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WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
Finance and Administrative Services Committee

August 7, 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
Carl Weimer

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

1. ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2007 WHATCOM COUNTY BUDGET, NINTH REQUEST, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$189,759 (AB2007-315)

Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, gave a staff report and stated this request is to address increasing costs of regulatory requirements regarding development. The administration worked with the Public Works Department on how to respond to development activity and concurrency. The additional staff requirements to address permit center activity and engineering work is necessary. The Council adopted additional fees in the fee schedule to direct revenue toward this effort. They will hire staff incrementally as revenue from permit activity justifies. This puts the budgetary authority in place to acquire the staff.

Crawford asked if this is to help Lee Carter, who is always so backed up. That seems to be the bottleneck over there.

Frank Abart, Public Works Director, stated that is part of the bottleneck. This would help Mr. Carter, but that won't be the only responsibility of the new staff. There are other areas specifically related to traffic engineering that must be shifted to a different component. These people will help with several areas.

Crawford stated Mr. Carter is overwhelmed. Abart stated Mr. Carter has to inspect areas before making assessment. At least two of these new positions will do inspections, but this position isn't exclusively to help Mr. Carter.

Crawford moved to recommend approval to the full Council.

Brenner stated former Public Works Director Jeff Monsen told the Council that the department was short by a number of engineers. One of the problems has been that they haven't been able to fill the positions that already exist. She asked why they are adding more positions when they have trouble filling the positions that are already there.

Joe Rutan, Public Works Department, stated these positions are engineering technicians and a manager for development review and traffic. The positions they've had trouble filling are professional, licensed engineers in the design and construction group, which used to be co-located with these. However, they've been at the new Cooper Building

1 in the past two years. They've filled two of those four positions. The development manager
2 could be an engineer, but it isn't a requirement for the position.
3

4 Brenner stated they can hire these people, but asked if there's still a backlog
5 because there aren't civil engineers. Rutan stated these staff will review development
6 proposals in the county. The licensed engineers, which are the positions they've had
7 trouble filling, carry out the six-year road program, which is separate from development
8 review.
9

10 Brenner asked if this request will bring more relief to the permitting department,
11 even without filling those other positions. Rutan stated it will. It will add a needed
12 manager position. This will help give focus to traffic issues, concurrency, and transportation
13 impact fees. The inspectors will make existing staff more effective. Now, two people are
14 doing inspection in the entire county. None are devoted to development. Time will be
15 spent more efficiently. He misspoke earlier. The development manager must be a licensed
16 engineer.
17

18 Crawford asked about fee revenue. Desler stated they're watching some fee
19 revenues increase. They are going to continue to watch the fee revenue to make sure they
20 can cover a significant portion of this cost. It's a legitimate investment of the road fund in
21 this function.
22

23 Weimer stated this is tied to concurrency to some degree. He asked if this will free
24 up the Planning Department concurrency planner to work on that more often and less often
25 at the counter. Rutan stated long-term transportation planning is a general government
26 function, and can't be funded from the road fund. That's why it's funded from the Planning
27 Department. This development manager and traffic manager would be part of that team to
28 look at long-term development and transportation trends and modeling. Now, that was
29 traditionally in the County Engineer's realm. Coordination with the Planning Department is
30 very important. They are dealing with issues that take a lot of time, such as concurrency
31 and transportation impact fees.
32

33 Weimer stated Mr. Everett gets pulled away from doing long-term transportation
34 planning to work on permits at the counter. He asked if this request would avert that
35 distraction. Rutan stated it would.
36

37 Brenner stated the request is for a budget amount for the rest of the year. She
38 asked whether they are going to hire right away. Desler stated they want to be cautious
39 about getting the right people. People may not start right on October 1, but the authority is
40 there.
41

42 Abart stated they are trying to minimize as much financial impact as possible. If
43 they can push it forward, they will, but he's concerned about financial impact. The issue is
44 the same with the purchase of the two vehicles. These requests are to have the money
45 available, but he will review the fleet to make sure it's necessary before purchasing
46 vehicles.
47

48 Brenner asked about approving funding for the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement
49 Association (NSEA) Conservation Corps crew. NSEA's deadline is now. Abart stated staff is
50 trying to find money in the budget. There are also discussions with NSEA and the
51 Department of Ecology.
52

1 Desler stated the administration identified \$26,000 from this year's budget authority
2 for the remainder of the year, and is asking NSEA for a proposal for next year. They don't
3 necessarily need a supplemental budget request. They will come back and fund about
4 \$50,000 for 2008. They are waiting for paperwork from the Department of Ecology, who
5 the County actually pays.
6

7 Brenner stated they must have the money available and ready for NSEA so they can
8 meet their deadline. They need to get going. This was supposed to come to the Council
9 today. The Council doesn't have another meeting before NSEA's deadline is up. Abart
10 stated the Public Works Department staff is working with the Department of Ecology and
11 NSEA, and the deadline has been waived.
12

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

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

- 18 **8. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**
19 **CONTRACT FOR SERVICES BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND COMPUWORK**
20 **PACIFIC FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE BLAINE POLICE SERVICE POINT AS**
21 **PART OF WENET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$66,500 (AB2007-333)**
22

