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

August 8, 2006

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

Present:  
L. Ward Nelson  
Carl Weimer

Absent:  
None

Also Present:  
Dan McShane

**COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

**1. ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2006 WHATCOM COUNTY BUDGET, ELEVENTH REQUEST, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$415,626 (AB2006-319)**

Crawford stated this item was withdrawn from the agenda by the County administration. An amended version will come forward tonight for introduction.

**COUNCIL "CONSENT AGENDA" ITEM**

**1. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND DAVID EVANS AND ASSOCIATES, INC. TO DESIGN AND PROVIDE CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATION FOR THE SLATER ROAD FLOOD PROOFING PROJECT, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$720,143 (AB2006-326)**

*Nelson moved* to recommend approval to the full Council. He asked if the predominant amount of funding for design will be done by the County, and if construction would be done with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds.

Kirk Christensen, Public Works Department, stated that is correct. The first \$3 million is from FEMA. The County contribution is approximately \$3.7 million. The original estimate was \$3 million or \$4 million.

Nelson asked if the cost estimate would keep going up. Christensen stated it hopefully won't. They did a detailed cost estimate a couple of months ago.

Crawford stated the cost went up once. Christensen stated that is correct. The cost went up when they got realistic details on soils and other issues.

Weimer asked if the new numbers are reflected in the six-year road plan. Christensen stated they are.

McShane asked about the capacity of the Public Works Department to work on projects, and whether staff will be added to deal with all the projects. He asked if this bumps back projects in terms of staff capacity.

1  
2 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated the administration recognizes the  
3 demand for a more aggressive schedule for Public Works Department projects. The  
4 administration supports that aggressive schedule. They have started to add capacity to  
5 work on just human resources issues in terms of attracting and retaining the people they  
6 want. They expanded the office space so there is room for people to work. Now, they will  
7 address some additional capacity issues coming forward. The administration is having  
8 discussions with the Public Works Department. There are difficulties in the short- and  
9 medium-term. The nature of public works is changing from one that deals with rural roads  
10 to deal with more urbanized issues, such as stormwater, higher traffic volumes, and road  
11 capacity.

12  
13 McShane stated concurrency is also a new issue.

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

16  
17 **2. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**  
18 **CONTRACT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND PHILIP WILLIAMS &**  
19 **ASSOCIATES, LTD. TO PROVIDE A FEASIBILITY REPORT FOR THE BIRCH**  
20 **BAY SHORELINE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED**  
21 **\$49,880 (AB2006-327)**  
22

23 Roland Middleton, Planning and Development Services, stated this is the Birch Bay  
24 berm. It is now called the Birch Bay Shoreline Enhancement Project. The project is  
25 construction of a berm for two miles along Birch Bay and beach reconstruction, similar to  
26 what has been done at Marine Park in Bellingham and Crescent Beach in White Rock. Much  
27 of Birch Bay is privately owned tidelands. This item is the first phase of the feasibility  
28 study. They want to meet with all property owners and go through preliminary design work  
29 with them to ensure they can get easements to construct the project. If it goes beyond the  
30 priority set by Whatcom County, they will not move forward with the next phase. If they  
31 can get easements and do construction, they will move forward with the next phase of the  
32 feasibility study.

33  
34 Crawford asked if there is any estimate of cost. Middleton stated there is not. The  
35 feasibility study will answer that question. They need to identify source material, whether  
36 the State Department of Fish and Wildlife will grant them the ability to barge in the source  
37 material. If they don't do a full size project, they have to decide how to maintain the safety  
38 and viability of Birch Bay Drive. Now, Birch Bay Drive is patched together.

39  
40 ***Weimer moved*** to recommend approval to the full Council. He asked if there is any  
41 money in the six-year road plan. The project must be included in the plan to capture  
42 monies from developments through concurrency. Middleton stated he agreed. That is the  
43 intent in the future. They also want to capture Millennium Trail monies, Federal Emergency  
44 Management Administration (FEMA) monies, and any other monies they can get. Until they  
45 are sure about moving forward, it is not included in six year plan. This project is in the  
46 subarea plan for Birch Bay, described as the beach promenade.

