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

April 24, 2007

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  
Dan McShane

Absent:

None

Also Present:

Barbara Brenner

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

**1. PRESENTATION BY THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (EDC) ON THE PROPOSED "ECONOMIC STRATEGIES COUNCIL" (AB2007-017)**

Ray Trzynka, EDC Board Chair, stated the EDC committed to this Council periodic and regular updates on their activities. Their new model is a traditional EDC model. Through the Economic Strategies Council, they will see a new strategic approach for reviewing the county economy. They will be inclusive and collaborative in every way possible. They will continue to update the Council on new opportunities and their contract deliverables.

Nancy Jordan, Economic Development Council Executive Director, submitted information and gave a presentation (*on file*). She described the background of the EDC. She read from the presentation. Projects include the regional marine cluster project, a monthly practitioners meeting, expanding their website functionality, a revolving loan fund, business retention and expansion, increased communication and information exchange with the community, and developing the Economic Strategies Council. The Economic Strategies Council would just look at economic issues without having to deal with budgets and staffing. They deal directly with just the issues.

Nelson stated being more collaborative in working toward the future is an excellent idea. Some people think it's too expensive to get involved. Don't include only those who can afford to be involved. Jordan stated this year they will review and change their membership structure to make it a more inclusive opportunity. They have talked with and won't compete with the Chamber. They will be able to show the value a member receives.

Nelson asked if members of one economic sector can come together and become involved representing their sector. Jordan stated they can.

Brenner asked how they won't compete with the Chamber. Jordan stated the Chamber is an advocate for issues pertaining to the business community. The EDC would meet about those issues, and find mechanisms for solutions, including funding. The Chamber can do that function, but the EDC and its new structure is better suited for those roles. They work well together in tandem.

1 Brenner asked if there is some way for the two to be a single entity. It's difficult for  
2 small businesses to pay for two memberships. Jordan stated they will continue the  
3 discussion so the community sees how the two organizations fit together. The membership  
4 structure could be a slightly higher membership fee that would pay for membership in the  
5 EDC, the Chamber, and the Downtown Renaissance Network.  
6

7 The EDC has different roles. The EDC is a conduit of public funds to private good.  
8 The Chamber's role is the community membership voice as a business sector. It is a  
9 membership-based organization. It doesn't receive public dollars for anything other than  
10 the Ski-to-Sea Festival. The EDC flows the public dollars.  
11

12 Brenner asked if the Chamber could do all those functions. Jordan stated it would be  
13 an idea to explore.  
14

15 McShane asked who designates the EDC as the associate development organization  
16 (ADO). Jordan stated Whatcom County made that designation.  
17

18 McShane stated the Senate Bill includes information on money that flows from the  
19 State. That money flows through the EDC. He asked what the EDC does with that money.  
20 Jordan stated there is a formula for use of the funds, and there must be a local match.  
21 They are in the process of defining their role in delivering those services.  
22

23 McShane stated he would like to see a report on how that money is distributed for  
24 the public good. He wants to make sure the EDC is moving in the direction the Council  
25 wants in terms of distributing that money. Jordan stated she will bring that information  
26 forward.  
27

28 Crawford stated he likes this concept. This reinvention of the EDC into a new  
29 direction, with the Board's administrative functions and the Economic Strategy Council  
30 focusing on issues, is important.  
31

32 Nelson stated the Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access (WAHA) is doing a lot of  
33 work to help small businesses provide health insurance. The interconnectivity between the  
34 EDC and WAHA is very important. Interconnectivity will help the community move forward  
35 more effectively than it has in the past. He's very encouraged about the work the EDC is  
36 doing.  
37

38 Peggy Zoro, EDC Member, stated they appreciate the fact that the EDC and the  
39 practitioners were able to support the WAHA grant. A big reason the grant was approved  
40 was because of the collaboration between the economic development partners and WAHA.  
41

42 McShane stated the health care issue is a big problem for his small company. It's a  
43 major impediment in trying to decide whether or not to hire people versus contracting out  
44 services.  
45

#### 46 **COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

#### 47 **1. ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2007 WHATCOM COUNTY BUDGET, FOURTH** 48 **REQUEST, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,566,525 (AB2007-191)**

49 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, described the supplemental requests.  
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53

1           **Nelson moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.

