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

July 11, 2006

Committee Chair Sam Crawford called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m. in the Council Chambers, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, Washington.

Present:

L. Ward Nelson  
Carl Weimer

Absent:

None

Also Present:

Barbara Brenner  
Seth Fleetwood  
Dan McShane

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

**1. PRESENTATION BY KEN OPLINGER, BELLINGHAM-WHATCOM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, REGARDING PROPOSED PASSPORT REQUIREMENTS AT THE BORDER (AB2006-017)**

Ken Oplinger, Bellingham-Whatcom Chamber of Commerce, read a presentation (*on file*). Canadian visitors to the U.S. spend most of their money in states that are not on the border. His initiative is attempting to get those states, Florida, California, and Nevada, to realize the impact from Canadian visitors. In the past, as the value of the Canadian dollar fell, there were fewer crossings. However, that isn't the case anymore. The value of the dollar is going up, but they aren't seeing the number of crossings increase. The reason is because they are trying to rebound from the events of September 11, 2001. Canadians don't like how they are treated at the border crossing. There are other reasons for the decline in crossings. With the upcoming document requirements, they are afraid they will see the number of crossings decline even further.

He continued to read the presentation on the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) Background. They don't anticipate that the Passport Lite program will work.

As an alternative, this coalition recommends using the Real-ID program, which was created for a different purpose. There are many similarities between the two laws. They hope to make drivers' licenses be the acceptable form of identification to get across the border, with the new security features of the Real-ID program. States will have to comply with the federal Real-ID program, even though drivers' licenses are state-issued documents. He read the presentation on Policy Alternatives, the Business for Economic Security, Tourism, and Trade (BESTT) Partnership, and a list of what has been accomplished so far.

Crawford asked what Mr. Oplinger would like from the County Council. Oplinger stated the County could join the coalition.

**Crawford moved** to recommend to the full Council that Mr. Oplinger draft a resolution.

*(Clerk's Note: This motion was not voted on.)*

1  
2 Weimer asked the opinion of the Washington State Congressional delegation.  
3 Oplinger stated all 11 members of the delegation have been supportive. There has been  
4 different levels of helpfulness from them. The delegation has drafted three different letters  
5 of support.  
6

7 Nelson asked if the ID is similar to the military ID card, which includes much  
8 information on it. Currently, even the military is supposed to provide access to implement  
9 the program, but the federal government hasn't implemented it. It's been six years, and  
10 the card is not yet fully automated. The two-year timeframe will be impossible. He asked if  
11 the public would have access to the information on the card. Oplinger stated the timeframe  
12 is not enough. However, Congress put a date certain in the legislation. The key point of  
13 the legislation they've been trying to pass is an extension. The proposed "passport lite"  
14 card has received the same criticism as other ID cards that haven't been implemented. It's  
15 a completely new separate identification. The radio frequency identification (RFID) chip  
16 used in the card contains only a number. That number must connect to a secure database  
17 with the personal information. The personal information isn't on the card itself.  
18

19 Nelson stated he is concerned that the public won't know what information is  
20 attached to the number. There must be a failsafe system that prevents false or  
21 manipulated information. Putting everyone on an identification is a big, bold step for the  
22 nation. Oplinger stated he agreed. However, they are responding to a law that is already  
23 passed. They are only asking for one small step to make these two bad laws work better.  
24

25 Brenner asked if people in the Canadian areas on the border are having these same  
26 discussions. There aren't very many border agents staffing all the booths at the border.  
27 Oplinger stated they are also having discussions. Governor Gregoire recently had a meeting  
28 with the British Columbia Premier. They discussed how this legislation would affect the  
29 Olympics. They believe another form of identification should be considered. Another issue  
30 with the 2010 Olympics is that the U.S. failed to rebuild the crossing at Peace Arch.  
31

32 Crawford stated that he suggests the "passport lite" be made available at no charge  
33 to current passport holders so they don't have to carry around their passports. Also, allow  
34 Canadians to come into the U.S. for 72 hours without identification. Oplinger stated they  
35 have been pushing that idea, but the Department of Homeland Security will not consider it.  
36 However, it's become a priority of the Canadian government.  
37

38 Crawford asked Mr. Oplinger to come up with a draft resolution for the Council to  
39 consider. This could have an enormous impact on their local economy. There is a lot at  
40 stake. For a clean tourist industry that represents a lot of money locally, without associated  
41 costs, this is an issue.  
42

43 McShane stated he agrees with the concern, but also sympathizes with the reality of  
44 the law they are trying to address. Include within the resolution some sort of statement  
45 about how they don't like these laws in the first place. Beyond the economic issue, he  
46 resents having to take his passport with him to Canada now. It is an incremental loss of  
47 freedom. There are no more border crossings in Europe any longer, between countries that  
48 were killing each other not that long ago. Put pressure on Canada and United States to  
49 have internal safeguards so they can cross the borders safely. That's the real issue.  
50 Oplinger stated the resolution he wrote for another organization has similar language. They  
51 would prefer to not have the legislation in the first place. There is not the political will in  
52 Washington D.C. to make it go away.  
53