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

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

- 27 **1. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**
28 **CONTRACT FOR SERVICES BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND THE YWCA TO**
29 **PROVIDE 2060 REPAIR AND RETENTION FUNDS TO ASSIST WITH RE-**
30 **ROOFING AND SEISMIC UPGRADE OF THE LARRABEE RESIDENCE IN THE**
31 **AMOUNT OF \$20,000 (AB2007-326)**
32

33 ***Crawford moved*** to recommend approval to the full Council.
34

35 ***Motion carried unanimously.***
36

- 37 **2. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO AMEND A CONTRACT**
38 **FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND PHILIP**
39 **WILLIAMS & ASSOCIATES FOR THE BIRCH BAY SHORELINE ENHANCEMENT**
40 **PROJECT TO INITIATE PHASE II WORK IN THE AMOUNT OF \$25,000**
41 **(AB2007-327)**
42

43 ***Nelson moved*** to recommend approval to the full Council.
44

45 Brenner asked if there will be the potential of State or federal funding to work on
46 some of the issues.
47

48 Roland Middleton, Planning and Development Services Department, stated there will
49 be in future phases.
50

51 ***Motion carried unanimously.***
52

1 **3. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**
2 **CONTRACT BETWEEN WHATCOM COUNTY AND ON LINE CONSULTING**
3 **SERVICES FOR THE WHATCOM COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING AND**
4 **JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY SECURITY CONTROLS RETROFIT DESIGN**
5 **IN THE AMOUNT OF \$313,690 (AB2007-328)**
6

7 **McShane moved** to recommend approval to the full Council.
8

9 Nelson asked how long this company has existed.
10

11 Mike Russell, Administrative Services Department, stated this company has been in
12 business for 15 years. The last one installed lasted six months.
13

14 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated this is just for design services.
15 Purchasing is a separate cost item.
16

17 Nelson stated design can lead to a limited contract. Russell stated they will lean
18 toward replacement controller #11, which they did a couple of years ago with the main jail.
19 They are also going to lean toward the type of controls they're putting in the minimum
20 security jail. It's all computerized with off-the-street parts.
21

22 McShane asked if they are staying with these buildings for the main jail. Russell
23 stated they have no other choice. There is liability with the control falling.
24

25 McShane stated they are not ready to move into a new building any time soon.
26

27 Crawford stated they would like to move forward with a new jail facility. It's
28 frustrating to throw money after a facility that is compromised, but they are on the same
29 page.
30

31 **Motion carried unanimously.**
32

33 **4. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO A**
34 **CONTRACT FOR CONSULTANT SERVICES WITH CH2M HILL FOR PHASE I OF**
35 **THE COMPREHENSIVE WATER RESOURCES INTEGRATION PROJECT IN THE**
36 **AMOUNT OF \$195,000 (AB2007-329)**
37

38 Paula Cooper, Public Works Department, submitted a proposed amendment (*on file*).
39 It clarifies the scope of work. It is added to Council packet page 85, after the task eight
40 description. It brings this exhibit into the contract, which links phase one to future phases
41 of the project. The amendment is a clarification.
42

43 **Nelson moved** to recommend approval to the full Council, with the amendment.
44

45 Weimer asked if it will take less staff time to implement, so they can continue to
46 move forward with other things.
47

48 Paula Cooper, Public Works Department, stated they initially proposed to have 20
49 hours per week for the entire staff time, for a period of six weeks. CH2MHill will have seven
50 full-day workshops, with some involvement in September. It is less of a time commitment
51 than initially conceived.
52

1 Weimer stated the contract identifies more than 170 hours of consultant time per
2 each workshop. That seems excessive for a six-hour workshop. Cooper stated there will be
3 a lot of preparation and digesting after the workshop. The consultant will apply the
4 prioritization criteria to the different projects and plans, and bring that back to staff team
5 for review. Also, the contractor will generate other organizational discussions. The
6 contractor has a lot of pre- and post-meeting work to do.
7

8 Nelson stated they are not inventing a new process. Another county has already
9 undergone this process. More municipalities and counties will find out that they don't have
10 in place processes and systems to help the public understand all the issues.
11

12 Brenner asked if Ms. Cooper feels that each meeting will require 170 staff hours.
13 Cooper stated different people and firms are involved. That sounds like an average amount
14 that it will take. The scope is laid out well. They've already whittled this amount down.
15 They can't really cut much more.
16

17 ***Motion carried unanimously.***
18

19 **5. RESOLUTION OF WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL FOR AUTHORIZATION TO**
20 **CHANGE THE CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT AMOUNT ON CABLE STREET,**
21 **PHASE II (CABLE STREET RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT – CRP 999022) IN**
22 **THE AMOUNT OF \$376,110.85 (AB2007-168A)**
23

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

26 Nelson stated there were some savings in construction and engineering testing
27 contingencies and right-of-way acquisition. Now, they have additional charges. He asked
28 how this change occurred.
29