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3           **Motion carried unanimously.**

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6           **COUNCIL "CONSENT AGENDA" ITEM**

- 7  
8           **1.     REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**  
9           **CONTRACT AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND THE GILMORE**  
10           **RESEARCH GROUP TO CONDUCT BRFSS (BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR**  
11           **SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM) PUBLIC HEALTH TELEPHONE SURVEY, IN THE**  
12           **AMOUNT OF \$29,127 (AB2007-197)**

13  
14           **Crawford moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.

15  
16           Nelson stated this is a new contract. He asked if it is grant funded.

17  
18           Terry Hinz, Health Department, stated it is. They did this five years ago. They are  
19           increasing the sample size in Whatcom County to draw conclusions from the data.

20  
21           Nelson asked if the information will be available when the State Board of Health gets  
22           together with the County Board of Health. Hinz stated the survey will be done at the end of  
23           the year. They will have results sometime next year.

24  
25           **Motion carried unanimously.**

- 26  
27           **2.     REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A FARM**  
28           **LAND LEASE AGREEMENT WITH JIM SNYDAR TO FARM APPROXIMATELY 80**  
29           **ACRES WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF HOVANDER HOMESTEAD PARK IN**  
30           **FERNDAL, WA, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3,000 FOR A 9 MONTH LEASE**  
31           **(AB2007-198)**

32  
33           **Nelson moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.

34  
35           Brenner asked how they decided on the amount of the lease. She asked if they can  
36           just allow the person to farm without charge, since the Council has made agriculture a  
37           priority for the county.

38  
39           Mike McFarlane, Parks and Recreation Department Director, stated they advertise the  
40           lease, and go with the highest bidder.

41  
42           Brenner asked if they can do a request for proposals (RFP) in the future for no  
43           charge, if it's a public priority. McFarlane stated the mowing schedule is timed to coincide  
44           with public events and allow the open space for parking and other uses. There is a public  
45           benefit. If they didn't do that, the County would have to expend its own resources.

46  
47           Nelson asked why they would not reduce the taxpayer burden if someone is willing  
48           and eager to do what is needed. This reduces the tax load to the public because someone is  
49           willing to do this.

50  
51           Brenner stated she's uncomfortable charging a fee for something that has a public  
52           benefit.

1 ***Motion carried unanimously.***  
2

3 **3. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**  
4 **CONTRACT AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND GALLATIN**  
5 **GROUP IN THE AMOUNT OF \$95,000 TO AID THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE WITH**  
6 **INTERGOVERNMENTAL ADVOCACY SERVICES AT BOTH THE STATE AND**  
7 **NATIONAL LEVEL (AB2007-199)**  
8

9 Crawford asked if this is related to the 2010 Olympics.  
10

11 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated it is. It's also related to other issues.  
12 They are seeking assistance from groups and the federal government.  
13

14 Nelson stated no other public government is involved with this agency, the Gallatin  
15 Group. He asked if they have experience working with local or state governments. Desler  
16 stated they do. Members of this firm have worked with King County.  
17

18 Crawford stated he is in favor of this item. The work seems to make sense, but the  
19 contract is costly. He asked if the contractors can guarantee their work. Desler stated the  
20 contract amount is for two years. There are no guarantees.  
21

22 The County needs more of a presence during federal decision-making points. Other  
23 local governments, including the City of Bellingham, has people working in Olympia and  
24 Washington D.C. If Whatcom County is going to get serious about important issues, it must  
25 have a stronger presence at the table when the decisions are being made.  
26

27 Crawford stated he would like to look back in a year or two and see the results of  
28 this contract. This is an experiment. Desler stated the County administration wants to take  
29 advantage of federal support for national objectives. In the past they've had moderate  
30 success, but they can do better. Whatcom County has a tremendous federal presence,  
31 including the international border and the large amount of federal land. They need to  
32 interact more with the federal government. Be a bit more strategic and focused.  
33