1 McShane stated people who live far away from the border don't think about these  
2 things.  
3

4 Nelson stated he used to be proud of the open border between the U.S. and Canada  
5 when the European borders were closed. Now it's the other way around. Instead, enforce  
6 the laws that exist. Train the agents. Get the agencies to do what they are supposed to do  
7 instead of punishing the common citizens. Their freedom is being eroded. Oplinger stated  
8 he agrees. Ahmed Ressam, the man who tried to bomb the Los Angeles airport, was caught  
9 crossing the border here in Washington. Everyone keeps saying they have to make sure  
10 that doesn't happen again. However, Ressam had a valid passport. The only reason the  
11 Border Patrol caught him was because a well-trained Border Patrol officer saw there was a  
12 problem and responded. The documentation is not the issue. They must make sure they  
13 have well-trained and well-paid people at the border who understand the issues.  
14

15  
16 **COUNCIL "CONSENT AGENDA" ITEM**  
17

- 18 **1. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO AWARD BID #06-55 TO**  
19 **LOW BIDDER, BILL PIERRE FORD, FOR THE PURCHASE OF A BOMB**  
20 **RESPONSE VEHICLE, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$37,857.70 (AB2006-287)**  
21

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

24 Don Boyd, Emergency Management Division, stated this will replace an aged vehicle  
25 to provide transportation for the bomb robot.  
26

27 ***Motion carried unanimously.***  
28

- 29 **2. RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING COUNTY ROAD PROJECT NO. 906008 AND THE**  
30 **AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR THE DRAYTON HARBOR ROAD CALIFORNIA**  
31 **CREEK BRIDGE NO. 38 REHABILITATION, AND REQUEST AUTHORIZATION**  
32 **FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT BETWEEN WHATCOM**  
33 **COUNTY AND LOW BIDDER, ASSOCIATED UNDERWATER SERVICES, INC.,**  
34 **FOR THIS WORK, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$118,819 (AB2006-288)**  
35

36 Joe Rutan, Public Works Department, stated there is another project in that area, the  
37 Drayton Harbor Road repair. This is not that project. The two projects will be coordinated.  
38 Expect one lane of traffic at certain times, mostly at night.  
39

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

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

- 44 **3. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**  
45 **CONTRACT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND BRIDGE DIAGNOSTICS, INC.**  
46 **FOR LOAD TESTING OF SLATER ROAD RED RIVER BRIDGE NO. 513, IN THE**  
47 **AMOUNT OF \$19,100 (AB2006-289)**  
48

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

51 Weimer asked if there is a plan to spend a lot of money if the bridge isn't what they  
52 thought it is.  
53

1 Joe Rutan, Public Works Department, stated they may find out the bridge is not  
2 okay, so they will have the technical data they need to get federal money to rebuild the  
3 bridge.  
4

5 ***Motion carried unanimously.***  
6

- 7 **4. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**  
8 **COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND THE**  
9 **WHATCOM LAND TRUST AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, ACTING BY**  
10 **AND THROUGH THE COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION, FOR THE**  
11 **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FARM AND RANCH LANDS PROTECTION**  
12 **PROGRAM, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$435,153 (AB2006-290)**  
13

14 ***Crawford moved*** to recommend approval to the full Council.  
15

16 ***Motion carried unanimously.***  
17

- 18 **5. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO AN**  
19 **INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND THE CITY OF**  
20 **BLAINE TO FACILITATE PARK AND ROAD IMPROVEMENTS AT SEMIAHMOO**  
21 **PARK (AB2006-291)**  
22

23 ***Weimer moved*** to recommend approval to the full Council.  
24

25 ***Motion carried unanimously.***  
26

- 27 **6. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO AN**  
28 **INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND THE**  
29 **WASHINGTON STATE PATROL TO PROVIDE EQUIPMENT TO LAW**  
30 **ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES IN WHATCOM COUNTY FOR ENHANCED**  
31 **CAPABILITIES FOR DETECTING, DETERRING, DISRUPTING AND**  
32 **PREVENTING ACTS OF TERRORISM, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$166,799 (AB2006-**  
33 **292)**  
34

35 ***Nelson moved*** to recommend approval to the full Council.  
36

37 Weimer asked how much of the division's emphasis now is on terrorism, and whether  
38 it has detracted them from other emergency response issues.  
39

40 Don Boyd, Emergency Management Division, stated the Homeland Security money is  
41 directed toward terrorism prevention. The next item on the agenda is an emergency  
42 management money. They try to tie Homeland Security money into all hazards. This  
43 money goes to all jurisdictions' law enforcement agencies. The focus of this money is  
44 communications and computer hardware.  
45