47  
48 Bruce Roll, Public Works Department, stated this work must demonstrate a nexus  
49 with road activities. That has to be done.

50  
51 Nelson asked if there is already a berm in the commercial area. Middleton stated the  
52 plan in 1986 was to do the entire area with a Wolf Bauer berm. It went from Terrell Creek  
53 to Jacobs Landing. The project stopped. He's worked with property owners in the area for

1 a year. The Jacob's Landing Homeowners Association has unanimously granted an  
2 easement. He is in discussions with all homeowners.

3  
4 Nelson asked if the purpose is to protect the road or to enhance the area with the  
5 promenade and parking. Middleton stated the plan is for a soft shore reconstruction of the  
6 beach. The beach would start low, and rise up to the road. It would protect the road and  
7 provide walkway access, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access to properties across  
8 the road, and opportunity to establish an underground utility corridor. They identified 29  
9 objectives through the public process, including storm events. They have to have the nexus  
10 with the roadway. The feasibility study is only for the section where the road is right at the  
11 beach.

12  
13 Nelson asked if the project doesn't include parking. Middleton stated the final design  
14 could include parking.

15  
16 Crawford stated a revision of a FEMA map makes it more defined. Zone B will move  
17 back to just the other side of the road. FEMA should approve those maps next summer,  
18 and it will change perspectives on flooding and flood insurance. Take that into consideration  
19 as people participate. People must understand that things will change. Middleton stated  
20 the contractor understands those issues.

21  
22 ***Motion carried unanimously.***

23  
24 **3. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**  
25 **CONTRACT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND WHATCOM COUNSELING &**  
26 **PSYCHIATRIC CLINIC TO PROVIDE MENTALLY ILL OFFENDER JAIL**  
27 **DIVERSION SERVICES, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$229,557 (AB2006-328)**

28  
29 ***Nelson moved*** to recommend approval to the full Council. His biggest concern is  
30 that they get people into services before their problems get bigger. He asked how this ties  
31 in to co-occurring disorders.

32  
33 Terry Hinz, Health Department, stated he doesn't have that answer, and would have  
34 Gary Williams give Councilmember Nelson a call.

35  
36 Nelson stated that if they don't take care of the mental health issues with clients,  
37 they will continue to have substance abuse problems.

38  
39 ***Motion carried unanimously.***

40  
41 **4. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO AN INTER-**  
42 **GOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND WHATCOM**  
43 **COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT NO. 5 TO FURNISH FIRE PROTECTION**  
44 **SERVICES TO THE PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT BUILDINGS AND**  
45 **EQUIPMENT LOCATED WITHIN OR ADJACENT TO THE ESTABLISHED**  
46 **BOUNDARIES OF FIRE DISTRICT NO. 5 (AB2006-329)**

47  
48 ***Crawford moved*** to recommend approval to the full Council.

49  
50 Nelson stated this move is essential. They need to see more of this in districts with  
51 financial problems, so they can meet the needs of the communities.

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

1  
2 **5. RESOLUTION AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 2005-071 ESTABLISHING**  
3 **COUNTY ROAD PROJECT NO. 901001 AND AUTHORIZING**  
4 **ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR THE AWARD OF A CONTRACT FOR MARINE**  
5 **DRIVE IMPROVEMENTS FROM BENNETT DRIVE TO LOCUST AVENUE**  
6 **VICINITY AND AWARDED THE CONTRACT TO LOW BIDDER WILDER**  
7 **CONSTRUCTION COMPANY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,720,625 (AB2006-**  
8 **330)**

9  
10 *Nelson moved* to recommend approval to the full Council.

11  
12 Crawford asked the reason for the amendment.

13  
14 Jim Karcher, Public Works Department, stated it is amended because the resolution  
15 is officially established in the annual construction program. They are recognizing that.  
16 There is no increase in cost. As they do preliminary engineering and get the bids in, it is  
17 the big-ticket item for a project.