34 Nelson stated they are not getting any increased presence in Washington D.C. or at  
35 the State with this contract. He read the deliverables. There is nothing in the scope that  
36 gives the County a greater presence. Desler stated that greater presence will be the role of  
37 the County councilmembers.  
38

39 Nelson stated the additional presence would be an increased function of the  
40 councilmembers, who would go to the State and Washington D.C. to do that increased  
41 presence. He asked if the Executive would support that type of increased presence and  
42 advocacy. Desler stated the Executive does support that increase.  
43

44 Nelson stated he would like a better analysis of what the contract dollars go toward  
45 and the timeframe and additional commitment it would take to realize more dollars from the  
46 federal government.  
47

48 Brenner stated the deliverables sound like things that the County staff should be  
49 doing. Federal elected officials have staff that interact with the County regularly. The  
50 County should be doing this. Don't contract it out to someone else.  
51

52 McShane stated he doesn't have enough information on issues to lobby Washington  
53 D.C. effectively. Lobbying for issues is daunting. This will help with the County's

1 strategizing. This contractor will provide strategic opportunities. The Executive is  
2 interested in going in this direction. Hopefully, the Executive will work with the Council  
3 when the time comes to take action on issues. This contract will help the County be more  
4 targeted when taking action.

5  
6 **Crawford moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.

7  
8 *(Clerk's Note: End of tape one, side A.)*

9  
10 Crawford asked if they could hold this in committee for two weeks so Councilmember  
11 Nelson can work with the administration on his questions. The County will have more  
12 responsibility to follow through on the results of the contractor's work.

13  
14 Nelson stated he wants to see the specific issues they will work on and how this  
15 group will address those issues. The Council may have its own issues it would like the  
16 contractor to address.

17  
18 McShane stated the Council and administration went over some of the important  
19 policy issues to this County a few months ago, prior to their trip to Washington D.C. This  
20 committee should do that regularly before legislative sessions. The County could do  
21 outreach to other government entities to speak with one voice when the opportunity arises.  
22 This group would help the County come up with a strategy to accomplish its goals on those  
23 issues. The County wants to make sure the contractor is focused. Then, the question is  
24 how the County responds to that strategy. The administration clearly sees a need for  
25 assistance. The Council should somehow get more involved also.

26  
27 Desler stated the key issues the administration identified are included in the Council  
28 packet. The administration is happy to discuss additional issues with the County Council.  
29 Since a majority of people coming to the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver will come to Whatcom  
30 County, there will be an impact to Whatcom County. The federal government has money  
31 set aside for Olympic-related impacts. The County wants to take advantage of that. He is  
32 happy to talk more about this with councilmembers. He can arrange a presentation with  
33 representatives from the Gallatin Group.

34  
35 **Nelson moved** to hold in committee for two weeks to get more information. Not  
36 even the federal legislators are aware of everything going on in Washington D.C. The  
37 constituents have to inform and educate the legislators. Don't assume they know what's  
38 happening. If this group can help with that, it may be worth considering.

39  
40 Brenner asked if the Sheriff approves of this contract. Desler stated many  
41 departments are in favor of it. They know they don't have the expertise, time, or  
42 understanding to address the more sophisticated issues related to the federal government.

43  
44 The administration is not happy with having to spend an increasing amount of  
45 resources on something like this, when they are already taking so much of the local  
46 resources. However, these are the ways people have been successful in getting federal  
47 dollars back into the community to address local problems. When decisions are made, be  
48 close to the table and have influence over those decisions.

49  
50 **Motion carried unanimously.**

51  
52 **4. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO AN**  
53 **AGREEMENT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND WASHINGTON STATE**

1           **UNIVERSITY TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR THE DELIVERY OF NUTRITION**  
2           **EDUCATION FOR THE RESIDENTS OF WHATCOM COUNTY WHO ARE FOOD**  
3           **STAMP ELIGIBLE, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$26,436.83 (AB2007-200)**

4  
5           *Crawford moved* to recommend approval to the full Council.  
6

7           Drew Betz, Cooperative Extension, stated this is a non-cash match. This year, they  
8           were able to increase the match by over \$12,000 because they were able to use the federal  
9           standard allocation for space. Whatcom County is one of about 11 partners in this project.  
10          The total budget is almost \$200,000.