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

48 Nelson asked for a presentation in a committee about coordination efforts between  
49 the local, State, and national level efforts to prevent terrorism. Boyd stated he can prepare  
50 something after the budget cycle in the fall.  
51

52 ***Motion carried unanimously.***  
53

1 7. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO AN  
2 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE GRANT CONTRACT BETWEEN  
3 WHATCOM COUNTY AND THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION OF THE  
4 WASHINGTON STATE MILITARY DEPARTMENT TO FUND EMERGENCY  
5 MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS TO SUPPLEMENT LOCAL EMERGENCY  
6 MANAGEMENT OPERATING BUDGETS IN AN EFFORT TO ENHANCE THE  
7 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$46,326  
8 (AB2006-293)  
9

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

11  
12 *Motion carried unanimously.*  
13

14 8. RESOLUTION SCHEDULING A PUBLIC HEARING CONCERNING  
15 AUTHORIZATION OF AN ASSESSMENT TO PROVIDE REVENUE FOR THE  
16 SAMISH WATERSHED SUBZONE (AB2006-294)  
17

18 Bruce Roll, Public Works Department, gave the history of the Samish watershed.  
19 The subzone was formed June 20, 2006 to address the lake management issues. This  
20 resolution will set the public hearing for an assessment. The assessment will maintain, then  
21 replace, the diversion.  
22

23 *Nelson moved* to recommend approval to the full Council. This assessment is  
24 based on property size. Roll stated the assessment is based on two things, water use and  
25 number of lake frontage feet. The amount chosen was (*inaudible*).  
26

27 *Motion carried unanimously.*  
28

29 9. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING WHATCOM COUNTY'S APPLICATION FOR  
30 FUNDING ASSISTANCE FOR A WASHINGTON WILDLIFE AND RECREATION  
31 PROGRAM PROJECT TO THE INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE FOR OUTDOOR  
32 RECREATION AS PROVIDED IN CHAPTER 79A.15 RCW, ACQUISITION OF  
33 INTEREST IN REAL PROPERTY FOR FARMLAND PRESERVATION (AB2006-  
34 295)  
35

36 *Weimer moved* to recommend approval to the full Council. This was discussed in  
37 the Natural Resources Committee. These two properties were lower on the list, even  
38 though they are good properties. He asked if this would affect the priority list.  
39

40 Kraig Olason, Planning Division, stated include a caveat that these are going to be  
41 two combined properties. Just because they are adjacent, they raise on the list. This is  
42 also a new funding source. A resolution from the Council is required as part of the  
43 application. The resolution references the application.  
44

45 *Motion carried unanimously.*  
46

47 10. RESOLUTION DECLARING INTENT TO ESTABLISH WHITECAP ROAD AS A  
48 COUNTY ROAD, DECLARING THAT SUCH ESTABLISHMENT IS A PUBLIC  
49 NECESSITY AND DIRECTING THE COUNTY ROAD ENGINEER TO REPORT TO  
50 COUNCIL UPON THE PROJECT (AB2006-303)  
51

52 Joe Rutan, Public Works Department, stated there are two small amendments. He  
53 intends to introduce this tonight and have a public hearing in two weeks. Amend the public

1 hearing notice and resolution to note a July 25 public hearing date, not a July 11 public  
2 hearing date.

3  
4 Crawford asked if the resolution to express the Council's intent is different from a  
5 resolution announcing a public hearing. Rutan stated it is a resolution for the Council to  
6 direct him, as the County Road Engineer, to report back to the Council, provide information,  
7 and hold a public hearing.

8  
9 **Crawford moved** to recommend approval to the full Council of the version with  
10 recommended amendment to the resolution.

11  
12 McShane stated a sign on Whitecap Road says "End County Maintenance." Rutan  
13 stated the intent is to accept that portion of the road beyond that sign. The road has been  
14 designed and constructed per County road standards. The County staff inspected the road.

15  
16 McShane stated the road is not paved. Rutan stated it has a chip seal. Chip seal  
17 looks like gravel until it is set up a bit, which takes time.

18  
19 McShane stated the road looks too narrow. Rutan stated he has not been out there.  
20 He will take a look.

21  
22 Brenner stated this belonged in the Public Works Committee, not Finance Committee.  
23 Rutan stated he agreed.

24  
25 **Motion carried unanimously.**

26  
27  
28 **OTHER BUSINESS**


29  
30 Brad Bennett, Finance Division Manager, stated the administration authorized a  
31 vendor to start constructing a gangway for the Lummi Island ferry terminal. Ordinarily it  
32 would have required a bid process. However, the administration made the purchase under  
33 an emergency declaration. The Executive is required to let the Council know what he did.  
34 This is the required notification of that acquisition. No action is required.

35  
36  
37 **ADJOURN**

38  
39 The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

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42  
43 Jill Nixon, Minutes Transcription

44  
45  
46 ATTEST  
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49  
50  
51  
52 Dana Brown Davis, Council Clerk

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON  
  
  
Sam Crawford, Committee Chair