18  
19 *Motion carried unanimously.*

20  
21 **6. RESOLUTION AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 2006-042 IN THE MATTER OF**  
22 **THE SALE OF TAX-TITLE PROPERTY BY NEGOTIATION, REQUEST NO.**  
23 **TR2006-11 (AB2006-331)**

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

26  
27 Nelson asked the location. There is no map.

28  
29 Crawford stated it is 20 feet of some area for \$300.

30  
31 *Motion carried unanimously.*

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34 **OTHER BUSINESS**

35  
36 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated councilmembers should be prepared to  
37 free up their schedules in the middle of October for Finance Committee budget review.

38  
39 Crawford stated there is a response from the Mayor of Bellingham on his website  
40 regarding Bellingham Herald article on disaster planning services. Desler stated the  
41 administration is preparing a letter to the County Council and other elected officials related  
42 to the questions before the Emergency Management Council and options for the future. He  
43 hopes to have a discussion, possibly in September.

44  
45 Crawford stated the Mayor is offering to provide a facility. That sounds pretty good.  
46 Also, the Mayor did not address in his letter his decision to decline to provide funding for  
47 staff a year ago. He is trying to understand the implication of the City of Bellingham not  
48 being a part of the system. He asked if there is some net gain for the County, because they  
49 would provide a facility. Desler stated there is no description of what the City of Bellingham  
50 will or will not provide. There is an effort to look at the possibility of a fire station in the  
51 Laurel district that offered its building for use as an emergency operations center (EOC).  
52 That analysis is going on. The City's offer of an EOC is to modify their Public Works

1 Department operating center. The City proposed adding staff. He hasn't seen budget  
2 figures for that, but speculates a \$450,000 cost to the City. They talked last week about  
3 contributing \$50,000 to the joint operations center for one year. That offer may have  
4 changed.

5  
6 Nelson asked if there are federal and State funding mechanisms that go through  
7 EOC's, and if this is a mechanism of funding to one entity to do it's own thing. He asked if  
8 that is the City's motive.

9  
10 Crawford stated someone mentioned to him that it doesn't make a difference until  
11 there is a disaster. However, if Bellingham has its own entity, there could be more money  
12 and more control over that money by the City. Desler stated that may be. Someone said  
13 the City has been fishing for ways to capture Homeland Security money for themselves, to  
14 the exclusion of others. He doesn't know if that's true. A national effort is to have  
15 jurisdictions coordinate and unify disaster planning and response efforts locally. Whatcom  
16 County has been doing that for 50 years. There has been an interlocal agreement for the  
17 Emergency Management Council (EMC) since 1956. The City is calling for something  
18 different. The City wants something for itself. The points made during the EMC is that  
19 people are not in favor of multiple EOC's to respond to disasters. They can be contradictory  
20 and ineffective. The County administration wants to clearly understand the City's problem  
21 and review options for the future. A committee is tasked to investigate the problems and  
22 possible solutions. Many jurisdictions are in favor of a countywide, unified system, including  
23 the tribal units.

24  
25 Crawford stated the Mayor is clear that the City has broken away from that. The  
26 City Council may not be so sure. Desler stated it was a heated meeting. The County  
27 administration will urge cooler heads to prevail.

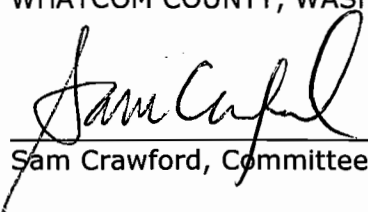
28  
29 McShane stated the meeting was agreed to by committee members to pursue the  
30 idea of how to do things differently to enhance services. That will provide information to  
31 the City Council, who ultimately approves the City budget. There was discussion in the past  
32 about expanding that City program, but the City didn't have the financial capacity at that  
33 time. It does now. Know where the entire community wants to go. It will be useful for the  
34 policymakers to make an informed decision. The County must give a clear description of  
35 what it can do, and assist in the decision-making.

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37 **ADJOURN**

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39 The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

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43 Jill Nixon, Minutes Transcription

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52 Dana Brown, Council Clerk

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