30 Kirk Christensen, Public Works Department, stated they put significantly more time
31 into traffic safety and control, given the public pressure. Additional rock raised the cost of
32 excavation. Other odd things from the public also created additional cost to complete the
33 job. A utility duct was missed on the plans. They had to modify some catch-basins. A
34 majority of the extra cost is traffic control and safety that they underestimated in the
35 beginning. To appease the public, they had to hire a lot more flaggers than planned.
36

37 Nelson stated this is an unanticipated cost to infilling, and is one reason why people
38 like to expand outward from the cities. They don't anticipate these costs with infill.
39 Additional housing, services, and infrastructure has to be put into place to accommodate
40 densities for which the infrastructure wasn't originally planned. Sprawl may be cheaper for
41 cities than infill. Christensen stated they are doing waterline that is being reimbursed by
42 the water and sewer district on this.
43

44 Brenner stated those kinds of costs they will find anywhere, including in the
45 unincorporated county. The costs weren't unreasonable, and could have happened
46 anywhere.
47

48 The descriptions on Council packet page 89 were confusing. They are not exceeding
49 the overall approved budget. They will exceed it up the road, because they are taking the
50 money from elsewhere in the budget. Christensen stated they didn't spend as much as
51 they'd planned on right-of-way and they had a contingency in the budget. They are using
52 some of that contingency and the right-of-way they didn't use.
53

1 Brenner asked if all the cost is covered. Christensen stated it fits in the original
2 project budget. They shouldn't have to make any more requests unless something else
3 happens.
4

5 Brenner stated there were many traffic complaints. She was glad that the County
6 responded quickly. She has no problem with that.
7

8 Crawford asked how the project is going overall. Christensen stated it is going very
9 well. It is scheduled to open at the end of the month, including the work on Wall Street.
10

11 McShane asked if they anticipate, within this contract, ongoing stormwater
12 monitoring associated with the new stormwater systems on Cable Street. Christensen
13 stated they have some for laying out a monitoring plan. They haven't sorted out how to do
14 actual monitoring of the swales. The Department of Ecology requires that they monitor the
15 vault. He hopes to work up an agreement with the person who makes the vault to take a
16 bulk of that cost. The manufacturer is curious about its effectiveness. There are plans now,
17 but nothing formal.
18

19 ***Motion carried unanimously.***

- 20
21 **6. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO ENTER INTO AN**
22 **AGREEMENT WITH BERK AND ASSOCIATES TO PROVIDE ANALYSIS FOR AND**
23 **PREPARATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE INCORPORATION PLAN FOR BIRCH**
24 **BAY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$100,000 (AB2007-330)**
25

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

28 ***Motion carried unanimously.***
29

- 30 **7. REQUEST APPROVAL OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT**
31 **PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS TO FUND THE CITY OF LYNDEN'S**
32 **APPLICATION FOR FUNDING IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,912,857; AND THE CITY**
33 **OF FERNDALE'S REQUEST FOR SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING IN THE AMOUNT**
34 **OF \$180,458; AND AUTHORIZATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE TO EXECUTE AN**
35 **AMENDMENT TO THE INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF**
36 **FERNDALE (AB2007-332)**
37

38 ***Crawford moved*** to recommend approval to the full Council.
39

40 Dewey Desler, Deputy Administrator, stated these are recommendations from the
41 board. He explained the process.
42

43 Nelson asked why Councilmember Weimer feels that the Economic Development
44 Investment (EDI) Board does not need to bring forward any more information on projects
45 than the Council already gets.
46

47 Weimer stated he said he would check with the Council. Some of the people on the
48 EDI Board want to come to the Council at least once per year to give a presentation on how
49 the EDI Board works and an update on its activities.
50

51 Nelson stated he understand how the Board works. He would like to know about
52 projects that are being brought forward to the EDI Board.
53

1 Desler stated the administration is putting together a report of all the projects put
2 forward, to date, since 1999. He explained the application process. An EDI project not
3 listed doesn't qualify for funding.

4
5 Weimer described the EDI Board discussions and votes on the two requests.

6
7 **Motion carried unanimously.**

8
9
10 **OTHER BUSINESS**

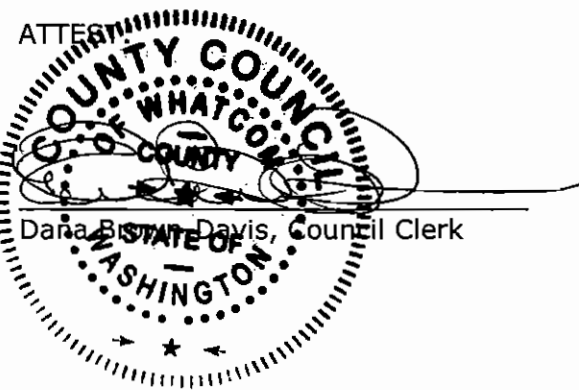
11
12 There was no other business.


13
14 *(Clerk's Note: End of tape one, side A.)*

15
16
17 **ADJOURN**

18
19 The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

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22 
23
24 Jill Nixon, Minutes Transcription

25
26
27 ATTEST
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29
30
31
32 Dana Bismar-Davis, Council Clerk

33
WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Sam Crawford, Committee Chair