11  
12          Brenner asked if they have a lobbyist in Washington D.C. Betts stated they don't.

13  
14          Nelson asked if this type of program is generally successful. Betts stated it is. There  
15          is less dependence on soda and more on water and milk. Children choose fruits and  
16          vegetables more often.

17  
18          Nelson stated he would like to see that evidence.

19  
20          *Motion carried unanimously.*

21  
22          **5. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ALLOCATE 2163**  
23          **FUNDING FOR THE CTED HGAP GRANT, BASED ON A RECOMMENDATION**  
24          **FROM THE WHATCOM COUNTY HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD COMMITTEE**  
25          **(AB2007-201)**

26  
27          Brenner asked for clarification on the information regarding the total percentage of  
28          homeless youth.

29  
30          Gary Williams, Health Department, stated the total percent of homeless youth under  
31          10 aren't necessarily on their own. That 25 percent includes families with small children.

32  
33          Crawford stated he agrees that the percentages may not be accurate. According to  
34          the information, there are more homeless youth under age ten than homeless teenagers.  
35          That doesn't seem correct. He would check the survey documents.

36  
37          Nelson stated there may also be duplicate answers on the survey.

38  
39          Brenner stated she would like accurate information before approving the contract.  
40          More than half the homeless have mental health issues. She is concerned about having a  
41          revolving door with people who are being treated yearly. They won't achieve a homeless  
42          rate reduction of over 50 percent in nine years. Williams stated providing support to  
43          individuals and families before they become homeless will result in a better success rate.  
44          Preventative services have the biggest impacts. Those already homeless will benefit from  
45          rent subsidies, case management, and similar support services. Those with chronic mental  
46          illness receive the highest portion of the budget. The focus is developing the level of  
47          services necessary to serve those folks so they will leave the homeless population.  
48          However, new folks will always be coming into the system. More information is available on  
49          the details of the services provided.

50  
51          Crawford stated he is nervous about creating attractive shelter services for people  
52          who can otherwise provide for themselves. He asked if there are safeguards built into the  
53          system to prevent that from happening. Williams stated there will always be system-

1 abusers. There is a single, coordinated system for entering folks into the County homeless  
2 program will help that problem. They will know what all the agencies are doing and who is  
3 receiving benefits. Also, they are deemphasizing the use of shelters. Instead, they focus  
4 on getting people into permanent housing. Permanent housing truly impacts the number of  
5 people who are homeless.

6  
7 **McShane moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.

8  
9 **Motion carried unanimously.**

- 10  
11 **6. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT**  
12 **AMENDMENT #3 BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND NORTHWEST**  
13 **HYDRAULIC CONSULTANTS TO INCLUDE EVALUATING FLOOD HAZARD**  
14 **REDUCTION ALTERNATIVES AND DEVELOPING FLOODPLAIN MAPS, IN THE**  
15 **AMOUNT OF \$128,000, FOR A TOTAL AMENDED CONTRACT AMOUNT OF**  
16 **\$328,000 (AB2007-202)**

17  
18 **Nelson moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.

19  
20 **Motion carried unanimously.**

- 21  
22 **7. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO AN**  
23 **INTERLOCAL LOAN AND GRANT AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF FERNDALE**  
24 **UTILIZING EDI PROGRAM FUNDING (FROM THE PUBLIC UTILITIES**  
25 **IMPROVEMENT FUND) FOR USE IN THE CITY OF FERNDALE'S CENTENNIAL**  
26 **RIVERFRONT PROJECT, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,530,900 INCLUDING**  
27 **\$504,900 IN GRANT FUNDING (AB2007-203)**

28  
29 **Nelson moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.

30  
31 **Motion carried unanimously.**

- 32  
33 **8. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO AWARD BID #07-31 TO**  
34 **SOLE BIDDER HYDRA PLATFORMS MANUFACTURING, INC. FOR THE**  
35 **PURCHASE OF AN UNDER-BRIDGE PLATFORM INSPECTION TRAILER, IN THE**  
36 **AMOUNT OF \$154,741 (AB2007-204)**

37  
38 Crawford asked what this is and why they need it.

