,  
38 FOR A TOTAL OF \$60,000 (AB2006-235)**

39  
40 Crawford stated he would prefer to amend this to be for this year only, and then deal  
41 with it as a budget item.

42  
43 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated they can adjust the contract to one year  
44 only, with renewals available for two more years. It's appropriate to do.

45  
46 Crawford stated he respects the Council of Government's desire for funding certainty.  
47 However, the Council needs to make certain it is getting accountability as the program  
48 progresses. They've already learned that much of this is subjective. Monitoring the  
49 program makes more sense for the taxpayers. Desler stated item VII in the contract  
50 addresses reduction in funding. If the County decides it is not able to fund this, it has the  
51 option to withdraw funding.

52  
53 **Crawford moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.

1  
2 **Motion carried unanimously.**

3  
4 **9. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO COMPLETE THE**  
5 **PURCHASE OF THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1661 BAKER CREEK PLACE,**  
6 **BELLINGHAM (AB2006-236)**

7  
8 Crawford asked if this is the animal control shelter.

9  
10 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated it is. It authorizes the Executive to  
11 enter into the purchase and sale agreement.

12  
13 Crawford stated the County is being challenged by the cost of the operating  
14 expenses. The costs so far are extraordinary.

15  
16 **Weimer moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.

17  
18 **Motion carried unanimously.**

19  
20 **10. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO COMPLETE**  
21 **ACQUISITION OF AN EASEMENT FOR PUBLIC PARK PURPOSES IN THE**  
22 **AMOUNT OF \$10,000 FROM THE JENSEN FAMILY LIVING TRUST UTILIZING**  
23 **THE CONSERVATION FUTURES FUND (AB2006-237)**

24  
25 **Crawford moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.

26  
27 Weimer asked if this is mature old growth.

28  
29 Rand Jack, Whatcom Land Trust, stated this is mature second growth.

30  
31 **Motion carried unanimously.**

32  
33  
34 **OTHER BUSINESS**

35  
36 There was no other business.

37  
38  
39 **ADJOURN**

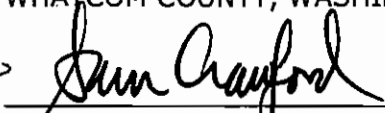
40  
41 The meeting adjourned at 12:27 p.m.

42  
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44   
45 Jill Nixon, Minutes Transcription

46  
47 ATTEST

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53   
Dana Brown, Council Clerk

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

  
Sam Crawford, Committee Chair