39  
40 Mary Green, Public Works Department, submitted photos of the equipment (*on file*).  
41 Before, the County rented one from the State of Washington, which no longer has one. The  
42 State now wants to rent the one the County purchases. It's not just for bridge inspections.  
43 It works any place that requires scaffolding, including the ferry dock.

44  
45 Nelson asked the rental amount the County would charge the State. Green stated a  
46 tentative rental amount is \$3,000 per bridge.

47  
48 Joe Rutan, Public Works Director, stated the State still has the under-bridge  
49 inspection trailer. The State does high-cost bridge inspections. The County would be  
50 reimbursed for the cost of the State no longer having to do those inspections in Whatcom  
51 County. The County will get its \$3,000 back, and have this equipment available for other  
52 uses.

1 Green stated this type of equipment has been around for a long time, and this  
2 company has also been around for a long time. There has never been an accident with one.

3  
4 Nelson asked if the rental amounts received goes into the equipment rent and  
5 revolve (ER&R) fund. Green stated it does. It will go toward replacing it in the future.

6  
7 ***Nelson moved*** to recommend approval to the full Council.

8  
9 Dewey Desler, stated the machine is rented full time from the ER&R fund. Any  
10 additional revenue received would go back to the road fund.

11  
12 ***Motion carried unanimously.***

- 13  
14 **9. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO AWARD BID #07-20 TO**  
15 **ALL BIDDERS FOR INCLUSION ON THE ON-CALL CONTRACTOR/EQUIPMENT**  
16 **LIST TO BE USED ONLY SHOULD A SPECIFIC NEED ARISE (AB2007-205)**

17  
18 ***Crawford moved*** to recommend approval to the full Council.

19  
20 ***Motion carried unanimously.***

- 21  
22 **10. RESOLUTION AMENDING CRP NO. 904018 FOR INNIS CREEK ROAD BRIDGE**  
23 **NO. 126 CONSTRUCTION AND REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE**  
24 **EXECUTIVE TO APPROVE AWARD OF CONTRACT TO WILDER**  
25 **CONSTRUCTION, AS LOW BIDDER IN THE AMOUNT OF \$399,487 (AB2007-**  
26 **206)**

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

29  
30 Brenner asked if the cost is more than budgeted.

31  
32 Chris Brueske, Public Works Department, stated it is. This was budgeted for in 2005.  
33 They didn't anticipate the rate by which the construction rates would go up since 2005.

34  
35 Crawford asked if they are getting federal help. Brueske stated the bridge portion is  
36 County funds. It's a three-way partnership with County, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement  
37 Group, and the Whatcom Land Trust. The Land Trust bought the land where this creek is  
38 historically aligned. The County will put the stream back to its historic alignment. The  
39 Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group built the downstream channel to convey the creek to  
40 the Samish River. When it floods, fish go across the road. He described the location of the  
41 road.

42  
43 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated construction material costs have  
44 increased in the last few years. There will be an impact on many areas of the government.  
45 They should talk about that at some point.

46  
47 ***Motion carried unanimously.***

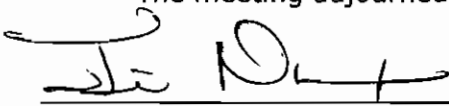
48  
49  
50 **OTHER BUSINESS**

51  
52 There was no other business.

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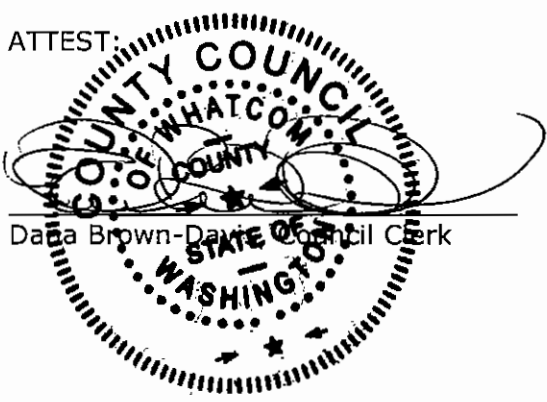
**ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.



Jill Nixon, Minutes Transcription

ATTEST:



Data Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

  
Sam Crawford, Committee Chair